

Gender, Faith and Locality: Muslim Women in Scotland

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ABSTRACT

Muslim women in Scotland have been largely absent from research and literature concerning Islamic communities in Britain. Using empirical data consisting of 37 in-depth interviews and five focus groups across three research sites, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, this study analyses the everyday lives and experiences of Muslim women in Scotland. This thesis opens up the nuanced ways that Muslim women practice their faith, refashion their interpretations of Islamic dress while also directing social and domestic interactions. I bring together a series of chapters which investigate how there is a growing awareness, sensitivity and acknowledgement of political and social changes led by Muslim women. I also draw attention to the struggles of Muslim women as they endure on one hand the patriarchal cultures and strict adherences born out of authoritarian interpretations of religion and, on the other hand experiencing and managing a number of social and political misrepresentations.

Furthermore, the study highlights how Muslim women formulate and practice multi-layered and multi-dimensional identities alongside their experiences of community cohesion. Simultaneously, I discuss how they consider religious racism in a world dominated by negative depictions of Muslims and Islam. Using a qualitative approach, the study reveals a number of intricate abstractions that view Muslim women under a microscopic lens, reformulating and reconstructing their social and personal identities to encourage a debate on the role of faith in everyday belonging, becoming empowered through the concept of *Hijab* practice and speaking about the disharmonies which exist within Muslim communities. I argue that Muslim women are becoming more 'risk-aware' (Haw, 2009), have created spaces of responsiveness through local-level activism and are continually contributing and working to represent themselves socially, economically and politically in a post-devolved Scotland, actions that often go undetected in wider debates and discussions about Muslim women in Britain today.

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Vocabulary

Chador	-	loose hair/head covering
Deen	-	Way of life/guideline
Falah	-	self-improvement/repentance
Hadith	-	Islamic texts and laws
Halaka	-	religious classes
Haram	-	forbidden
Hijab	-	tight hair/head covering
Imam	-	religious scholar/teacher
Khutbah	-	religious sermon
MashAllah	-	form of appreciation
Namaz	-	prayer
Niqaab	-	cloth which covers the full face, apart from the eyes
Shahada	-	Islamic declaration of faith
Ummah	-	global Muslim community

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The shocking events of September 11th 2001 and the bombings of July 7th 2005 are just two significant occurrences which had reshaped, constructed and reconstructed how we examine Muslim communities in Britain and around the globe. Previously, moral panics, increased scrutiny, social and cultural exclusions led to already silenced communities to become ever absent in spaces of the public and private discourse. This thesis brings together a set of wider understandings of the lives of Muslim women, borrowing from feminist narratives of faith, demonstrating among other things how Muslim communities in Scotland are becoming increasingly alert to generalised representations in news media of Muslims and Islamic cultures. The main aims of the study are to seek out and discuss the everyday experiences of Muslim women in Scotland, the ways in which they experience faith in public spaces alongside their articulations of identity and culture in the home. The objectives of the research are further explored on Page 3, however, it is critical to note that this study looks to provide a deep analysis of who Muslim women in Scotland are, how they identify themselves through faith and culture, alongside their interactions in

spaces of the social and domestic. In addition, the study explores their understanding of religious and cultural modes of dress and practice, how well these are executed in social and public space and how women access faith and religious institutions.

Furthermore, the PhD project is collaboratively funded by the ESRC and The Scottish Government in a bid to draw together a set of cross cultural understandings of minority communities in Scotland. As part of the Knowledge Transfer team, the study will create and help maintain networks and contact between the public and policy sector in the Communities Analytical Services and the Scottish Muslim community, including a one-month internship in Edinburgh through which the study was able to collate and expand its network base. A collaborative study such as this will indeed spark further debate into the relationship between Government and community, and it is with this in mind that the thesis seeks out how Muslim women interact with local and national political parties, their understandings of religious hatred e.g. Islamophobia, and how confident they feel in approaching local authorities to report racial and religious hate crimes.

Intersections between race and nation are now being filled with numerous studies relating to the debates around the position of faith when considering nationalist agendas and social and political policy (Secor, 2002). Essentialist categories are being rejected on the basis that they cannot display the subjective interpretations of the lives of Muslim women. Furthermore, Muslim identities have been confounded (Sayyid, 2010) to reflect the ways in which Muslim communities are devoted to nationalist agendas, with some commentators arguing that religious cultures can result in a set of contentions between what it means to be part of a nation and how this impacts on faith loyalties (Sirin and Katsiaficas, 2010). Religious guidelines are said to subdue the need to recognise 'nation' as a constant in identity formation, however, research now suggests that Muslims are simultaneously forming social and cultural identities with a view to adopting a religious identity within them (Modood and Ahmad, 2007).

It is only recently that Scotland has been considered as a separate and distinct area of research (Hopkins, 2008) as it has previously been represented as a supplement to wider debates around Muslims in Britain. Providing an insight into the lives of Muslim women who have been either born, raised, lived and work in Scotland, the thesis re-establishes Scotland in academic discourse about Muslim identities, arguing that the Muslim communities in Scotland, although small in quantity, still perform a significant role in

everyday social and political participations, faith activisms and are worthy of much more attention in scholarly debates.

The positions of Muslim women are further examined and highlighted in view of gendered spaces of faith practice outside of the home, in particular the use of faith institutions and religious spaces is explored in Chapters Six and Seven. The study illustrates ongoing gendered segregations within hierarchical mosque structures and how these have led to a reawakening for Muslim women to attempt to combat and overcome such discriminations. Experiences of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments are still very much present and active within Scotland today and I illustrate how Muslim women are victims of such discrimination, although it is often perpetuated within wider discourse that Muslims living in Scotland are not as likely to be victims of religious racism.

The thesis lends itself to a number of academic discourses within human geography as it highlights numerous intersections between Gender, Sociology, Politics and Religious studies. I situate my study in the interdisciplinary realm of Human Geography as it allows the work to embark on a number of journeys through various other topics and subject areas such as Contemporary Religious Studies, Community Studies, Gender Studies, Race and Cultural Studies. Furthermore, the work also identifies a number of narratives which are unexplored in significant detail and I discuss these as a separate issue below.

1.2 Motivation for Research

Having worked in and around BME communities for a number of years, I completed my undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations in investigating the ways in which the migration choice of first and second generation Pakistani Muslim women have resulted in their decisions to settle in particular areas of North-East England. Similarly, my MA thesis discussed the experiences of BME communities in social and community participation with a close insight into how BME networks and organisations work to fulfil the needs of grassroots level minority ethnic groups. My passion for exploring the lives of ethnic minority groups in North East England, in particular Pakistani Muslim women, led me to apply for a studentship examining the everyday experiences of Muslim women in Scotland post September 11th 2001. The research, a collaborative project with The Scottish Government, allowed me the opportunity to fulfil my enthusiasms to showcase how Muslim communities are working hard to eliminate negative social depictions of

themselves. Having never previously worked in Scotland, I felt it was important that I highlight the ways that gendered activisms exist in communities throughout Scotland and, indeed that there is a certain level of nationalist loyalty attached to the work that Muslims in Scotland carry out. Furthermore, I understood that studies looking at the everyday lives and constructions of Muslims and Muslimness in Scotland were lacking or largely absent from those exploring Muslims in Britain, and this supplemented my personal need to identify research which looks at specific minority groups. I hope this study goes some way in presenting and representing some of the lived experiences of Muslim women throughout Scotland as they overcome everyday prejudices, inclinations to portray national allegiances and practicing their faiths in spaces of the public and the domestic.

1.3 Research questions

The objectives of the research are to study the lives of Muslim women in three areas of Scotland, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. Having designed a research plan, my aim was to answer the following questions:

- 1) How do Muslim women understand the concepts of *Hijab* and incorporate Islamic dress into their everyday lives?
- 2) How do Muslim women participate in social and civic activities in Scotland?
- 3) What are the gendered ways in which Muslim communities be identified as non-homogenous?
- 4) In what ways are religious, social and cultural identities formulated, practiced and expressed?
- 5) How do Muslim women understand and experience Islamophobia and religious racism?

1.3.1 *Methodology*

The research site, made up of three Scottish cities, was chosen as they were home to the largest Muslim communities in Scotland. Similarly, all three had very different migration and economic histories when it came to understanding the settlement of Muslim communities in those areas. The study consists of a three dimensional methods approach

of 37 semi-structured interviews, five focus groups and a number of photo-taking exercises by five of the participants. The aim of the research was to allow for a varied sample that had one distinguishing factor in common: their religion. As such, the sample size is made up of women from various ethnic, professional, educational and social backgrounds.

1.4 Limitations of research

The study covers a significant amount of empirical data and I go to many lengths to provide a profound insight into the everyday lives of my participants. There are, however, limitations to my research and I have identified these throughout the field study period, data analysis and writing up of the research. I see these less as gaps in my research and more as lessons learned from the experiences I have had and I further allude to these in the final pages of the thesis whereby I demonstrate how future contributions to research can be strengthened through a number of methodological design changes.

In the first instance, the recruitment drive of my research led to a lack of interest from Muslim women in Edinburgh. I had difficulties gaining interest from community groups and this could be a result of research fatigue as a number of the participants had already been involved in smaller-scale, undergraduate and postgraduate studies as research subjects.

I also became increasingly aware that a number of my participants were Muslim converts from a white, Scottish or European background. Had I been aware of this earlier in the research planning period, I would most certainly have sought to introduce and include a narrative specifically looking at the experiences of female Muslim converts in Scotland as I felt it warranted its very own discussion stage. Nonetheless, I feel the portrayal and analysis of their everyday lives are well represented in this thesis and I still endeavour to produce a number of worthy arguments from my time with them.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter Two provides a critical reading of feminist geographical literatures which speak to and of Muslim communities in Britain. It sets out to bridge the discourses between race, faith and nation, introducing the gendered experiences of Muslim women as an addition to current debates around Muslims and Islam in Britain.

Chapter Three sets out the contextualisation for the study. I provide details here of Muslim settlement into Scotland, the ways in which they have become a part of the economic and social landscape. The chapter also highlights how Muslim communities in Scotland have developed spaces of religious practice throughout Scotland and the rising numbers of charitable and government-funded organisations that are formed as a result of growing Muslim numbers and a wider recognition of their needs.

Chapter Four explores the methodological aspect of the study. It discusses how feminist methodologies are becoming increasingly popular within geographical research and the importance of understanding the significance of feminist methods when conducting empirical research. I establish the justification for choosing the research sites, and the methods used to conduct the research. The chapter explores the ways in which I recruited participants, the women themselves and demographic information about their backgrounds. I also discuss the experiences of being a Muslim researcher researching Muslim communities, drawing attention to the importance of being reflective and aware of power positions at every stage of the research. I use the chapter to illustrate how I was able to identify ethical issues, demonstrate ‘reciprocity’ to the participants and speak about some of my reflections about the field study.

Chapter Five introduces the first empirical chapter of the thesis. I identify the various ways in which Muslim women interpret, maintain and explore *Hijab* practice. The chapter also illustrates the complexity of discussing Islamic dress as something which is inherent to all Muslim women, as many choose to not wear the *headscarf*, instead they practice *Hijab* through a set of embodied behaviours. The empirical evidence further highlights how *Hijab* has been ‘refashioned’ to recognise global transformations in Islamic dress and the ways in which ethnic cultures are reproduced through the *headscarf*.

Chapter Six examines the experiences of social and political participation by Muslim women following significant global events which have demonised Muslim communities throughout the Western world. I use this chapter to demonstrate that Muslim women, although victims of some patriarchal religious cultures, are still attentive and aware of representations about them in news media. I argue that Muslim women are becoming

increasingly responsive to negative social depictions, striving to work with and for other Muslim women in their communities. Moreover, the participants discuss their experiences of subtle activisms in spaces of the local community and the barriers they have faced when attempting to overcome patriarchal dominance in spaces outside of the home.

Chapter Seven deconstructs the notion of homogenous Muslim communities and singular faith practices. I use the empirical data here to illustrate how some of the women converted to Islam during personal life changes and to gain a sense of wholesomeness. The participants also discuss how they feel able to practice their faith and religiosity in a devolved Scottish society, paying attention to the spaces that women occupy in a mosque setting. I set out in this chapter to argue that gendered dominations within the infrastructure and management of mosques have excluded women from participating in mosque affairs beyond the realm of prayers and practice.

Chapter Eight establishes how Muslim women in Scotland are constructing, reconstructing and experiencing gendered formations of religious and national identities. I use the photographs taken by some of the participants to illustrate how they view 'home', 'Scotland' and 'culture'. The chapter reveals important distinctions about how the participants use particular signifiers of Scottish nationalism to purport their identities as Scottish or non-Scottish. Education, healthcare, formal recognitions of nationalisms are among some of the ways the women embody their nationalist cultures and assert their Scottishness. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how some participants simultaneously embody gendered identities as mothers, daughters and display ethnic and cultural identity. These identities are established as significant to the women as they symbolize a recognition of their religious affinities.

Chapter Nine explores some of the most disturbing everyday experiences for the participants: religious racism. As a discipline of intense scrutiny and debate, anti-Muslim sentiments are perpetuated through news media, everyday interactions and subtle (and not so subtle) racisms. The discussion in this chapter deconstructs how Islamophobia is deemed a fear of Islam rather than of Muslims and that there needs to be a disassembling of the concept into one which recognises the discriminations and prejudices experienced by Muslims and racialised ethnic communities. The chapter also draws attention to the ways in which the participants are able to identify what they feel are examples of religious racisms alongside the processes of how these harassments are reported, investigated and dealt with.

Chapter Ten concludes the thesis, bringing an overall finish to the literatures and empirical data. I use this chapter to summarize and reassess the previous arguments while also shedding light on how future contributions could be delivered through a variation of methodological techniques and more specific research studies. Ultimately, this chapter revisits and reiterates particular understandings which have been analysed and explored in the empirical findings. I argue here that Muslim women understand dress through various lenses which are dependent not only on their understandings of religion and culture, but also their ongoing relationship with their personal faith identities. Indeed, they are continually adapting to a fast-changing globalised world which allows them opportunities to seek out *Hijab* fashions and *Hijab* activisms. Furthermore, providing gendered experiences of faith is vital to understanding how Muslim communities in Britain operate as separate, non-homogenous groups with a number of conflicting interests in faith institutions, access to information and experiences of Islamophobia. Barriers to community participation are more than often seated within cultural manifestations of religion which hinder the progress of women to local and national political stages. These findings are crucial to adding to ongoing debates around Muslim women's participation and are useful in challenging and improving particular social policy led by community engagement and interaction.

Chapter Two

Feminist Geographies of Muslim Women

'Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain, or recreate certain mental states in these groups. So if the categories are of religious origin, they ought to participate in this nature common to all religious facts; they should be social affairs and the product of collective thought' (Emile Durkheim, cited in Cosmon, 2001)

2.1 Introduction

This thesis locates itself within feminist frameworks which explore the interpretations of race, nation and faith. The latter exists as the newest arrival into the academic contestations of geographies of identity, place and belonging (Kong, 2001). The discussion I hope to extend throughout the thesis is that of women's experiences, women's knowledge and their interpretations of their lives in regards to social, political, faith-based and cultural changes in the scales of the global, national and local.

My understandings of feminism are that it has previously presented dialogues for and of women. These particular dialogues of women and for women have gone on to transform social and political ideologies which have enabled changes to the everyday positions of women in the private and public, the ways in which they associate meaning to particular social changes and the impact concerning these meanings. As it can be defined through a number of narratives, this chapter is less concerned with reviewing those definitions and instead looks to present detailed implications drawn from feminist accounts of faith and nation and the ways in which these accounts have previously been ignored and silenced. The evidence I present is that of women's experiences, their knowledge and their wisdom. It is with this in mind that I move forward in arguing that these experiences can be situated within feminist theoretical frameworks, placing faith and nation as the primary focus of the thesis, as a newly discovered practice within social sciences, adding to, yet not replacing, the already established theories of race and nation. By the use of various analytical tools, validation of women's experiences allow us to draw together a unique set of understandings, which are hidden in everyday dialogue. These tools of validation have earlier been employed in the 1980s and 1990s with the rise of second-wave feminist action whereby autonomous change was sought for working women, those in the public as well as changes for women working in the domestic and private (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). Since then, feminism has experienced a further shift in ideological organisation and looks to seek knowledge and historical interpretations of previous theories around modernity, colonial, structuralist and Marxist discourses (Mann and Huffman, 2005).

People experience feminism in various ways and Skeggs (2001) argues that the label of 'femininity' can be assigned to a number of actions, practices and embodiments whilst also creating separations and asserting a set of subjective experiences. She further highlights that cultural feminist theory has failed to identify these subjective experiences with a view to understanding women's perspectives from women themselves (1997). In her book '*Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable*' she highlights how women are aware of their social and political positions, and that their sense of place is often overlooked in academic discussion. Feminism further identifies the workings of race, faith and culture within these dialogues and feminists argue that previous equality programmes sidelined the issue of race and indeed sexism, although these are now recognised as individualised forms of autonomy and validity (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Anthias and Yuval-Davis have spoken of the relationship between feminism and

class, arguing that ‘gender and race, unlike class, relate to a particular representation of a biological, physiognomic or national difference’ (1992: 112). Viewing *class* as more than a set of organisational reproductions, Skeggs (1997) highlights how it is difficult to define what we may mean by *class* and criticises cultural feminist theory for ignoring class as a constant in discourses of femininity as it neglects to understand that the relationships between *class* and *gender* may not immediately be recognised.

Here, taking ‘faith’ as the constant, I argue that rather than acting as a non-biological form of identity (in this sense, it shares similarities to class), it is not only creating a position within the social, faith is a sacred embodiment and goes further than ‘class’ in many different ways. People of faith or those who are members of a faith community, society or collective are separate in their everyday lived experiences as they follow some or most practices associated with that faith. Faith is a learned practice, one which is not labelled through monetary or physical value or assigned by a set of social principles or understandings, yet a diligent endeavour to carry on the customs, traditions and norms of a faith, a set of directives and guidelines under which a member of that faith should live their life. Arguably, class also bears a resemblance to this non-physiological form of identity, however, I further argue that a faith identity subsumes within it a sense of hierarchical structure through cultural norms and values. It has been argued many times over that religious cultures have often overpowered religious doctrine, in particular, religious cultures of non-western origin (Gilliat-Ray, 2010), and that many faith communities, although living within some religious guidelines, are often perpetuating ethnic cultures which are derived from various contextual interpretations of religious texts (See Tarlo, 2010 and her work on fashioning Islamic dress) Of course, these divisions within faith groups are as observable as diversities are within ethnic minority groups and I use Chapter Seven to further highlight the separations between Muslim communities in Scotland. Furthermore, the thesis outlines the deconstructions of hegemonic faith cultures and the importance of recognising how ethnic, social, political and economic differences exist within faith communities. It also identifies the bridge between faith, gender and nation, arguing that Muslim women in Scotland have become a crucial part of the landscape through their mediation of the public and domestic, civic duties and performance of faith in the everyday.

2.2 Bridging discourses of Faith and Race

Borrowing from Butler's argument of 'cultural intelligibility' (cited in Lloyd, 2007), normative frameworks exist as a method of establishing justifiable academic discourse. She argues that 'race' and 'culture' in academic discourse are produced as a result of recognised shifting intersections and deconstructions of 'race' and 'cultural' conditions. Rather than see them as essentialist categorisations, we must work to discover contestations within 'race' and 'culture', and adding 'faith' as a further narrative which has been normatively produced. Previously recognised as a unitary category, women from minority backgrounds have been neglected and unseen, therefore denying them a crucial opportunity to voice their experiences and knowledge (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue that extremist religious movements have hindered the progress of women through controlling their bodies, whether it is through dress and veiling in Islam or authoritarian interpretation of religious doctrine (1992; Werbner, 2007) as part of other faith movements. More recently established ethnic minority communities, those of faith and ethnically recognised backgrounds, have been identified as important to secular debate and wider public discussions. To add, however, although there is a rise in debate, racial and religious racism has not subsided as growing diversities are being recognised within contemporary Britain alongside growing tensions as to the role race and faith may play within public and social policy (Bhattacharya, 1999). This is further investigated in Chapter 9 as I uncover understandings of religious racism by Muslim women in Scotland, their experiences and opinions surrounding the use of *Islamophobia* as a term to address the growing social resistance against Muslim by groups and individuals who harbour racist ideologies and look to misrepresenting and stigmatise racial and religious difference.

'The representation of 'racial' difference and identity is one of the most controversial areas of contemporary cultural and political life' (Bonnett, 1993: 13). The study of racism and racist ideologies has become a priority for social geographies in Britain, and indeed across the world. The constant reworking of racist frameworks over the last 30 years is but a case in point of the changing attitude towards racial studies. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) argued that 'racism is not a fixed, static ideology, but it is contradictory and constantly undergoing transformation' (1982: 9-11). These transformations include the shifting attention from Jews and the Irish during the 19th Century as minority populations (Bonnett, 1993) to a distinct religio-ethnic stigmatizing

of Muslims in the West. Arguing that the precise ambiguities of racism cannot be calculated, Miles and Brown (2004) find that racisms, although rooted in ‘historical and social change’ (2004: 62), are susceptible to conditions within the political environment at a particular point in time. The stigmatization attached to Jews and Irish during the 19th Century came in the form of migration movement fears, threats to indigenous populations and their rights to protect their cultural, social and economic landscapes. The same fears, yet in an altered political time came soon after World War Two with the increasing influx of migrations from previously colonised places to Great Britain and this made the most recent impact in racial studies, inviting debates of diversity and multiculturalisms (Bonnett, 1993). The markers of difference, at the time were increasingly manoeuvred by ethnic association as minorities from South Asian and Caribbean backgrounds began to create their home spaces within the UK (Shaw, 1988; Bonnett, 1993; Vertovec, 1999). Furthermore, the shift in characterizations of immigrants has led to further transformations of the socio economic backgrounds of Muslims. Although this is further discussed in Chapter Three with relation to Muslims in Scotland, Sophie Gilliat-Ray (2010) provides an outstanding summary of the migration histories of Muslims in Britain in her book *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction*. Using much Census and survey data, alongside academic records, she presents a detailed understanding of the movements by Muslims from across the world to Great Britain and indeed the shift in their social, economic and religious characterizations. She argues that reform movements across the world have enabled Muslims to not only advocate their allegiances to their faith but also do so as an act of contemplating their divisiveness from other Muslim faiths. For instance, reforms in the Middle East, she recognises, are more politically based, separating out the Sunni and Shia practices, whereas the South Asian reform movements came as a way of characterising the separation of liberal versus conservative political parties (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). In addition, she argues that Sunni Muslims in Britain far outnumber their Shia counterparts as they are as estimated to be around 320,000. Nonetheless, they are a significant part of the Muslim population in Britain and with reference to those living in Scotland, I further articulate the distinct practices and experiences of both South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims living in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee in the empirical chapters of this thesis, highlighting the separations and indeed the disconnections between the groups.

Esposito (2010) argues that while we consider the many images and interpretations of the Muslim faith, we must remember that they are indeed multiple and diverse. The mass

migration of Muslims across the globe is an indication of their vastness of nationalities, ethnicities, cultures and languages. As Esposito (2010) highlights, there are some 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide and the majority of these have origins in Asia and Africa, although the Arab world is considerably large. Nonetheless, there are large Muslim communities living in other parts of the world, namely London, Paris, Rome and Berlin in Europe and New York and Washington D.C. in America. Naturally, this is the reason much research in Britain has focused upon Muslim communities in England, however, there is increasing evidence to suggest that the dispersal of Muslims in Britain is on the rise and in this thesis I provide further information about the movements of Muslims to Scotland in Chapter Three. I discuss their social, political and economic activities and how they have become embedded within everyday Scottish life.

2.3 Speaking ‘for’ ‘Race’

When speaking of ‘ethnicity’ or of ‘race’, Peach (2002) insists that we must be careful in the use of these terms as they are continuously in danger of essentialising the debate of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’. Likewise, the discourses around ‘religion’ can lead to similar risks in essentialising Muslim communities and the practices of Islam. While I am aware I use them considerably throughout the thesis, I am also conscious that I regularly attempt to deconstruct and separate the terms as much as possible. Bhattacharya further (1999) argues that in order for us to speak of ‘race’ and ‘culture’, it is essential that we have experienced it and have been subjects of ‘race’ and ‘culture’. Specifically, she adds that academics speaking of ‘race’ and ‘culture’ must give opportunity to those who have been rejected and whose voice has previously been unheard. For Bhattacharya, the notion of ‘see, it happened to me’ plays a role in her understandings of race from an academic perspective, which she argues non-racialised people cannot access as their anecdotal accounts are ‘self-contained narratives’ (Bhattacharya, 1999: 461). She further contends that examinations of race and those writing about ‘race’ must be meticulously scrutinised to find if they have experienced the ‘see, it happened to me’ validated accounts. ‘People who are not racialised themselves can only listen to those who are’ (Bhattacharya, 1999: 461).

I find such an argument to be misplaced within the geographies of faith as a number of geographers writing on ‘race’, ‘faith’ and ‘culture’ are, perhaps by their own definition,

not within the same racialised, faith or cultured backgrounds as those they speak for, yet their understandings of race, faith and culture have been by far some of the most interesting as they view ‘race’, ‘faith’ and ‘culture’ through a specialised lens. Although I believe that Bhattacharya’s claims of subjective experiences plays a large role in presenting academic discourse, I disagree that those experiences must be a result of having lived the racial or cultural experiences. Race and culture are experienced by everyone, in various forms, everyday. The notion of subjective experiences is dependent upon the meanings we draw from social interactions, whether we *see* ‘race’ and ‘culture’ or understand that we are indeed experiencing ‘see, it happened to me’ through a number of forms. Furthermore, Nayak (2011) projects how ‘race’ and ‘culture’ are embedded within the politics of the state and security, and as such are also emotionally experienced through ‘gestures, fleeting glances and strained silences’ (2011: 554). Arguably, we ‘experience’ something that we label as ‘race’ or ‘culture’, yet are reinforcing the social structures which support the process of ‘othering’ through marking our differences, creating emotive reactions to that which we feel is foreign and strange. There also exists the argument that the search for authenticity within ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ research must designate much of its time to those of low socio-economic backgrounds (Reynolds, 2002) as it is those communities who possess genuine knowledge of their lives. In addition, Harding (1993) argues that particular versions of standpoint ethnocentrism should be rejected on the basis of privileging academics who argue for an epistemological standpoint and instead we should focus on a central point to extend our research and offer opportunities for other marginalised voices to be heard. In accessing women’s knowledge, the thesis understands the critical practices involved in the creation of that knowledge and how it now works to contextualise women’s understandings of the world around them and their production of that world. I argue that there is a growing interest among Muslim women in Scotland to advocate for their social, political, economic, religious and domestic rights as a result of global, national and local manifestations and events and this is evident as I move further into the empirical chapters.

2.4 Muslim Geographies

The renewed interest of geographies of religion has prompted an additional variable into research looking at immigrant histories, politics, international affairs and local level conflicts. Kong (2010) identifies how religious geographies, in particular, those relating

to Muslims, have been given a new stage upon which we locate global shifts and the impact they are having. She argues that the reinvigoration of books and journals analysing religious communities comes as a ‘forced’ result of international events as she maintains that ‘our geographical imaginations and religious sensitivities have been radically reshaped and resharpened, even our human sensibilities have been assaulted’ (2010: 755). The growing interconnectedness of the world compels us to remain informed of how events elsewhere in the globe impact our everyday living (Jackson, 2008). Moreover, Armstrong contends that “what happens in Gaza or Afghanistan today is likely to have repercussions tomorrow in London or Washington D.C.” (Foreword in Esposito, 2010: x), therefore we can no longer fail to consider global shifts and developments in the Muslim world. Kong further insists that new research locating geographies of religion have been completed with much comprehension that they have invited academics to situate new disciplines and approaches to researching religion: comparing and contrasting ‘sites’ of religion and religious worship; a context approach to religion which focuses upon historical and everyday interactions; the relationship between mobility and religion; and research looking at religious populations have all been uncovered as emerging disciplines and the geography of religion has become more recognized. The study of spaces of religious worships, for example, indicate they are increasingly multi and fluid, mosques have become sites of research, not least for their depth in analysing religious practice yet also as a way of recognising local level politics and the regurgitation of ‘the other’ by residents opposing the building of Muslim places of worship (Gale, 2005). Furthermore, the identity construction of young Muslims in Britain has been at the forefront of much academic debate with writers such as Dwyer (1998), Hopkins (2004) and Archer (2001) deconstructing hegemonic discourse which view young Muslim men are controlling and young Muslim women as dominated. A growing set of racialisations are addressed in wider theoretical and empirical literature on belonging, cohesion and assimilation with relation to young Muslims in England and Scotland (Kong, 2010), recognising faith as an additional variable.

By way of creating intersections between age and religion, Falah and Nagal (2005) introduce a unique set of writings which illustrate the relationships between gender and religion in their book *Geographies of Muslim Women: Gender, religion and space*. Several observations are made about issues affecting Muslim women including the body and dress, segregation and assimilation and the objectification of Muslim women (Nagel, 2005). Nagel argues that the experiences of Muslim women are no less than other

women's experiences and that they are manifested in 'subordination and opportunity, mobility and immobility, security and insecurity' (Nagel, 2005: 4). Furthermore, they are entangled in a recognition of how space and place play a large role in these experiences and it is because of this that geographers are increasingly highlighting religious geographies as a new discipline. Nagel also argues that Muslim women have been accorded an unjust amount of interest post September 11th 2001, highlighting 'there are few social categories today that generate as much interest, attention and scrutiny as that of "Muslim women"' (2005: 5) and that the book dangerously risks validating the attention, lessening the impact of Muslim women's knowledge while simultaneously etching out in detail what she describes as the 'Muslim woman category', a set of readings which problematises the underrepresentation of Muslim women's experiences. The volume of readings, which is broken up into three parts, includes writings on (i) Gender, development and religion; (ii) Geographies of mobility and (iii) Discourse, representation and contestation of space. As such, they set out to evidence how gender is managed or mismanaged in Islam, and contribute not only to wider discussions around the relationship between gender and faith but also creating new sets of understandings by highlighting the challenges faced by Muslim women in education and employment, politics and the domestic sphere alongside their representations in news media.

Hopkins' paper on feminist geographies draws attention to the ways in which masculine identities are constructed and the everyday experiences of gender (Hopkins, 2009). Using research data from young Muslim men in Scotland, he argues that they 'withdraw to the private spaces of the home after September 11th 2001 as a result of the hostility and lack of comfort associated with negotiating the street on an everyday basis' (Hopkins, 2009: 4, See also Hopkins and Smith, 2008). He asserts that young Muslim men use various locations to manage their identities and carry out their faith practice. For example, the home is used as a space of concession, away from the hostility of the streets whereas the mosque was recognised as a social site and carried emotional attachment (Hopkins, 2009). Focusing upon emotional geographies, Hopkins' work contributes to the ongoing discussions surrounding the use of sites and location for religious worship and the role they play in creating emotional attachment. Other recent work on geographies of religion and in particular those looking at Islamic geographies or geographies of Muslims have explored migration on transnational levels (Silvey, 2005) and the representations of women in the media (Falah, 2005; Zine, 2006). Alongside this, Gale's (2004) and Dunn's (2005) work on the politicisation of mosque planning and building in Birmingham, UK

and Sydney, Australia respectively, seek to underscore the ways that geographies of religion must be considered in spatial contexts in order for intersections between faith and geographical discourse to succeed and move forward. Nonetheless, much of the debate surrounding feminist geographies of religion focuses upon Islam and Muslims, therefore, leading us to contemplate how other world religions play a role in the constructions of the everyday (Hopkins, 2009). Although this thesis does not provide a lens with which to uncover the personal interactions of those outside of the Muslim faith, it does endeavour to contribute to wider discussions surrounding the place of religion in geography and Britain today.

As a discipline, the significance of research given to Muslim communities comes not only as a result of a number of global and national interventions and events, but also due to previous discussion surrounding the role Islam plays in national and local level politics and the everyday. Portrayed as an essentialised system which promotes global unity, Dietrich (2011) argues that the principles of Islam transcend social, political, historical and economic boundaries. Nonetheless, contemporary stereotyping of Islam shows a deep-seated culture of separation, coupling Islamic traditions with those of aggressive, patriarchal dominance and characterised as a religion tainted with terrorism and global threats (Miles and Brown, 2004).

Everyday religiosity can be hindered or furthered through experiences of religion in the private and public, access to faith institutions and practicing faith in the community. Nationalist variations and localised characterisations, also socially constructed (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995; Anderson, 1983), are (re)constructed to provide innovative experiences that speak for and of Muslim women in Scotland. In Chapter Six, I discuss the notion of ‘responsibility’ that Muslims have been unfairly given as a result of global and national terrorist activities. A perceived recognition that Muslim communities must stand and speak out against such activities have reinforced the unawareness of de-homogenised Muslim collectivities against a backdrop of questioning whether the social and media demonising is deserved to those who do show no reaction to events over which they have no control (Hopkins and Gale, 2009). Ehrkamp (2007) advances this argument showing that structures of discord and dissonance exist under macro-level homogenised practices. These discords are a result of interpretations of Islam based on meanings created in a particular historical and context-specific time (Ehrkamp, 2007).

Being heavily scrutinised, Muslim communities are constantly brought under examination vis-à-vis multicultural politics and the place of faith within the social system (Dietrich, 2011). A real concern is the feasibility of discussing Muslims in Britain without paying regards to national events in both England and Scotland and other global occurrences. The divergence between the two nation states is better understood in the next chapter which contextualises the research in Scotland, however, it must be noted that the absence of research about Scotland's Muslim communities is a consequence of the smaller numbers of Muslims living there, compared to England, not an outcome of the lack of Muslims in Scotland (Hopkins, 2009). Furthermore, the work of Scottish Muslims are beginning to emerge, and this is not to say that these happenings are the results of recent struggles yet they are ongoing projects to help identify growing ambitions of young Scottish Muslims and Scottish Muslim women.

2.5 Muslims in the West

The relationship that Islam shares with Britain is long and boundless, stemming across centuries of history, global movement and the transportation of culture and people. A number of studies have uncovered the history between Islam and Britain (Ansari, 2002, 2004; Gilliat-Ray, 2010), arguing that the distinctiveness of Islam in Britain came after the First and Second World War with large numbers of immigrants from Muslim countries moving to Great Britain to fulfil labour demands and promises made to governments of Muslim states in exchange for recruiting soldiers (Anwar, 1979). Many Muslims, with a range of different ethnic backgrounds settled in port areas of Cardiff, Liverpool, South Shields and London. Ansari (2004) further contends that the majority of immigrants were in some way connected to the British Empire and their operations in colonial countries. In addition, Ansari (2004) argues that there were no distinct trends in the migration movements of Muslims to Britain, this may be one of the reasons why much of the literature pertaining to racisms and discriminatory experiences of Muslims living in the West has been ignored up until this point. Similarly, a shift in research and knowledge around ethnicity represented a growing awareness of faith in everyday life (Peach, 2002). Describing religion as the 'new key to unravelling ethnic identity' (Peach, 2002: 255), it has become a new and exciting concept within social geography which has energised new ideas and thoughts of identity, everyday experiences and mobilities.

Moreover, Hussain and Bagguley (2012) argue that the identities of ethnic minorities in Britain have increasingly been deluged in cultural and national articulations and that it is only within the last decade that nationalisms, faiths and ethnic cultures are being considered in debates about identity construction. Being able to contemplate social positions and empowering decisions around identity formation, religion began to be seen as a determiner in shaping the everyday (Dwyer and Shah, 2009). It has been noted that the culture within which particular forms of Islam exist have been considered separate and, therefore dangerous (Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992). *The Clash of Civilisations* by prominent Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington has become a much contested and controversial text in which Huntington argues that there has been a resurgence of Islamic practices in Western countries which have surpassed and exercised authority over hegemonic Western values (Huntington, 1996). Academics have commentated on the aggressive tone Huntington employs in his writing with Edward Said challenging Huntington's argument, calling it 'vague' and Huntington a 'clumsy writer and inelegant thinker' (Said, 2001). Furthermore, Huntington's approach to analysing Islamic practice is indeed analysed in a singular form. His writing often makes reference to a solitary form of Islam, which may be practiced by many but by no means all. The book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* has gone on to influence a number of academics and politicians to consider a wider dialogue of faith and to exhibit Islam much more as a faith of multiple dimensions. Nevertheless, the emergence of growing considerations of Islam in Europe has created further social and political conflicts over the accommodation of religious practices and symbols in spaces of the public. The practices associated with Islam positioned it as different from Western norms and as a result, less attention was paid to understanding the hegemonic principles of a Muslim faith and Islamic communities were previously essentialised as different from the norm yet homogenous in their own respective practices, understandings and traditions. It is now possible however to speak of Muslim communities less as polarised communities, but as multiple in their cultural understanding and plural in their faith practices (Knott, 1992; Smith, 2004).

Creating debates around citizenship and belonging, these policies were not limited to ethnic but also faith politics and the notion of multi-faith dichotomies being made possible within a multicultural political environment. Certainly the formation of the Muslim Council of Britain became a profound step for progress in multicultural politics, although their suspension as representatives from the British Government after allegations

regarding a senior member of the self-made group were made represents a growing awareness of the need to understand the varied cultures within a Muslim faith. Moreover, the growing number of Muslim organisations and associations representing the needs of Muslims in the UK symbolizes two things: firstly, increasing numbers of Muslims participating in everyday social and political life in Britain and secondly, a necessity to provide Muslims with opportunities to engage. Using micro-level processes, it is possible to see the ways in which multiculturalism endeavours to consider scale in its projections of identity politics (Samad, 1997; Modood, 2005) Furthermore, it is argued that these politics are submerged in the public and private, the local and national and the religious and cultural (Modood, 2005).

Studies concerning Muslims in Britain cover a number of facets from their private and domestic understandings of faith, the practicing of that faith in spaces of the private, patriarchal forms of faith traditions and how they are (re)performed (Siraj, 2010) and accounts of masculinity in Muslim households and communities (Archer, 2001, 2003; Hopkins, 2006, 2007, 2009). Much research pertaining to Muslims in Great Britain has focused upon communities in England, neglecting an exploration into the ways in which Muslim communities in Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland are continually constructing and reconstructing their faith identities and practices. Nonetheless, Hussain's (2008) work on providing a quantitative analysis of Muslim trends in Britain goes some way to fulfilling the gap in research for Muslims in Wales. On the other hand, her work, the first to quantify a thorough analysis of Muslims in Britain does not offer a full critique for Muslims in Scotland, it does however make reference to the Scottish Census a number of times, arguing that the nature of the question on religion in the Scottish Census was asked in terms of 'belonging' as opposed to questioning the autonomous response and allowing people to profess their religion as a state of fact (Hussain, 2008). Her work contemplates the use of particular language in the Census and the impact this may have had upon the answers. The work highlights a number of inconsistencies with research concerning Muslim communities in Scotland. Firstly, quantitative delineations although extremely useful in understanding the geospatial makeup of Muslim communities throughout Scotland, cannot make up for the intricacy involved in understanding these communities at a micro-level comparison. Secondly, because of the nature of Hussain's work, Scotland's Muslims are often discussed as an aid to a larger discussion as opposed to being presented as a further area of study. This raises interesting debates and serious

issues around the ways in which research concerning Muslims in Scotland is most likely considered as an addition to other research or as a smaller, less eventful area of study.

The literature researching Muslims in Britain is vast and here I take my research forward by looking at three distinct sections: gender, faith and the nation; contemporary understandings of Muslim dress and practicing the sacred. Together, these form the basis of much of the thesis which looks to problematise the considerations of Muslim women in Scotland, their social and political positions and their everyday understandings of faith and faith practice.

2.6 Gender, faith and the nation

“A theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state... should not separate the power holders from the rest... and therefore state and culture must now be linked” (Gellner, 1983: 1, 36)

This particular quote by Gellner ultimately unearths the recognition that in order to understand the ‘state’, we must contemplate the ways in which ‘culture’ plays a role in the creation of state and nation. Yuval-Davis argues that researching the relationships between gender and nation is a further outcome of identifying the hegemonic discourses which exist among the marginalised in society (Yuval-Davis, 1997). She further dictates that a surrendering of women’s feminine identity has been demanded in order to place their ethnic and national ideologies within a wider political discourse (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). Furthermore, the work of black feminist Patricia Hill Collins (2000) sees us witnessing what she terms ‘black feminist epistemology’ or ‘alternative epistemology’, the growing possibility of understanding experiences beyond ourselves, those that create intersections between two dominant discourses, in this case, race and gender. She understands that these alternative epistemologies are an outcome of subjective experiences, those which are lived rather than objective thought and it is the production and presentation of data that must be carefully handled as to not upset the narrative being put forward, as it holds the lived experiences of their teller. She argues that the intersections of race and gender create a space in which women understand their experiences as a result of wider sensibilities to the world around them. For example, she argues that black women are attuned to challenges they face in the everyday, alongside

the responses they may have to those challenges, recognising that they ‘may be victimised by racism, misogyny and poverty’ (Collins, 2000: 26) because they are women and because they are black. Using this ‘alternative epistemology’, my work with Muslim women similarly finds that they are not only conscious of barriers they may face as a direct result of their gender, faith and ethnicity, but they also actively build their responses to social situations knowing they be already be victims of social stereotyping.

In her work with Moroccan women, Mernissi (1987) argue that feminist liberation movements were ‘an expression and by-product of Arab-Muslim nationalism’ (1987: 13). Her study focused on the experiences of spatial boundaries, sexual practices and everyday experiences, interviewing over 100 women and analysing 420 letters sent to a Moroccan counselling service which was televised regularly on Moroccan television. She found that a result of women changing traditional gendered boundaries, they occupied ‘traditional male spaces’ which led to an intense debate regarding the role of women outside of the home, and in the workplace. This ‘encroaching’ on male dominated space, she argues, was different to many feminist liberation movements across Europe and America, as they were occupied with rejecting particular representations of the female body, specifically, pornographic, whereas in Morocco, women were more concerned with claiming their bodies as their own, to occupy whatever social spaces they wish, and to do without repudiation (Mernissi, 1987). Amina Wadud, a prominent professor of Islamic Studies, speaks about her personal experiences of intersecting gender, faith and space in her book ‘Inside the Gender Jihad: Women’s Reform in Islam’. On a visit to South Africa Wadud was invited to hold a *khutbah* (religious sermon) which was negatively received across the world, less because of her position as a woman, although she recognises that had she been a male uttering the same words, she may not have received as much attention, and more because of the content of the sermon. Largely arguing that women must be offered equal rights to occupying and embodying space as men, she also identified that there is little Qur’anic justification for the expulsion of women with some mosque spaces and within leadership roles. Moreover, she highlights that ‘the cultural and historical precedent of exclusive male leadership in the role of religious ritual is not required’ (Wadud, 2006: 169). Essentially, she points out that gender segregation cannot be justified through Islamic knowledge, nor is there any evidence of such recommendations being made. This segregation, she argues, reinforces wider patriarchal practices which extend beyond the remit of the mosque space, and into domestic, political spaces, as Mernissi’s (1987) work has earlier reflected.

It is the growing consciousness of Muslim women as a response to global challenges and events that sees them becoming more visible in everyday social, public and political spaces. Muslim women are not only using their faith in retaliation to national and international events, but their role as women within that faith alongside growing aspirations to continue to participate in state and local-level politics. I use Chapters Six and Seven to further discuss how Muslim women are stepping up to confront stereotypes, defy social stigma while also mediating their multitude of identities which transcend beyond faith and gender.

A growing political presence and autonomous social movements have led to an encouragement for women to debate national and international policies. Previous literatures concerning the ‘national production or reproduction’ of women have neglected to seek out the role of women in multicultural discourse (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 1, see also Balibar, 1990; Chatterjee, 1990), however there exist a growing number of exceptions to this rule as contemporary academic discussions write to the advantage of anti-racist feminist movements across the world (McCabe, 2005; Srivastava, 2005; Staggenborg and Taylor, 2005). It is with the increasing numbers of women in politics today that they have previously been unrecognised within discourse surrounding government affairs also, which indicates an overall lack of acknowledgment given to the projects women have previously accomplished. Coupled with the increased rise of female presence in affairs of state comes a demand for a recognition of the achievements of women overall in social, political and economic matters.

The place of faith and race within national agendas is an emerging relationship and it has been argued that a nation cannot exist without an active dialogue discussing the politics of ethnicity and race (Jenkins, 2008). Young people in Britain are continually asserting national identities in line with their ethnic backgrounds which show that the structures of nationalism are continually shifting and are fluid (Llobera, 1994, Jenkins, 2008). The importance placed upon spatial tools of analysis allows us to appreciate the distinct ways in which race and nation are played out at the macro and micro level (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). Organisational concepts of community relating to those of minority backgrounds have followed a different path than those who have lived in majority community cultures as they attempt to construct and reconstruct themselves as a ‘natural’ community with ‘natural’ boundaries and ‘natural’ collectivities. The organic-ness of such notions overlooks the changing relationships between and within ethnic minority and faith communities and do not question whether the constructions of community are still

appropriate in a multicultural environment (Bhabha, 1990; Yuval-Davis, 1991; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). These constructions of community have also neglected to research the relationships between ‘gender’ and ‘concepts of community’ (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that there is a great need to look at the role of feminist agendas in ‘cultural constructions of social identities and collectivities as well as in most cultural conflicts and contestations’ (1997: 39). Since her writing, there have been numerous academic literatures which have deconstructed the ‘natural’ boundaries under which communities are created, taking particular aspects of community and community interaction, breaking down the myths and socially fabricated imaginations of what a community should be (Anderson, 1983).

I argue in Chapter 6 of this thesis that women are indeed contributing and have done so for many years to a now devolved Scottish economy and continue to contribute to the future of Scottish society and economy. In doing so, their productions and reproductions of nationalist civic participation, national identity and citizenship show a broader understanding of the various ways in which women ‘perform’ community and ‘perform’ nationalisms. The fact that I term this ‘subtle civic participation’ in no uncertain terms indicates that the outcomes of those contributions are also subtle however, indeed they offer Muslim women the opportunities desperately needed to step into a white, middle class, male-dominated political space and to transform the lives and futures of Muslim women in Scotland. With a shifting ideological feminism being placed upon political and social policy, the positions previously assigned to men are changing also. Women’s experiences are no longer secondary interpretations nor are they easily dismissed, as they have formerly been disregarded (Yuval-Davis, 1997). I argue that these newly acquired positions held by some Muslim women in Scotland over-determine and underrepresent the yet excluded and silenced voices of women in the private sphere. Traditional roles attached to women’s positions in the private often dictate their lack of autonomous practice in the public, therefore leaving many unheard and subjective experiences. The argument that women are ‘carriers of tradition’ still exists within many ethnic and faith communities, however I contend that the shifting roles from the private to public are bringing to light openings for women to delve into local and national politics. Since its devolution, Scottish politics demands a separate autonomy, which I find is located at the community level with awareness campaigns targeted at local communities, women and marginalised groups. Constructed as a particular signifier of difference, faith has widened the separations between cohesive and homogenised communities (Rex, 1996). Markers of

difference not only fail to penetrate the discourse of multi-faith and multicultural dialogue, but also extend beyond the remit of the social, and into the political, denying opportunities and creating polarised communities (Modood, 2009).

2.7 Contemporary understandings of Muslim dress

The delicate processes involved in creating, maintaining and changing identities show that they are organically fluid and flexible (Hall, 1999; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). With the inclusion of faith and community, the mobility of such identities becomes further problematic (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) and diverse as struggles over acceptance and belonging are brought forth. Political, social, cultural and religious subjectivities lead to the shaping and reshaping of identities as they are also infinite therefore the difficulty is writing not of identity, yet of capturing a particular set of contexts which can be better understood as the shaping factors of identity formation. For young people in particular, the question of belonging is closely tied to the importance they put upon place and religion. Dwyer and Shah (2009) argue that negotiations between parents and children play a large role in their performance of identity through the level of independence they are given. In this thesis I argue that women that are the victims of social and cultural reprisals are becoming more attentive to the opportunities in which they can assert particular identities, using their respective religious and cultural norms to further their engagement with national and social issues. Using the *Hijab* as a means of practice and a tool of analysis, I argue that disparities exist between writers in regards to their experience and interpretation of the *Hijab*. On one hand, some argue that the *Hijab* is the ultimate form of empowerment for women, using particular interpretations of the holy texts alongside empirical data from field research (Dwyer, 1999; Franks, 2000; Tarlo, 2009) whereas other perspectives highlight particular patriarchal histories behind the wearing and practice of the *Hijab* (See Ahmed, 1992). Mernissi (1987) argues that physiological demands are placed upon women through *Hijab* practice and as a result, their progress outside collectivities and development in the public sphere is tragically thwarted. She further highlights that the *Hijab*, rooted in specific cultural frameworks which have been situated in historical contexts, represents a religious, cultural and social rationalization for the dominance of women's bodies and therefore, their thoughts, knowledge and ambitions (Mernissi, 1987).

More recent discussions have centred on the *Hijab* and *veil*, viewing them under the lens of post-colonial discourses in light of global events and nationalist agendas. It is no longer possible to debate the meanings of Islamic culture without referring to the events of September 11th 2001 or July 7th 2005, nor it is worthwhile to ignore the impact those events have had upon Muslim communities in Britain. There still exists a dearth of literature pertaining to the everyday experiences of Muslim women living in isolated communities. Previous research has given attention to masculine perspectives of the *Hijab* (Jonker, 2003), whereas it is only recently and in the last decade that significant effort has been given to write about the understandings of women and from a feminist perspective. The absence of research looking at situational, nationalist and context driven perspectives of Muslim women in relation to *Hijab* practice is overlooked by the current contributions Muslim women are making in social, political and economic engagements (Bullock and Jafri, 2001; Ho, 2007; Hussain, 2008; Tarlo, 2010) and the changing nature of empowering spaces for Muslim women. Dwyer (1999) argues that dress is an overstated signifier for Muslim women, and furthermore, she emphasizes how contestations of dress fail to determine social and cultural identity performances.

Norms and values deriving from cultural or ethnic practices are not undetermined, meaning they are not fixed, nor are they non-representative, rather they are maintained and supported through fundamental customs which require significant constructions and reconstructions of those values in a distinct set of circumstances (Friedman, 1994). The social reproductions of values are inherent in the ways in which we behave, interact and experience the world around and outside of us. The interactions and motivations of faith present a different paradigm with which our tools of analysis require a much deeper understanding, a consideration of sacred, spiritual and constructions of holiness in everyday behaviour. In this thesis, I illustrate the ways Muslim women in Scotland 'act' and 'behave' faith through the embodiment of *Hijab* as an everyday practice (See Chapter Five). The varied interpretations of the *headscarf* and *veil*, the most physically visible signifiers for Muslim women, highlight how women experience *Hijab* practice differently depending on their understanding of modesty and faith practice (Lane, 1984). Where some women argue that the female body must be fully covered from head to toe, others are more liberal in their approach, arguing that *Hijab* should be regarded as a set of behavioural practices (Mernissi, 1987). Mernissi argues for a three-dimensional approach to the *Hijab*; visual, spatial and ethical (Mernissi, 1987). Although I argue that the role of *Hijab* for the women involved in the study is an empowering one, the behaviours

attributed to *Hijab* practice are still located within an embodiment of a set of discursive behavioural practices. Women are expected to behave ‘properly’, dress in appropriate clothing and respect the boundaries which have been created for them by the community in which they live (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Grave consequences are often sought for women who neglect to adhere to cultural norms and to those who may tarnish the social reputations of their families (Modood et al, 1994).

With much of her work located within cultural studies, a number of Yuval-Davis’ arguments have been reconstructed here to represent the specific ways in which religious culture signifies a symbolic responsibility for women to carry out their faith within the realm of a religious doctrine interpreted and practiced many hundreds of years ago. However, some women have since been successful in transforming Islam to manage their contemporary expectations without sacrificing the sacred relationship they share with their faith (Tarlo, 2010).

Other academics have argued that the *Hijab* could be further understood as a social practice of appreciation and in particular, the dressing of the *Hijab* becomes a positive encounter with the public space (Jonker, 2003). Jonker further highlights that women are acutely aware of how the *Hijab* may be received, arguing that it represents more than a symbolic identification with faith and, instead a signifier of individual culture and ethnic customs. It is in this respect that the *Hijab* becomes a form of accountability for its wearer. Killian (2003) goes on to argue that an unjust set of duties are placed upon women to represent their cultural and ethnic heritage and negative impacts of which are overlooked. Moreover, techniques of observation are reinforcing a sense of modest behaviour for Muslim women, challenging their personal autonomy and as such decisions are made regarding their performance of faith based on a number of moral principles entrenched in cultural norms (Afshar, 1994).

2.8 Practicing the sacred

I argue that the constructions of faith allegiance for Muslim women in Scotland are not only very closely allied with cultural, ethnic and values of heritage, but also are socially fabricated as evidence suggests divisions between faith communities who share a similar religious doctrine but bear varied interpretations to that doctrine based upon country of origin, cultural interpretations and the use of that interpretation in upbringing and social

collectivities. The levels of religiosity possessed by Muslim women are often thought to be higher than those of non-Muslim faith communities in Great Britain. Specially, the physical practice of faith is more evident as a result of bodily signifiers and identifying factors. For this reason, it is further argued, that nationalist values are not perceived as inherent in Muslim women, therefore there is a failure to see their ways of embracing national and civic norms (Hussain, 2008).

The domesticities of faith, that is, the internal processes and challenges, possess a set of resources which have been primarily understood from a male perspective or have been gender blind to the interactions between male and female experiences (Hassan, 1993). Symbolic collective responsibility and a lack of agency for women led to a huge gap in research which is only now, after much deliberation, being filled by writers across a number of social disciplines such as Moghadam's (1994) work looking at women and nationalisms, Afshar (1994, 1998), Afshar and Barrientos (1999), and Werbner's (1999) work with Pakistani Muslim communities in Manchester, Ahmed's (2001) studies of Muslim and South Asian women in the education and employment sector in Britain alongside more recent studies by Siraj (2011, 2012) which underpin Muslim women's identities in Scotland, their feminisms and demarcations of religiosity. The position of women in religious cultures has previously been associated with sacredness and sanctified behaviour, however the emergence in academic discourse of scale and power of scale finds that women have experienced faith under a distinct set of paradigms. Debates over equality for Muslim women have been constituted within a faith practice or set of faith ideologies, rather than imposing a spectrum of religious, social, cultural and scale power relations upon those equalities (Hassan, 1993). Hassan argues that we must look to the role of Islamic verse in assessing the rationalization for the prejudices experienced by women, adding:

‘Considering the fact that there are hundreds of publications—books, articles, brochures, etc.—on the subject of women in Islam, virtually all of them by Muslim men, it is rather strange that there is not a single publication on the subject of the position or status or role of men in Islam. Perhaps this means that men have no position or status or role in Islam!’
(Hassan, 1996: 56).

Although there is considerable evidence to suggest Hassan is correct to assert that there does exist an over use of doctrine relating to women and their roles in Islam, dictated by men, I also argue that the interpretations of Islam coupled with a nationalist agenda display varied and subjective experiences which cannot alone be dictated by religious text. We must also look to encompassing ethnic culture, everyday subjectivities and experiences of faith and nation in understanding the lives of Muslim women throughout Scotland and Britain today.

2.9 Concluding remarks

Bondi and Davidson (2003) highlight that through a binding of theory and practice, feminism is ultimately applied through processes of power. The imagination of the thinker is called into question regularly as we habitually place people into categories which have been socially and culturally constructed. These unchallenged assumptions have led to serious consequences about the work of feminist geography in identifying and eradicating gendered forms of compliance. Therefore Bondi and Davidson (2003) argue that a denaturalising of gender has since discovered particular groups in society which are unrepresented, ignored and stereotyped. The recognition of faith groups has been borne out of a wider understanding that cultural and spatial practices are inherently linked to power and gendered processes. The earlier marginalisation of women in human geography (McDowell, 1993) is now further represented by the growing numbers of social scientists studying Muslim communities and indeed Muslim women across the world which I argue cannot be understood without a profound appreciation of historical processes (Massey, 1994) and the influence of the time-dimension, contextualised events and significant occasions. The late arrival and recognition of gender and faith into the realms of social sciences has resulted in a major gap in research which is now identified. I argue here that a new wave of feminism which views faith subjectivities alongside the interactions of ethnic and racial cultures makes innovative nuances to understanding the reality of the current positions of Muslim women.

It is critical to note the shifting paradigms within feminist research with much regard to the increasing religiosity among women of particular faith backgrounds. On one hand, they are the symbolic bearers of tradition, carrying forward the norms and values intrinsically taught to them through religious doctrine, cultural behaviours and domestic practices and, on the other, they are carriers of national values, representatives of the local

and of the state. Therein lies a problematic assumption that because some women have chosen and been given the correct opportunities to seek out social, political and economic autonomy, that they are signifying an end to oppressive and discriminatory practices (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). As a result of global events, national agendas and local interactions, social and political changes are becoming more resonant with personal experiences. Collectivities, identities, subjectivities are just some of the attributions I take forward in this thesis and I look to presenting a set of unique, personalised and context-specific experiences and forms of knowledge which are located within a religious, social, cultural and national framework to allow a look into the worlds of women, their everyday interactions, their knowledge base and their understandings of religious application in a site boasting multi-ethnic and cultural-religious contestations.

Chapter Three

Muslims in Scotland: A Historical and Demographic Overview

3.1 Introduction

National archive statistics suggest that in 2001 there were approximately 1.5 million Muslims living in England and around 40,000 living in Scotland. This does not currently account for fluctuations within immigration however other estimations state that the Muslim population in the UK is around 2 million (Hewer, 2001: 516). In addition, the majority of Muslims in the UK originate from South Asian backgrounds, however, the increasing levels of migration from Middle East also gives rise to the number of Muslims from other parts of the world.

In England, a large majority of South Asian Muslims have often been born out of working-class poor backgrounds; migrating to the UK with a hope to secure employment, dwellings and remittances (Abedin and Sardar, 1995). Anwar (1995) argues that in England, London, Oldham, Birmingham, Blackburn and Bradford became main settling areas for migrants in the post-war period. These particular regions still observe high numbers of settlers from South Asian backgrounds, mainly Pakistani. In Wales, Cardiff and Swansea became the main inhabited areas and within Scotland, the textile in Glasgow

industry saw a sharp rise of foreign workers (Hewer, 2001). Although similar to England and much of the UK, those settling within Scotland were filling the enormous labour shortages left after the Second World War, which involved working unsocial hours with little pay, they also gained employment within other sectors such as those partially-skilled and were able to work their way up the employment ladder (Bailey et al, 1995). Nonetheless, migration from the Indian subcontinent was not the first to impact Scotland. Irish migration dating as far back as the 1800s became known as a crucial period in migration (Miles and Dunlop, 1987). Following in these footsteps and bearing in mind that settlers were predominantly South Asian, Scotland found itself populated by a number of Pakistani families. In 1991, there were almost 22,000 Pakistanis living in Scotland (Bailey et al, 1995) and, although this is relatively small compared to the rest of the population, this climbed to around 30,000 by 2001 (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2008) with the overall number of Muslims estimated at around 42,000.

Scotland is home to Muslims originating from parts of Jullundur and Ludhiana which, post 1947, had became part of the Indian state. Following the partition in 1947 between India and Pakistan migrants were travelling from Pakistani regions such as Lyallpur and settling in parts of Scotland. The 1947 separation of the two states closely links together Muslims in Scotland as first generation, whether pre-war or post-war, have a connection to the event (Bailey et al, 1995: 36). Although Muslim by faith, their original ethnic background could be Indian or Pakistani, however many from India may identify comfortably with Pakistan as this was, at the time of the partition, regarded as the Muslim homeland. Further readings concerning the histories and migrations of Pakistanis and of Muslims in Britain are provided by Anwar (1979), Abedin and Sardar (1995), Ansari (2004), and Gilliat-Ray (2010).

Aside from the earlier mentioned modes of migration, the Scottish shipping industry allowed Muslims from the Indian subcontinent to travel and sometimes stay between visits. These workers on their travel visits gained the advantage of being able to stay longer, creating regular dwellings and later, when labour was required, settling down in areas within Glasgow, where much of the shipping trade was based (Bailey et al, 1995).

Many, unlike those in England, were able to move into diverse trades as opposed to settling in the unskilled or semi-skilled sectors. Opportunities arose in catering and retail and these became popular industries which saw many migrants able to secure their finances enabling them to focus on their social and political participation. I use Chapter

Six to discuss the ways in which Muslim women are becoming proactive in social and political participation. The move from trade to trade allowed Muslims in Scotland to not only develop their skills and networks, but also gave way to their introduction to professional sectors, which in turn led to an improvement in economic and social positions. The education sector experienced increased numbers of South Asian and Muslim students engaging with intense curricular studies such as medicine and engineering. This again added to the already growing professional representation of Muslims.

Of the 42,600 Muslims in Scotland, 75% are Pakistani (Marranci, 2007). They are the largest ethnic minority group within Scotland and those associating Islam as their religion are amongst the second largest religious group in Scotland and the UK. Albeit, they still account for less than 1% of the overall Scottish population (Marranci, 2007) which is one of the reasons they are increasingly becoming an interest group for academia and social politics. Their on-going connection to Scotland allows them to identify with, engage with and access the intricacies of being ‘Scottish Muslims’. The relationship shared by Muslims in Scotland to their nation is one which involves social and political participation with other non-Muslim groups. Nevertheless, it would be evidently wrong to assume that all relationships are homogenous and anti-racist and indeed the difference that Scotland enjoys stems from its experiences of migration which has, as Hopkins argues, “resulted in distinct contrasts in socio-economic backgrounds of ethnic minorities in Britain” (Hopkins, 2008: 117).

3.2 Muslims and the economy in Scotland

As this study specifically focuses on three distinct areas of Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, I take some time here to discuss some of the histories of each place to provide a clearer context of the Muslims working and living there.

3.2.1 Glasgow

Although all three follow separate trajectories in terms of migration, population densities etc, Glasgow has higher levels of all ethnic and religious minorities, not just Muslims.

Residential clustering, similar to areas in England (Bradford, Manchester, West Midlands etc) exists in certain parts of Glasgow (See Kearsley and Srivastava, 1974 and Hopkins, 2008). It is currently home to at least 16,000 Pakistani Muslims (Mir, 2007). A closer look at Glasgow would find that on the Southside and inner city, Pollokshields has a high number of Pakistani Muslims and while residential clustering within Pollokshields is visible, the overall thought in academic geography draws attention to Pollokshields as a solitary entity, home to several Muslim identities and ideologies. In 2001 it was reported that at least 42% of Scotland's Muslim community resided in Glasgow, which is unsurprising considering its history with international commerce and its large shipping ports which experienced high numbers of settlers from lascar and maritime workers (Scottish Government, 2005, 2011). The Scottish Census provides the largest set of population data concerning Muslims in Scotland, although there are still many gaps in research, in particular in areas of low Muslim residence. Boasting the largest Muslim population, a number of migrants from South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and more recent movement from refugees in the Middle East and Eastern Europe sees a considerable change in the demographic of the city of Glasgow. According to Pacione (2005) Muslims and those of South Asian background migrated to inner city areas of the Gorbals, Pollokshields and Govanhill. Named the 'transition zone (Pacione, 2005: 143), reasons for the high numbers of migrants in these areas include easy access to transportation, employment and inexpensive accommodation. The Gorbals represented the port of entry for a large number of South Asian migrants during the 1950-1960s. These areas are still heavily populated by Muslims of South Asian descent; however, there has been recent evidence of suburbanisation (Mir, 2007). This is furthered by the change in employment patterns for Muslims from manual labour and ship building to self-owned businesses and the clothing trade (Aldrich and Ward, 1990).

Studies assessing Pakistani and Muslim communities are increasing, although Kearsley and Srivastava's work (1974) has provided a quantifiable basis for much contemporary work. The study used a quantitative approach to map Pakistani and Indian settlements in Glasgow and found three central neighbourhoods inhabited by South Asian families; Woodlands, Pollokshields and Govanhill. While their study provides a good level of informed geographical knowledge, their work lacks clear characterizations in terms of employment or economic activity, nor does it seek to validate ideas in human geography around identity, inclusions and exclusions, participations and nationalist values. The study carried out by Bowes et al (1990) notes the increase in Indian and Pakistani peoples

within Glasgow from 12,000 (1974) to around 17,300. Although these communities were still clustered around the same neighbourhoods as those previously asserted by Kearsley and Srivastava (1974), the neighbourhoods themselves were “becoming more suburbanised” after increased levels of housing from the private sector (Bowes et al, 1990, See also Mir, 2007)

Pacione (2005) reports that the largest numbers of Muslims reside currently in Woodlands and Pollokshields East where they represent over 5% of the resident population, followed by Pollokshields North (10%). Furthermore, Pacione argues that there has been a 210% increase of the Pakistani South Asian population during 1981-1991, however, data regarding their religious background is unavailable, and therefore calculating the residential Muslim population during this time is difficult.

3.2.2 Edinburgh

According to 2001 national statistics, 16% of Scotland’s Muslim population reside in Edinburgh. Wardak (2008) argues that a large number of these are migrants from parts of South Asian, namely Pakistan, who travelled for reasons of employment and study during the 1960s and 1970s. Wardak’s work follows closely the faith practice patterns of Muslims in Edinburgh, although his work provides little in terms of demographic information, therefore making the Scottish Census one of the most heavily used articles in retrieving data regarding religious groups in Scotland.

The SEMRU (Scottish Ethnic Minorities Research Unit) study of Pakistani communities in Edinburgh explored the lives of Pakistani communities, estimating them at 4,000 in 1987. According to the report many lived in council housing and were employed in the retail and catering industries. Similar to a number of other migrants at the time, they were able to seek opportunities into more professional and white-collar trades with improved skills and access. Although limited due to the nature of its data collection methods, the SEMRU report provided a benchmark for further studies to be carried out as research in this subject area was lacking enormously (Bailey et al, 1995). Bailey et al (1995) note that there was an increase of economic activity within Asian communities with the rise of businesses in Scotland owned and run by South Asian peoples, concurring with Hopkins (2008) later paper whereby he argues that the Asian migrant population are of an advanced level of socio-economic level than may have originally been thought. The even

distribution of Pakistani people in Scotland adds to the increasing levels of social and economic activity.

The SEMRU study (1987) carried out in Edinburgh found a dispersed Pakistani community from the areas of Leith to Wester Hailes. At the time the study argued that many of the Pakistanis residing in the area of Wester Hailes were doing so predominantly within council accommodation. The project also studied the distinguishing features within employment for Pakistanis in Edinburgh, concluding that many worked within the retail trade and a few in white collar industries. Unfortunately much of the data used in the SEMRU study was based on Census data from 1981 which was later deemed inappropriate as it neglected to consider ethnicity and focused more upon country of birth to counteract this.

3.2.3 Dundee

Marranci argues that up to “45% of the non-Christian population” in Scotland is Muslim (2007: 133). Considering the majority of this non-Christian group also belong to a South Asian, mainly Pakistani, background, there have been a number of attempts to analyse these communities in terms of their employment and housing patterns. Jones and Davenport (1972) completed a piece of research which studied the Pakistani community in Dundee. They estimated the population numbers in the area at around 500-600 which accounts for under 0.4% of the overall Dundee population. At the time, this small number of settlers had been attracted by Dundee’s Jute trade, which although has now ceased, flourished for many years. With the Jute trade being a major industry in some South Asian countries, being able to utilize already acquired skills must have seemed a solid basis for Pakistani workers in Dundee. Many of them had arrived from regions in Punjab to follow on their Jute work in Scotland (Bailey et al, 1995: 37).

According to Munoz (2008), Pakistanis living and working in Dundee experience higher levels of segregation than those living in Glasgow, and in particular more than other minority ethnic groups residing in the same areas. These increasing degrees of experienced segregation may be a result of the clustering of the Pakistani population in Dundee who largely live in just three postcode areas of Dundee alongside the earlier settlement patterns of Jute workers in and around Dundee (Munoz, 2008). Moreover, Findlay and Garrick (1990) argue that during the 1980s, Scotland was the second most

significant settlement areas for migrants after London, although migration patterns and aspirations were increasingly situated under different economic circumstances.

To reiterate, around 42% of Scotland's Muslim population reside in Glasgow, 16% in Edinburgh and 7% in Dundee. Between them, these three areas are home to the majority Scottish Muslim groups. The distinctions offered by Scotland in terms of its Muslim population differs significantly from those in England, taking into account areas of settlement, socio-economic make ups, a changing way in which Scotland is opening up to its Muslim communities and, in turn, their acceptance, confidence and aspiration to further their religious and political orientations.

In terms of their economic development, Muslims in Scotland have slowly improved their advancement to housing. Similar to their counterparts in England, South Asian Muslims began by living in poor quality accommodation which was often based around inner city areas, enabling them easy access to work (Jones and Davenport, 1972). Muslim households were often bigger, leading to problems of overcrowding within inner city areas. This has been closely picked up by the Scottish Census, estimating that Muslim households are overcrowded by 33%, making these the most occupied houses amongst all religious groups in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2005). Work set out by the Scottish Office in 1983 had underestimated the numbers of Pakistanis in Edinburgh significantly at 2,100 and, unlike SEMRU's study, felt this group owner occupied accommodation rather than living in council owned residencies (Scottish Office, 1983). It not only became crucial but necessary that SEMRU's project had been carried out as it allowed geographers to assess the socio-economic characteristics of Pakistanis more confidently. Jones and Davenport (1972), Kearsley and Srivastava (1974) and the SEMRU (1983) study provided essential data on South Asian communities living in Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Economic, social and cultural make-ups of Muslim groups are experiencing vast change within a move to suburban neighbourhoods in towns and cities. Bailey et al (1995), however, argue this may not be a result of greater aspirations but rather a refusal to occupy council or rented accommodations as a result of discrimination. There is a relatively balanced number of Muslims who live in unshared houses and flats, respectively 53% and 47% (Scottish Government, 2005: Table 2.1). This information, taken from the Census 2001, however neglects to highlight what proportion of this accommodation is owned or rented which presents further difficulties in analysing those living in rented accommodation, reasons why and whether further ambitions are likely to change in regards to it.

Although there seems to be a growing professional community in Scotland, Muslims still face the difficult task of vastly improving their educational levels. At least 39% of Muslims between the ages of 16-74 are believed to have no qualifications, although Muslim student numbers are increasing as are the numbers for those in full-time education. This aspiration by Muslims in Scotland leads us to consider other economic concerns, in particular housing and neighbourhood segregation and how correlations may be made between housing structures and education and employment.

The Scottish Census (2001) also uncovered other important details surrounding Muslim communities, for example it highlighted that 45% of Muslim women have never worked, whereas for their male counterparts, this is significantly decreased at 17%. This much smaller proportion could be a direct result of Muslims being likely to be self-employed (29%), with a high number of these being male, going back to an earlier point made concerning the high numbers of South Asian small business owners. Other figures show that from the Muslims who are in employment, 25% of those work in managerial positions and at least 10% in the unskilled sector. This adds to the growing ambitions of Muslims in Scotland to increase their level of economic activity. Breaking this down further, only 4% of Muslim women have achieved higher managerial positions whereas this figure is significantly higher for men at 10%. Relating this back to the issues faced by Muslim women, especially those from South Asian background, this can be further explained by cultural, discriminatory and religious complexities at work, adding to the pressures already faced by Muslim women in the home environment through a patriarchal religious culture, these difficulties can disable opportunities for women in the workplace.

A number of academics argue the contribution made by the Muslim society is not only significant yet will continue to expand with the growing number of young Muslims together with an aspiration to increase the numbers of Muslims working in areas of social policy and government (Anwar, 1995).

Reports by the Scottish Government (2005) would suggest that only half the Muslim population in Scotland are economically active or seeking employment. The Scottish Government argues this high number is a result of Muslim women being unemployed or not seeking work (2005). 67% of Muslim men are employed or working whilst this number is significantly reduced for women at 35%. This inconsistency exists amongst other religious groups too including Sikhs and Hindus, which may be better explained through cultural practices and migratory experiences rather than religious affinity. The

intricate relationship, however, between religion, race and cultures begins to uncover some of the understandings we may have previously overlooked in these groups. Although the statistics reveal worrying levels of economic inactivity among Muslim and South Asian groups in Scotland, they continue to be better accomplished than their English counterparts (Hopkins, 2008). In England, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis form the majority which are unemployed within ethnic minority groups at 43%. The low rates of employment for Muslims in Scotland can also be interpreted in other ways, racial and religious discriminations – the levels of employment for non-Muslim Caucasians is significantly higher with those with an affinity to the Church of Scotland becoming more likely to be in employment at 72% and Roman Catholics at 65%. This sharp distinction drives us to consider other dialogues in play. Anthias and Yuval-Davis study the impact of Muslim societies on the non-Muslim world, arguing “Muslims face racial discrimination” (1992:3) as they exist within distinct cultures, not all of which can be easily manipulated into Western application, therefore, limiting their use of culture and religion. This, in turn, leads to the lower levels of unemployment existing amongst Scottish Muslims whose aspiration it is to embed their religious and cultural identities with Scottish nationalism.

3.3 Scotland and Islam

Scotland’s relationship with Islam stems back many centuries and among his works, Bashir Maan writes about the journey of Islam and Muslims into Scotland in his book *The Thistle and the Crescent* (2008). It is currently the second largest religion in Scotland, boasting at least 35 official mosques and places of worship (Muslim Directory, 2011, see Appendix 1). Although this does not account for the numbers of unofficial and informal places of worship as private home spaces are often used as communal spaces of faith practice. The first official mosque was created in Glasgow in 1944 and 18 years later the city of Edinburgh followed suit and established a mosque in a house in Laurieston Place (Maan, 2008). Soon after this Aberdeen and Motherwell found opportunities to provide their Muslim communities with mosque places towards the end of the 1970s. Maan argues that towards the beginning of 2000, Muslims had become more settled in Scotland gaining economic prosperity and social stability. He asserts that at least a dozen Scottish Muslims had been named in the businessmen millionaires list, a large majority of these likely the sons of migrant workers who travelled to Scotland in the late 1930s to 1960s.

Moreover, Maan pays close attention to how they had to overcome ‘the abuse of racists, the humiliation of slammed doors, the mockery and banter of children in the streets’ (2008: 211). Here, I refer to Chapter Nine whereby I use empirical data to evidence how Muslims in Scotland are still very much the victims of such harassment.

Mahmood argues “the challenges faced by Muslims in the West are in a sense different in nature and magnitude (1995: ix). He goes on to consider how Muslims living in the West are faced with overarching Western cultures and modes of ‘modernization’ which have little time or manoeuvrability for Islam and its customs. On the other hand, one could argue that the West and its influence have a positive effect on Muslims as they are bound closer to their faith, being able to distinguish between religious practice and cultural (Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002). By doing so, Muslims are assured they are following the proper religious paths by separating cultural ideologies. I argue, however, that to do this, they must also begin to breakdown their ethnic and native traditions, which for first generation Muslims in Britain, is a much harder task. These Muslims bind together their cultural and religious identities, and the values which are associated with them, to defend themselves from Western influences. Furthering these thoughts, I argue that not only are Muslims in the West afraid of losing their religious culture, the West carries its own fears of Islamic influence and reacts to protect its majority and their non-Islamic values. For instance, the banning of the Hijaab in French schools in 2004 and in England, the dismissal of a female Muslim teaching assistant for refusal to unveil her veil in 2006. Nevertheless, there is on-going political debate behind these issues which Anthias and Yuval-Davis argue stems from the “fear of diversity and pluralism” (1992: 10), the very value the West seems so committed to advance.

Being South Asian, Muslim and living in the UK carries all sorts of difficulties and discriminations. Cultural, religious and racial prejudices aimed at Muslims further the on-going difficulties experienced in schools, employment and within social and political spheres. In Scotland, it is the combination of the three (cultural, religious and racial) which highlights the process of ‘racialization’ (Dwyer, 1999). The idea that a person can become racialized if they express certain values, or exhibit particular physical attributes which coincide with an ethnic (or now, religious) category. Muslims in Scotland experience a different kind of racialization than that experienced by Hindus or Sikhs (Hopkins, 2007a) due to the nature of their religious position in politics and social spheres. Unless Asians can be visibly categorised as being non-Muslim, they are given a label whether they are Hindu, Sikh or non-religious. The reconstruction of the ‘Asian’

person has developed into the ‘Muslim’ (Brah, 1996) and Hopkins further notes that by addressing the global politics which have affected Scottish Muslims, we can begin to explain their experiences of Scotland as a home, nation and a community (2004).

With 98% of Pakistanis in Scotland belonging to the Islamic faith, this racialization is only set to continue with 31% of these under the age of 16 (Marranci, 2007). Hussain and Miller argue as much as 49% of native-born Scottish are Islamophobic, although this number is much less than native-born English people (2006). I use Chapter Nine to further illustrate how Hussain and Miller’s work can be used to help uncover some of the anti-religious racisms currently at work in Scotland.

Scottishness can be defined through a number of different factors including “place of birth, ancestry, residency, education, accent, upbringing, dress and physical appearance” (2007: 134). The difficulty faced by Muslims wanting to become closer to Scotland is how to define their Scottishness through these characterizations as well as remaining loyal to Islam and its cultures. Marranci points out that 67% of Muslims are Pakistani and 28% are Bangladeshi (2007). Each carries similar yet separate cultures and principles yet are both susceptible to racializations. In discussing politics and Muslims, the thesis will outline significant events, political parties and ways in which Scottish Muslims come to be defined as Scottish.

3.4 Global and national events

The Rushdie affair in the late 1980s not only gained huge media attention and public debate but also led to an increased demonization of Muslims across the world, particularly Europe and the UK. Alexander (1998) describes it as an “impetus for renewed public debates around immigration, integration and citizenship” (1998: 440). Linked inextricably to the notion of racialization, Muslims in the UK began to undergo fierce media attention portraying very negative labels as tormenters and fanatics. John Patten, for *The Times* (1989) quotes, “the issue of race relations has been thrown into sharp relief and all of us have had to think deeply about what it means to be British and particularly what it means to be a British Muslim” (Solomos 1993: 224).

Out of the Rushdie affair political parties, aspiring to become the voice of British Muslims, were born - the Islamic Party of Britain and the Muslim Parliament of Great

Britain. Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins illustrate ways in which both parties wished to constitute the British Muslim and develop ideologies based around this (2002: 294). Although separately founded, the Islamic Party of Britain began in 1989, expanding rapidly from the events surrounding Salman Rushdie, gaining most support. The Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, founded in 1992, looked at representing the political values of Muslims in Britain and abroad. Both parties wanted engagement, politically and socially, from Muslim communities and non-Muslim communities in Britain. For them it would mean a created and sustained homogenous group and although the concept seems attractive, the parties did not accrue quite as much interest as they had hoped.

In Scotland, Hussain and Miller (2006) argue, three main events occurred which hugely affected the Muslims living in Scotland. The New York Terror attacks, the Iraq war and the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. Global catastrophes soon became national with 7/7 and the attack on Glasgow airport in June of 2007. Muslim people around the UK, recovering still from the Rushdie affair, were faced yet with more confrontations while the world re-thought Islam, its cultures and traditions, together with the disastrous effects fundamentalists were having upon Western civilisations (Bulmer and Solomos, 2008).

The experiences of Muslims in England were similar to some of those in Scotland yet on a much larger scale, evidently as a result of the larger numbers of Muslims living there. Central to this was the SNP (Scottish National Party) whose anti-war policy was much stronger than that of other political groups (Hussain and Miller, 2006). As a political party they strived to promote a type of Scottishness which could be better described as 'inclusive' and by doing so garnered much support from the Muslim communities through such projects as 'Asians for Independence' and 'OneScotland' (Hopkins, 2008). This type of inclusion has not only helped to bind Muslims in Scotland, it has enabled them to engage politically and socially. Through global and national events such as September 11th 2001, the Iraq war, 7th July and an attempted terror attack in Glasgow, Scottish Muslims are ever more determined to closely hold together their cultural, religious and national identities. It is these very identities which have become central to much recent academic research into the lives of Muslims in Scotland and worldwide. As they possess not only the qualities of a religious group but those of different ethnic groups, their identity becomes that of a complex nature (Bhachu, 1985).

Following on from many debates in geography around identity, McCrone and Bechhofer (2008) stress the power this identity can have upon one's acceptance into society. They

take from Jenkins (1996), arguing social identity is “an understanding of who we are and who other people are” (2008: 1245). Therefore it is not only one’s perception of oneself but also the notion that others can become a part of the identification process. Moreover, they argue that ways national identity is constructed through a number of processes, all of which may not be applied successfully to South Asians and Muslims in Scotland. Many Scottish Muslims may be able to associate with accent as a signifier of Scottishness yet not with ancestry or residence, unless native-born converts or Scottish-born Muslims. “Accent makes a significant difference” in ones application to identify themselves as Scottish (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2008: 1255), as does birth, residency and race. McCrone and Bechhofer propose that national identity is one which is often taken for granted and not actively assessed by those who feel enabled to identify themselves as Scottish, English or British (2008: 1247). For Muslims, however, identity is a concept which is continuously debated, contemplated and reconfirmed. These identities can be and are affected by certain events such as terrorism, social and political uproars and the consequent media attention. Such events can lead to the reproduction and reconfirmation of identity, therefore, it is unlikely that one can relate to a single identity and remain loyal to this. Instead, I argue that Muslims in Scotland are constantly faced with the difficulty of having to re-establish their social identity, not only to themselves, but also to those around them. Taking this further, I argue that due to the nature of cultural and political discourses within the Islamic religion and ways in which Islam draws Muslims close to their faith, those living in Scotland with an affiliation to Islam, are identifying themselves as Muslims, not only as a social identity to draw them closer to Muslim identities, but also as a political response to the increasing negative media attention given to them. I give further credit to these ideas in Chapters Six and Eight. As they are continuously reminded of the hostility they face, Muslims are fused further to their religious identity which, in turn, leads to reconfirmation of other identities – in this case, ethnic and national.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) explore the boundaries which enable the changing nature of social identities, including political and cultural (1992: 5). To assess this further, I use Brunt’s (1989 – taken from Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins 2002) argument that the term ‘identity’ can be further associated with two thoughts; the first, what is the identity being portrayed and second, what represents this identity (1989: 152) in terms of its markers or images? In addition this, Hopkins’ theory of ‘signifiers’ is one which already illustrates the markers for Muslims in Scotland e.g. dress, physical appearance and skin colour.

Drawing this further, Muslims can also be associated with political and cultural ideologies which impact identities they portray and experience (2004).

In a survey carried out by Islamic Awareness Week (Hopkins, 2004), 84% of the participants felt that non-Muslims were more likely to be suspicious of Muslim communities since the attacks on September 11th 2001. Increased media attention has produced moral panics around Asian communities, focussing upon previously insignificant racial, religious or cultural differences, sensationalising mediocre debates (Alexander, 1998). Rooted within these panics are on-going racisms which, as a result of global and national events and sensational media, have become politically, publically and economically grounded. As discussed earlier however, the difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK lies in the techniques in which they have created to deal with these up-coming racisms and the ways in which Muslims have taken to these, furthering the links to Scotland and Scottishness. Elsewhere in the UK, namely London, there had been a 600% rise in reported racial and religious hatred crimes after September 11th 2001 whereas Scotland as a whole only report a 20% increase (Hussain and Miller, 2006: 33). Although this may demonstrate that Islamophobia and associated racisms are considerably lower than those in England, it does not indicate a lesser extremity of the discriminations.

The growing Muslim population living in Scotland is often undebated and somewhat forgotten within academic research. Miles and Dunlop (1987) argue that any studies specifically looking at Britain naturally includes Scotland without giving proper definitions to its complexities and separate ideologies. Particular studies (See Jones and Davenport, 1973; Hussain and Miller, 2006; Hopkins, 2004) have provided a good foundation to begin to unearth some of the nuances that exist among the Muslim communities in Scotland. Recent events and media attention have brought to the foreground the difficulties faced by Muslims generally, the reception they receive and the uniqueness that is Scotland. This does not justify the dearth which exists in this area of research pre-1960s. The absence of such research has been costly, although the increasing interest over the last 30 years has recovered some of what has been lost.

3.5 Conclusion

As Bhachu argues “there is virtually nowhere in the world in which a pure nation state exists” (1985: 21) and Britain is certainly no exception. Its increasing multicultural community continuously alters political and social thought. For Muslims in Britain, their participation within the political and social has changed ways in which their children are taught in schools, the discriminations they may face at work and the essence of community solidarity.

Much work has been completed on the lives of Muslims in Britain (Anwar, 1995; Shaw, 1988; Werbner, 1990; Brah, 1996; Modood et al, 1997 and so on) yet much of the work neglects to capture the distinct nature of Muslims in Scotland. Perhaps as a result of its smaller Muslim population, previous academics have somewhat ignored the importance of Islam in Scotland and the racisms which exist there (Jackson, 1987: 98). Assessing these racisms, Hopkins demonstrates how they differ from those in England and experienced by previous Muslim settlers as the Islamic presence is growing and becoming more evident in the West (Hopkins, 2004).

The various migration and settlement histories of the three areas of study: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee highlight that Muslim experiences are indeed diverse and non-homogenous. Economic migration to Scotland has occurred in different in different cities and Maan (2008) argues that Scotland’s relationship with Islam and Muslims stems back much further than earlier anticipated, making research into Muslim communities in Scotland more critical. With the recent rise in media concerning Muslims around the world, including those involved in illegal activities, the research is timely and appropriate to explore the everyday experiences of how Muslim women are affected by social, political and cultural change throughout Scotland. The higher concentration of Muslims in Glasgow also made it easier to access Muslim communities through increasing numbers of community and grass-roots driven groups. It is also notable that growing numbers of Muslims are currently living outside of the research areas and, although they are not the focus of the study, it is apparent that some of these movements are the result of suburbanisation when speaking to the participants involved in the study.

The different histories of migration and economic activity in each of the field study areas mean that participants have different experiences regarding identity, culture, Scottishness and belonging, which is further explored throughout the thesis and as mentioned earlier,

race is a marker which can establish how ‘Scottish’ one can be. The racialization of the ‘the Muslim’ from ‘the Asian’ has had major effects on most South Asians, especially those who are non-Muslim. Although less salience may be given to racisms which exist in Scotland as opposed to those existing in England, it is essential to recognise ways in which these racisms are created, exercised and the effect they have.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical foundations which have facilitated the methodological approach within the research study. I use qualitative methods in the study to bring together women's views and experiences. It is here that epistemological and ontological understandings are brought forth, together with a more contemporary consideration of the production of knowledge which draws upon everyday experiences of Muslim women. The chapter is separated into a number of sections, firstly, seeking to consider the groundwork for a feminist approach to research, which has been furthered explored in the literature review. Secondly, the chapter provides an outline of the participants involved in the research and a detailed understanding of their background. Thirdly, I discuss data collection before and after recruitment, highlighting the significance of researcher reflections and understandings of the ways in which positionality can affect the research process. Finally, the chapter elaborates on the mechanics involved in data analysis and validity of research data before exploring the

observations made by participants and myself during the research process and life after the fieldwork experience before offering concluding remarks.

4.2 Situating feminist methodologies

Grounding the empirical focus is vital to all projects of research as it provides the necessary frameworks from which the research is born, nurtured and considered. Here, the research follows a feminist methodology which is situated in feminist theories around ethnicity and anti-racism. Rose (1993) argues that a geographical lens in the absence of feminism is one which is male-dominated, white, middle class and heterosexual. Michèle Le Doeuff takes this criticism further, arguing that the masculinist nature of the subject not only ignored the importance of feminist thought but is still domineering in its ignorance of feminist knowledge as it “forgets about women’s existence and concerns itself only with the position of the man” (Le Doeuff, 1991: 42). Ultimately, feminist geography argues for a rigorous approach to research which not only includes but simultaneously seeks to practice feminism in theory and application, and that prior to the intervention of feminist theory, understanding and method must be criticised and evaluated in its gendered form and exclusionary practices. Such knowledge is vital in order to develop an understanding into how gender exists and is used within everyday life, particularly when considering public and private spaces. Furthermore, Hopkins (2009) highlights how “gender is understood as a social construction organised around biological sex” (2009: 3), arguing that social constructions have essentialised gendered forms in particular socio-spatial contexts and locations.

In writing about feminism in the politicisation of gendered spaces, conditions and places, McDowell (1993) argues that such politics unite feminists as there exists a general consensus within feminist epistemologies that all women vary in their experiences of social reality, however it is these variations which combined create a shared understanding of the states under which women live.

4.3 Understanding feminist methodologies of Muslim women in Scotland

The epistemological foundations of the feminist influences in humanist science do not look for universal truths but seek out a set of observations that can be made about human behaviour through methodological approaches which rework feminist frameworks within their research methods to draw out socially constructed meanings around gender, space and place. *Standpoint theory*, emerging alongside socialist feminism, seeks to ground feminist theory. Dyck (1997) evaluates standpoint theory as a method of engaging with women's worlds, that which carries an understanding of socio-spatial contexts in women's lives. This theory has often been criticised for the reproduction of women as subjects as well as essentialising concepts in feminism through overt confidence in its methods (See Hennessy, 1998 and Dyck, 1997). *Poststructuralism* is described by Al-Hindi as identifying "multiple axis of differences among women and even contradictory positions along such axis within the same person" (1997: 148). This particular group of feminists are specifically interested in the interrelations between identity and gender and the vital nature of understanding gender as part of one's identity, alongside the plurality of others e.g. wife, mother, worker, friend etc.

It is crucial to understand socio-spatial frameworks within which geography works and continually reconstructs, coming up with new and innovative ways to research social phenomena. As a result of this need, this thesis hopes to add to feminist frameworks in a way that can bring about an informed, valid and considered understandings of the paths of female subordination with society, linking these closely to the contexts in which they take place and large scale structures which continue to exclude women (Al-Hindi, 1997) through interactions in the local and national while also considering global manifestations, cultural and political impacts upon Muslim women in Scotland.

4.4 Placing feminism and religion

The study of religion in feminist geography has gained a large amount of popularity in the past decade. Academics such as Dwyer (2000), Woodhead (2000) and Hopkins (2009) amongst others have been successful in drawing out the distinct characterisation of religion in producing and reproducing gendered divisions, experiences and values. Hopkins' (2009) work on *emotional geographies* draws out the value of using feminist

methodologies to investigate and obtain profound understandings of the methods whereby religion shapes the lives of men and women, their social experiences and ‘emotional journeys’ (2009: 10). The importance of gender within the religious confines has been previously neglected, not only within geographical thought but a number of the social science disciplines (Woodhead, 2007). The premise of this study then, is to further seek out the understanding of everyday interactions of faith by Muslims in Scotland, in particular those interactions which are subjugated by over-arching debates around faith, race and belonging.

Investigating the everyday lives of women as opposed to essentialising the role that women have played in hegemonic cultures is another practice encouraged by feminist geography. It is the construction of gendered ways, identities and nuances which geographers work to place in social contexts. By studying the everyday lives of women, one can then begin to understand the different structures, situations and powers which shape the thoughts and experiences as women understand them and form narratives around them. As equally important is the work of historical feminists and historical geographers who are able to take the experiences into further investigation, contemplate their historical contexts and how these contexts have evolved given the global and social changes in history (Domosh, 1997).

There have been specific interests within more recent feminist literature surrounding the relationships between the local and global and studying the ways in which global changes (globalisation, migration, political changes and economic recessions etc) have affected the way women situate themselves in socio-spatial circumstances, employing various identities, dialogues and altering their everyday practices to appreciate such change. Nast (1994) recognises that it is also the communication of these understandings to other feminists through local and global networks in the academy. To clarify, she lists a number of these including: Women in Geography study group of the IBG; Geographical Perspectives on Women Speciality Group; Canadian Women and Geography study group of CAG (Nast, 1994). A further emphasis upon the methods of investigation has also taken place, particularly a larger awareness on participatory research which empowers participants, allowing them to effect change in the research process and the importance of reflexivity at every step of the research (Nast, 1994: 56). This is further discussed in this chapter as the participants were asked to collect visual evidence of places and feelings of belonging which they felt ultimately embodied their experiences of self, nationalism and

faith. The chapter now turns to the mechanics of research, recruitment methods and introducing the participants.

4.5 Recruiting participants

A number of methods were sought to seek out participants. Firstly, I began compiling a list of potential organisations, institutions and community groups across Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee when working for The Scottish Government under a one-month internship in the Communities Analytical Services department. Initially, many of the contacts made were formal organisations such as police, community support and various government controlled agencies. I received positive feedback from the majority of the organisations contacted and, although many were not grass roots level organisations, they were keen to have an impact and to participate. Part of the aim of the research, however, was to reach previously unspoken communities of Muslim women, and as a result I decided to look further into involving local community groups, volunteer organisations and religious and faith-based institutions (See Appendix 2).

I sent a general-format e-mail to the list of organisations, providing a brief detail of the research study and a request for assistance in finding participants (Appendix 3) which would be followed through with a phone call one week later. This was to ensure that I was taking full advantage of the details available for these public and charitable organisations.

The following extract is a reflection of the fieldwork in recruiting participants or speaking with organisations. Here I consider my positionality within the research process, careful to maintain a professional and respectable standard for the participants when addressing e-mails and responses to messages:

“The majority of these messages were formal – dear sir or madam - inviting people to ask questions about the research with the aim of distributing the information sheet to their friends and colleagues. Not all communication was formal however; there were a number of e-mails which were sent following telephone conversations and/or general meetings and these were more informal as it was more appropriate to greet these particular men and women Islamically instead. I think this is really important to point out because the people I was speaking to were mainly Muslim women and men and there is a general

social and religious consensus that you greet another Muslim using Arabic address because it bestows upon you certain good deeds. What I wasn't aware of was how religious my participants were so what I didn't want to do was to acknowledge them Islamically because that would immediately present them with someone who they might assume is 'a proper Muslim', so I decided I would let that judgment be made by the participant, so I'd often call and ask if I'm speaking to so and so and let them know it was me who was calling, 90% of the time this would lead to the respondent to say salaam, so then I knew how to proceed from there when contacting them in the future. And the same exercise applied via e-mail too, unless the participant was the first to contact me, as was this case of many of my first respondents, this made it a lot easier because the initial communication was reversed, they made the first step, so I knew how to greet them back. So it was very clear to me that I had to be careful not only when meeting participants in person but also how I conduct communication with them because there was an assumption about my own religiosity throughout all of this which I constantly had to monitor to gain information about the effect on participants when I greeted them in a certain way."

(Excerpt 1. Fieldnotes, November 3rd, 2009)

Fourteen e-mails were sent with nine successful responses. A number of these responses were individuals who acted as 'gate-keepers' to sister organisations and low-level community groups, those who receive little funding, groups formed through mosques or women's groups. One particular group who were tremendously helpful in Glasgow and Dundee was a government-funded community organisation set up to recognise the social and service needs of Muslim women. Muslim Women's Resource Centre (or better known as MWRC) were first introduced to me through my placement at The Scottish Government and were eager to maintain contact throughout the fieldwork study. They organised the first focus group meeting and provided room hire and tea and coffee for future focus groups and interviews. Their keenness to allow me the use of their space became clear as they were organising an annual conference and requested that I present some of my findings. I was happy to reciprocate, unfortunately the event was subsequently delayed by a significant number of months due to funding and administrative issues and I was unable to provide any further feedback from my research. Nevertheless, MWRC continued to be of considerable help in providing details for their sister-group in Dundee and contacts in Edinburgh too.

During the course of the initial focus group and interviews, I used more informal methods of snowballing and casual contacts in and around Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. I was then contacted by a small number of women in Glasgow who had received information about the research study from an internet discussion board (glasgowmuslims.com). Unbeknown to me, a previous contact and participant created a link to my research study on the online forum to attract interest and possible candidates for participation (See Figure 1). A further contact was kind enough to take copies of my briefing letter of the research study and a business card to hand out to potential participants at the Muslim Council of Scotland AGM. Similarly, MWRC used a short detail of the research project in their newsletter which provided more participants.

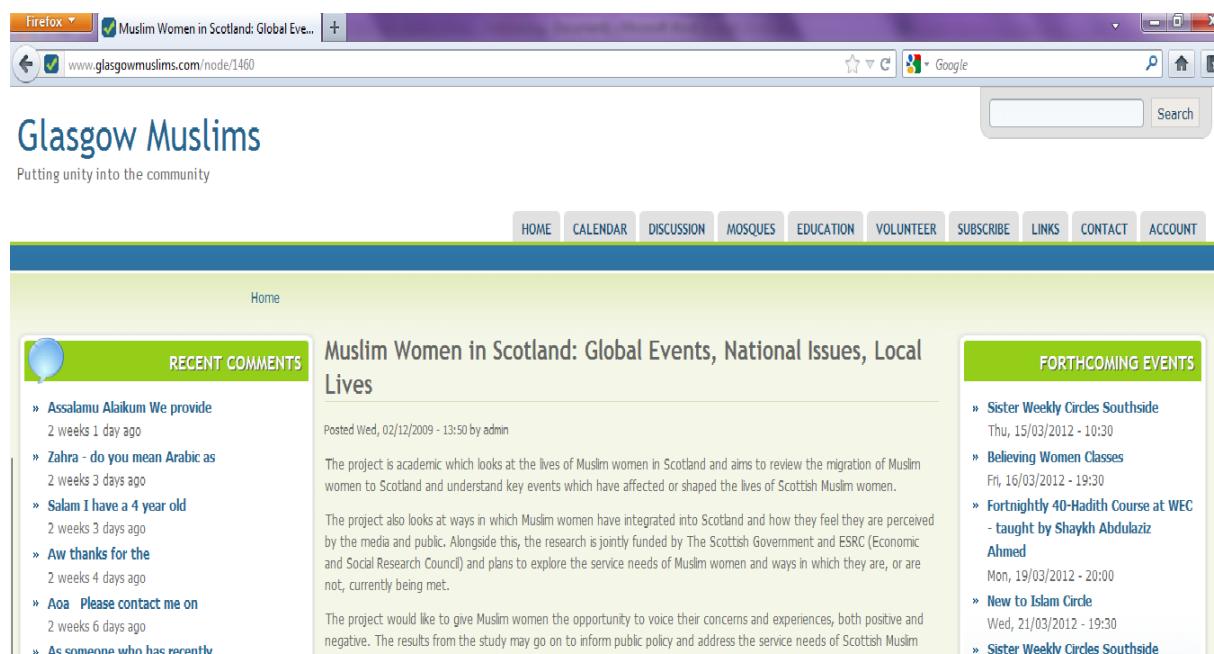


Figure 1. Screenshot of research study on Glasgowmuslims.com

4.5.1 Gatekeeping concerns

It was necessary for me to include gatekeepers in this research as I was unfamiliar with the research context, how to gain participants for the study and ways in which I could promote my research. Defined as 'those individuals in an organisation that have the power to withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of research (Miniechello et al, 1997 cited in Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert, 2008: 549). The gatekeepers involved in this research consisted of a group of both men and women from a number of different

backgrounds who worked closely with the Muslim communities in their respective cities. My experience with gatekeepers was varied from those who had eagerly anticipated in the research and wanted to be very much involved, such as MWRC in Glasgow and Dundee and Beyond The Veil in Edinburgh to others who requested incentives for participation. In an initial e-mail from one of the community groups in Glasgow, I was told that it was unlikely participants would respond to any calls for participation if I did not offer incentives, in the shape of currency or shopping vouchers. At this point, I was unable to tender to the request as I was on a particularly tight field budget and, as such I decided to invest time in locating other community workers and organisations that could help me. I was confident I would be able to find other community groups that would be willing to allow me access to their networks. A gatekeeper in Edinburgh, a young man who carried out work in the community, Faisal¹ assumed an automatic role as gatekeeper and in an e-mail highlighted the concerns of the women he had asked to participate in the study, women who were unknown to me and whose only knowledge of the study was from Faisal:

“Would it be possible to have a sample of the questions which would be asked? Some sisters are apprehensive about this. Would you be doing this interview over the phone or would it be by means of filling out forms? Wouldn't it be easier to have someone here across the border conducting the interview?”

Extract 1. E-mail from Faisal. 07/12/2009

This e-mail raised a number of concerns for me as I was beginning my research and already receiving negative feedback in terms of potential participants feeling anxious about the aims of the research. I felt almost inexperienced in the research field as previously I had not anticipated such gate-keeper issues. However, I responded courteously, iterating that I would be travelling to Edinburgh on a number of occasions to conduct the research as it was important that the participants meet me personally. I also offered to meet Faisal and stressed that my details could be passed directly to women interested in participating, allowing me the opportunity to address their queries in person. In a subsequent meeting with Faisal a few weeks later, he happily left with handouts to pass on to the women he works with in the local Edinburgh community.

¹ The gatekeepers' name has been changed to protect his anonymity

4.6 Introducing the participants

Across all three research sites, the number of participants interviewed was 37, and the number of participants in all five focus groups was 33, bringing the total number of participants to 70. Using demographics taken when the interviews were conducted, the following graphs and charts highlight the ethnic and economic backgrounds of respondents. The focus of the recruitment drive was less to acknowledge participants from a particular social, ethnic, economic or age profile but rather to allow for an approach to research that studied those who identified as Muslim women living in Scotland, gaining an autonomous sample that were conscious of their social, political and faith identity. There was not a particular emphasis placed upon ethnicity or age, and as such, this allowed me to further delve into the different Muslim communities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. Furthermore, this reiterated my initial aims and objectives of the study, to gain knowledge from women of many backgrounds and those with many different life experiences.

The participants had dissimilar migration and life histories and as such, different experiences of living in Scotland. The research sought to include Muslim women who had reverted and converted to Islam alongside those born into an Islamic household and had maintained their faith.

The frequency tables below shows the resultant sample, indicating the range of interviews across all three sites:

Location

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Glasgow	14	37.8	37.8	37.8
Dundee	14	37.8	37.8	75.7
Edinburg h	9	24.3	24.3	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 1. Frequency indicator (interviews)

The following table allows for a more concise indication for the overall participants, including all focus groups. It is critical here that I point out the higher number of

participants from Glasgow as not only was I able to successfully undertake three focus groups, the participants were of considerable numbers in each focus group, as many as ten per group.

Location		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Glasgow	33	47.1	47.1	47.1
	Dundee	24	34.3	34.3	81.4
	Edinburgh	13	18.6	18.6	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Frequency indicator (all participants)

For a more visually engaging breakdown see Appendix 4. The following charts represent the age and ethnicity demographics of participants. The higher numbers of participants from a 35-44 age group is indicative of the method of recruiting participants using voluntary organisations throughout Scotland. Furthermore, 50% of the sample is between the ages of 16-34, indicating the growing young age profile of Muslim women throughout Scotland (See Figure 2).

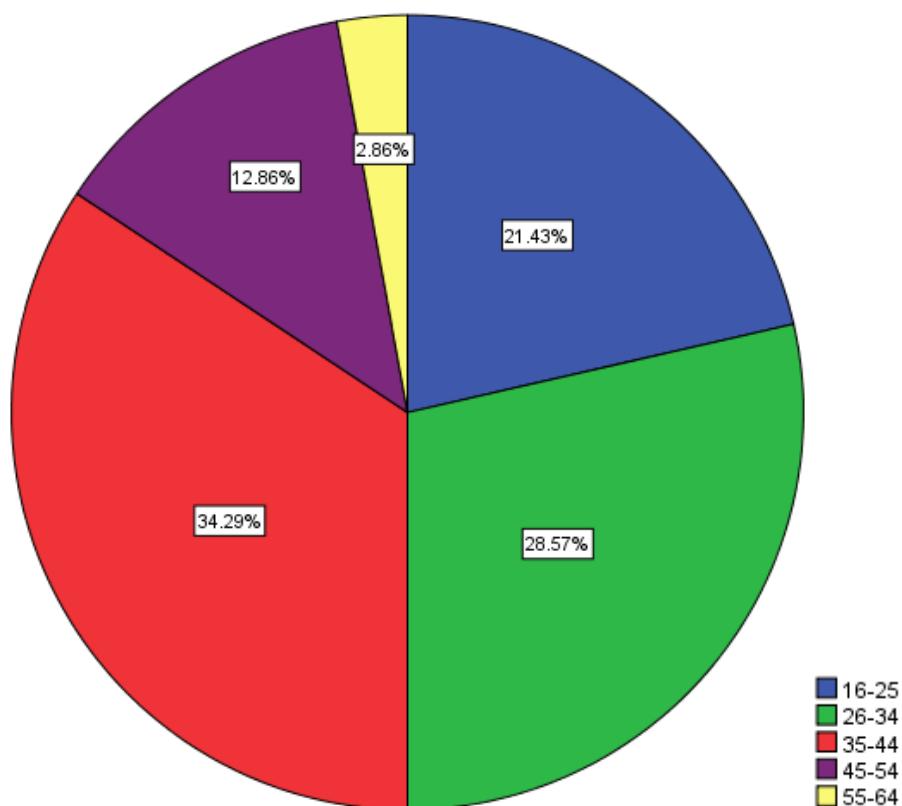


Figure 2. Age Indicator of sample size

Figure 3 shows the ethnic background of the participant sample, signifying a large sample size from Asian/British Asian backgrounds. This could be indicative of the growing numbers of South Asian Muslim communities in Scotland, particularly as they are the largest ethnic group in Scotland (See Chapter Three for further information).

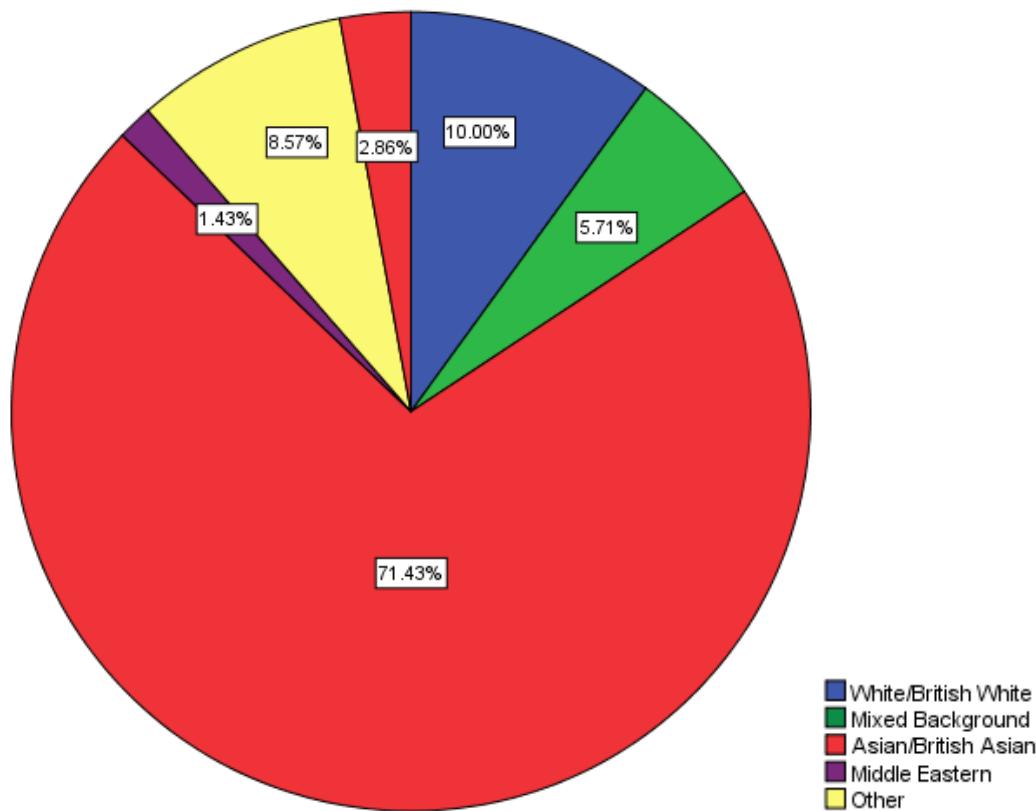


Figure 3. Ethnic background of participants

Those who indicated 'Other' (two participants) were unhappy with the selection of ethnic backgrounds available as it did not take into account the need to recognise *Muslim* as an ethnic category. These participants held the view that they identified themselves as either a White Scottish Muslim, or a Scottish Muslim and therefore, the choices available were not applicable. I decided to use the most conventional method of collecting demographic information by following the approach set by the Office for National Statistics which allows for a more vigorous and widened insight into social and economic backgrounds.

The following bar chart shows the numbers of women by age and occupational background:

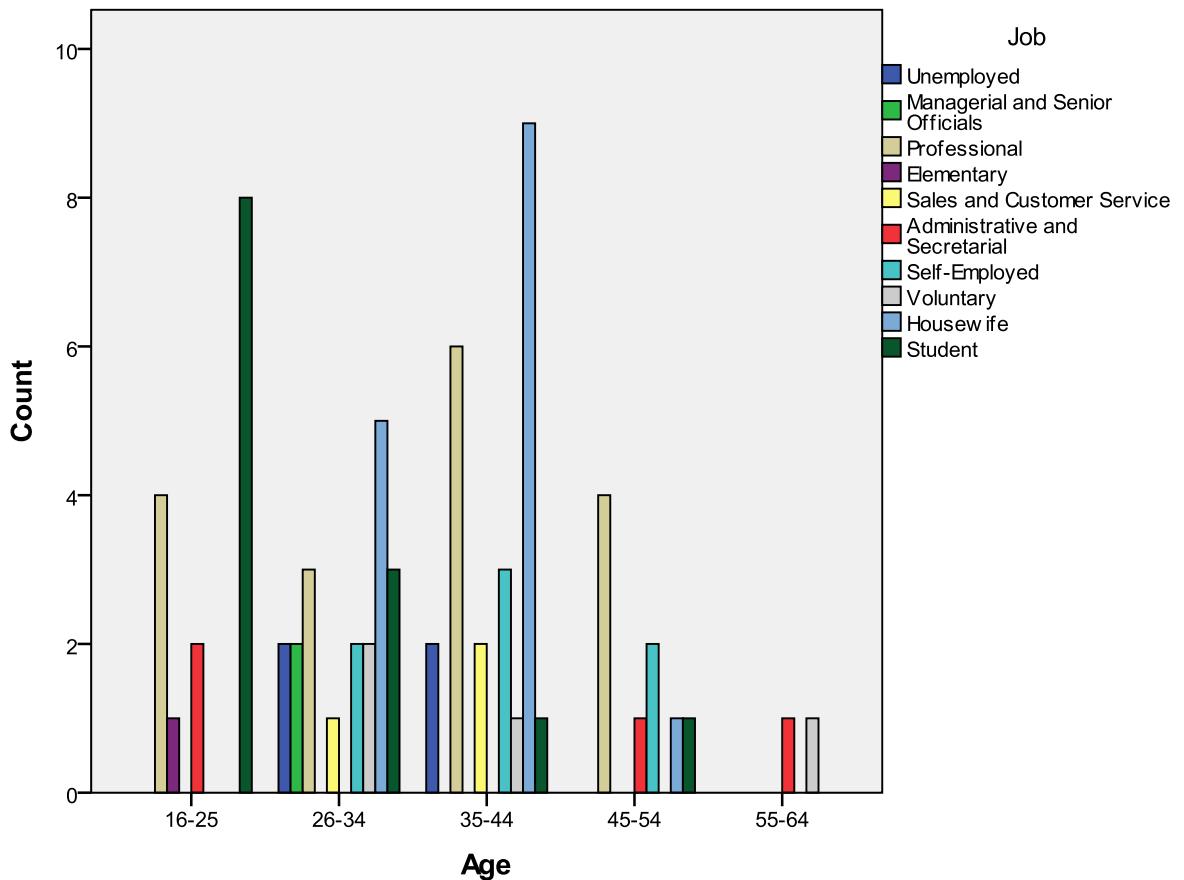


Figure 4. Age by Occupation

The chart highlights a high number of students within a lower age demographic alongside various indicators of women working in the voluntary sector. Some of these women were paid workers working in local and national community organisations whereas others were volunteers. The chart also indicates a large number of women who were housewives. The majority of these women were involved in focus group discussions as opposed to the more intimate interviews. In addition, women aged between 35-54 were more likely to be in a professional occupation. Those women who asserted they were housewives also chose to not disclose their employment status whereas others found themselves at a crossroads, unsure whether to indicate their unemployment or their roles as housewives and the impact this may have. For the study, this signified an important distinction that women are becoming more aware of their economic status and are conscious of employing a particular profession. It also indicates that the use of 'housewife' as a professional indicator draws close attention from women who may previously have

specified 'unemployment' as their professional occupation. The graph below highlights the distinctions between the different locations:

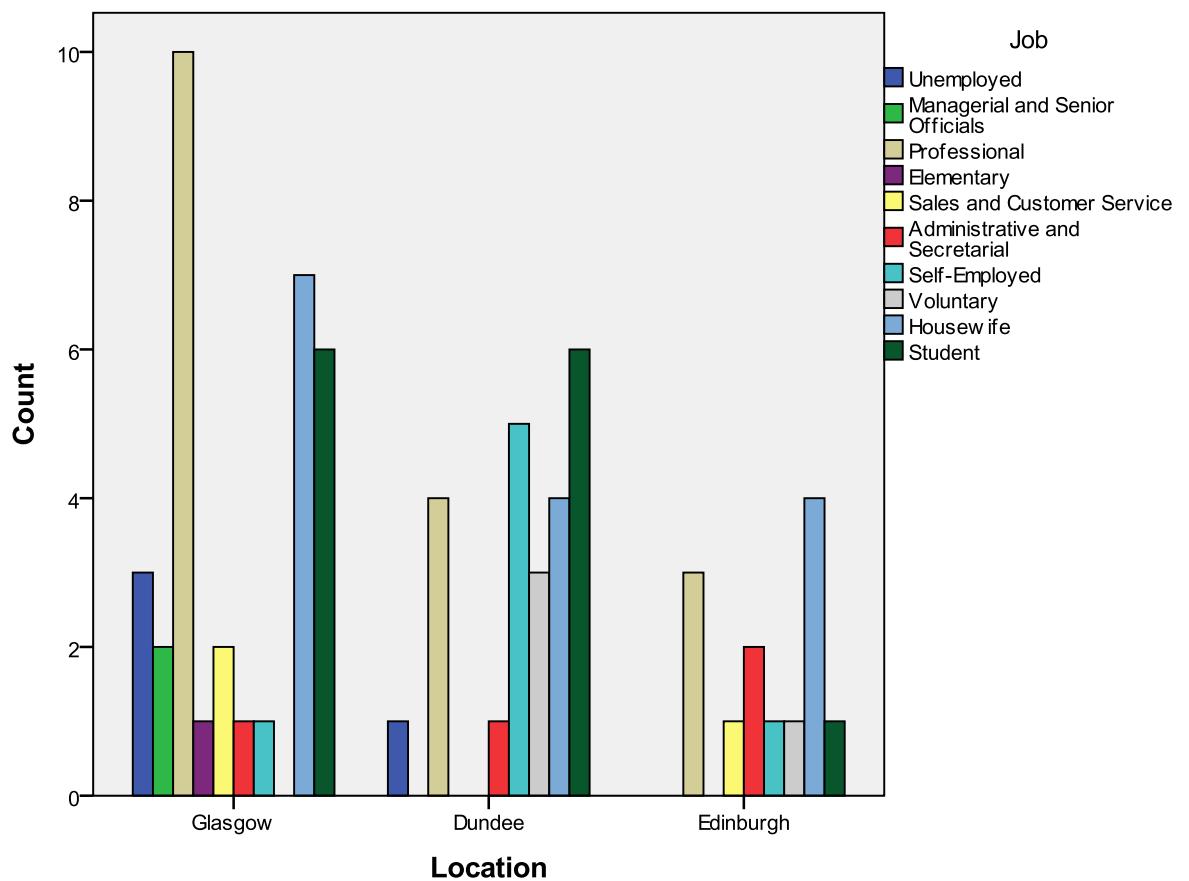


Figure 5. Occupation by Location

Furthermore, no young women in the participant sample were without formal qualifications (See Figure 6).

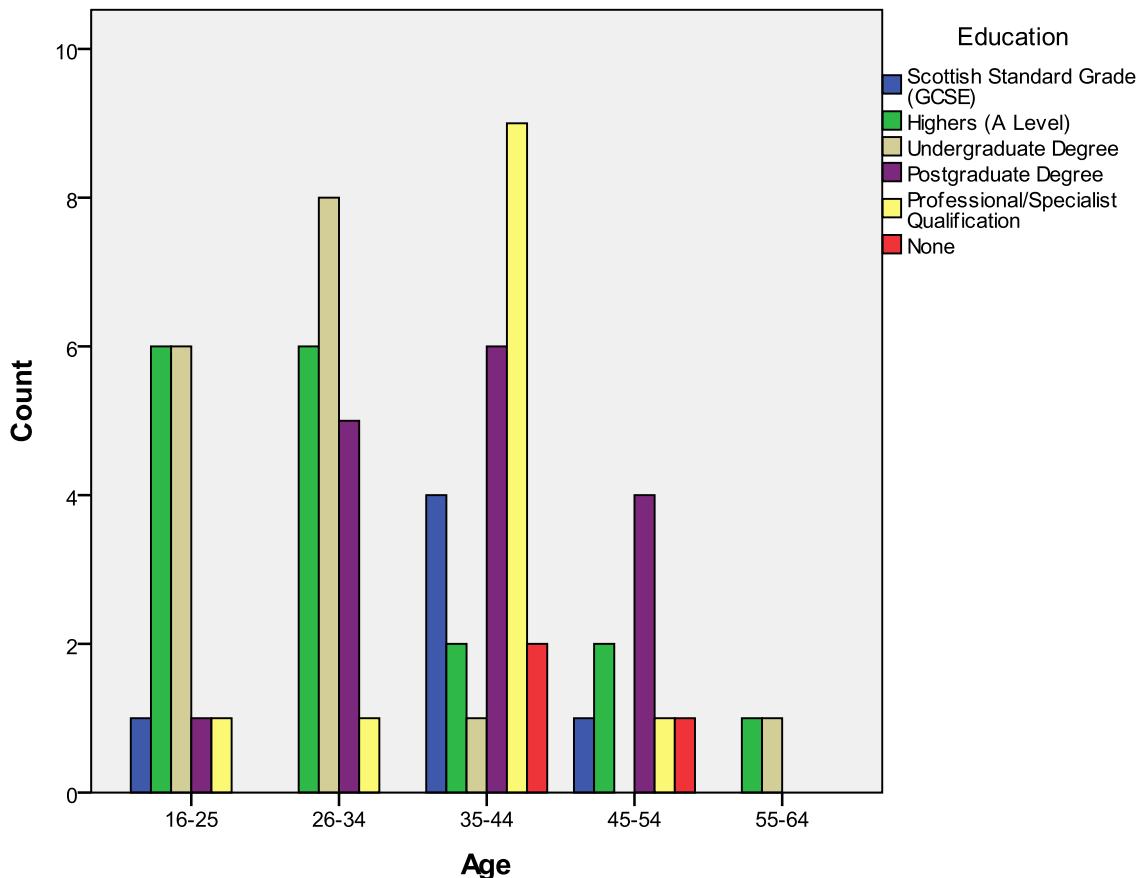


Figure 6. Age/ Education as indicator

The high numbers of students in Dundee is indicative of the recruitment drive there as I was able to seek out local community groups who worked closely with students at Dundee University. The large numbers of those working in the voluntary sector is a result of communicating with various voluntary organisations in the area and increasing my network and contact base to include charitable establishments. Additionally there were higher numbers of housewives who had no formal qualifications as well as those who had received tertiary education outside of Scotland.

Finally, this graph below indicates that very few participants in the sample, across all locations had little or no formal educational qualifications. I believe this to be indicative of not only the recruitment design, but also of the women who chose independently to become part of the research project, requesting invitations for interviews. This also reinforces some of my earlier observations regarding the growing consciousness of Muslim women across Western Europe.

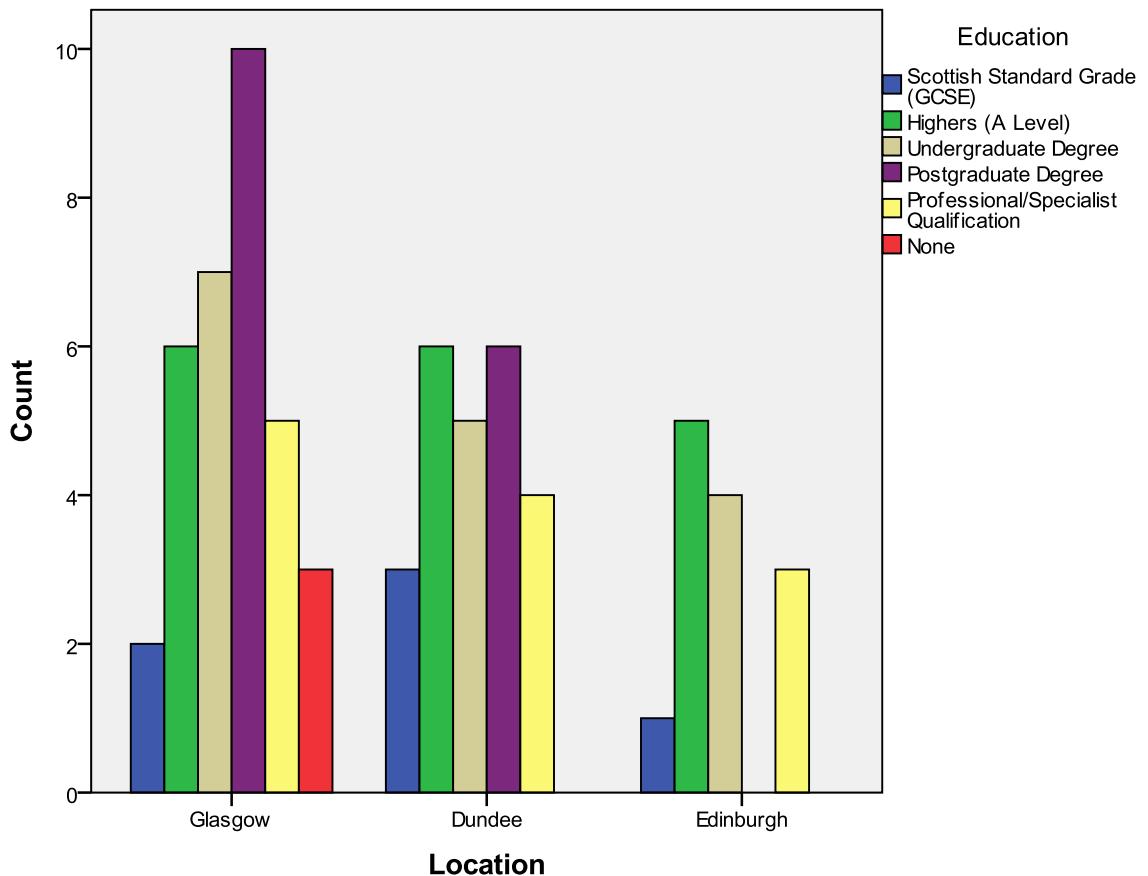


Figure 7. Education by Location

4.7 Research design

The research design involved conducting semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participatory visual methods over a period of 8 months from December 2009 to July 2010.

4.7.1 *The interview*

Kvale (1996) describes the qualitative interview “as a conversation that has a structure and purpose” (1996: 6). Its structure is often pre-written by the researcher or research team, with given themes and topics, however, its purpose is likely to be an accumulation of personal accounts of reflection of the ‘subjects’ or ‘researched’ experiences of the world. The purpose of the qualitative interview is often one which is fluid, flexible and

dynamic, unless carrying out a structured interview, which was not the case for this project. In creating the research design for this project, interviewing was chosen as the leading method of data collection alongside focus groups and photo-taking exercises. The latter two were to allow participants not only a voice within a group and social setting but also an autonomous role within the research, creating actual data using visual methods.

The methodological approach which can also be referred to as the ‘conversational technique’ understands the interaction between researcher and researched as the creation of knowledge; epistemological understandings view knowledge as constituted within dialogue and the ontological thought of conversation views the conversation itself as human reality, a presupposition for the production of knowledge. Together, these three understandings represent the different ways in which knowledge is created, constituted and shared. It is with this in mind that I set forward in my quest for interviewing Muslim women in Scotland, to delve into their everyday lives, to gain their knowledge, and attempt to set my own prejudices aside and allow them to converse on their life, their experiences in an autonomous setting where they are deemed the expert.

The aim of the interview was to gain an understanding of the participants’ constructions of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) in addition to providing a platform for the participants to see their knowledge as a narrative. While much of the interviews focused upon the participants, I was prepared to also divulge my personal knowledge, most of which was demographically based e.g. my age, occupation, family background and this allowed participants to acknowledge my social and professional position as well as gain background information about me before reveal their personal experiences. Using the presumption that ‘knowledge is narrative’ (Kvale, 1996), I found that interviewing allowed a flexible approach without pigeon-holing participants (Bryman, 2008) as it focuses upon the narratives within the conversation which further permits different approaches and warrants a departure from the interview schedule, allowing new questions to be asked, new discoveries to be made. This became more urgent within the focus group discussions as I was met with a wide range of views and opinions which I had to work at separating and referring back to individually. Additionally, as I was striving throughout the project to maintain a clear direction in which I understood knowledge through the feminist lens, I found interviews an appropriate method as I was interviewing women who approached me asking to participate in the research. It allowed me to interact with women in a short space of time, gaining a lot of data. The method allowed women to express their views using their own language and their own words (Sanders in Bryman,

2008). I further associated the method with McDowell's outlook on interviewing whereby she finds that the interview represents a 'mutual exchange of views' (McDowell, 1992: 407). While I agree that there are a number of limitations to the method as I cannot draw generalisations or present a large amount (in quantitative terms) of data, I also argue that my approach to data collection has granted me an exceptional amount of data in qualitative terms. The value that I attribute my data throughout this thesis cannot be matched in quantitative techniques of data collection. Words, pauses, laughs, meanings are all part of what I endeavour to present alongside a set of voices that are indeed previously unheard in academic discourse, first time interviewees and participants who were unaware of the value given to their understandings and to their perceptions.

My interview questions, based upon previous literatures, current social and political events, alongside my own casual interactions with some Muslim women on occasions, asked women to consider their understandings of faith, their experiences of what faith entails, practises associated with Islamic custom, tradition and culture. I was also interested to discover what knowledge women had about other Muslim women in Islamic history and, as such, asked them questions about any inspirational role models they had and the ways in which they practice Islam within their own understanding of faith. In questioning their experiences of identity formation, the emphasis was to discover the varying degree to which the women practise simultaneous identities, and in doing so, consider how they felt about nation and nationhood within the realm of faith identities. furthermore, participants were asked to recall global and national events which have affected their social experiences, the ways in which they have changed their lives and their understanding of religious racism. I provide a further breakdown of this in Appendix 5. It must also be noted that there were occasional interview questions which were not part of the set framework of the interview schedule. These questions were only asked if the participant personally progressed the interview to discussing more sensitive topics, including their understanding of terrorist activity, fundamentalism, counter-terrorism strategies and their effectiveness in dealing with terrorism in Scotland. The participants were under no obligation to answer these questions, and were only asked if the setting and comfort of the interview were deemed appropriate.

4.7.2 Focus groups

Rather than act as a group interview, the focus groups in this research allowed me to speak to a number of participants at the same time, while simultaneously giving them the opportunity to speak to each other and converse as a group (Bryman, 2008). A number of conversations were held in the focus group of which I was not a part, and in those instances I took a back seat approach, allowing the participants to construct their own engagements with topical issues. In other instances where I felt the conversations were becoming dangerously off-topic e.g. discussing shopping trips, purchasing houses and last week's basketball game, I intervened and moderated the focus groups, asking participants to come back into focus, giving them a brief introduction to another theme and again, allowing them to converse within themselves. The focus groups allowed me privileged insight into the social exchanges of the women and my role as a facilitator ideally saw me experience internal processes (Bloor et al, 2001). In addition, the flow of conversation was natural without much interference from me other than moderating topics of dialogue. I also used focus groups in the research as I was wary of the dangers of stand-alone methods in qualitative research and in this sense, the focus groups became an adjunct to other methods in the project (Bloor et al, 2001). It was also good research practice to include more than one method in my data collection and analytical approach.

I conducted a total of five focus groups, three in Glasgow, and one in both Edinburgh and Dundee. The lack of response in both Edinburgh and Dundee meant I had to make the decision to stop fieldwork in order to allow me sufficient time for transcription and analysis.

The chapter will now discuss what I describe as the 'interview journeys', the process and experiences I recall while carrying out fieldwork.

4.7.3 Interview journeys

Having previously never visited Scotland prior to the research study, the journey over the English border not only brought about feelings of unease yet also a curiosity of the adventures that lie ahead. It was indeed the most exciting time of the doctoral study which I had eagerly anticipated and, thankfully, was not disappointed. In an excerpt taken from the research diary, I write of my first interview with a woman living in Glasgow. Rahna

changed the location of the interview from the mosque to a public place the previous day and I arrived into Glasgow on a busy Saturday afternoon, curious to find if I could recognise a woman whom I was yet to meet, with only her Hijab identifying her. Although this seems an easy task to accomplish, the high street was bustling with Hijab-wearing women, as you could expect of any city centre high street:

“I met Rahna as I was walking down a high street in Glasgow. She recognised me on the phone looking curiously at people’s faces trying to identify her, and we went to a cafe in the city centre. Rahna wears Hijab and is petite. She is 34 although looks very young, perhaps this is the reason she escaped my view. The interview was conducted in a cafe, which, in hindsight, was not appropriate as the sounding on the recording is difficult to now transcribe due to increased background noise.”

(Excerpt 2. Research Diary)

This particular excerpt, aside from highlighting my naivety at attempting to conduct an interview in a public cafe, also led me to contemplate my own position in the research and the power my own biases would have upon the research subjects, the interactions I shared with them and, indeed the impact it would have upon the data collected. This initial interview unfortunately was poorly conducted and difficult to transcribe due to levels of commotion in the cafe area. Although disappointing, it served as a reminder for me throughout the fieldwork period that I must be mindful of the influence I may have upon my research participants as I needed to understand their lives from their perspectives separating my own ideas of who they are, what they do, what they wear and what they may look like. I also made the decision at this point to conduct further interviews in private spaces, whether it is in the home or a private space within the public e.g. a library, a mosque or an office.

4.7.4 Making ‘home’ the field

The intricate process of interviewing involves a multitude of positions from researcher to researchers, expert to study and vice versa (Dyck, 1997). It is as a result of complex power structures within research that feminist strategies become highly receptive to the power employed by the researcher. Many feminist academics note this function that authority has within interviews or focus groups and attempt to level the playing field

though a number of techniques. Ann Oberhauser (1997) distinctly refers to the ways in which continuous reflection on the part of the researcher was required when carrying out a study into the gender dynamics in the home (1997). She adds that by way of neglecting gender dynamics in the household in this particular mode, researchers are then unable to critically assess political and economic inequalities which further exclude women within the employment sector (1997). Thus, the importance of carrying out research within the private becomes clear, one must understand the private space in order to comprehend the public and vice versa. Oberhauser's research focused upon doings within the private realm, what she terms "home-based economic activity", and as a result, the 'home' became the 'field'. Using a feminist methodological approach, Oberhauser was able to penetrate the 'field' not only as a stranger but also as an individual, who possessed common values with the participants (1997: 179). She argues that the use of such a strategy allowed her "to critically examine and shift the hierarchical power relations between researcher and researched" (1997: 179). Not only was Oberhauser a researcher, there to gain knowledge about the economic activities of the women, but also as a woman herself, a wife, a mother and equally as important, a worker. Shared common values become a gateway for those who we research an insight into our lives as researchers, narrowing down our commonalities and effectively communicating our shared values and experiences.

Dyck's (1997) study into the health care of Indo-Canadian women in British Columbia, Canada also affected the 'home' as the 'field' within the research process. Exploring women who were first generation, as ethnic minorities and their experiences of health care (1997), she concludes that the caste, culture and/or religious background of the researcher and participants can also manipulate the research process and the relationships created within it (1997) (See also Nagar, 1997), further exemplifying the importance of positionality and reflexivity that researchers must employ at all stages of research.

Hanson (1997) makes clear the meaning of space and place within feminist research arguing that the links between the two may help focus the methods implemented within feminist study, allowing participants to self-empower within the interview and research process if the research is carried out in the home, making the 'home' the 'field' and increasing the effectiveness of feminist research (Hanson, 1997: 124). Al-Hindi considers such a method as also rooted within critical realist perspectives of feminism (Al-Hindi, 1997). The linkages between home and various other relational spaces (e.g. office)

become clear within such contexts, most particularly in Oberhauser's work on economic activities in the home (1997).

This became evident as I entered the home of many of my participants, wary of the fact that I was no longer the 'expert' yet more a 'guest' in the presence of the expert (England, 1994). Studies conducted within the private, domesticated spaces may not only reduce the power relations at play but also shift power balances, empowering the participant. In her research looking at female telecommuters, Al-Hindi observed that the method she used twisted the power structures around, rendering the researcher immobilised and the researched in charge of the process (Al-Hindi, 1997). In turn, this makes them the expert and she argues that knowledge was a shared understanding between herself and her participants. Her critique of *critical realist* methods found her contemplating her role in the research process as she grew more wary of the importance to create knowledge which could be used and supplemented elsewhere. As a result of authority which is already present within the home exercised by the woman as domestic command, 'home' was central to the working women in the study as it became one of the small number of arenas where they were able to reaffirm their domination upon others within the household (Al-Hindi, 1997). This is further explored in Chapter Eight which explores the constructions of identity for Muslim women in Scotland.

Oberhauser further argues that studies couched within the home as the data collection 'site' "challenge masculinist assumptions about the household as a private sphere outside the public purview" (1997: 165). By way of bringing to an end the justification for her work within the home, Al-Hindi comments on the distinct emergence of the multitude of identities exercised by women and their own perceptions of these identities and structures within which they continue to develop e.g. as wives, mothers etc in the private and as workers in the public. Such knowledge meets the overall aims of feminist social research in that it gains profound accounts of domination in the domestic and their connection to the public lives of women. This knowledge then is not only understood by the researcher but crucially, also by the researched as it is their understanding, experiences and thoughts (Al-Hindi, 1997).

4.8 Visual Innovations in Research Methods

As part of the research design and to allow women an opportunity to become knowledge-creators I asked a handful of participants to carry out a photo-taking exercise which saw them capturing images on a disposable camera using particular themes I asked them to consider. These are included in Appendix 5. Due to financial constraints, I was unable to provide participants with digital cameras, and this did impact the quality of the images. However, I was pleased with the response rate from the participants alongside the uniqueness of their interpretations and their contemplation of the given themes. As a technique of engaging emotions and affects within research, (Pain et al, 2007), an increasing number of writers have noted the use of 'photovoice' as a non-verbal method which allows participants to assess how they would 'mirror' their everyday lives or one aspect of their life using photography (Wang et al, 1998: 80). In McIntyre's study of women in Ireland, a primary data collection method was the use of cameras and asking women to record characteristics of their lives in picture. This allowed participants the authority to visualise their thoughts themselves rather than the researcher. Photovoice also grants the opening for women to focus upon particular parts of their everyday which they hold dear, this may be a place, person or situation (McIntyre, 2003). McIntyre found that such a technique not only gave women a reason to take part, but benefitted them emotionally as they were able to comprehend the deepness of the meanings they attach to separate aspects of their lives (McIntyre, 2003).

Brieg and Roberts' (2007) study of marginalised indigenous women in Saskatchewan, Canada, also offers important insights into the use of photovoice and visual methodologies. Their research began as a direct result of marches in Saskatchewan against the segregation of indigenous women all over the globe. The aim of photovoice was to capture and contribute knowledge held by these women which allowed the local community to assess the strength of the information they possess. They highlight the importance of choosing specific cameras for special visual filtering and the process of taking the photographs by the women .e.g. proving date for the return of the camera/film to preserve energy and vitality into the project and also provide support throughout the research process and into the focus group stage (2007: 153).

One of the most crucial stages within this strategy is the interpretation of narratives and also photographs themselves. As a way of accurately analysing visual data, the researcher may be able to (given the practicalities of the research) represent their findings back to their participants, affecting questions, clarity and judgement of accuracy and verification (Pain, 2004 and McIntyre, 2003). In this study, the women were asked to share with me

their experiences of photovoice and the meanings they were able to draw from the captured images. I use these images and brief discussions with participants in Chapter Eight to further illustrate understandings of national identity for the women and their interpretations of Scottishness, belonging and home.

4.9 Ethical Issues

Ethics are of the upmost importance within any structure of investigation. Research into human behaviour must be critically assessed prior to any practical study to ensure participants are protected from harm. Stanley and Wise comprehensively argue that “treating people like objects – sex objects or research objects – is morally unjustifiable” (1993: 168). Those who we research must not be coerced, harmed (physically or emotionally) and must, at every stage, feel they are in control of their own thoughts and perspectives, individuals in their own right (England, 1994: 82). Ethics provide a system whereby learned scholars are able to consider the benefits as well as the disadvantages presented by the research to society, policy and individuals.

Ethics within the social sciences, however, have a tendency to focus upon the negative aspects of research, more willingly than to consider its positive interventions (Pain, 2004). The consideration of ethics, then, must be placed within the context of the research, rather than deciding based upon a number of categorical points (Kvale, 1996). Manzo and Brightbill (2007) argue that philosophical debates around ethics still continue to drive the decisions made by IRB (Institutional Review Boards), denying the dynamic-ness of particular research methods (e.g. participatory action research methods) as it is unable to adhere to pre-planned agendas as a result of its founding nature (Manzo and Brightbill, 2007).

The issue of Muslims in Western societies is topical, intriguing and very often controversially placed within wider social and political discourses, therefore ethical issues were of utmost importance throughout the project. Information divulged by the participants has been kept confidential and as such, names in this thesis have been altered to protect the women involved in the study. Participants were given my details prior to the interview being conducted and asked to read and sign a form of consent (See Appendix 6) which, rather than lay out the aims and objectives of the research and the use of data forthcoming from the interview, it was an indication of their rights as participants,

reinforcing the expectations that they should have of the research, the data and of myself to protect them at all times. I ensured all participants had understood the form of consent and answered any queries which may have arisen. I also made it clear that they could contact me concerning any issues about the research and made a point of leaving my contact details (a business card) with them. Some participants questioned the reasons for the study and my own personal background and relationship with Islam and Muslims, this is further considered in my reflections of the fieldwork. Newcastle University ethical guidelines were followed and the research was subject to approval by the Ethics Board prior to the fieldwork being initiated. When submitting my ethical approval forms I considered any potential risks to the participants due to the nature of the study as there was an expectation to discuss experiences of anti-racism, Islamophobia and social experiences since September 11th, 2001 and July 5th, 2005 and, I write:

“It is crucial in this project for participants to feel they are able to trust the researcher with personal experiences, therefore, interviews and focus groups will only take place when participants feel they are able to trust the researcher. This will also mean allowing participants to choose where interviews and focus groups take place, such as the home or community centre etc. This will allow participants empowerment within the research process”

(Excerpt 3. Section 7.1 from Newcastle University Ethical Approval Form, 30th April, 2009)

I was continually reflexive during the course of the fieldwork and tried to ensure that the participants were comfortable at all times. The initial interviews were conducted in places outside of the home, and as I was a visitor to these new places, I was often anxious that the interview be conducted in a formal way, with an interview guideline in hand, drinks available for the participant and the necessary paperwork understood and signed. I realised that as I went on to conduct more interviews, my behaviour became more casual and relaxed and I was able to socially and culturally identify with the women in a number of ways. This is further discussed in the reflections of the fieldwork in this chapter. The impact of carrying out semi-structured interviews in an informal and casual manner was redressed and manifested in the responses by some of the participants who understood I was not there as a government researcher (as my research was funded 50% by The Scottish Government) but as a student, looking to them for knowledge. I continually explained that although the research was partly funded by The Scottish Government, it

was an academic study, not a policy driven research project. At the same time I also reinforced that there were expectations of myself to identify key issues in the Muslim community which may arise out of the research. Nonetheless, those issues were grounded in a grass roots level approach which would be considering the needs of the Muslim women involved in a study, not as an investigation into their everyday activities to report back to government office. The purpose of providing my contact details to participants was to give them the opportunity to get in touch with me any time after the interview to ask questions about the research, progress or to withdraw. The majority of participants did not maintain contact after the research process, and this is further reflected upon in my experience ‘after the fieldwork’ in this chapter.

In terms of reciprocity, there was little I could offer the participants in terms of financial or material gain, however, I was pleased to hear that for the women, the study represented a much needed approach in public discourse around the everyday lives of Muslim women and as many remarked on the interview process as one which was therapeutic and forced them to consider their personal responsibility for taking part in research. The following excerpt is from an interview carried out with Aisha in Glasgow:

“This kind of research really forces [you] to really think about er some of the deep rooted views that you have and your reaction to those things and how you reacted to them and how you would possibly react in the future, so I think it’s a beautiful opportunity to be able to air things that you either haven’t aired before or haven’t aired for a long time and to go away feeling offloaded but with a bit of new insight into yourself and also with the knowledge that you’ve hopefully been able to benefit somebody” (Aisha, 10th March 2010, Glasgow)

The above interaction with Aisha highlights not only how she used the research interview to further play out the disenfranchised disabled Muslim community in Glasgow, yet to also simultaneously challenge herself and her personal judgements. This particular interview will stay with me for a long time as it was incredibly intense, humbling and emotional, lasting over three hours in the four walls of her small Glasgow flat. The interactions I had with Aisha, a visually impaired yet vibrant, humorous young woman was one filled with painful memories, regrets, distress and also ambition as she spoke delicately, shifting carefully around her kitchen preparing tea, using her hands to judge the temperature of the water, her fingers to estimate the depth of the tea in the cup and an

acute awareness to skilfully perceive my voice and direct her eyes towards me when speaking, a skill she was taught as a young blind child by her parents.

Throughout the research, I felt an overpowering sense of accountability to reciprocate with the respondents and decided, after having discussed the idea with my supervisors at Newcastle University and Ruth Whatling at The Scottish Government office, that I would prepare a short report for The Scottish Government after completing my thesis which would address the issues within and between Muslim Communities in Scotland yet also offer an accessible outline of the research findings for those involved and those interested in the study. This is coupled with validating the aims of the research (Baxter and Eyles, 1997) as the report will be publicly accessible, allowing the researched to access their words.

4.9.1 Researcher and Researched Safety

The safety of researchers is often neglected and focus upon the participants' safety usually takes precedence. Mags and Moore (2007) outline what they believe to be potential researcher safety concerns: Physical, emotional, ethical and professional. As equally important is the emotional protection of researchers and participants, especially when interviewers are bound by confidentiality agreements. These agreements must still be upheld if the participant discloses an event, experience or activity which questions the credibility of the researcher's honesty, legal intents and ethical adherence. Therefore, confidentiality agreements also travel with the emotional burden of whether the researcher can actually provide such anonymity (Mags and Moore, 2007).

Safety concerns apply to both the researcher and researcher, intensifying the level of reflexivity required to carry out fieldwork and maintain ethical standards. In order to bring these concerns to the attention of the academic, we must think about the ways we can protect the rights of the researchers aside from physical safety e.g. letting colleagues know of one's whereabouts, avoiding late night travel, ensuring one is able to contact family or friend if need be etc. In order to ensure my own safety during the fieldwork, I would leave details of overnight stays, locations and phone numbers with friends and family. I would also aim to finish my working day before it was dark and avoid walking alone in unknown areas.

4.10 Data Analysis

The data collected from interview recording was transcribed using a freely available software programme online called *ExpressScribe*. It was recommended by a fellow PhD student who had also used the software for her own transcriptions. Initially, I had concerns regarding security and the storing of data, however, looking further into the programme, it was used offline and the voice files were uploaded and erased as required. The software allows users to upload voice files, slow recordings down and create *hot keys* which can rewind and forward recordings in order to effectively beat previous methods of foot pedalling. After each recording had been transcribed in English, including all non-verbal nods and communications, the files were then erased from the software in order to further protect participants and manage data files. A database from the demographics forms were also completed and entered into SPSS for analysis into the relationships between age, ethnicity and location and these have been presented in section 4.6.

I began a brief analysis of the transcripts, recordings and my personal reflections on the interviews and the experiences in the field to draw together a number of themes and patterns which could then be transformed into codes and a framework for deeper analysis. Bryman (2008) refers to this method as *post-coding* as it is a process of coding material after it is been collected. Similarly, Charmaz (2006) make a distinction between two types of coding processes, *initial coding* and *selective coding* (Charmaz, 2006: 57). I used this method to tease out primary codes which may be part of an overarching coding theme. Further exploration led to selective coding which would rule out some of the initial codes or even combine some of the initial codes to form a new analytical category. Primarily, I used the freehand method with a few transcripts to draw out themes from as this particular method would allow the data to speak for itself rather than having previously established theories or ideas around the data which had not yet been analysed. I was also cautious not to influence the directionality of my data analysis, therefore choosing codes based upon the transcripts and previous readings. I created a database of codes (See Appendix 7) which included seven *super codes*, which I describe as the overarching theme or idea for the sub-codes, alongside a number of sub-codes ranging from six to twenty three, depending on the free hand analysis completed previously. The super codes would then become the basis for my five empirical chapters. The super codes and their related sub-

codes were imported into a computer software program specifically designed for the analysis of transcriptions and data taken from qualitative fieldwork. Nvivo allowed me to manage, store and analyse the data by coding the transcripts into the relative coding themes. Colour-codes were attached to each theme and a simple ‘click and drag’ would allow a segment of an interview to fall into one or more different sub-codes depending on the theme being explored. After coding the data, each super code was exported into an MS Word document for deeper analysis. The program Nvivo was less used as an analytical tool but more as a way of storing and managing the data, I was able to import all transcripts and store them as *Sources* while the codes were converted into *Nodes*, specifically *Tree Nodes*, which allowed for sub-codes to be created within the super codes.

After exporting the relevant super codes from Nvivo, I began reading and re-reading the excerpts from the interviews and continued free-hand analysis of the data to draw out interpretations for use in the empirical chapters. It is important to note here that again the data was leading the focus of the empirical chapters as it had been organised according to a previous analysis of themes taken from transcripts. I felt a significant responsibility to allow the participants to gain their own voice from the research and make this about them, rather than a research process which ultimately would dehumanize them. I decided to use both computer software and axial coding to overcome the limitations of using one method only (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). A thematic approach to the data was taken which allowed me to construct a large database of indexed themes (Bryman, 2008). Computer programs are unable to seek out subtle interpretations without human influence and the storing and handling of data without the use of software may have overpowered my ability to manage it as there were various voice files, demographics forms and writings in research diaries which I use in my reflections of the fieldwork. I was watchful of not allowing my own judgements and existing knowledge to manipulate the data while it was being coded, managed and analysed as the urgency was to responsibly speak for the participants (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Colbin, 1990).

Using qualitative methods, the aim of the research is not to produce a universal or absolute truth about Muslim women in Scotland, yet to present a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the lives of those women involved in the study. Validated through meticulous coding, analysis and management of data, the thesis provides an account of the everyday lives of the participants, their desires, their anticipations and their understandings, rooted within a discourse of feminist and faith geographical methodology

and literature. As the interviews and focus groups were conducted and transcribed in English, this removed the need for a translator, allowing me to focus my energy on interpreting the words of the participants and representing them in the most accurate ways possible. I attempted to ensure this accuracy at all stages by allowing a methodological approach which seeks to characterize the participants' lives as opposed to fitting their words to a particular theory or hypothesis. Using existing literature, the empirical chapters have focused upon representing the participants' outlook in particular social, political and cultural contexts. Using the interpretive geographical model set out by Schwartz and Jacobs (1979), the analysis of data is 'attempting to develop representations and constructions to describe the representations and constructions that take place within the social world' (Baxter and Eyles, 1997: 506). Furthermore, I feel that through a process of continuous reflexivity I have developed a rigorous approach to the research through thematic interview guides, understanding the power relations at work throughout the field study alongside critiquing my positionality at every stage of the research context (Baxter and Eyles, 1997).

In terms of addressing the generalisability of research, I have attempted to offer valid accounts of the women involved in the study, and does not mean it is generalisable to all of the Muslim women living in Scotland, however, it is a contextual narrative which opens up previous debates around the lives and contributions of Muslim women in Western societies, their ideas of belonging, identity, participation and anti-racism. Moreover, the nature of the research has been validated through the experience of the participants who argued that such a project was needed to understand the lives and experienced of Muslim women living in Scotland.

4.11 Reflections of the Researcher

As researchers, we must assume, when going into the 'field', that we know very little about the contextual spaces, the everyday lives and the meanings that our participants experience. By doing so, we not only maximise the efficiency of our research project, yet also enable participants the ability to speak without having their thoughts judged within an interview situation. Notwithstanding, we do bring some form of authority to the field and the participant which is near impossible to change and we must also consider the impacts of such power in great detail (Nast, 1994: 59).

Within feminist studies, it is often the preference of the interviewer to enter the ‘field’ as a humble student, stressing that they are hoping to connect with the participants on a number of levels, understanding the participants’ knowledge and contributing their own (England, 1994:82). As a way of reflecting on one’s power within the research, academics may alter power relations so that they become increasingly more equal, although the researcher will inevitably possess more authority. As mentioned in the previous section, the concept of ‘betweenness’ comes into play, living between the world of the participant and the researcher’s own. Betweenness, then, becomes a type of empowerment for the participant as the researcher continually challenges the levels of power in the interview (Pain, 2004: 656). Pain also highlights that such forms of reflexivity can often expound if the aims of empowerment are being met, depending on how the participant reacts to their empowerment (Pain, 2004: 588 and Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

In Nagar’s research she selects dress as a form of reflexivity, contemplating the ways in which gendered concepts of dress were able to locate her within the geographical setting. Although Nagar admits this is not a severe change from what she was used to wearing, she accentuates the importance that dress had within the research, allowing her to become an ‘insider’ to the multiple communities as they homogenously accepted the particular form of attire she had chosen (Nagar, 1997: 216). The notions of reflexivity, positionality and insider/outsider relationships have been further developed within feminist geographical literatures.

The boundaries between what we term ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are unsteady and researchers are more often finding themselves in ‘positional spaces’ (Mullings, 1999: 340) whereby they must confront the level of subjectivities they expose during their field study period. In her research with the Pakistani Muslim community in the south of England, Robina Mohammad noted how she was wary of shifting between the ‘insider/outsider’ roles. She was careful not only to provide too much personal information to her participants about herself, given she was a divorced single mother-of-two which may lead to her exclusion from the small group of women she worked with but also to remain in her given role as insider to the group (Mohammad, 2001). Similarly to Mohammad, I found myself on numerous occasions fighting the urge to allow the participants to delve into my personal life, as many of them asked questions, raised curiosities and pondered about my religious and cultural background and family life. In answering questions about my religious background, I found myself at a crossroad. On one hand, I could use the opportunity to showcase and create my ‘positional space’,

carefully disclosing very particular bits of information or, on the other hand, create an informal space which would allow the participants to view me as ‘one of them’ (Mohammad, 2001: 108). On occasions where I would divulge information, it was more likely to be a series of questions as opposed to a single enquiry, sometimes leading to questions about marital status. On more than one occasion I was asked if I ‘was looking to get married’ and if I were, that the women involved would gladly introduce me to potential candidates as they felt matching was part and parcel of their Islamic duty. This raised serious questions about how I was viewed by the participants and on occasions I contemplated whether wearing a wedding ring would deter them from their curiosities. Ultimately, I felt unable to do so as it would ‘mislead’ my participants and I was under no illusion that they were of extreme significance to me and that misinforming them could lead to upset, withdrawal and consequences in ‘protecting’ the emotional states of my participants. I was careful not to overindulge participants with their enquiries as I could foresee a number of consequences. Firstly, that the elder women would view me as either ‘too modern’ or ‘too westernised’ and not allow me into their homes and around their daughters for fear I should in some way influence them and, secondly, that the younger participants would look to me for ambition and inspiration as they had begun to unwrap and seek out education and career opportunities in the world around them. A number of the younger participants questioned how my parents ‘allowed’ me to come ‘all the way’ to Dundee, ‘were they okay with that?’ they asked. On these occasions I was drawn to consider some of the turbulent relationships the participants may have with parents and male members of their family. Similarly, I was cautious of how I could unconsciously influence any future interactions about their study and career aspirations with their families. I made it clear that my family supported my research, they understood my need to carry out the field study and I was also in regular contact with them throughout the day to alleviate any concerns they may have for my wellbeing. On some occasions I would purposefully call my mother to ask how she was and to let her know I was okay also. Thirdly, I was wary that I would be answerable for any religious and cultural questions the participants may have as some of them positioned my research within the discipline of Islamic Studies rather than Geography.

In his research with young Muslim men in Scotland, Hopkins (2007b) discusses how positionalities were shaped and exercised throughout the study. Unlike in Hopkins’ research, I was aware that I shared one vital similarity to my participants before beginning the research: religion. Although this was not explicit to all of the participants, some

participants would deliberate over it while others assumed I was Muslim, mainly due to my name. The following excerpt, taken from my talk considering the various positionalities I explored when carrying out my research allows a further breakdown of the different methods of reflexivity I sought at each stage of the research process:

One of the crucial aspects of the fieldwork was my attire. During the interview process I would go on to ask the women about clothing and the style of dress, their clothing consumption habits and ways in which these are linked or not linked to their sense of faith. So it was important to consider my own personal views on this. So the question for me was, how could I maintain my own religious autonomy at the same time as not offending my participants by wearing the clothes that I normally do, which I would characterise as non-Islamic and 'western'. In some cases, this decision was made easy by the location of the meeting, the mosque, for instance whereby I would wear clothing that would naturally fully cover my arms, legs and also my head by wearing a loose head covering. Although I would do this regardless of participants when entering a mosque, out of respect, I also think many other, non-Muslim researchers would follow this model of covering when in a mosque or respect the rules in a place of religious worship.

In cases where meetings were conducted in a non-religious setting, I decided to take it easy and cover my arms and legs but not my head, to maintain my religious independence and also respect the participant but not assuming they are highly religious or show little religious inclination – for this, I wore what I would prefer to call my normal attire, jeans, trousers, jumpers etc. this worked well for most of the time and few participants questioned my faith throughout the fieldwork, however, I was met with some hostility when carrying out an interview with a woman in Glasgow who told me I should be wearing at least the Hijab, which is a tight covering over the head, if not the Niqaab, because that is what Allah wills us to do. On another occasion, during a focus group, I was under fire again for being the only woman in the room, bar one, not wearing a headscarf. These occurrences happened after the interviews and focus groups had already finished, so the women had consciously thought about this during the discussions, waiting till the end to ask their questions, which I thought was very kind of them to do because they decided not to interrupt the interview process. I decided to be very honest and answered the questions as detailed as possible so the women knew how aware I was of the fact that I did not cover my head. I told them it was an active decision I made not cover my head as I had learned that Islam has many interpretations and schools of thought and that I chose not wear the headscarf because I didn't feel it was necessary for

me personally but can fully appreciate women who take an active decision to cover their head, one which I felt was very courageous given the current political and social climate.'

(Excerpt 4. Positionality talk, Newcastle University 2010)

In the case of my research, I found that each meeting, contact, negotiation was a lesson learned also, of the importance of deep self reflective thought of my power on my own research and to learn to embody the position of an outsider in some situations but also the positive impact of being an insider. For me, the outsider came as a young woman who was not Scottish, independent and a researcher, the insider came in the form of a British Asian Muslim woman who was aware of the rules of clothing, manner and verse in Islam, and being able to use these in casual conversation without obscuring the nature of the research and the precious position in which I held my participants.

Since the fieldwork, I have maintained some contact with participants and the organisations involved in the study, either through recruitment or providing spaces in which I could carry out the interviews. AMINA (MWRC) were particularly useful and a number of the volunteers have since become friends or associates who contact me to request information or write letters supporting the work their organisations are doing due to continued financial threats and closure. Other organisations have maintained contact through social networking websites such as Facebook or e-mailing lists.

4.12 Conclusion

Feminism became increasingly popular within the discipline of Geography as numbers of female academics increased, giving way to a new 'turn' in academia of studies attempting to explain the marginality of women previously within the academy and general workforce. This distinction began to surface as enhanced levels of literature were published within various books and journals throughout the 1970's (Rose, 1993). This criticism of Geography was not only questioning the under-representation of women, rather probing the origins of knowledge within Geography, questioning its validity, impartiality and integrity within research. It is this particular type of knowledge which feminists criticise as it neglects to investigate the delicate gendered differences which exist in social reality.

Continually feminist theorists are taking apart many of the ‘assumed truths’ regarding the world and decoding the complex nature of one’s identity. The methodologies employed directly affect the ways in which research is carried out, the dissimilar contexts in which the research can take place as well as the researcher’s own influence upon the research process. “Feminist research strategies are overtly linked to the researchers’ engagement in social and political change” (Hanson, 1997: 123). Such research requires sensitivity and patience on the part of the researcher and research team in order to carry out good qualitative research.

The ‘home’ has not only been employed as the ‘field’ of data collection but also as a strategy of sharing common identities with and between women, producing sensitive accounts of women’s lives and “gender-aware explanations of social phenomena” (Nagar, 1997: 206). This chapter has sought to provide a detailed and enhanced look into the research design, mechanics and processes involved in the fieldwork. I have here spoken of the crucial understandings of ethics, analysis, the growing significance of understanding reflexivity and positionality in research and a short overview of the interactions since the fieldwork has been completed. The next chapters of the thesis introduce the empirical work, beginning with *Hijab* Practice.

Chapter Five

Hijab Practice

5.1 Introduction

The various forms of Islamic clothing, in particular the *Hijab* and what it represents, have very quickly become one of the most controversial of debates in British society today. Intense media attention and social scrutiny have failed to address issues of negotiation by and the experiences of *Hijab* wearers. A number of academics have raised questions surrounding the various interpretations of *Hijab* (Hussein, 2007; Saidi, 2012), and the application of *Hijab* and its place within a British multicultural community (Haw, 2009; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012; Werbner, 2007). A large number of studies (see Afshar, 1998; Basit, 1997; Dwyer, 1999) with Muslim communities in Britain have focused upon women's place within the home, work and social domain. Scotland as a separate place and space of *Hijab* practice has been severely neglected within empirical research and as such this chapter goes some way to explore the ways in which the *Hijab* places itself as a significant part in the everyday lives of Muslim women living in Scotland.

I begin with a review of literature, discussing the interpretations of the *Hijab* and the *headscarf*, and why it is necessary to distinguish between the two throughout this study. I

also use participants' own experiences to draw close attention to the ways they understand what meanings the *Hijab* and *headscarf* means to them. The literature reviews the (re)presentation of Muslim women and the *headscarf* and explores key studies in Muslim women's interactions whilst practising *Hijab*.

From section 5.6 onwards, I introduce the first empirical evidence of the thesis, exploring the various constructions of the *Hijab* in the everyday lives of Muslim women in Scotland. I explore the ways in which they view *Hijab* practice, their awareness of global and political change and how the participants felt they had become individually invisible yet were religiously visible. The chapter goes on to discuss how Muslim women are applying cosmopolitan fashion to the *Hijab* to make it more appropriate to contemporary fashion and feminising their dress and I end with a discussion about how Muslim women in Scotland are acutely aware of *Hijab* practice, whether or not they decide to wear the *headscarf* or *veil* and the experiences they have been subject to post-September 11th 2001.

5.2 Hijab and Islamic interpretation

As the most crucial and physically obvious signifier for its wearer, the *headscarf* has become one of the most contested markers of identity in recent years for Muslim women. Previously, it has often been linked to female subordination and oppressive cultures and, as described by Bullock (2002), a 'pop culture view' of Muslim women practicing the *Hijab* through the notion of covering began to see them as little more than creatures of tyranny. Bullock argues that feminism and its approach to the *veil* is less assuming and equally ignorant to the experiences of the wearer (Bullock, 2002) as they are heavily rooted in liberalism and individualism, neglecting the silent voice of *headscarf* and *veil* wearers. More recently, however, academics have sought to understand the *headscarf* from the perspective of its wearer, and explore ways in which the *headscarf* is an embodiment of women's faith, and an everyday practice of *Hijab* (modesty) and the role it plays in daily routine (Dwyer, 1999, Tarlo, 2010). It has been in the twentieth century that more Muslim women are accepting the practice of the *Hijab* or *headscarf* (Ruby, 2006) and Afshar (1991) describes this urgency by Muslim women as one rooted in increased awareness of religiosity through education and religious engagement. Together with a rise in commitment to religious intellectuality, Muslim women began to practice wearing the *headscarf* and *veil*, which in turn, led to a keen interest by social

anthropologists and social and cultural geographers to explore further the dynamics of the *headscarf* and *Hijab* and the role it plays within societies that are historically non-Muslim (See for example Shadid and Van Koningsveld, 2005 (Netherlands); Hussein, 2007 (Australia); Werbner, 2007 and Mahmud and Swami, 2010 (Britain and France)).

In order to fully comprehend the various ways in which Muslim women understand the *Hijab*, it is equally important to understand the context in which *Hijab* was created, written and practised. Lane (1984) suggests that when discussing the different interpretations taken from Islamic text concerning the *veil* and *Hijab*, the latter is often perceived as prevention or beholding yet also a protection. The concept of *Hijab* is that of modesty and concealment and there is ongoing debate among Islamic scholars and Muslim communities as to the interpretation of the *Hijab* from Qur'anic text, with debates stretching from modest to loose clothing as an acceptable form of *Hijab* to a more literal practice as the correct and only form of *Hijab* custom. Appearing in the Qur'an no more than seven times, five times as a noun (*Hijab*) and twice as 'Hijaban' (Ruby, 2006), the *Hijab* becomes a method of protection which can be physically worn and/or emotionally practiced. Badr (2004) argues that the ways in which language is used to portray the *veil* is misleading, often negative and oppressive, without taking into consideration the experience of the wearer before assuming this particular form of clothing as immoral and backward. A large majority of participants in this study argued that in order to accomplish the objective of the *Hijab*, its wearer must adhere to, or aspire to, the emotional and physical notion of *Hijab*, therefore the use of language throughout this chapter is critical. *Hijab* will be used to convey embodiment of both physical and mental modesty whilst the *headscarf* and *veil* will be exercised in a more literal sense to describe the garment worn to cover the hair, face and neck. In a similar way, *Jilbab*, *Niqaab* and *Abaya* will be appropriated to describe the long dresses and overcoats worn by Muslim women. It is important to make this differentiation as the participants in this study often found themselves in a state of confusion as to how the *Hijab* has come to mean something which is an item of clothing yet throughout Islamic history and verse it is described as an intricate kind of behaviour which men and women must follow, and in turn, diminishing this gendered role that *Hijab* plays within the everyday.

As already specified, the interpretations of religious text are vast and complex, and an attempt at exploring a wide range of these is not the purpose of this chapter. This said, it is clear much of the literature and looking at Muslim women is doing so through a feminist lens and as such, I decided that a large amount of the literature would also carry

forward the ideas rooted in feminist literature concerning the interpretation of the *Hijab* in Islamic text and history. A literal meaning of *Hijab* – ‘curtain’ can be found in Surah 33, verse 53 of the Holy Qur'an (Mernissi, 1987). Mernissi goes on to argue that the concept is three-dimensional:

‘The first dimension is a visual one: to hide something from sight... the second dimension is spatial: to separate, to mark a border, to establish a threshold. And finally, the third dimension is ethical: it belongs to the realm of the forbidden’ (Mernissi, 1987: 93).

Ethical dimensions of the *Hijab* relate to that which is forbidden, hiding something from public gaze.

In relation to the *veil*, Ahmed (1992) argues this was mainly practiced by the Prophet Muhammad’s wives and she goes on to suggest that although it is not completely clear how the *veil* came to become a norm among the rest of the female Muslim communities. She further argues it was “perhaps wives being taken as models probably combined to bring about the general adoption” (1992: 56). Albeit uncertain, Ahmed’s argument may relate to the ambiguousness of the *veil* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as it does not explicitly convey the notion of what the *veil* may be. A literal interpretation of Surah 24: 31 would find impositions to forms of modesty but little justification in the creation of a garment to cover fully all parts of the body when outside the setting of the private space:

‘And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers...’ (Yusuf Ali, 2000: 290)

Similarly to Bullock (2002), I highlight that it is not the Holy Qur'an that determines “in any casual way how people live” (2002: xxi) yet the translations and interpretations of the Holy texts and the practising of those texts in a particular cultural, political and economic context. She goes on to argue that there is no denying that some Muslim women do live under particular gendered restrictions however the reasons, rather than being based within Islamic text and Hadith, are much better understood through a cultural lens and cultural practices. I further argue in this chapter that women’s experiences of the *Hijab* are symbolised through embodiments of cultural and religious practices. It is the embodied experience of the *Hijab* that I further explore throughout the next section.

5.3 Representations of the Hijab in the Global North

Current debates surrounding the *Hijab* and *veil* are constantly reinvigorated and renewed as a result of ongoing global and national political ramifications and policy discourse. Post-colonial meanings of the *Hijab* post-September 11th 2001 have been refuelled yet still overlook or shield the experiences of Muslim women and, as a result, much of the depiction, contestation and deliberation concerning the *headscarf* and *veil* originate from male perspectives (Jonker, 2003). More recently, however, renewed debate attempting to dissect the contributions made by Muslim women are growing (see Bullock and Jafri, 2001; Ho, 2007; Hussain, 2008; Tarlo, 2010) as a visible presence of Muslim women wearing Islamic clothing increases and the geographies of religion pertaining to the study of Islam and Muslims in the UK find themselves questioning the various spaces of engagement in which Muslim women are able to be executors of their interactions. Dwyer (1999) argues that dress is regularly overemphasised within studies concerning Muslim women and that it is therefore a ‘contested signifier’ for Muslim women’s identity and social recognition of their affinity to their faith (Dwyer, 1999: 5). By creating binary opposites, the *Hijab* has previously been represented as a form of dress contradictory to ‘Western’ values. Dwyer’s argument deconstructs these binaries, and instead rethinks some of the ways in which young Muslim women create and maintain autonomous and varied identities while wearing or considering Islamic dress. She further illustrates that particular spaces produce different meanings of dress, using school environments as a place to consider the negotiation of identities (Dwyer, 1999).

Certain Islamic dresses such as the *headscarf* have come to be known as doctrine and other symbols of clothing which have become synonymous with Islam are the *Burkhas*, the full veiling of the body and face, coupling Islam with oppression, male domination and, since wide scale acknowledgment of Islamic extremism, and fundamentalism (Badr, 2004). The *Hijab* and, more exclusively, the *veil* have become deeply connected with fanatical Islamist culture and the level of physical concealment offered by the *veil* is often intimidating and perceived as a danger to Western civilisation (Badr, 2004). Naheed Mustafa, a Canadian-born freelance journalist speaking at a conference for the University of Exeter Islamic Society said:

‘In the Western world, the Hijab has come to symbolise either forced silence or radical unconscionable militancy. Actually, it’s neither. It is simply a

woman's assertion that judgement of her physical person is to play no role whatsoever in social interaction' (Franks, 2000: 924).

In the UK specifically, Hussain (2008) argues that the religiosity of Muslim women is often spiritually and physically greater than that of the indigenous white British population, therefore their adoption of British ways and processes is often more difficult to achieve. Later in this chapter I explore the participants' experiences, both negative and positive, of the *Hijab* in public space.

For many Muslim women, as recognised later in this chapter, the *Hijab* can be seen to symbolise a number of things including modesty and a shying away from Western culture, an embodiment of Islamic, cultural and personal identities. It is the interpretation and depiction of these identities which has created social barriers for Muslim women as they look to embrace *Hijab* as a practice and the *headscarf* as a garment (Said, 1997). The meanings drawn from the representation of the *Hijab* in news media have long ignored "the complex, cultural, political, socio-economic and religious factors that influence whether or not Muslim women cover" (Badr, 2004: 321). Equally damaging is the depiction of Muslim women post-September 11th 2001 and the invasion of Afghanistan as "faceless creatures behind the *veil* and [their] husbands" (Badr, 2004: 325) which only led to a reinforcement of the already negatively perceived connotations of Muslim people and Islam as a backward and fundamentalist culture and religion (Gregory, 2004; Atia, 2007). Many studies condemning the overly negative portrayal of the *veil* and *Hijab* have been conducted (See for example, Kutty, 1997; Jafri, 1998; Bullock and Jafri, 2001; Ahmad, 2002; Cole and Ahmadi, 2003; Cloud, 2004; Wadud, 2007 and Tarlo, 2010). Although a number of academics argue that many Muslim women see the *Hijab* as a positive act and practice (Franks, 2000), others have argued that the concept of *veiling* is one rooted in patriarchal domination and discourse, alluding to the actual passiveness of Muslim women (El Saadawi, 1980; Mernissi, 1987). For these, the *veil* and *Hijab* practice becomes one of ultimate dictation: physically and psychologically. Fatima Mernissi, in particular, argues that the *veil* and the meanings behind it have and continue to hinder the development of women's rights and thus is oppressing to Muslim women (Mernissi, 1987). Writing as an Islamic feminist scholar, Mernissi considers the religious, historical and cultural justification of the *veil* and *Hijab* practice, which leads her to condemn them as rooted in historical context (Mernissi, 1987).

5.4 Embodying the *Hijab*

The characterisation and makeup of an ethnic identity is the result of cultural experiences or norms created through or as a result of post colonial migrations (Hall, 1996). In this respect, the *headscarf*, although certainly not a result of post colonial experience, can be better understood in the global North as an expressed religious symbol rather than an identity (Dwyer, 1999). The *headscarf* does, therefore, become an identifier of a particular religious and cultural identity. It is important to understand, however, that the way a *headscarf* is worn, the style, colour, length is an indicator of a number of things including the ethnic culture of its wearer as well as how they interpret the *headscarf* in Islamic doctrine. And equally as significant is the non-practice of the *headscarf* and what this means for *Hijab* practice by those who choose not to wear the *headscarf* or *veil*. Dwyer (1999) expresses this signifier as a choice for Muslim women, one which is individual and can be better understood as an amalgamation of a number of discourses including “ethnic heritage; socio-economic class; parental or familial attitudes; religious beliefs; political affiliation and personal orientation” (1999: 6).

“One has to be bold and intrepid to wear the *Hijab*, not a victim” (Franks, 2000: 920). Franks’ argument considers the practice of wearing the *headscarf* as one which is “situation and contextual” (2000: 917) as opposed to a limitation of social interaction. As a garment, the *headscarf* becomes an active choice by Muslim women which inevitably provides them with the opportunity to contemplate observations made by those around them and this in turn allows them to develop their religious, cultural and social identities. Jonker (2003) explains how positive meanings can be drawn from the *headscarf*, describing it as a device used to gain respect. In this particular sense, Muslim women who wear the *headscarf* are immediately made aware of the practice of *Hijab*, reflecting on those practices and realising that the *headscarf* becomes much more than a symbol of religion and identifier of ethnic and cultural heritage but also a responsibility that they are expected to fulfil. In this study, the Muslim women who wore the *headscarf* felt that they were not only representing themselves as women and individuals but also representing Muslims the world over and Islam itself. Killian (2003) argues that this responsibility is unfairly thrust upon women as there can be negative consequences for family or communities if women wearing the *headscarf* cannot continually adhere to its ideologies. I argue throughout this thesis that Muslim women are bearing responsibilities for

worldwide Muslim misrepresentation that is generalised across religious culture, homogenising different ethnic and national communities.

Symbolism is intricately linked to notions of *veiling* and a number of writers (Killian, 2003; Tarlo, 2010) have argued that the *headscarf*, depending on its style, can be used to identify the wearer by their national and cultural heritage. For example, in North Africa and some Middle Eastern countries, women have worn the *headscarf* as a reaction to the West and as a result of post-colonial nationalist movements (Killian, 2003). In discussing Islam in the West, Shaffir (1978) argues that when one feels their norms or cultures are threatened, they are more likely to give those cultures more significance within their lives. For this reason, it is conceivable that Muslims living in Britain, indigenous or not, are more likely to be perceived as religious or highly spiritual. Dwyer takes this argument further by arguing that the sexualisation of the body is a leading factor for a woman's decision to begin wearing the *headscarf* as she is not only following her religious norm but can also be performing a 'dulling' of her sexuality through wearing ethnic or traditional clothing (Dwyer, 1999). A number of the participants in this study spoke about their experiences of *Hijab* practice through wearing the *headscarf* as they felt 'protected' from being sexualised or overly feminised by others (see section 5.6.1).

5.5 Experiences of the Hijab in public space

There have been various studies completed concerning the experiences of Muslim women wearing the *headscarf* across the world, with a large number of these being conducted post-September 11th 2001. A number of these studies have attempted to understand the *headscarf* and *Hijab* from a feminist perspective and, thus, have explored particular meanings synonymous with Islamic dress. Badr (2004) explores the experiences of Muslim women in Houston, USA post-September 11th 2001 and the ways in which news and media depiction has affected their observation of the *Hijab* and the meanings attached to this in everyday routine and within Islamic history. According to Badr, 92% of the respondents felt there would be a negative backlash on Muslims in the U.S immediately after the New York and Washington attacks, with a further 98% fearing negative portrayal of Muslims subsequent to September 11th 2001, especially which are aimed towards Muslim women (67%) (Badr, 2004: 328-330). Of the 67 women involved in Badr's study, 41 wore the *headscarf* and over half of these were immigrant Muslim

women. The women in the study agreed that the physical practice of the *Hijab* (*headscarf*) is one rooted in cultural discourse alongside religious principles. Similarly, Ruby's (2006) study of Muslim women in Canada discusses the experiences of Muslim women who are non-wearers of the *headscarf*, arguing they often feel pressure to conform to convention, accepting mainstream ideals that women must cover in Islam. This said, these particular women felt that the *Hijab*, if worn, is an element of their cultural identity rather than a religious obligation (Ruby, 2006). Dwyer's (1999) study of schoolgirls in an English school found that Muslim girls were often racialised which led to exclusionary practices. Furthermore, she draws attention to the ways in which dress is scrutinised for young Muslim women of Mirpuri background as 'respectability' is tied together with appearance and behaviour, creating obligations for young Muslim women to dress accordingly to adhere to cultural and ethnic practice.

The practice of racialization has become synonymous with Muslims in the 'West' and in her study of female Muslim students, Dwyer (1999) argues that ethnic heritage is among the factors in the deliberation of dress, further considering the ways in which religion and ethnic heritage are combined to create assumptions about Muslim students and their ethnic background (Dwyer, 2000). Similarly, Franks' (2000) study of white Muslim women in Britain suggested that white Muslims experience Islamophobia through association with Islam, not as British people (Franks. 2000). This will be further discussed in the analysis section as this chapter draws upon the experiences of white and non-white Muslim convert women and their adoption of the *headscarf*.

Through the conscious decision making process involved in covering a particular part of their person, Muslim women are ultimately controlling their interactions (cf. Ruby, 2006). Franks (2000) suggests by practicing *Hijab* through the *headscarf*, Muslim women are narrowing the "sexual site(s) or sight(s)" they choose to convey to the public eye (Franks, 2000: 921). In this respect, the *Hijab* becomes a method of mobility, one which allows women to freely manoeuvre between public and private, becoming directors of their interactions along the way. The *headscarf*, then, is indeed not a barrier to social engagement, yet an empowered tool with which Muslim women choose their interactions. Tarlo's (2010) study of Muslim women in Britain found that they felt extremely empowered by the *headscarf* and through 'Hijab activism', Muslim women were continually conscious of the space around them and the affect the *headscarf* would have upon their daily interactions.

5.6 Interpretations of Hijab and headscarf

I now explore the ways in which some of the participants discuss Islamic clothing, practice *Hijab* in public spaces, personal interpretations and embodiments of dress. It is integral to the order of the thesis to locate this chapter as it introduces some of the most personal conversations I had with participants and opens up debate for further chapters also, arguing the ways in which dress plays a role in their everyday decisions and identity formations. I argue here that Muslim women's interpretation of *Hijab* vary greatly from those who believe it is not a requirement of Islamic practice, nor is it firmly rooted in interpretations of Islamic history, to those who strongly contend that without the *headscarf*, a Muslim woman is not correctly adhering to Islamic dress, and is therefore not adhering to Islamic guidance. I also assert that Muslim women are 'invisibly visible'. I construct this as a space where Muslim women are religiously visible either through the process of racialisation or their physical signifiers of dress. Simultaneously, they are individually overlooked for these signifiers, or indeed overlooked religiously when not adhering to Islamic forms of dress. I begin with an exploration of the intimate and personal scale of the body before shifting my attention to consider the role of the community and how Muslim women occupy local spaces.

5.6.1 What is *Hijab*?

As discussed earlier, the meanings attached to Islamic dress are diverse, not only interpreting Qur'anic texts but also the application of the verses in daily life. The participants in Cole and Ahmadi's (2003) study of Muslim women in an American university campus found that a number of them took to wearing the *headscarf* for a multitude of reasons. The study, conducted with students on a college campus found six prominent themes which ranged from 'being a good Muslim' to 'social reinforcement... and religious obligation' (Cole and Ahmadi, 2003: 54). In my study, similar themes around stereotypes and representations were found, alongside how some women took on board interpretations of the holy texts in which they felt the *headscarf* was an obligatory practice. In one conversation, a young Pakistani participant and a student of Computer Science stated:

‘There is not even a question of not veiling, I mean it’s understood, that if you are a good practicing Muslim woman, you have to cover. I mean there is no debate about that.’ (Cole and Ahmadi, 2003: 54).

This was also prevalent amongst my participants, all of whom understood *Hijab* in different ways and had different experiences of *Hijab* practice. Some of these differences were rooted in their ethnic and cultural backgrounds the adoption of the *headscarf* was a pinnacle of their personal endeavours to maintain and practice their faith in a physical form. Here, Afra in Dundee describes how she believes she is obeying the word of Allah through embodying the *Hijab* physically:

“Because the most important thing in my life is I am Muslim and I am obeying Allah in everything and one of them is my dress, the way I dress” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

For her, it is the literal interpretation of the Islamic texts which are crucial, playing a vital role in her decision to wear the *headscarf*. For others, such as Zubeidah in Edinburgh, *Hijab* represents more than a cloth over her hair. It is the essence of the way she dresses. Here, the *headscarf* becomes a routine rather than consciousness:

“I find it strange that people call it the scarf, the head covering, a Hijab because my whole dress is a Hijab so I get a bit erm like, why does it have to have such a label, people do cover their heads, they might need a hat for the warmth or they’re having a bad hair day so they decide to wear a hat or something... So it’s only a little bit of the way I dress. I’ve got a whole body that I cover, it’s only the head part that suddenly becomes a huge beacon” (Zubeidah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2009)

Zubeidah places less emphasis on the meaning the *headscarf* may carry as she sees her whole sense of dress as a form of *Hijab*. She finds the idea that her *headscarf* stands out as a label in which people define her as a setback, rightly believing that there is more to a person than physical elements. With such debates around the *headscarf* and forms of Islamic clothing, Zubeidah associates the amount of misplaced attention on the *Hijab* as something which distracts from understanding Muslim women from a more intimate perspective. Similarly to Zubeidah, Nazli, aged 26, is a manager in the voluntary sector:

“Hijab to me is... to cover your hair, to cover your chest, to dress modestly so there’s no point in wearing Hijab and wearing short sleeves because there’s point in covering your hair and wearing short sleeves, it kind of defeats the purpose. Hijab to me is modesty and that your face and your hands and your feet are not the only thing that’s covered and you’re not dressed in a provocative way” (Nazli, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Nazli describes *Hijab* as more than a *headscarf*, it is also important for her to practice *Hijab* through the embodiment of dress, a form of modesty which can only be achieved through dress.

Furthermore, Kalsoom, a Scottish convert to Islam discusses her experience of women in full veil (*Niqaab*):

“Niqaab for a lot of people is, is the protection and the veil that actually enables them to go into public life and certainly people I know, I mean I know people who are quite happy you know working and meeting with people and so on as long as they’ve got their Niqaab on because that gives them that sufficient separation that enables them to interact and ... they can engage whereas you know I know people who if they didn’t have that then they would have to stay home, they wouldn’t be able to engage in that kind of life” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

She describes how, for these women, the *veil* itself is the driving force behind empowerment and Muslim women use this force as a method of direction everyday interactions, in the workplace and in public. Women become directors of their personal exchanges, making the *Niqaab* a powerful force in everyday interactions. Similarly to the women in Williams and Vashi’s (2007) study of Muslim women in America, here it is the *Niqaab* which allows women the opportunity to engage in both public and private space of interaction.

For two particular participants, Firdaus and Heba, *Hijab* is a form of modesty in behaviour alongside the practice of physical modesty. Firdaus, a Pakistani mother-of-two is 52 years old. Having been born and raised in Pakistan, Firdaus talked of times previously in the interview when she wore *headscarf* and here, once she felt more comfortable in her personal faith and devotion to no longer wear the *headscarf*:

“I don’t wear Hijab, I don’t cover my head but I cover my body and I try to do Hijab as well, I don’t just come out and I know I should cover myself, I should look after my eyes. And if I have good intentions” (Firdaus, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Firdaus talks about how *Hijab* is intricately linked to the notion of ‘intentions’, as Mernissi (1987) discusses, the form that *Hijab* takes is emotional, physical and mental. In Edinburgh, Heba is a teacher, originally from Saudi Arabia and moved to the UK as a result of her husband’s profession in medicine. She speaks here about ‘connections’ between *Hijab* and its wearer:

“Okay, Hijab to me means not just covering your head and your body but also... you know how you present yourself, for example, not making a scene while on the road or attracting attention, unnecessary attention. Not speaking with a loud voice, I think Hijab erm I would say is the essence of a Muslim woman, just it’s very special and it shows most of all the submission to Allah because it’s a command to wear the Hijab and I think that’s why this connection between you and god, it’s that very special” (Heba, Edinburgh, 28th January, 2010)

Heba sees the *Hijab* as a commandment from Allah, one which takes a physical form but must also be practiced socially and she uses the example of social etiquette to portray the ways in which *Hijab* takes form in the space of the public.

Similarly to Heba, Kalsoom, 42, in Glasgow understands the *headscarf* as practice which has been foretold and an act which she must obey, nevertheless, Kalsoom places her decision to wear the *headscarf* within a feminist framework, describing how it is specific to her previous experiences as a young, white, Scottish woman who felt a responsibility not to sexualise her body and the practice of *Hijab* through the *headscarf* allowed her to become comfortable within an environment where she feels physical beauty often overlooks emotional comfort:

“We’ve been asked to wear it and... because of my generation if you like, the feminism as well, I’ve never been into wanting to flaunt my body and all of that kind of stuff so it kind of made some sense on that level too” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

Nuha, an English Muslim convert woman living in Edinburgh redefines the *Hijab* as a normative practice, one which must go hand in hand with everyday life in Edinburgh. She understands that the *Hijab* is a practice which must follow social norms as well as religious verse and she uses religious and social context in which the Qur'an was written to justify her decision to dress accordingly:

“And I do believe you live according to the society that you're in and I certainly believe that about Hijab and covering and modesty and you're supposed to be modest in relation to the society that you're in and actually that society is fairly immodest so it's not that hard [laughs]. It's the difference of wearing a t shirt or shorts to go swimming on the beach or a thong and no top, I think it's that kind of... I believe that actually you're alright in a t shirt and shorts in that situation” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Here, she uses the example of visiting a beach and wearing a t-shirt and shorts as opposed to beachwear and still being able to apply *Hijab* in such a situation. Echoing Nuha's thoughts on the matter, Erina, a Scottish-born Muslim convert stresses that wearing the *headscarf* and being a Muslim convert diverts more attention to her in the public, which, in essence, is not the intention of the *headscarf*. She appreciates that Scotland is not an Islamic country and therefore, it is the feeling of belonging which is crucial for Erina as she recognises being a white Muslim convert, she is more visible wearing the *headscarf*:

“When I'm in an Islamic country, I will wear Islamic dress, I will put the Hijab on, I have no qualms with that because I want to blend in and I feel that if I wear it here I will stand out and I don't want to do that” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

This first empirical section highlights the varied interpretations women apply to the *Hijab* and *headscarf*. They discuss the *Hijab* as a way of ‘obeying Allah’ through Islamic dress, they similarly argue that *Hijab* can be better understood through the guise of ‘modesty’. Modesty in dress implies conservative fashion which covers the skin over the neck and body. Interestingly, the participants are aware of the juxtaposition that exists between the *Hijab* and the *headscarf* as Zubeidah highlights that her whole dress and behaviour is *Hijab* but only her head covering can be construed as a *headscarf*. It is crucial to appreciate that these interpretations follow throughout the rest of the thesis. It presents unique and divided understandings of faith, the practices of faith alongside experiences of the women.

5.6.2 Global developments in Hijab

The participants in the study, although from a range of backgrounds and experiences, were aware of global ramifications in terms of public policy and social interest when it came to Muslims and Islam. Many of them were politically aware, if not politically active and understood the role of news media in debates around the *Hijab*, its consequences and the various ways in which Muslims are portrayed and how changes in other countries could affect them.

Heba contemplates the recent policy change in France, forbidding the wearing of the *Niqaab* in public places. Later in the interview, Heba suggest she would emigrate elsewhere if such a ban were to be enforced upon Muslim women in the UK:

“I think the recent France’s ban on veils and Hijab, I think that’s ridiculous and it is raising concerns. People are already applauding, you know the British people are already applauding the, er France on maintaining its culture and not letting the outsiders change things and they’re talking about how we should embrace that” (Heba, Edinburgh, 28th January, 2010)

Recognising the negative impact such a ban would have upon her own personal use of the *Niqaab*, Heba’s words imply an aversion to those who support the ban as she sees it ultimately as one of a violation of her own rights. Similar to the participants in Tarlo’s (2010) study, a ban on the *Niqaab* or *headscarf* in Britain would lead a harming of the preservation of Muslim identity in Britain.

Erina is a 47-year old Scottish Muslim convert, and a mother of four. Here she reflects on the negative use of language in print media which demonstrates the serious consequences irresponsible reporting can have upon Muslim women:

“... then the big headline ‘women won’t get on plane’ but when you read the [whole] story, the ladies didn’t go off in a huff, they didn’t spout about it, they just said ‘no we don’t wanna do it’ and then the airport contacted them and said yes, you can have a refund so I think the media just like a headline”
(Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Erina uses the example of two women refusing to be scanned in a full body scanner at an airport. She argues that they were portrayed as backward and unsocial, and there are further details behind the incident which often goes unreported. Erina identifies here how

Orientalist portrayals of Muslim women can become extremely damaging if not accurately described (See Bullock and Jafri, 2001; Zine, 2006; Said, 1981). Afra, another participant from Dundee identifies the power of media reporting, arguing that Muslims are continually alert to the environment around them, how they are perceived in that environment, creating spaces of relentless reflexivity and self consciousness:

“Because if you look, if you look to the media and to the, what’s going around in politics, you always be alert about you are a Muslim, they are Scottish, I’m a Muslim, you are aware of issues which is... you are not aware of it in normal daily life” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

These two excepts illustrate how born Muslims and those who have reverted/converted to Islam understand the damage that can be caused by irresponsible or hyphenated media attention. Afra argues that the increase in media attention leads to a questioning of identity and belonging, compelling Muslims to identify themselves in social situations. Deeba, a young Libyan born and Scottish raised student talks about the awareness of wider, global political ramifications, especially those taking place in Muslim states and the interventions from the ‘Western’ part of the world upon Islamic states:

“I think it’s mainly because of all the politics that goes on and how all the Muslim countries are crazy rich and oil and stuff and what they try and do is to keep people busy with all these problems so they can do what they please”
(Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Deeba’s assertion that ‘oil rich’ countries are often the centre of news media debate certainly draws us closer to understanding how young Muslims interact with negative media and recognise its impacts. On one hand, Deeba illustrates that the media is at fault for misunderstanding Muslims, portraying Muslim countries as ‘crazy rich’, and on the other, she sees too much attention given to Muslim states in the news, often at the risk of depersonalising Muslims elsewhere. On a more positive note, Hajra, a 33 year-old divorced mother-of-one talks about research events undertaken in Glasgow as a response to negative media portrayal of Muslims:

“Erm there was a series of events that took place here in Scotland called the Muslim women talk erm, it kind of touches on some of the things that you’re talking about and it was getting Muslim women’s perceptions after the 7/7 issue and erm... but I think it made me think... were it to happen now I would challenge it because I think because as the years have gone by I have become

stronger and more aware, more aware of my rights as well erm so I would challenge it, I'll give as good as I get now [laughs]“ (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

Hajra reflects on the lessons learnt from the events and how she was able to relate her experiences in the public and interpret those experiences given the necessary frameworks, in this case, viewing her experiences through a racialised, cultural lens. She adds that if similar situations were to arise again, she would be prepared to tackle any racism she may experience. The excerpts presented here reflect on the negative media impacts of Muslims and Islam and the ways in which these have come to be seen as demonstrated experiences, lessons to be learnt, as is the case for Hajra in Glasgow. Furthermore, it is understood here that unities of faith bring singular values in attempting to seek out and highlight negative media, the women in this section are from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, yet they share a set of distinct attitudes when speaking of global developments and media portrayals of *Hijab*.

5.6.3 Individual invisibility and religious visibility

A number of participants in the study who practiced *Hijab* through the *headscarf* often felt they had become displaced as individuals and had become invisible as empowered beings, yet religiously visible to those with whom they interacted. Here, Aisha describes an experience she had at an airport:

“I remember taking a flight to England, to London rather, and being at Glasgow airport and obviously because of my visual impairment, I have to get assistance to reach to the aircraft and er I remember a couple of guys having a whole discussion you know about me in front of me about how they were going to do this and you know ‘we’ll probably need an interpreter’ and I was like ‘hello, you know I do speak English, just talk to me about it’ and just being completely ignored, it was like I had not made that statement. And they were coming up with a wheelchair that I didn’t need, asking what language do you speak? English! [Laughs] should we get you an interpreter? Er no!”

(Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Aisha, a Scottish born white Muslim convert who wears the *headscarf*, is also visually impaired and required assistance to reach her terminal at the airport. Here, she reflects on the conversation between the servicemen who assisted her to her terminal, remembering that they were discussing whether they would need to call an interpreter to be able to hold dialogue with her. Her emotions in reaction to the experience are obvious, feeling anger, disappointment and disempowered by the response the two men had to her wearing the *headscarf*, showing little consideration to her language abilities, and openly discussing her person. For Aisha, together with the *headscarf* and her visual impairment, there was an instant invisibility attached to her spoken language abilities also as the men proceeded to assume she was unable to converse in English, in spite of her being a part of the indigenous Scottish community.

Aisha's experience at the airport echoes what a number of white convert Muslim women who wear the *headscarf* have experienced. The memories of becoming individually invisible yet religiously visible are increasingly driven towards Muslim converts in this study and Kalsoom remembers being mistaken for a nun in the city centre of Glasgow. Although she blissfully remembers how the security guard mistook her for a nun, she was also aware that had the truth become known, she may fall prey to negative behaviours, hence her decision to use other city centre places of parking. This said, Kalsoom did take advantage of his mistaking her for a nun as a way to avoid parking charges in the first instance:

“I used to go erm, I used to go for meetings and I would go to this car park and the guy in this car park used to keep calling me sister and then I realised that the Arch Diocese of Glasgow was just around the corner from that car park and he thought I was a nun. I sometimes had a blue scarf, he thought I was a nun going there and he would shout yes sister, I won’t charge you sister [laughs]. I stopped going there because I thought he’s gonna find me out [laughs]” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

Franks' (2000) study of white Muslim women in Britain found that for those who wore the *headscarf*, there was often a misguided association with particular religious backgrounds, such as Christianity or being mistaken for orthodox Jewish women. In Dundee, Kamilah, a Norwegian born white Muslim convert and a mother-of-two talks about her experiences in spaces of the public:

“I prefer Manchester, I feel more comfortable there. We went just before... beginning of December, walked out of the car, all the ladies with scarves on. Walk around the street, nobody’s looking at you. You feel like you’re anonymous, you feel like... there’s nothing to worry about and there’s foreigners there, a lot more. Here, you walk around the street, you know which ones a foreigner and which ones not and most Scottish people know foreigners. People do point out if you are a foreigner” (Kamilah, Dundee, 26th January, 2010)

She relates Dundee to a place where she is constantly visible as the only Muslim women who choose to cover in the neighbourhood she lives and, as a result, people are aware of her physically yet emotionally and personally unacquainted. For Kamilah, the *headscarf* detaches from its aim of distracting attention from her, and works to draw awareness to her in the public space. She argues that through her experience in other cities, such as Manchester in England, Muslim women are part of the environment, they are as invisible as individuals as they are as figures of faith, drawing less attention and being able to remain anonymous. Kamilah also pays attention to the segregation she experiences in Scotland, which I later play out in Chapter Seven as I discuss the nature of non-homogenised Muslim communities throughout Scotland.

5.6.4 Practicing Hijab and non-veiling

There were a number of women who were part of the study and chose not to wear the *headscarf*. For these women, it was the emotional and mental embodiment of *Hijab* which gained increased priority in their everyday lives. Erina in Dundee describes how the *headscarf* would draw attention to her and for this reason, she chooses not to wear it as she dislikes being noticed in public settings:

“I think if I wear a Hijab I will make people look at me more and I am not a person who likes a photograph taken, I don’t like to be the centre of attention when it’s my birthday or on holiday so that’s my personality. I don’t want to be looked at” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

She reconnects ideas from the previous section about visibility, however, the racialisations and segregations in this case are overturned as Erina is a white Scottish

Muslim. The complexities of considering the experiences of white Muslim converts are better understood by Franks (2000) and Moosavi (2012). For Erina, the *Hijab* is a moral behaviour, as for many women in the study. The distinctness of Erina's decision not to wear the headscarf comes from her being the sole white Muslim convert in the study who chooses not to dress Islamically, regardless of social and family pressure to do so from her husband and his family and her Muslim friends. She compensates for her dress choice through choosing modest and loose clothing which cover her arms and neck:

“Clothing is important for me as a Muslim to cover, obviously I don’t my head but I do like to cover my arms and wear things that are nice but not sort of overly revealing. So for me, that’s important, but that’s me” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

For Afra, a Libyan national living in Glasgow, she often has to defend her daughters' decision not to wear the *headscarf* although she practices it herself:

“My two daughters are not wearing Hijab, they are seventeen and the other one is fourteen and people were not happy, ‘how your daughters are not wearing Hijab’. I said ‘see I wore it not because of my family and not because of anyone around me, I wore it when I felt this is me, this is what I want’. So I can fight for it but my daughters, if I push them to wear it, they won’t be strong and they are the next generation. They should take the decisions themselves to wear it...” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

She argues that the process involved in choosing to wear the *headscarf* is personal to those who choose to practice and she feels it is her responsibility to support her daughters in this choice and to deter family and social pressure. On another note, during my first focus group in Glasgow, when asking participants about their experiences and views of *Hijab* and the *headscarf*, they in turn questioned my decision not to wear Islamic clothing. All but one of the nine participants in the focus group wore a *headscarf* and exercised an intense level of autonomy when being questioned about their faith and practice. One participant who moved to Scotland from Turkey, Ceren, chose to sit next to me during the course of the focus group, a move I felt she had made as a way of making herself less conspicuous in the group. She also says of her decision to not wear the *headscarf*:

“I don’t feel [the need for] Hijab yet, just Allah. I wear it inside, for spirituality. If I see a Muslim woman, it doesn’t matter, even if she explains it.” (Ceren, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

Ceren further questioned my decision not to wear the *headscarf*, although I found this to be less a curious question but instead a way of drawing out other interpretations of Islamic dress, *Hijab* and practicing *Hijab* in a personal sense. It is clear that the women in the study felt a pressure to conform to *Hijab* in more ways than one, through Islamic practice, dress alongside mannerisms, language and thoughts. This draws particular attention to the ways in which *Hijab* is understood and practiced by Muslim women with these passages situating the practice of *Hijab* as a sacred, personal and intimate transaction with their faith. It is understood both as a cultural and religious requirement by women in different ways. Although levels of religiosity are associated with wearing Islamic dress, it is argued by women that their faith encompasses much more than the *headscarf*.

5.6.5 Refashioning religious identity

I discuss here the idea of ‘refashioning’ faith identities through Islamic dress, arguing that it serves as much more than a signifier of religion or religiosity. For some participants, the decision to begin wearing the *headscarf* stems from convenience. Here, Kaneez in Edinburgh talks about how her decision to change from a cultural dress to Islamic dress was triggered by lack of time to prepare in the morning and convenience at work:

“Er convenience, it was so easy in the morning, you get up, have a shower, dry your hair and put your scarf. Because when I was younger, oh my... I used to spend so much time doing my hair. Hair every day, shower, drying, flicking and then put my other scarf on... Because I was doing a lot of workshops I was actually carrying the boxes with my stuff in and the scarf used to be flying around, so I just started to wear Hijab” (Kaneez, Edinburgh, 28th January, 2010)

The practicality of the *headscarf* overcomes its religious attachment here for Kaneez, a busy mother-of-two who works full time and often also works in the voluntary sector in addition to paid employment. Previously, Kaneez would wear a *chador*, later replacing

this with the *headscarf*. Refashioning the *headscarf* for some participants, such as Kaneez, came as a practical measure to make up time during the day. She later talks about how the essence of dress is an important one, one which must be regularly maintained in accordance to the current trends and appropriates to particular contexts:

“Clothing is very important to me, whether it’s wedding outfit, I’ve always been one of those... I want the best and I’ll work to get the best and I also feel like in Islam it says, be presentable, be so that people are attracted to you. Not in the wrong way... be pleasantly dressed. If you’re going to a meeting then obviously dress as if you’re going to a meeting and if it’s a wedding then a wedding, it’s very important” (Kaneez, Edinburgh, 28th January, 2010)

Here, *Hijab* occupies various spaces and becomes a versatile element of a Muslim woman’s makeup. Hajra discusses how cosmopolitan fashion can be carefully combined with the *headscarf*, making it trendy and creating contemporary styles. She reflects on the various compliments she receives for making her *headscarf* look appealing without little effort nor expense:

“When I get compliments on the Hijab pins that I wear. I’ve got some er really nice Hijab pins so I’ll erm and I have them up here so I get nice compliments on your pins here and that strikes a conversation really and when they hear my accent, they hear that my English is actually not broken or erm faltering and you can just talk about things, oh I just got it from Primark for £1.50 and it gets a little rapport going and it shows that you’re friendly” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

Individual interpretation of the *Hijab* as Tarlo (2010) argues can be related with the various ways in which women style their *headscarf*, the textures and decoration and this can be seen in Hajra’s creativity in dressing her *headscarf*. In creating fashionable styles with her ‘*Hijab* pins’, Hajra is also aware of the responsibility she carries in being socially comfortable with discussing her fashion ideas and the representation she portrays of herself and of Muslim women who wear the *headscarf*. For Nuha, a Muslim convert, it is the representation of the *headscarf* in the media and particular Muslim women celebrities that she is mindful of:

“Shazia Mirza... she’s kind of funny, she’s gone from being this woman who is, yes I’m Muslim, yes I’m wearing the scarf on stage, yes and so what to being made over by Trinny and Susannah, whoever it was that made her over and

now she's makeup and hair, and she never puts the scarf on and it's not really about her being a Muslim anymore unless she's taking the piss out of it essentially. She sort of switched quite a lot so she's been an interesting character to watch" (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

She argues that some celebrities put on and take off the *headscarf* much too easily, negating its importance and somewhat failing in their responsibility to present femininity in the *headscarf* in a respectable way. Nuha goes on to talk about how women in the Damascus have come to sexualise themselves wearing a *veil* through feminising their footwear. Calling this notion "stripper shoes", she explains how she has witnessed women wearing the *Niqaab* who use their feet to draw attention to themselves:

"If you've been the Middle East at all, if you go, it's all about the stripper shoes. Everywhere you go there's really high heeled platformed spiky kind of strappy. It's all about what you can do with your feet, how much you can sexualise your feet essentially. And if you go to somewhere like Damascus, there are rows of shoe shops with what we call the stripper shoes" (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Sajidah, a young graduate student in Dundee discusses here how a friend who wears the *headscarf* (she does not) has overcome social stigma attached to the *headscarf* and is now employed by one of the world's largest technology companies:

"She worked hard at university, she worked hard throughout her life but I think wearing the Hijab as well, I thought people are more aware of her being a Muslim and a lot of people will know that she's a Muslim and at the same time she's so successful and that makes me feel proud that you know... people don't realise you can do a lot of things and you can achieve a lot. And people used to ask stupid things like oh do you wear a scarf when you go to the bathroom or use the shower? And it's like, no we can take it off and also, do you wear it to bed? And it was kind of like funny when people used to ask her because we learnt how ignorant people can be, so she always used to explain things like that and now she's so high up and she goes around the world giving lectures and stuff. And I feel proud of her and its nice knowing that she's a Muslim and she's going out there and doing a lot of things like that... you do kind of feel like it's a nice" (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June, 2010)

For her, the *headscarf* becomes a refashioning of Muslim women in the workplace, deterring from the perpetual portrayal of them being oppressed stay-at-home wives. For Sajidah, her friend's success is something for her to be proud of as she refashions the economic market and opportunities available to Muslim women.

In terms of consumer products and practicing *Hijab*, Erina and Sajidah both discuss in separate interviews the difficulty and the ease of purchasing clothing appropriate to their *Hijab* requirements. For Erina, the garments are of a casual nature, whereas Sajidah's attire is more professional as she searches for work clothes. Tarlo (2010) discusses *Hijab* fashion in more detail in her book *Visibly Muslim*:

"It's difficult to buy things that cover, it's really difficult because you see a nice top and you go oh it's too low on the neck, it's too short on the sleeve, and I'm fed up of wearing tops under other tops" (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

"Okay erm clothes wise, I always make sure, especially with buying tops, obviously it's got sleeves, if it doesn't have sleeves then I will have to wear a cardigan but will a cardigan go with that or it's not too low cut, if it's too low cut then I'll have to get a vest. Again with trousers, can't wear anything that's too tight or I always think can I wear this, will I get away with it? Will I not? Do I need to incorporate something else into it" (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June, 2010)

The simple process of finding appropriate clothing soon becomes a difficult task with the women choosing carefully, as Sajidah explains, "will a cardigan go with that?" It becomes a delicate process and although there are a number of outlets which provide *Hijab* appropriate clothing, it is often the intricacy of maintaining current fashion and trends, making *Hijab* appropriate to everyday life including work and social.

Choosing particular headwear also becomes a method by which Muslim women can feel belonging. As discussed earlier, white Muslim convert women are often further visually obvious when they wear the *headscarf*, it becomes a beacon of visibility for them. Nuha discusses how she decided to change her headwear to seem more 'normal' in public spaces:

"You know I used to wear a scarf in the traditional style and after all that happening I stopped and I started wearing hats and bandanas and whatever

else. Because I learnt to be openly Muslim in some respects can hinder you so I kind of pulled back a little bit and then when people know me and now I'm normal...“ (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Although she is not decisively saying that *veiled* Muslim women are not normal, she recognises that wearing the *headscarf* presents particular connotations to those around her which inevitably make her feel uncomfortable. The refashioning of the *headscarf* here, then, becomes a way in which her social interactions become normative, accepted and more appropriate. The reorganising of Islamic symbols of dress here have become deeply seated in cosmopolitan ideologies and representing the *Hijab* as a fashion-conscious decision. The women in the study vary in their styling of the *headscarf*, some choosing traditional, conservative styles whereas others engage with more radical techniques. I further discuss how the women come to understand their practice of *headscarf* and the awareness that *Hijab* practice raises for their social and political interactions.

5.6.6 Awareness of *Hijab*

An embodiment of *Hijab* as a practice and the *headscarf* as a central component of that practice sees Muslim women becoming empowered in many different ways. Here, the analysis discusses the changes Muslim women experienced as a reaction to their decision to wear the *headscarf*. Jasmine, a convert Muslim and mother-of-two remembers how the gender binaries had been overturned by male colleagues showing her less attention sexually:

“Mostly... I did notice that actually when I used to work as well, I was in quite a male environment and I worked in IT and I did notice that... they didn't speak so much about inappropriate with me, I did see people's behaviour change in a lot of ways towards me” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

Here, the *headscarf* becomes an encouragement for the viewer to avoid unnecessary conversation, in this case “inappropriate” discussion. This example showcases how ‘protection’ is often one of the benefits attributed to *Hijab* and the *headscarf*, such as negating attention from males in spaces outside of the home. Likewise, Aisha became more aware of the *headscarf* in particular social settings:

“Wearing Hijab made me a lot more aware that I was Muslim so whereas before I might have been comfortable, for example, go to the pub with my Muslim colleagues, I suddenly felt, would I really wanna be doing that? Do I wanna be aware of myself in Hijab, in the pub? You know is it really what I want to do? So it really forced me to think about my social interactions and the sort of set up that I’m in whereas before I would quite happily stick out my hand and shake hands with a man, I was suddenly aware of that and also aware of the other male on the other end was much more aware of me as a Muslim woman” (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

For her, the *headscarf* became much more than an embodiment but also began mediating her interactions and the spaces of those interactions. She reflects on how the *headscarf* continually reminded her to behave in particular ways and the changes in her approach to male work colleagues or social contacts.

Afra recalls a particular experience she had which she felt was especially constructive as she decided to take off the *headscarf* upon request of a colleague at work who wanted to see her hair. Attending a beauty course at the time, Afra remembers how the teacher was very careful to protect Afra’s privacy by closing the door and ensuring they would not be disturbed:

“I remember when we went to the course and she asked, can I see your hair and I said yes, and I took my Hijab off and she said, the teacher, said ‘I like to do your hair. I’ve never touched something like it’. And I said ‘okay, we can choose a day during the course and you can do whatever you want to do’ [laughs]. So I said ‘only I don’t want men to come in during the... while you’re doing my hair’. So we closed the door and she did it and we were laughing about how hair is different and how my hair is very thick and very bushy, we take it really easy. And I felt everyone was looking to my reaction how I was taking these things. But it did go smooth and everyone was engaged and touching... [Laughs] it’s really, it’s really good. Not to be rigid, people are not erm accepting rigid ones. You need to be as flexible as you could to change someone’s idea” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Afra’s interpretation from the experience finds her talking about responsibility “not to be rigid... you need to be... flexible”. Here, Afra’s notion of responsibility sees her seeking to transform the attitude that others may have of women wearing the *headscarf*. Ultimately,

she becomes the activist as she realises the importance of her act and the positive consequence it will have upon those around her. The awareness that the *headscarf* raises for many of the women come from a sense of responsibility which is often placed upon Islamic dress. Although I have previously discussed that *Hijab* is practiced mentally, emotionally as well as physically, it is here that we see a particular set of behaviours and obligations attached to the *headscarf*, making it much more than a symbol of faith as the women are continually aware or made aware that the *headscarf* raises a number of questions for those around them as well as their behaviour in particular social settings. In Aisha's case, the *headscarf* allowed her to contemplate her previous lifestyle choices, appropriating how she may experience the *headscarf* in social spaces she was previously accustomed to.

5.6.7 Everyday spaces of *Hijab* practice

As discussed previously in the chapter, *Hijab* is a form of modesty, a practice which can be fulfilled mentally and physically. Here, Nazli, a manager in the voluntary sector discusses how she maintains *Hijab* in Dundee through modest clothing:

“Erm I think because of my dress, I don’t think you would know that I was Muslim... it’s not very hot in Dundee, I think when its hotter people might think why are you wearing so much clothes? But I really don’t think people pick up on it because I dress modestly, what I think is modest, another person might not think is modest so I kinda express my religion that way but then again I feel it’s my choice” (Nazli, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

She recognises that people would often not realise she is Muslim due to her choice of dress and as a result of the weather in Dundee, she is able to physically practice *Hijab* somewhat effortlessly. For Nazli, everyday *Hijab* practices comes with the ease of her dress choice. For others, the notion of *Hijab* practice is less subtle as they are made aware of their physical presence by others. Nazli also refers to how she is often not recognised as a Muslim as a result of her choice of dress which raises interesting questions about the role of ‘signifiers’ when discussing identity. Nazli’s background, half Scottish/half Palestinian means she is less racialised than other participants, although she attributes this more to her choice of clothing and less to her ethnic roots. Here, Rahma, a student in Glasgow recalls a time at university when her professors were surprised with her level of

social ability, negating their perceptions of the *headscarf* as a dominating factor of Rahma's life:

"I don't know they said to me as well like afterwards I stood out from the class and I was like oh I assumed it was coz I was wearing a scarf and I was like oh what are they saying now and they said no because you were wearing Hijab yeh but you were still interacting with everybody and listening and actually working on your stuff" (Rahma, Glasgow, 27th January, 2010)

This particular excerpt highlights how perceptions of the *headscarf* are rooted in patriarchy, disempowering the experiences and voice of the wearer. This goes to show how making the *headscarf* a visible part of identity can create positive reinforcements and begin to contradict some of the negative or implied meanings attached to Islamic dress. Participants who chose not to wear the *headscarf* were not singled out to these perceptions as Erina discusses below. Her experience of not wearing the *headscarf* sees her being privy to other, less positive interactions. She recalls a particular incident whilst out shopping as people were discussing Muslims in Dundee quite openly and, as a white, blonde haired, blue eyed middle aged woman, the initial judgements of her religious background are not established:

"For me it's been very easy because I do not wear the dress code that would say she is Muslim and its quite interesting because when September 11th happened I was going around Asda with my little shopping trolley and of course if people had saw me with a Hijab on, they wouldn't be talking openly but when I was going out with my shopping trolley you could hear people like oh yeh... the conversations were quite frightening" (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Wary of her positionality in her interactions, Erina seems to the speaker to be taking a casual approach to the interaction, whereas she is very aware of herself within that space, choosing her actions and words very carefully. Had Erina been wearing the *headscarf*, she certainly feels this interaction may not have occurred, indeed to the length of the conversation that took place emphasising how non-racialised Muslims are often the victims of subtler forms of Islamophobic behaviour. I use Chapter Nine in this thesis to discuss this further.

For Aisha, the process of wearing the *headscarf* was a difficult one as she battled with the reaction her work colleagues would have. Here, she talks about her employer being at the

forefront of the discrimination she experienced, inevitably, the incident led her to question the real motive of *Hijab* in her life and whether she could successfully embody *Hijab* without physically abiding by it through the *headscarf*:

“For the first few months of taking on the Hijab, I did doubt whether I had done the right thing because I had a lot of experiences like that. And the first day I put it on I remember going into work and I had an absolutely ghastly manager at that time and I remember her saying, what are you doing with that dishcloth on your head? And I remember just going to the washroom and just crying buckets and why wondering what am I doing? Why am I putting myself through this? I don’t have to do this... and it was such a crazy thing” (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

The language with which her manager chose to describe her *headscarf* shows an alarming level of insensitivity and although this interaction shows a disturbing attitude from a senior colleague, it simultaneously demonstrates how such conversations can impact faith and decisions about faith. As Aisha highlights “I don’t have to do this”, she recognises that although the *headscarf* is simply one of her many devotions to her faith, she also understands that it is a choice she is making and a preference which will always be available to her, given her interpretation of Islam and Islamic dress.

I end this chapter with a short quotation from Nuha, an English Muslim convert living in Edinburgh. Nuha is part of a family of converts, her husband and her children who all converted to Islam a number of years ago. Nuha talked earlier about the decision to change her headwear to seem more “normal”. Here she reflects on the various ways in which she can often use her headwear as a method of “disguise”:

“I think it does I think I mean I’m pretty much covered up all the time, it’s just not in what has become the culturally accepted way of covering up, yeh. I wear a lot of hats and a lot of scarves and a lot of different disguises I guess. But that’s my culture and I don’t think I’m really out of my culture with the way that I dress and I guess actually I would look a lot more outlandish if I was walking around in a veil” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

She uses ‘culture’ to define her interpretation, the headwear being versatile and colourful, and often a way in which she can change her dress style, making *Hijab* adaptable in the everyday and again, realising the impact a *headscarf* or *Niqaab* would have upon her interactions. The language Nuha uses here provides an interesting insight into her

approach to faith as she very much understands it as an intimate relationship, referring to ‘my culture’ a number of times in this interaction. This draws attention to the ways in which religious culture is defined and redefined through dress, negotiating style and techniques of dress depending on interpretations, experiences and opportunities to refashion Islamic dress.

5.7 Conclusion

The debate surrounding *Hijab* and the *headscarf* has been one which has been reframed time and again, viewing Islamic dress and its place within British society through various different lenses, cultural, political, feminist – to name just a few. This chapter brought together various feminist interpretations of Islamic text, together with the application of the *Hijab* in daily practice and the various ways in which Muslim women in Scotland feel empowered but also disempowered through the physical practice of *Hijab*. The chapter has discussed the versatility in refashioning the *headscarf* and presenting a more adaptable item of clothing which can be easily reconstituted depending on the context (work place, weddings etc – see section 5.6.5). The invisibility of Muslim women wearing the *headscarf* is also apparent in this chapter as it draws upon white Muslim convert experiences. Similar to Badr’s (2004) study of Muslim women in Houston, USA, the “*Hijab* remains true to its purpose as both a symbol of modesty and as a physical marker of Islamic social identity” (2004: 335). Muslim women in the study use the practices of the *Hijab* elaborately to direct their interactions in the social spaces, for those who choose not to wear the *headscarf*, they are often privy to unconstructive debate surrounding Muslims, being aware of their own religiosity within particular contexts yet choosing to remain silent, fearing reprisal.

The data here has illustrated how women exercise, understand and construct spaces of *Hijab* practice. Not only do the women in the study apply different interpretations to their experiences depending on a wide range of signifiers including, ethnic heritage, religious doctrine, life experiences and so on, they do so as a way of defining their affinity to their faith, recognising their ethnic and social identities. As a result of this we can see that the *Hijab* becomes a force from which Muslim women take their own interpretations and apply them accordingly, reconstituting how they view the *Hijab* and *headscarf* time and again.

Chapter Six

Everyday Making and Community Participation

6.1 Introduction

The debate in Britain surrounding the role of Muslim women in secular, multicultural societies is often compounded with sensationalised social media attention and focuses on the ‘spectacular’ rather than the ‘ordinary’. Some of these representations further negative social depictions of Muslim women as being isolated housewives (Dwyer, 1998), who follow strict and culturally traditional norms, with other more recent additions which draw together the lives of Muslim women as successful in terms of economic status and political involvement. Few representations acknowledge the complex everyday experiences of ‘ordinary’ Muslim women who work to support their families, who carry out community development work and make conscious decisions throughout their lives without the interjections from male relatives, pressures from within cultural and religious communities and as a response to everyday micro-political interactions and experiences. This chapter aims to clarify the ways in which media and social and political interactions can inevitably affect the lives of Muslim women in Scotland and shape their social, economic and political relationships through what I would term as ‘community activism’

and ‘civic responsibility’. The chapter begins with an outline of what I mean by ‘community activism’ and ‘civic responsibility’, although these are particularly subjective to the participants involved in the research.

‘Community activism’ and ‘civic responsibility’ are intertwined throughout the chapter and are presented as a way of enabling the ‘activist’ to respond to everyday anxieties through positive actions (Maxey, 1999). I argue that community activism is a method used to illustrate how citizenship can be viewed through a grassroots lens (Falk, 1993), often occupying the spaces of those who engage in local politics through ground-level activism. The ‘bottom-vantage’ (DeHanas et al, 2010) of participation finds itself mobilised in a network of locally-led, or nationally recognised community projects with much work determined by resources, opportunities and sets of social connections. Furthermore, discussing community activism and engagement under the guise of religiosity and faith signifiers brings our attention to those who feel civic responsibility is one of the ways they are able to fulfil religious and social obligations (Sirin and Katsiaficas, 2010). The chapter brings together a localised set of experiences and ideas from Muslim women in Scotland which finds them executing the responsibilities they feel towards negating negative representations of Muslim women, particularly in news media.

Bang (2003: 241) refers to the ‘everyday making’ of community participation as way of carry out civic responsibilities through self-governance, that is, to ‘self-reference’ without introducing government policies and powers in the space of community-based politics. In this case, the Muslim women use civic responsibility as their approach to tackle stereotypes through community-based organisations and support networks. The use of activism in this case is particularly relative to the women’s faith as well as social groups, at the occupational level and it is the collaboration and varying discourses of these that are closely examined in this chapter. These activisms are less represented as protests but instead responses to an overarching debate around responsibility within and for Muslim communities, making them more subtle than general depictions of community activism as a reaction to social struggles or injustice (see Kobayashi, 1994 and Naples, 1998). The women in this study become activists through their use of civic duties and dialogue in the workplace, extending out to social spaces and interactions within the public sphere.

6.2 Media representations of Muslim women

Unfavourable news and media representations are one of the reasons formerly politically inactive Muslim women decide to become active citizens and some of these women look to resist powerful media representations which create anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiment within the global, national and, specifically for the women involved, at the local scale. In the wake of September 11th 2001 there has been an upheaval of Muslim identities and social responsibilities in academic discourse (Mandaville, 2009). Muslim communities which were previously invisible were thrust into the ‘political spectrum’ (Pritchett, 2005) and, furthered by the London bombings of July 2005 and other global and national events, were consistently subjected to media demonization and vast social stigma. Hopkins and Gale (2009) argue that the issue of responsibility is a product of such affairs which has led to the questioning of the ‘homogeneity of Islamic identity and faith... which are seen to vary on the plane of their intensity between less and rather more ‘extreme’ expressions’ (*ibid*, pg. 2). Modood (2009: 193) highlights the intense and somewhat undeserved attention given to Muslim groups when discussing matters of ‘immigration, and cultural diversity’ and argues that the shift from ethnic to religious identity has also focused acutely on Muslims rather than any other religious group, thus bringing again the matter of responsibility to the fore, questioning what roles Muslims are playing to prevent further illegal attacks in secular and non-secular societies and countries.

Islamophobia² a ‘form of cultural racism’, has led to a silencing of the majority Muslim voice (Werbner, 1997: 237) and, although Islamophobic behaviour existed prior to September 11th 2001, the events of that day, together with the attacks and attempted attacks in London, 2005 and Glasgow, 2007, anti-Muslim behaviour is recognised as not only national tragedies but globally and locally significant, impacting on spaces occupied by individuals, neighbourhoods and communities. Research done in various countries and cities in the UK and the United States shows that September 11th 2001, the subsequent War on Terror in Afghanistan and the Invasion of Iraq have demonised and criminalised Muslims the world over (Poole, 2002; Peek, 2003). The more subtle forms of anti-Muslim

² The Runnymede Trust report commissioned in 1997 defined Islamophobia as "dread or hatred of Islam and therefore, to the fear and dislike of all Muslims", however some writers have further described it as "not irrational, but rather a rational process involving the deliberate demonization of Muslims based upon misinformation used in the post 9/11 context to support the war on terror" (Birt, 2009: 218).

behaviour prevalent, yet not fully understood previously in the shape of racism against Muslim communities gained a much greater platform and Noble (2005) argues that this subtle form of Islamophobia and cultural racism is often overlooked by the authorities as it goes unreported.

In England, the violent outbreaks in the north-west in 2001, often represented as being the result of self-segregation³, segregation and negative attitudes towards migrant Muslim communities (Phillips, 2006, Hussain and Bagguley, 2003), further dominated media images of Muslims, in particular those who were young and male were represented as violent, erratic, out of control and troublesome (Hopkins, 2009a). Hopkins argues that few depictions connect Muslims with everyday work and the contributions that they are making, economically, socially and, more recently, politically (Hopkins, 2009a). The rarity of such images leads us to further question the role of the media in addressing the realities of everyday life for a lot of Muslims and non-Muslims. These realities, of which we see very little, then, are further examined in this chapter, addressing the real, everyday issues of Muslim women in public spaces of work which are highly politicised. The chapter focuses upon civic actions and everyday responsibilities of Muslim women to illustrate the different ways in which they are bearing the brunt of negative media coverage whilst also responding in positive ways by creating spaces which are constructive and engaging outside of the home.

6.3 Muslim women and active participation

Until recently, religion has received little attention as a marker of identity and race, class, gender and age were often given precedence (Kong, 2001). It is only with developments within the last two decades that geography and other social science disciplines have begun to closely examine the role that religion plays in debates surrounding belonging, in/exclusion, citizenship, integration and everyday interactions. Aftab (2005) notes that male historians have too often ignored the issue of gender relations within a dominant patriarchal South Asian Muslim community⁴. In her work, Aftab argues there are a

³ The debates surrounding self-segregation ultimately causing the riots have been heavily challenged by Phillips (2006).

⁴ Aftab's study follows the discourse of a nineteenth century plight from Muslim women in Punjab, India to a key politician at the time, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. The women wrote a detailed letter to Sir Khan, requesting provisions made for women's education in the area.

number of reasons for women wanting to gain education such as Islam giving them rights as Muslimahs to edification and that they were simply appealing for what is rightfully and morally theirs (ibid, pg. 89). Other examples of feminist Islamic activism include Arat's (1998) work on political discourse in Turkey. The engagement of women's movements and organisations have been closely linked to geo-political and worldwide developments (Moghadam, 2008) such as the banning of Islamic clothing in both secular and Islamic states and we are beginning to experience the increase of feminist communities within Muslim groups (Wilson et al, 2005). Wilson et al (2005) consider the divergence in the everyday realities faced by current and previous feminist generations and argue that lessons have been learnt as a result of earlier efforts (ibid, pg. 6). The lack of accurate accounts of Muslim women's lives reinforces marginalised, oppressed and silent representations of Muslim women. As a result, Pritchett (2005) argues not only have women suffered, but feminism as a whole has been "divided by unnecessary political compartmentalization" (Pritchett, ibid, pg. 11).

Identity politics readdresses the underlying issues for many Muslim women and in her work with young Muslim schoolgirls, Dwyer (1998) argued that complex dynamics of what it means to be female and Muslim are relentlessly refigured, reproduced and represented by on-going transformations within organisational practice and the media. It is in particular those women who present an image separate from the norm, women who choose to cover in a non-Hijaab wearing society, or those who choose not to cover in a Muslim community, are more than often stereotyped, socially criminalised and victimised as what they offer is different and therefore risky.

In Hopkins' study (2009a) of Muslim men in Scotland, he identifies a 'patronising tone' amongst the young men as they discuss the roles of Muslim women, domestically and socially (ibid, pg. 83). More precisely, the men argue that Muslim women self-segregate through lack of interaction outside of the personal space of the home, therefore, the women are ultimately responsible for the challenges they face (Hopkins, 2009a). While these conversations were context specific, it is apparent that the young men were more than likely speaking of their own experiences in their families and friendship circles and thus, are unaware of the contributions and activisms taking place outside of the home and in the space of the public and the social. There is a growing need for Muslim women to enter this political and social domain, however, with these responsibilities Muslim women are also often expected to adhere to particular gendered and religious models of dress, practice and social modesty according to their cultural and religious community. Muslim

women, when stepping outside of the safe yet politicised boundaries of the home, enter another space and endure the scrutiny of the local community, their friends and family and in particular, the non-Muslim community, often becoming experts of Islam and ethnic culture (Hopkins, 2009a). Therefore, their movements are heavily observed and political meaning drawn from and to their selection of dress, work lives and social choices. As a result of this heavy surveillance, a number of Muslim women who have successfully entered the public domain are still victims of much criticism from within Muslim communities as they are often seen as moderate, liberal and essentially not of the ‘right sort of Islam’ (Glynn, 2009: 183). An example is the attack upon Baroness Warsi by a group of men who condemned her for not being ‘a proper Muslim’⁵. I discuss and deconstruct the notion of ‘proper’ Muslims in Chapter Seven, describing those Muslims who follow a more rigid approach to faith, practicing Islam mentally, emotionally as well as physically. Nevertheless, this has not deterred women from stepping out onto the political platform. In contrast, a number of new Muslim women were amongst MP’s seeking election during the 2010 campaign⁶, although their elections were won/carried out in England, campaigns in Scotland have had less success with one candidate, Shabnam Mustapha, representing Glasgow South being defeated in the 2010 elections. Nevertheless, Muslim women in Scotland are politically contributing in various other ways, which is further discussed in this chapter.

In other political campaigns, Muslim women have been at the forefront as organisers and demonstrators (Tarlo, 2010). In her work on the practice of veiling and covering, Emma Tarlo presents uniquely understood meanings and interpretations drawn from the *Hijab* and *Niqaab* which are simultaneously rooted in cosmopolitan, neo-liberal environments. In her book, ‘*Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith*’, Tarlo brings together an innovative set of ideas surrounding the concept of *Hijab* and with it the role of activism and Muslim femininity. She notes that the practice of *Hijab* wearing is not simply religious yet one which has been informed by past and current political debate, global events and contemporary discourse (Tarlo, 2010) and argues that *Hijab* campaigns are not a matter of freedom, ‘politics and human rights’ (ibid, pg 4), but also a movement by women for other women across the world, noting especially the banning of religious symbols in French schools and the Palestine and Gaza incursions. Calling this ‘*Hijab* activism’, Muslim women have sought the responsibility of leading demonstrations

⁵ Videos of the attack are available widely on the internet, however, for this chapter the following source was accessed: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/beds/bucks/herts/8387110.stm>

⁶ Rukshana Ali, MP for Bethnal Green and Bow; Shabana Mahmood of Birmingham Ladywood; Yasmin Qureshi, MP for Bolton South East.

against actions which are identified as threatening their religious independence and freedom of religious expression (Tarlo, 2010). Singh and Cowden (2009: 486) argue, however, that ‘defending values can become somewhat hollow’ as they fail to address key arguments within wider discourse. It is in this sense that the women become asserters of autonomy, rather than viewing them as defending their religious values, they are representing themselves as a binary to the depictions of Muslim women in news media whilst also recognising that not all women have the opportunity to speak out for religious expressions and freedoms. These politico-religious movements place women within a space of matriarchal authority, countering many of the perceptions depicted within media discourse that sees the *Niqaab* as isolationist, separating its wearer with society and missing vital opportunities to engage and network. Here Tarlo argues that by dressing in the *Hijab* or *Niqaab*, women become executives of their interactions, choosing who they want to interact with and at what stage, deciding for themselves the level of appropriate contact (Tarlo, 2010). This diverts attention away from Muslim women being stereotyped as dominated and assumptions made about their religious practice, gendered spaces and cultural backgrounds. Many women have put on the *Hijab* not only as a result of the increase in Islamic knowledge and closeness to their faith but also as a political response to the images portrayed by the media. It is in this sense that some Muslim women are bearing the responsibility of a hostile media, lack of support from wider institutions and, more crucially, the responsibility of Islam and Muslim action worldwide. I draw connections here between the decisions Muslim women are making in *Hijab* practice and those that are wearing the headscarf as a method of their personal activisms. The governance of Islamic dress in Western countries is leading to Muslim women responding to obscure policies which may legitimate the prohibition of wearing Islamic dress in social and public spaces, leading to exclusionary practices for some women.

6.4 Muslim organisation and activism in Scotland

Scotland’s relationship with Islam and Muslims extends as far back as the seventh century (Maan, 2008), although its Muslim population was not to become noticeable until well into the 19th century and after the war periods with the increase of labour demands and economic opportunities. Muslims also have a strong association with political parties and

there are a number of Scottish Muslims who are heavily involved with politics⁷, although few are women.

There are a number of organisations in Scotland which hope to promote community engagement, offer services to those from Muslim backgrounds to integrate and take part in local events (See Table 3).

Organisation	Focus
Muslim Council of Scotland	integration, community cohesion and Muslim engagement with socio-political issues
Al-Meezan	Islamic learning centre in Glasgow
Pakeezah	support for smaller groups and sister establishments whose remit is often the female Muslim community located in Edinburgh
Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh (MWAE)	set up by and for Muslim women in Edinburgh and the Lothian areas – the group was set up to stimulate social activities for Muslim women to further engagement with the general population
Saheliya	government funded organisation set up to specialise in mental care issues and promoting good health among ethnic minority women in Edinburgh and the Lothian areas, offering befriending services, domestic abuse counselling and complimentary therapy to aid recovery
Shakti	charity which receives lottery funding to run its services as a women's aid group, a large number of its clients are Muslim or from Muslim backgrounds and the group also offers culturally sensitive training to volunteers and staff
AMINA The Muslim Women's Resource Centre	promote developments in religious, racial and community cohesion alongside aiding women in overcoming barriers to participation through a befriending service

Table 3. Muslim/Islamic organisations throughout Scotland

One of the organisations I specifically worked with was AMINA-The Muslim Women's Resource Centre (MWRC), founded in 1997, and a number of interviews were carried out

⁷ Bashir Maan, Bashir Ahmed, Mohammad Sarwar, Osama Saeed and Anas Sarwar

with some staff and volunteers. Their services range from befriending, capacity building, a helpline for domestic abuse victims which is a large part of their remit within the Muslim community, counsellor training and counselling services and they often provide training for public and private organisations such as local schools, police and prison services to help deal with issues distinctively concerning Muslim clients and inmates. It is crucial to note that a large number of the organisations are government funded and others are community led, funded through national charitable schemes or receive private funding. The government funded projects are increasingly more resourceful and nationally led too as they are able to provide larger marketing schemes. This said the current economic downturn has severely affected those which are government funded and a number of them are under the threat of funding cuts and even dissolution which will inevitably weaken community resources and activities.

6.5 Responsive Muslim women

6.5.1 Media representations

It was generally agreed by all participants that particular print media had a large role to play in the negative social depictions of Muslim communities. Zine (2006) uses the term ‘gendered Islamophobia’, contextualising particular stereotypes and argues that it ‘operates socially, politically, and discursively to deny material advantages to Muslim women’ (Zine, 2006: 240). Peek’s (2003) study of Muslims in New York University campuses following September 11th, 2001 also highlighted how participants felt anger and distrust towards the media. Similarly, one of my participants, Kalsoom, a 54-year old working in her local community in Glasgow describes how she feels the media have failed in addressing the variations in religious belief among Muslims and have thus supplemented the already prevalent harm caused by some uninformed statements in newspaper articles:

“[W]ell there’s a new one adding because we’re terrorists as well now but generally that we are oppressed we are you know hard done by, by our religion you know people, they don’t just distinguish between the way people behave in their culture, they consider it’s the religion” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

Kalsoom identifies that representations of Muslim women have been continually negative, although a ‘new’ depiction has arisen as a result of terrorist activities. Nagel and Staeheli’s study (2008) also found that British Arab activists felt this way too and a number of participants commented that public suspicion had increased since September 11th 2001. Kalsoom also recognizes that this representation is critically damaging for Muslim women as they access services, for example in this case, attempting to seek advice about domestic abuse counselling:

“Islam is going to be portrayed wrong or potentially is, so do we want to take that risk, and individual women also have to take that thought of ‘if I go to the mainstream services and talk about my husband, they’re not gonna understand my situation and are they just going to act on these stereotypes”

(Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

As previous literature also suggests, derogatory depictions within particular media have affected the integration of already isolated communities, making grass roots level success all the more harder to accomplish (Haw, 2009). Kalsoom’s argument on one hand identifies that negative media perceptions of Muslim women only work to further segregate already isolated women whereas on the other, she also highlights that the media perceptions of Muslim women are attempting to recognize the plight of women across the world. By her argument, they contextualize the representations into those belonging to secular British society, an attempt at representation which has ultimately had the opposite effect for Muslim women in the West. Khadijah, a divorced mother-of-three also senses this in her interview and agrees that although she is unhappy to be stereotyped, the meanings behind such labels do exist:

“Islam is just seen horrendously, I think... any article you read, there is seventy to seventy five per cent that will always be against, or something negative will always be put across about Islam... I think they see women are being repressed and they’re being forced. And I think they are in certain countries and even maybe here in the UK, you do hear stories, it does happen unfortunately”

(Khadijah, Glasgow, 15th December, 2009)

Another participant, Kamila, a 35 year old mother-of-two in Dundee addresses the problems of sensational media stories, noting that this sensationalism draws attention away from the real issues experienced by Muslims in Scotland and across Great Britain:

“[T]hey never seem to get to the real issues and hit the nail on the head, they just seem to skirt around that side with things like that you know or the extreme views of course which are always coming to the forefront” (Kamila, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

Increasingly, Muslim women in Scotland and throughout Britain are becoming ‘risk-aware’ (Haw, 2009: 365) and are acutely alert to the media portrayals surrounding Islam, Muslims and how this can impact their social and political lives, together with having a detrimental effect upon the various identities they hold. The women are highly conscious of the perceptions being created about them within the media and often want to disassociate themselves from that but are unable to due to their religious inclination and this is evident from the use of words such as ‘they’ to mean the non-Muslims and ‘the media’, and ‘my’ to mean oneself as well as the wider Muslim community. The women are equally aware of how these media depictions can affect their lifestyle and use of mainstream services. The damaging images publicized by particular media, then, extend further than solidifying public perceptions. It can also lead to a decline in quality of service which is vital to community integration and anti-segregation debates. The following excerpt from Aisha, a Muslim convert since the age of 18, now 27, highlights how she feels about her experience of Scottish media and the role it has played in the portrayal of Islam and Muslims.

“I think where we do better than down south, is that erm we... because we have smaller media organisations in terms of the BBC is the BBC, but the base here is much smaller. They're a group of journalists who have a lot more creative freedom I think and they also outsource a lot more than London does and the same applies to ITV erm they outsource to a lot of other companies who, again, have a lot more freedom because they're small Scottish based production companies. Since the formation of the Scottish Islamic Foundation, they have done an awful lot of work in terms of lobbying and campaigning the media for change and they have been able to use the erm the participants from their border and particularly from their campaign groups to take part in a lot of these programmes. So there is a lot more scope for us to influence and change media perceptions, even if the people at the top are still holding onto their archaic views of Muslims. I think we have a lot more power in Scotland to change it and that's where I think we do better really” (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

She feels there is much more freedom in Scotland in regards to media reporting and, as such, there are also opportunities available to direct the media into providing positive depictions of Muslims. It is through projects set up by organisations such as the Scottish Islamic Foundation that Aisha has been empowered to discuss her own experiences and exercise her agency. At the time of the field research Aisha's work, as a result of her visual impairment, was geared towards setting up online resources for blind and visually impaired Muslims, with these resources being accessible for both Shia and Sunni Muslims alike. It is particularly interesting here that Aisha draws out the complexities in localisation of media depictions as she previously worked for BBC Scotland and discussed the flexibility of approaches that Scottish media has had towards portraying communities in Scotland, particularly Muslim communities.

Here, Shazia, a 25 year old trainee solicitor in Glasgow feels particularly angry about the events of September 11th, 2001, describing how she is not responsible for other people's actions, only for her own, but felt that she was the victim of a lot of scrutiny at the time:

"I just think it's stupid, just stupid. It's anger, it's more like annoyance because of their actions we're gonna have to suffer and I'm gonna have to justify myself because I'm not gonna let anyone judge me by who I am so I'm gonna have to justify myself now and I'm gonna have to put myself across more" (Shazia, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

This passage exemplifies how young Scottish Muslims are feeling the pressure to often defend themselves against depictions in the media as a result of terrorist and other illegal activities from aggressive Islamic minority factions. Humera in Edinburgh is an active volunteer of the group *Beyond the Veil*⁸. A mother-of-two and a teaching assistant in her local primary school, Humera discusses here how she often feels the need to justify herself and her position on a number of things pertaining to the acts of other Muslim groups, namely, global political acts in the name of Islam.

"Sometimes yeh, when people speak to me or ask me questions, I kind of have to, not sell myself, but offer explanations but why should I have to?" (Humera, Edinburgh, 24th June, 2010)

⁸ Beyond the Veil is a women's group in Edinburgh, set up to promote a better understanding of Muslim women and their needs. The group focuses on creating a safer environment for Muslim women through befriending services and community engagement events.

For this reason, her role in the community group *Beyond the Veil* is a significant turning point in her life as she is able to answer those questions in an environment specifically set out for such agendas, to mark out how and why Muslim communities are different. Humera's work with *Beyond the Veil* has opened up a number of opportunities to work alongside the wider community in Edinburgh, extending her social networks, highlighting the emergence of activist cultures within the female Muslim community across Scotland. *Beyond the Veil* is but one of the examples I highlight in this chapter as a group who work to condemn the negative depictions of Muslim women through active engagement with local communities and service providers.

In Glasgow, Shazia feels that she now has to work much harder to gain social credibility but also blames the media intrusion for the difficulties she has faced:

“Because Islam is not what is shown in the media, it’s not that at all, it doesn’t take a genius to dig behind those headlines, look at what Islam really is about and feel connected to it. Islam is not about bombing people, it’s not about what the media makes it out to be at all. I mean if you’re thick as mince, then you’re gonna believe that ‘oh I’m not gonna talk to a Muslim in case they’re ticking” (Shazia, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

Here Shazia is particularly upset about the negative media affects upon her own life as she has worked hard to reach the point in her career where she is currently at. In a later stage of the interview, Shazia tells me that she feels her career opportunities have suffered due to the negative media attention and although, she is unable to prove otherwise, a number of applications were rejected, she thought, on the basis of her Muslim name and background, echoing findings from Zine (2006) as she discusses ‘gendered Islamophobia’. Hajra, 33, from Glasgow discussed the sense of responsibility she felt had been forced upon her and others in the Muslim community, an unfair and unjust response to the events on September 11th 2001:

“I think it’s, it’s the perception that just because this group of people did it and they were Muslims then other Muslims they have to make up, they have to compensate for what happened. Just as I wouldn’t expect the British people you know or white people or erm the British government to compensate for the slave trade that happened thousands of years ago [sic.] because it wasn’t themselves that did it you know and it doesn’t matter that they’re the same

colour or the same religion, they weren't the culprits" (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

As argued by Hopkins and Gale (2009), Muslim communities throughout Britain are victims of this type of social vindictiveness and have thus sought to eliminate the problem through the use of civic responsibility, a responsibility which takes into account their religious, social and political values, providing a space for community-level or micro-level activisms to take place.

6.5.2 Engaging in civic responsibility

The following two sections illustrate how Muslim women not only react and feel about an overarching depiction of them in news media yet also the ways in which they work to carry out community engagement activities, civic action and responsibility, alongside the barriers they face when accessing opportunities for civic engagement. A number of women participating in the study formed a network of volunteers working for charities in and around Scotland. Begum, 44 from Glasgow feels civic duties are part and parcel of Islamic values, and political activity at any level is crucial for integration debates. This integration, however, must be mutual for it to work and Begum argues that Muslim women are failing in their task to become members of Scottish civic communities:

"Erm I do feel that Muslim women need to speak up and be heard and have a voice. They need to be proactive and erm I really feel that they need to get, I mean like I said to you, see because there's so few of us who get to work in the community, we have to double, triple work for others you see. So if everybody was like then, then it would be so much easier" (Begum, Glasgow, 27th January, 2010)

Begum herself is a mother-of-five and, originally from Wales, has lived in various towns and cities of Scotland. She works actively with the local Glaswegian community and her work and she argues here how she feels there must be a much bigger consensus from Muslim women to engage with their local communities in order for representations of Muslim women to be positive. They must be visible in their community as being 'proactive', but as a result of a lack of opportunity, engagement and effort, she feels her work is over-burdened.

“Because we are staying home, we aren’t doing much. I try to do voluntary work in different places, erm... it’s not as they advertise it... But I like to part of the community, I like to do something, for humanity’s sake, not for Islam’s sake or for Scottish or for British. For humanity, I want to be positive in this life, to do something [that] will benefit others. This is probably the source of happiness, when you feel you did something good for others. I like to er give positive ideas about Muslim women, that we are the same, nothing is strange about us. That is my intention.” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

For Afra, volunteering becomes much more than a daily exercise or a need to exercise compassionate behaviour, and she uses her time as a volunteer to carry more complex tasks, a role model for human behaviour and her interpretation of how charity works in Islamic cultures. Simultaneously, Afra recognises that traditional female roles have affected the roles of women in public spaces, adding that women “aren’t doing much”. It is her view that women must become a part of the community in which they live and it is the responsibility of women themselves to actively seek out work, if practicality allows it. The roles played by these women are dictated by their religious obligations that they play out to the local communities and how they feel they must carry out their faith activisms through civic engagement through community participation. Aisha in Glasgow speaks about this:

“I would want to be an active citizen within the Muslim community and beyond and I would want to be able to give as much as I could to society. And I would want to be known as yes, she does what she does because she’s a Muslim and Muslims are people who do that erm and I think probably given the current climate that we’re in, there is more of a need for people to be adhering to that particular mindset because unfortunately, Muslims these days are known for all the wrong reasons and I would like to think that I would be somebody who would be able to play a part in returning to that for the right reasons” (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

For Aisha, the impact she can have as one individual Muslim woman plays a large role in her decision to come an active citizen through her community work. Similarly, to Afra, she is aware that her actions can be interpreted and construed in a number of ways, therefore she works harder to portray herself as a ‘good Muslim woman’. Foziah, a community worker and volunteer in her own local community in Glasgow, uses the

interview here as an opportunity to showcase how her journey into community participation through active engagement and intervention:

“I look at my own experience as you know someone who married at a very young age and having not at that point you know completed er full education you know setting my house but also expecting my very first child, all of that kind of stuff. The intervention that worked for me is one where in where the local community centre they had a definite policy and the policy was about community development and about empowering communities and everything they did it was about empowering communities around anti racist, anti discriminatory practice so everything they did had that baseline kind of erm aim. And I’m a product of six years of intervention of that family centre erm and you know very often I say, I wouldn’t have been or would have done what I did had I not had had that intervention. So makes you aware that you do have a role to play but that also comes with a lot of sacrifice because... if you erm put yourself in a public kind of erm position and you put yourself in a position where you contribute to the development of your community, is that the sacrifice of time for your family, all of those things. So in order to gain, you lose bits” (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Foziah is a council worker and tells of her experience as a young girl, who very much followed the trend at the time, marrying young and becoming a homemaker. Her role as an active citizen was not to come until much later in her life. For Foziah, it would not have been possible to carry out the work she is currently doing twenty years ago as she would have sacrificed a large part of her life, her family. Instead, she waited until her children were old enough to become independent individuals before putting herself forward for community roles and, as she expresses, it was the result of intervention from her local community centre that led her to the position she is currently in. Foziah plays a large role in the wider female Muslim community and is a member of the Muslim Council of Scotland as well as The Muslim Women’s Network UK, a network of professional and highly regarded women who work to share information, organise events and raise the profile of Muslim women across the UK.

For those women involved in community charities or women’s groups, the study found that there are a number of reasons for participation within community based organisations and the decision making process involved various social, political and economic

considerations. The reasons ranged from a passion to working with and for Muslim minorities in their local communities, to those who have a specific set of skills which they felt could be better utilised in the community sector and in participation with other Muslim women. When asked to think about why they decided to begin working in the voluntary sector, Noreen, a 42 year old paid worker describes how she came to work for AMINA - MWRC after having worked for a similar organisation:

“To be honest I saw it’s a place where I can have erm a good impact on the clients and erm something I feel is rewarding for me I feel that I’m helping my community and I’m helping the people I understand more than others”
(Noreen, Glasgow, 13th April, 2010)

As I discussed previously, a number of the activisms taking place are a result of religious obligations to combat derogatory representations of Muslim women. For Noreen, however, her ambitions show other incentives for her decision to become a community worker and volunteer in the community sector. She describes her work as ‘rewarding’, encompassing not only a faith commitment to active engagement but also a personal fulfilment that she receives through her work. For Shamaila, a 39 year old volunteer, who commutes daily from a small town located between Glasgow and Edinburgh, her own personal experiences led her to seek out women’s groups as she felt there was a lack of social and political engagement in her town and, through various contacts and meetings, was informed of the work of AMINA - MWRC and began working for them soon after:

“I have been working with Muslim women for quite a while but not in this area so erm I do have a passion for erm to work with minority ethnic Muslim women and that passion to led me to come here” (Shamaila, Glasgow, 13th April, 2010)

Furthermore, Shamaila asserts that her work is specifically fulfilling the needs she feels Muslim women are lacking. She identifies that although it is work with ethnic minorities in Scotland, there is a faith marker attached. Similarly, a number of the women in the study have found a space of *absent activism* or *absent participation* specifically by Muslim women in Scotland which has led them to create, work with and/or endorse organisations which work particularly to engage Muslim women in social and political spaces.

A number of participants place themselves in a role which gave them the responsibility of utilising their cultural and religious backgrounds to facilitate and develop service

provision and community integration. Together with exercising agency (Haw, 2009), the women in the study were able to contextualise their skills and create spaces of micro-level activisms to support the wider local female Muslim community:

“Because we understand those barriers, we understand those needs and this is why I feel that this is the place where you can make a difference because you know how you can go about it and stuff like that but definitely there are many issues which will be well understandable for BME people more than others”

(Noreen, Glasgow, 13th April, 2010)

Noreen here takes her identity markers e.g. race, religion, gender and builds an autonomous set of skills she feels she is able to apply to her work. Moreover, Noreen is simultaneously not contending that women who do not possess the same identity and cultural markers as those who work in her sector are unable to carry out community work. By doing so she places her skills and life experience in a particular space which allows her to engage with other Muslim women. This level of micro-activism or active engagement highlights how she is but a small part of a much wider intervention and that Muslim women in Scotland seek out opportunities for engagement and opportunities for other Muslim women. Shamaila also agreed with Noreen when discussing issues in her home town from where she commutes:

“We are a minority there so I feel there are many barriers, challenges that we face as a community and that kind of led me to get involved with AMINA”

(Shamaila, Glasgow, 13th April, 2010)

Zubeidah, a volunteer at a mother and toddler group which runs from Edinburgh Central Mosque, is also a hardworking community worker in other aspects of her life. She works as a radio presenter on Radio Ramadan, held mostly during the month of Ramadan, hosting talk shows and phone-ins for questions regarding Islamic practice:

“I feel very empowered in Scotland, in Edinburgh, I can’t compare it living to a city like Glasgow which is a completely different scale, Edinburgh, living in Edinburgh, I’ve had opportunities to do stuff... er that I would be at the back of a long queue in London to try and do” (Zubeidah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2010)

They have hosted talk shows with Paddy Ashdown, Shelina Janmohamed and Noam Chomsky. Here, she talks about how she finds differences between various localities

across Scotland and the rest of the UK. Originally from London, she has already been privy to the fast paced life of the capital and can easily distinguish between the different freedoms available to her. Zubeidah makes a key point here as she discusses Glasgow as being a very different locale from Edinburgh and, as a result a set of different activisms occur there. Zubeidah is aware of the social and economic diversities across Scotland, and she argues that living in Edinburgh has been an ‘empowering’ experience for her as a result of growing social networks and chances to progress her work in the community. The larger Muslim population in London and in Glasgow, compared to that of Edinburgh signify the level and ease of interaction which Zubeidah implies, as she is able to connect to a number of different networks simultaneously within a small geographical area. Through Zubeidah’s narrative of ‘empowerment’ in Scotland, I argue that spaces exist within local level communities, communities which are often tight knit in terms of their relations with others in that community. These communities interact through social spaces, micro-level interactions and discussions which have inevitably led to a platform for Muslim women in Edinburgh, specifically to speak about integration and social contributions. Zubeidah’s point here is to argue that such spaces are rarely available in larger social settings, such as London, as a result of its diverse cultures and backgrounds. In Edinburgh she is part of a mother and toddler play group which she has been fundamental in creating. The group is abundant with women from a range of ethnic, Islamic and cultural backgrounds, all coming together to exchange dialogues in a shared common space.

The aftermaths of September 11th 2001 and also 7th July 2005 have led to an awakening for Muslim women in previously dormant socially political circles. Previous studies have identified ways in which Muslims have reintroduced themselves to communities and social spaces through a distancing of terrorist activities (Peek, 2003) and instead created a positive space of ‘community activism’. For a group in Edinburgh called *Beyond the Veil*, the preliminary initiative to set up the group came from the after-effects of events such as September 11th 2001, as Humera remembers:

*“When the 9/11 and the July bombings happened, then afterwards we decided we wanted to do something you know so we made a booklet called *Pride and Prejudice* which we wanted to give or show to people or present to people to show this is what we actually are like, we’re not like that so we kind of kept escalating from there really”* (Humera, Edinburgh, 24th June 2010)

Humera previously told me that *Beyond the Veil* was set up as a smaller sister organisation of Pakeezah (see Table 3), which is also located in Edinburgh and is a community-led group which receives funding from charity organisations. Most of the work is carried out among the volunteers when they finish work or during lunch hours. Humera is also a full-time teacher at her children's primary school as well as one of the main activists within the group and her work with *Beyond the Veil* has taken her to working with local schools in Edinburgh, as well as her own, and working with local police diversity units and inter-faith establishments around the Lothian area⁹:

"We target kind of schools and we do workshops there, we do a lot with Lothian Borders Police, we do erm diversity training there so we really made a lot of contacts, it's quite good... we work with the interfaith organisation who give us a bit of funding and help but we don't get paid or anything"
(Humera, Edinburgh, 24th June, 2010)

The initiative has perhaps grown beyond what was initially expected but, as can be seen, crucial to the development of local Muslim communities in Edinburgh with police gaining an enhanced understanding of the workings of these communities and such groups are vital to performing the community work needed to reach grass root level Muslim women. Alongside Humera, the volunteers in the group also bear the responsibility of many Muslim women in the area who have little contact or engagement with the wider general population due to cultural and practical complications. The women, both at AMINA – MWRC and *Beyond the Veil* are carrying out community work with initiatives that are government funded but not government led and those which receive little funding or none at all. Like Humera, a number of volunteers working for *Beyond the Veil* do so as a political reaction to the continuing negative social depictions which have been triggered through harmful media portrayal and previous studies have also found that activism within Muslim communities have also defined particular types of activisms as such (See Nagel and Staeheli, 2008). These are just two examples of work currently going on within Scotland, and there are numerous other community groups and various organisations which still work to provide a better framework for community engagement and with it, as these two examples demonstrate, the activism led by Muslim women is vital to fully understanding the various social and practical needs of Muslim women in Scotland.

⁹ For further information see <http://www.eifa.org.uk/pakeeza.html>

6.5.3 Identifying barriers to social and political participation

In her work looking at approaches to community participation, Fraser (2005) argues that groups who are more likely to be under-represented also undergo exclusions from opportunities to participate. I introduce here some of the barriers to social and civic participation from the women, who argue that it exists not only as a form of marginalised exclusion, yet there also exists a gendered structure to participation. In Dundee, Raniya is a housewife and a volunteer at a local women's group. She uses the interview here to discuss how women, although often heading the domestic space, are less inclined to work in and with the community:

“You know a lot of women are busy with their home lives, they can’t go off and do something like that. I think education, maybe a lot of them don’t have the education, you know similar things that I said earlier on or their husbands, they might think, oh you’re not doing that, what are you gonna do that for? Discouragement there as well, I think it’s a lot of hard work and it takes a lot of time to get there and I don’t know if anybody’s willing to invest that”
(Raniya, Dundee, 24th June 2010)

She makes reference to the position of women in the household, arguing that it is also at the displeasure of their husbands if married women choose to participate in local social and political events. From her experience, Raniya considers the ‘discouragement’ women receive from their husbands and families which ultimately affects their decisions not to participate. It is evident here that patriarchal dominance within the private domestic sphere is in turn weakening the opportunities for women to contribute to civic and social engagement. Similarly, Beena, also in Dundee argue that:

“Muslim men are very funny about women doing stuff like that. You know, personally I think, no, no, no the men want the women to stay in the house and look after the kids” (Beena, Dundee, 20th April 2010)

In the same sense that Raniya argues women are unable to access opportunities as a result of educational barriers, Falak, a young nursery school assistant in Dundee has identified that language is a key hindrance for women:

“See I just think... you get Muslim women but some of them don’t know very good English or some of them don’t know nothing about politics so maybe if they looked more into it or actually watched and understood what they were saying, then they would probably vote” (Falak, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Falak discusses the lack of engagement from women in political arenas, in particular, referring to the absence of votes in democratic elections from Muslim women. She is arguing here that it is not the opportunity to vote that is preventing women to come forward, but more a lack of language engagement. If women were to understand the seriousness and effectiveness of their vote, it is likely they would contribute to wider discussions around community politics. One way to introduce women to local politics, Falak argues, is to provide them with the necessary resources such as accessible information about their local politicians, their policies and effective ways to discuss and contact them. The issue of language and accessibility is one which I would argue is not specific to Dundee, yet the conversations I had with participants in the Dundee area suggested that there was an overall lack of social integration and contributions by Muslim women there as a direct result of language barriers and accessible information.

For other participants who have chosen to contribute their time to attend local events, it is the impracticality of those events which become the action of deterrence. For Jasmine, a Scottish woman and a convert to Islam discusses how meeting arrangements for a local political party go against her religious distinctions to practice:

“In the SNP meeting, we got a leaflet through the door for the Scottish national party the other day and if you want to get involved... erm it said we meet every Wednesday at this pub in Broughty Ferry and I thought... how can Muslims go to that then if they did want to get involved with anybody?”
(Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

There is an obvious lack of engagement and understanding of cultural and religious practices from the local SNP organisers in this case as alcohol is considered *Haram* in Islam, and to arrange a meeting at a local pub would not only exclude practising members of the Muslim community, but also other religious groups such as Sikhs and Mormons. On another occasion in Glasgow, Hajra was left distraught after taking her daughter to a local church event for children:

“erm I was just waiting patiently for my daughter who was doing arts and crafts and erm one of the church members came and started speaking to me

and I found her to be very sort of... interrogating and she made me feel very uncomfortable by the way she was completely staring at me and asking me is this the first time I had come into the church and I thought why, what made her think that as her first question and when I told her no, I've actually been to this church... and how can my religion say this when this is what Christianity is saying and I thought this isn't very nice because I've only popped in so my child can partake in activities there and it said everyone welcome" (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

Hajra is a practising Muslim who also wears the headscarf. She was able to distinguish that on this occasion, she was being asked questions about her religiosity, as a result of her choice of dress. She later states that her *Hijab*, rather than acting as a barrier, should encourage people to speak to her as she argues it is 'message' that tells people 'I am approachable'. Furthermore, Hajra felt that this incident was not representative of her experiences of local churches and indeed that she could single this occasion out as a 'bad experience'. The episode highlights that for Muslim women, they must overcome a number of obstacles to participate and contribute to ongoing discussions in their local community. Dress, language, education and domesticated ethnic and religious cultures are just a few of the reasons Muslim women are unable or choose not to participate in their local communities. The need for women to be in a gendered environment is further showcased by the rising numbers of organisations and charities for women. Here, Tibah demonstrates how patriarchal ethnic cultures, passed on through generations affect the ways in which Muslim women exercise their autonomy outside the home:

"So there's so many of these mummies boys and erm and the women they're like, they're stuck in these, especially the daughter in laws, they're stuck in these houses, the men want them to be like their mums, the girls don't want to be like their mums because obviously they've got their own personalities and they're the ones that are finding the problems so that's why they're trying to do something about it. And the men are quite happy, they're quite secure in their comfortable world with their mums and it's the women who are suffering so, that's where it's coming from..." (Tibah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2009)

The reproduction of ethnic cultures through marriage signifies how women are taught to play a particular role within the household, often at the risk of losing their autonomy in public and social spaces. Referring to them as 'mummy's boys', Tibah argues that

mothers of sons need to be increasingly proactive in teaching their children to be independent and less inclined to depend on their wives and mothers.

6.5.4 Future contributions and aspirations

In discussing future contributions, Nazli in Dundee and Aisha in Glasgow both use various means to assess the ways in which women can and do participate in their local social and political communities. For Nazli, a worker in the voluntary sector, there needs to be an increasing presence of Muslim women in politics in order for a serious dialogue to take place which considers the contributions they can make:

“I want to see Muslim women councillor, a Muslim woman MP, MSP. Erm I want to see Muslim women in the NHS as councillors because it’s really needed and support. And I’m fed up, there’s only so much training you can give someone and understand all these different cultures and I think if we really want to see positive change, we need to get into those jobs ourselves, rather than leaving it for other people and expect them to understand us because it’s not really fair, I don’t think anyway” (Nazli, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Nazli identifies that a positive outcome of an increased contribution from Muslim women would be the discourses of cultural engagement between local and national government and health services. A particular set of responsibilities are drawn together here by Nazli as she argues that ‘it’s not really fair’ that Muslim women sometimes assume a given service will work or not work for them. Moreover, she stresses that ‘us’, meaning Muslim women, need to assert themselves into stronger positions which could lead to positive reengagement and affirmation for others to become involved.

For Aisha in Glasgow, the internet becomes the tool with which she offers input. She demonstrates how it is an effective method of interacting, sharing and receiving information and also provides her with valuable services and provisions:

“Yeh this is erm... this is a big issue and I have in fact set up an organisation since to have books translated in Braille and audio etc because I know there is such a shortage. For me, erm the internet has

been a lifeline, I don't know what I would do, not just for my Islamic studies, for everything.” (Aisha, Glasgow 10th March, 2010)

The use of the internet here emphasizes how Aisha has not only been successful in creating an organisation to help support her needs as a visually disabled woman, but also a specific religious need in translating religious documents into Braille. I use this example to argue that understanding how Muslim women use the internet opens up a number of avenues of research, which is becoming vital for their social participation. Aisha benefits from online networks in several ways as are highlighted, indicating new opportunities for other Muslim women to create spaces of participation and contribution.

6.6 Conclusion

Representations of Muslim women in the media offer two extremes, on the one hand are depictions of women as unjustly oppressed, marginalised and victims of patriarchy and, on the other, women who are socially and politically savvy, distinguishing Muslim women who seem to have embraced their religious, social and cultural backgrounds without the need to sacrifice what it means for them to be Muslim, female and British¹⁰. What we are often not subject to are those women in between; women who are socially and politically active but at a much lower yet equally important scale. These women often work at the local level, carrying out ‘community work’ and create spaces of ‘community activism’. I highlight this as a type of work not only carried out within a particular religious, ethnic and/or cultural environment, but within the local area, in this case Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, positioning the scale of the local all the more vital as each of these cities across Scotland share different economic and social histories. As Hopkins (2008a: 15) notes, “we all engage with, create and are dependent on specific scales at different times and places” and a number of organisations I worked with during the fieldwork were ultimately founded as a direct result of Islamophobic suspicion and behaviour affecting Muslims.

¹⁰ Sayeeda Warsi, Conservative MP; Saira Khan, a successful businesswoman and regular columnist for the Daily Mirror, Shazia Mirza, a British comedian; Humera Khan, a Muslim activist who has worked closely with think tank organisations, taken part in government debates surrounding multiculturalism and community cohesion, to name a few. These women are often present in the media and are managers of a diverse range of religious beliefs.

Relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims are greatly affected by global processes and multiculturalist discourses which often obscure debates around integration and engagement. They are not relationships which can be maintained simply through key community leaders or voices of authority in local communities but must also include less powerful and grass roots level members of Muslim and non-Muslim communities (Phillips and Iqbal, 2009). This chapter has demonstrated the various ways in which Muslim women assert political and social identity to develop collaborations with the non-Muslim and Muslim communities in Scotland, with a specific aim to enhance social attitudes and diminish negative media stereotypes.

It has previously been argued that Muslim communities in Britain are thought to be self-segregating (Kong, 2009), however recent debates have criticised this assumption and construct a separate discourse which stimulates already present positive encounters and contributions made by Muslim communities. Modood (2009) highlights the ways in which “Muslims positively use, adapt and extend the contemporary western ideas” (*ibid* pg. 202) and particularly with the utilisation of certain scales, movements are being constructed around specific global and national events. Through the use of agency, contextualisation and a profound deliberation over the use of religious doctrine to enable women to take on board empowering positions within community based activism; this chapter has focused specifically on the ways in which Muslim women continue to contribute to a devolved Scotland. There is, nonetheless, a long way to go in demarcating negative media perceptions, social attitudes and stereotypes before the Muslim population of Scotland are no longer held accountable for the actions of minority politico-religious movements across the world. The debates surrounding responsibility and allegiance to state nationalism is one which continues to differentiate Muslims within particular media discourses. As outlined in this chapter, these discourses have led to the construction of political spaces in which Muslim women are empowered to think critically about the ways in which they already do and can contribute to civic duties through community-led change and activisms.

Chapter Seven

Practicing Faith: Gendered exclusions of Muslim women

7.1 Introduction

Following on from the constructions of civic engagement by Muslim women in the previous chapter, I now look to deconstruct the notion of the homogenous Muslim community, reflecting instead on the diverse ways in which Muslim women in Scotland may or may not practice their faith in social, private and work spaces. Using concepts surrounding agency and autonomy, I explore the interpretations women take from Islamic text and Qur'anic verse and applying these to everyday narratives and routines. The chapter also reflects on the experiences of gendered roles for Muslim women and how they endeavour to fulfil these roles under the umbrella of faith practice, noting the significance placed upon gender hierarchies within cultures from faith communities (Ahmad-Ghosh, 2004).

A discussion of the levels of religiosity by Muslim women and the ways in which this is hindered or furthered through their experience of faith in the everyday takes place after a brief overview of underlying literatures. These literatures are rooted in the surrounding multiculturalism discourse, from service provision and the recognition of needs to a more

nuanced look at political accommodation and integration into the wider British society of Islamic beliefs and values. Leading on from this, I look at the ways in which Islam is represented in everyday narrative and the reformation of identities from racial to racial-religious identities as the more prominent and most relevant signifiers of identity (Modood and Ahmad, 2007). As I situate much of my discussion in feminist literatures on geographies of religion, I also observe that Muslim women have created autonomous spaces of faith and that particular spaces have been gendered to either include women or exclude them (Bhimji, 2009). I argue in this chapter that mosque spaces are symbolised as spaces of exclusion for some Muslim women who are unable to access, negotiate and manage interactions with mosque leaders or those in mosque administration as a result of patriarchal cultures within the mosque and local communities. Furthermore, there exist community tensions within Muslim groups which are often unheard, unspoken and overlooked as a result of homogenising a community on the basis of religious solidarity and faith inclusion.

I begin with a brief discussion which explores the ways in which multiculturalism has changed the face of Britain and, more specifically, the ingressions of religious pluralism amongst Britons. As Parekh (1990) argues, multiculturalism is much more than the pluralism of experiences and backgrounds but also emerges as a discourse which recognises the importance of religious communities growing at a pace comfortable for them as opposed to mainstream expectations. This discourse further acknowledges the hybridity of cultures which creates a space of enhanced understanding and dialogue. Among these discourses, Gilroy (1987) suggests that ‘new forms of agency’ have emerged as a result of the merging of compound identity politics, enriched cultures and ‘past and present experiences’ (Gilroy, 1987). This chapter draws upon some of those forms of agency with a closer look into the practices of Muslim women in Scotland, their access to faith institutions and their experiences of and in faith communities, drawing out the multifaceted approaches to faith practice in places of secularism.

7.2 Recognising the culture-religious turn

Postmodernity has brought together a merging of diasporas, money, commodities and ideas (Samad, 1997, Appadurai, 1990) while concurrently providing a platform for a multicultural model which we endeavour to achieve. Samad (1997) argues that within the

paradigm of multiculturalism, we are presented with nuanced micro systems which work to reconsider how global processes have been restructured to recognise the importance of a local-global relationship. He argues that these particular “structures represent national characteristics as well as local variations” (Samad, 1997: 241). In this chapter, the local plays a vital role in the practice of faith for Muslim women as they draw upon their experiences whilst also applying these understandings to their current performance of faith. They also provide a fresh outlook on the subtle ways in which Muslim communities are dissimilar, often alien to one another. Rex (1985) highlights that multiculturalism brings with it a particular harmony which sees cultures as singular, working hand in hand with the governance of individual rights in public and private domains. A further discussion by John Rex and his work with Yunas Samad (1996) argues that the precursor of multiculturalism builds upon political and institutional cultures, often negating the plural values existing in a society (Rex and Samad, 1996). While working to homogenise plural societies, culture and religion often become a signifier of difference, creating a boundary which extends across social and political disciplines (Rex, 1996). These markers of difference from one group to another, for example, Christian to Muslim, Muslim to Jewish, Jewish to Hindu and Hindu to Sikh, create further homogenising labels which present these groups as cohesive and integrated, blurring separations and dangerously edging towards the eradication of pluralist culture (Herbert, 1996; Ballard, 1992; Goering, 1993, Modood, 2009). Previous racial markers of difference have been replaced with an emphasis upon culture and religion and the practice of these within public space. Modood and Ahmad (2007) argue that “a politically correct concept of multiculturalism has fostered fragmentation rather than integration” (2007: 188). In their research looking at perspectives of multiculturalism, they highlight how some British Muslims explain multiculturalism as an ‘unwillingness on the part of secularised institutions to negotiate with religion’ (2007: 202).

7.3 Identifying the role of faith in multicultural society

It has been argued that there has previously been a failure to grasp the role that religion plays in public life (Sacks, 1991; Davie, 1994; Van der Veer, 1994), however, more recently, there has been widespread discourse comprehending the ways religion and culture have embodied the everyday (Modood and Ahmad, 2007; Gale, 2009; Modood, 2009; Ehrkamp, 2007, Gilliat-Ray, 2010) with increased funding and collective support

for religious places of worship, religious practice in space of the public alongside further endeavours to promote religious teaching (Gilliat-Ray, 2010).

As Lewis (1997) argues, taking Kepel's (1994) critique of the role of religion in public discourse further, “commentators will need to be increasingly alert to the growing salience of religion in public life” (1997: 143). His work, studying the relationship between cooperation and conflict among Muslims in Bradford highlights how differences in cultural capital has led to an avoidance of racial disparity whilst simultaneously renewing the separations between communities through cultural and religious practice (Lewis, 1997). He further argues that governing institutions have a crucial role to play in the appreciation of cultural and religious identities as they are interlinked with political process and reform.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis study the impact of Muslim societies on the non-Muslim world, arguing “Muslims face racial discrimination” (1992: 3) as they exist within distinct cultures, born out ethno-religious traditions, not all of which can be easily manipulated into Western application, therefore, limiting their use of culture and religion. The practice of religion, then, becomes one awash with difference in the wider public space, differences which are often unapparent as Muslims are seen as a separate and organized group. Further to this, the increase in attention given to Muslim communities in academia sees a shift from essentialist concepts to viewing Muslim communities as highly politicised, autonomous, self-integrating and self-segregating (Smith, 2004; Knott, 1992).

In their study of Arab Muslims in the UK, Nagel and Staeheli (2009: 96) argue that the emerging discourses of social cohesion place the obligation of an integrative Muslim community upon the minority group themselves. They argue that this “signals the marginalisation of public discourse of multiculturalism” (See also Back et al, 2002; Lewis and Neal, 2005; Yuval-Davis et al, 2005). They rightly argue that the faith practices led by Muslims are comprehensive and often locally positioned. They present a number of parallels which are imbedded within these localised practices: modern/traditional, religious/cultural, public/private, female/male which they highlight as negotiations of “social and spatial mobility” (Nagel and Staeheli, 2009: 99). These dichotomies are crucial as a discourse throughout this chapter as the analysis of data provides further insight into the experiences of faith communities and how these parallels are drawn out.

There is a growing need to identify the saliency of religious and faith practice in Great Britain and across Europe and Meer's work on Islamic schools in the mainstream public

space emphasises the closeness of faith dimensions in identifying religious communities. He argues that the “distinction between “practicing” and “non-practicing” Muslims is one which is problematic as one can begin “by viewing the former as a matter of degree and definition” (Meer, 2007: 58) and the multilayered practices are often not stressed. Furthermore, Smith’s study of faith rhetoric in urban Britain found that identity formation in the form of the global ummah has frequently become a united agenda, away from the stigma “under the economic and cultural domination of western capitalism” (Smith, 2004: 189). As a consequence, academics are now keen to draw upon these identities as ones directly related to wider political idioms and transformations (Knott and Khoker, 1993; Lewis, 1996; Jacobsen, 1998; Modood, 2000, and Roald, 2001). Moreover, Smith considers the avenues available to Muslim women for religious decree, arguing that, as a result of tight knit community relationships, Muslim women often look to relatives (spouses, brothers, fathers) and community leaders for advice and religious education as opposed to less gendered spaces of knowledge gateways (Smith, 2004).

In her study of Turkish immigrants in Germany, Ehrkamp found that place was a significant factor in the practice of faith (Ehrkamp, 2007). Nagar highlights communal places as significant attachments to home and feelings of belonging (Nagar, 1997a; Fortier, 1999, 2000). Ehrkamp argues that communal spaces such as mosques, especially, are situated as places which underline religious identity formation at the same time as reinforcing gender segregation, power relations and the oppression of some community groups. As a result of differing Islamic interpretation and practice “public and private spaces also serve to structure the exclusion of others in the neighbourhood and elicit contestations” (Ehrkamp, 2007: 16). Through her study, it is evident that while Muslim communities are widely represented as homogenous, at the local level they symbolise extreme levels of disharmony through cultural practices and popular spaces which endeavour to allow the performance of faith. Social meanings, attached to communal places provide ‘representational space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) as Gale (2009) argues in his study looking at the politics involved in mosque planning and building, emphasising that these dialogues were often seated in a wider framework of multicultural discourse, highlighting the place, in this case Birmingham, UK, as one which is indicative of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity (Gale, 2009).

7.4 Scotland and Islamic practice

Scotland's long relationship with Islam and Islamic practice is well documented in Bashir Maan's literature (1992, 2008) and, although by his own admission, some of the writing is anecdotal, Maan provides a deep insight into the transitions of Islam into Scotland and the ways it has situated itself as a recognised form of faith practice through the construction of Muslim organisations and mosques.

The first move to create a space for faith practice for Muslims in Scotland came about through consultations within Muslim communities by a Glasgow-based branch of *Jamiat ul Muslimin*, set up in 1933 as the very first Muslim organisation of any sort in Scotland. Identifying spaces where Muslims could pray communally was one of the first recommendations of the society, which began hiring out a vacant hall in the centre of Glasgow on Gorbals Street in 1940. Four years later, the association opened the first mosque in Scotland on Oxford Street, Glasgow, a renovated building. The first purpose built mosque was not constructed until 1984 at a cost of £3million (Maan, 2008). Understandings of faith practice from gendered outlooks are absent from much of Maan's work as he speaks of the work of Muslims in Scotland, their contributions to wider Scottish public life, however he does discuss the role of Muslim women in politics. This has been explored further in Chapter Six. Maan's work is among the few that discusses Muslims in Scotland with such detail and, as such, the lack of women's experiences throughout his writing denotes a wider absent of women in faith institutions at decision-making level. Wardak's (2002) ethnographic study of a mosque in Edinburgh finds that a culture of exclusion from the wider community lends itself to be seen as maintaining 'order', however, I argue that such exclusions exist within the faith community through gendered divisions in mosque practice. This chapter helps to distinguish how patriarchal cultures within mosque practice have resulted in many women unable to gain a level of access similar to that of men to faith institutions and offers a breakdown from the perspectives of the participants of the consequences of such exclusion.

7.5 Women practicing faith

The analysis in this chapter is broken down in a number of different sections exploring the meanings Muslim women take from Islam, how they have explored Islam in the

context of a secular society, recognising the relationship between Scotland and Islam in terms of morality and shared values. The analysis also considers the experiences of faith practice in terms of practicality, access to faith institutions and organisations whilst simultaneously rethinking ways in which Muslim women are acutely aware of representations of Islam and the performance of faith in professional, social and private spaces.

7.5.1 '*Islam is a way of life*'

There was a general agreement among the participants that Islam was a positive constant in their lives and regardless of how they practiced it, the women observed Islam as a 'way of life', an organised method of living within moral guidelines and behaviours. Similar to the participants in Bhimji's study (2009), my participants viewed their practice of faith through mannerisms which allowed the women to extend their moral and sacred practices by means of 'good' behaviour:

"For myself I think, Islam it encompasses everything, erm we're given the guidelines of how to live our life on every single aspect which is amazing you know from just one book and then the Hadith book and the sayings of the prophet" (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

Here Hajra, a single mother and Muslim revert who was drawn back to Islam after her divorce, discusses how her interpretation of Islam sees her following particular guidelines, setting in place the notion of Islam as a 'way of life', she uses these guidelines to make everyday decisions, clarifying her actions through referring to Hadith and Islamic text, while simultaneously using religion as her strength, something which becomes a driving force in her everyday experiences as a single mother. In addition, Aisha in Glasgow says:

"Erm... Islam of course is much more than a faith, it is a Deen or a complete way of life. And if you take on Islam in its entirety, certainly as a convert, then it requires a complete overhaul of the way you live your life. The way you dress, the way you talk, the way you carry yourself, everything" (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Similarly, Aisha describes how converting to Islam has led to a complete ‘overhaul’ to her everyday living. She argues that one must view Islam in its sum, claiming that you must want to change your lifestyle and behaviour to become attuned to a Muslim way of living. The convert experience is something of an undiscovered phenomenon in Scotland (cf. Franks, 2000; Moosavi, 2012), with very little research looking at the relationships between faith, social values and national identity. I use Chapter 8 to further explore the symbolic connections between faith values and civic duties which goes some way into developing a lens with which to understand the convert experience as something more than a sacred transformation. Jasmine, a convert Muslim who lives in Dundee converted after she married her Turkish husband. For her, the journey into Islam led her to believe it provided a sense of fulfilment:

“Well... it’s just like this constant thing in your life and it’s there and there’s some purity deep down inside and peace that you have” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

For others, Islam requires a more intimate and sensitive relationship with its believers (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). For Jasmine, Islam is a continual relationship which allows her to discover a sense of tranquillity and she recognises it as wholesome and natural. Unlike previous participants, Saira, a young trainee solicitor in Glasgow finds that the fluidity of faith plays a large role in her life which allows her to practice her faith less physically:

“I see Islam as erm it’s an escape from everyday life so I mean I’m gonna be the first one to admit that I’m not very religious myself, I don’t pray five times a day but when I do pray you just feel completely disconnected and it’s just, it’s like a timeout, like a zone out kind of, you know you start thinking about other things, you just get wrapped up too much in everyday life and I think Islam is erm kind of brings you back down to earth really just to say to you, you know this isn’t the be all and end all” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

Saira confesses here that although she may not be a religious person, her practice comes in various forms and it is distinctively a way of escape from the monotony of everyday life rather than a narrative which dictates the way she must organise her life. Although

this is a clear parallel to Hajra and Aisha earlier, it works particularly well to strengthen the debate amongst academics who argue that Muslim communities are neither cohesive nor homogenous (Nagel, 2005, Gilliat-Ray, 2010) and are instead ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983). Other participants such as Afra reflected upon historical roles of women in Islam, arguing that there appears to be much distortion in the representations of Muslim women throughout Islamic history:

“It’s really good. If you look at the... the early stage, even in the probably hundreds of years, you don’t hear about oppression in women, the history is full with names of women who did very nice things. If you read the history of the prophet dealing with women, either they are relatives or they are people around, really there are many names comes, even in small things. I’m doing research for a while for myself to give lectures in the Halaka time about er, about women treated in Islam, about the issue of love, engagement and marriage, it’s really, really amazing” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Echoing the subsequent participant, she considers the historical context of Islam, noting specifically how it has become blurred with the notion of disempowered female role models. She describes how Islam’s characterisations of women is plentiful, she ultimately sees the women ‘who did very nice things’ in Islamic history whilst also being particularly mindful of her role within this as a student of Islam, she is continuously adding to her knowledge through meetings with other women at *Halaka*¹¹. I later discuss the *Halaka* as a feminised space which some women have engineered as a result of not only exclusion from male-dominated places of worship but also as an autonomous evaluation of the women themselves, their quest for knowledge and affirmation of their belief system.

“No that was my choice, I chose Aisha erm because you know the prophets wife MashAllah and she was a good strong woman who talked you know well and helped her community and that’s why I chose Aisha” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

¹¹ The *Halaka* refers to social meetings held to debate religious interpretations and to recite passages of the Qur'an. In his research exploring identities of young Polish Tatars, Michal Łyszczař refers to the *Halaka* as devotional spaces organised by mainly Arab Muslims “to enrich their religious knowledge and, most importantly, to realise the role of global religious community of super-ethnic character” (Łyszczař, 2001: 65)

Furthering this perception of female role models, Erina, a Muslim convert, describes how she was quite cognizant in her decision to select her Islamic name subsequent to her Shahada. The name she ultimately selected would be ‘Aisha’, the name given to the Prophet Muhammad’s wife, and Erina recalls the importance of embodying the role of Aisha within her community alongside the significance of the name due to the position Aisha was given as the favourite of the Prophet’s wives (Waddy, 1980). For converts, the decision to consider Islam as their faith affinity comes for some as an embodiment of what it is to be ‘faithful’. Below, Nuha, a 39 year-old convert of English descent discusses how she felt enlightened by Islam as a faith, yet her decision was not an immediate confirmation that Islam was the right step in her moral guidance. Instead, she researched the majority religions and took an informed choice to choose Islam:

“Quite a few of my friends have become Muslim and I was, from the age of about 18, kind of searching for, I don’t know, the meaning of life, which everybody does, searching around that age, looking for family roots, where I’m from and where I’m going. And I read about everything, everything you know, literally from witchcraft to Hinduism, Muslims, Christians and kind of settled on Christianity and Islam and erm focused my studies on those two... erm and... read lots and lots and lots of different books and had lots of different discussions with people... It seems to satisfy me more and feel more comfortable for me” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Similar to the majority of converts to Islam, Nuha ascribes her decision to convert to the various experiences she was privy to from a young age. She asserts a particular reverence to her knowledge about other faith practices, consciously selecting Islam as it was ‘more comfortable’. Furthermore, this particular passage reinforces the fluidity of practicing Islam as a religion, adding that it did not impinge on her cultural values nor did it affect her social experiences:

“See I think it’s easy for us because we’re a British family so we’ve just maintained our British culture and just dropped the sort of getting drunk on a Saturday night bit of it, but we’re very, you know, we’re very UK in our way of life” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Here, Nuha discusses the changes they made in terms of lifestyle to accommodate their Islamic beliefs, underlining the notion of choice given to those who practice Islam. She

pays particular attention to the idea of a pic ‘n’ mix of Islam, taking aspects which suit her current lifestyle without disrupting the importance of moral values and ethics.

7.5.2 The relationship between Scotland and Islam

Previously I have discussed the relationships which exist between Scotland and the Islamic community (See Section 7.6 and also Chapter Three), although Maan’s (2008) research of historical connections between the two further illustrates a rich account detailing early contact and roots from Islamic countries such as Egypt and Syria. Alongside Mann, Ansari (2004) provides a vast narrative depicting early transition of Muslims into Scottish Universities to modern-day advances which witness Scottish mosques representing a relationship which understands Scottishness and Islam as bound entities in their social values. The participants here discuss how they see their Islamic and national values as grounded in social freedom and social justice.

“Here you are free to practice anything you want, free to go to the mosque anytime, free to meet any Muslim, any other Muslim, speak about religion freely. So this is a good thing, this is what actually kept us here” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Afra, a Libyan woman who has lived in Scotland for a number of years recognises the freedom living in Scotland has given her and her family, and she expresses how the decision to stay living in Dundee is one which has been informed by the ease of practicing Islam in her locale. Given the tensions in Libya, Afra understands the freedoms offered to her through social democracy in Scotland, which she also attributes as a key motivation for living in Scotland.

“So I suppose in terms of representing Scotland, and to me I suppose a lot of Muslim values and a lot of Scottish values, they’re just like that, they’re the same. Social justice, welcoming, hospitality, caring for each other, neighbourly-ness, to me those are the positive things about Scotland and the positive values held by Islam, it’s no difference, you know there’s no contradictions there whatsoever” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January, 2010)

Kalsoom, a Scottish Muslim convert goes further, remarking on the intricate relationship Islam has with Scotland in terms of the value system of both. She notably illustrates

morality as a specific behaviour which is manifested within Scottish communities as well as Islamic beliefs and behaviours. As Rahma also agrees, the participants evidently saw Scotland as a country which is welcoming, its citizens polite and its environments diverse:

“I think also because people are just nice people from Scotland, they don’t look at you and think ‘oh they’re Muslim’, they just take you as you are, they’ll say ‘hello and hi’ in that sense so it’s really nice and they’re open to people and I think that’s what we’re like as well” (Rahma, Glasgow, 27th January, 2010)

“So like at Ramadan they did a collection for the homeless people in Dundee, which is like for white people and they came to the mosque and they took the food and like after it was collected, coz it was collected after the whole month and MashAllah they got so much. Erm so they do, they try and engage, even the mosque which I think is pretty good for the mosque” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Furthermore, the practice of Islam in Scotland is intrinsically related to the practical access to information which is discussed further in this chapter (See Section 7.5.6). This relationship is one which can be continually sustained through work in the community and as Deeba, a young university student suggests here, the efforts by the local central mosque in Dundee is integral to the wider community as it ultimately works to (re)present the Muslims local to Dundee in a light which they are comfortable with, albeit these localised efforts do not diminish the exclusion faced by Muslim women in the spaces of faith practice. There is a central theme throughout the interviews that local support was integral to representing Islam and Muslims as an all-encompassing and multifaceted community, a local and national *ummah* which further distorts what segregations may be taking place at a micro level. In another interview, Tibah, a Scottish Muslim of Pakistani and African background considers how important the process of gaining knowledge has been for her:

“I didn’t actually understand very well but since I have been looking, when my girls were very little, there was a lot of things that my family used to say you have to do this because you have to do this, you should have a boy, it

doesn't make sense to me and when I looked in the Quran, it doesn't mention anything about girls, they're all equal and I think that made me stronger and I looked more into it" (Tibah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2009)

Tibah here identifies the danger of not seeking to validate knowledge when living within a cultural Islamic environment. She recognises that previously in her family, men and women were given specific roles according to a specific interpretation of Islam, one which is particularly mainstream for the majority of Muslim communities across the world, upholding a patriarchal agenda and assigning particular responsibilities to women, often as child bearers and keepers of the home. There is now a growing recognition among Muslim women that these roles are supported through Islamic verse or history and are born out of culture rather than religion. Afra talks about this below also, highlighting the importance of Islamic education and access to these within particular localities:

"Ah, culture. Err it's erm culture because people doesn't like to read, that is the problem, people just doing things as the people before them doing, without looking or without reading, er the religion, religious education is less. We just know how to pray, how to fast, how we mend faults, if we make sins and how to do Falah for that. We don't look how to deal with other peoples from religious way. We just follow what our parents tell us" (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Afra's knowledge of Islam comes from her teaching and interactions with other women in the *Halaka*. Like the women in Bhimji's (2009) study of women's access to mosque spaces, the women who attend the *Halaka* in Dundee as a space of religious conversation. Although they may not be attending similar sessions to those women in Bhimji's study, nor are the sessions being led by a male Imam, Afra and her co-participants at the *Halaka* look to the sessions as a way of learning about Islamic manners, historical knowledge, the roles of women and their impact on Islamic history. Bhimji further illustrates that her participants "understood Islam to be a form of struggle and an experience shared in mundane, everyday situations" (2009: 374). This is also reflected in Afra's and Tibah's discussions of their own articulations and journeys into accessing knowledge about Islam. I further discuss the 'struggles' some of the participants have faced in Section 7.5.6.

7.5.3 Faith practice in the spaces of the local

Ansari (2004) argues that Islamic organisations which have been rooted in South Asian cultural practice are ignore the concern for Muslim women's faith performance. He argues that "in many ways they have reflected and reinforced the patriarchal attributes of their communities, which have greatly influenced the extent to which Muslim women have been able to carve out a space for themselves in the public sphere" (Ansari, 2004: 374). Furthermore, Andrews' (1994) study of Muslim women in Leicester found that particular religious groups within Islam set different agendas for women's participation in mosque activities. The study highlighted that women practicing Shia Islam were able to benefit from less constraining mosque practices, being provided with space to pray and freedom of movement within the faith institutions. Moreover, the study also emphasised the significant role played by Ismaili women who were often required to attend mosque practices and become an essential component in the planning of faith events and social activities.

The experiences of Islamic practice among the women were extremely diverse, with some describing the lack of opportunities to access Islamic education and others narrating their experience of practicing faith in particular contexts within Scotland. This particular section delivers some stern quotations which find women in the study alluding to patriarchal power so severe, it disallows them spaces of autonomous worship and religious edification. I begin with Sajidah who considers the difficulty of partaking in mosque committees, a difficulty which is certainly not unique to Scotland or even Great Britain, but across all Islamic places of worship worldwide (Wadud, 2007). Notably, Sajidah explains this complexity as a result of patriarchal dominance within the mosque committees and an elusiveness to ascribe women roles within the everyday management of the mosques. This said, there is also a lack of expertise, as Sajidah argues for women to begin to assert their rights within Islam to the wider structures regarding the practice of faith.

"Erm as far as I know I don't think there is a woman on the central mosque committee, there should be but I don't think there are... I think some of the members are a bit old school. A bit more traditional and I think they should be more active in the community and say look we want to be on the committee you know and we want this and we want that... I don't feel active enough and I

don't know what I could do myself but I don't think there are women on the committee which is a shame. This is one of those things where I don't think men would feel comfortable with it" (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June, 2010)

Gilliat-Ray's (2010) work suggests that there exists concerns regarding the level of qualifications required by Imams to teach Islamic studies in UK institutions. Sajidah presents similar concerns to Gilliat-Ray as she argues that they 'mostly reflected a concern with language and communication difficulties, pastoral ability... and accusations of 'sectarianism'" (2010: 163). Furthermore, Rahman et al (2006) comment on the 'conservativeness' of Imams, arguing that their lack of understanding context leads to a failure in carrying out obligations to Muslim communities and British societies. Misha, a mother of five in Glasgow discusses the significant dangers of Imams who are unaware of the British legal system and its evident prohibition of corporal punishment (Gilliat-Ray, 2010, see also Wardak, 2002), adding that there is a particular set of criteria attributed to those imams, for example: immigrant, untrained, male. The lack of successful female imams or *sheikhas* has had profound consequences for the female Muslim communities and other vulnerable groups (Gilliat-Ray, 2010) throughout Scotland as their religious needs have been overlooked by their male counterparts:

"The imam who is in a mosque like that who will not accommodate women or speak English or be open to youngster and basically I would say those mosques are the ones that usually hits the kids which is unacceptable in my opinion, it's giving a negative impression to the children, that imam is from a village somewhere, he's uneducated and he's got a basic knowledge of something and they've shipped him over. Then when that imam leaves, he makes sure that another imam comes from his village, back home and it's a vicious flipping cycle" (Misha, Glasgow, 27th January, 2010)

Calling this a 'vicious flipping cycle', Misha is referring to the need to educate Muslims within the UK to as a priority, countering this need to employ Imams from outside the UK borders. Similarly in Glasgow, where there have been recent uprises among young female Muslims to gain admission to the mosque board (<http://forum.mpacuk.org/showthread.php?t=45180>). Here, Saira is not shy to report on the processes within mosques which amplify the already prevalent patriarchal discourse at play. She identifies that these processes are reinforced through the arrival of Imams from countries outside of the UK which can be identified as 'Islamic' through their relationship

with Islam. Below Saira is also acutely aware of the representations of women on the Central mosque board and although she is determined to be active in the change, she is already disheartened by the attitudes she has experienced by the board:

“Central mosque, their committee is made up of men. It’s crazy because men are excluding women in their own society as well so there’s the whole committee of Glasgow central mosque now I would like to get onto that committee and ruffle a few feathers and stuff... I think there are a lot of barriers that Muslim men are creating for them as well. They don’t like change. They don’t like it when women say do this or do that. They’re completely oblivious, they’re not gonna do anything” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

Ahmad’s (2012) research which explores the key challenges for mosques and imams in Britain, argues that ‘mosques cannot be inclusive without involving women’ (2012: 184). He demonstrates that his female participants were aware of the problems they faced within mosque environments and were often unable to overcome the gendered barriers established by mosque leadership and as such ‘women rarely occupied roles of significant power in such appointments’ (2012: 185).

“And not because, you know, people could take you being a Muslim and English in London, I think because they’re so used to everybody being from everywhere and living differently because that’s what London is whereas here I don’t think they can take it so easily” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Above, Nuha who has moved from London to Edinburgh in the recent years, has been witness to the social norms of both cities, assigning her move to Scotland in effect as one riddled with difficult assertions. She sees London as much more diverse, as it does encompass a larger number of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, than Edinburgh with little attention drawn to her identity as a Muslim. There is a particular significance placed upon ‘space and place’ as Afra discusses below. Having had the experience of different religious spaces throughout Scotland, she speaks of the inter-relations within the community, saying:

“There’s one from each community, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Arab, whatever, Malaysian, they come to the mosque and their wives come as well so the

women's in the room and the men and they plan things together. But here in Dundee, there's none of that" (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Furthermore, Afra reflects on her experience living in Aberdeen, in which she found that the inter-community relations in Aberdeen were much more open to interaction, allowing an exchange of ideas, respecting ethnic cultures and faith practices which stem from these. She also describes how she sees very little of this in Dundee, leading to a lack of community cohesion among the various Muslim communities living in Dundee from a range of ethnic backgrounds. This begins to uncover interesting curiosities about the spaces in Dundee and who controls these spaces of worship and inter-religio-community relations as well as why they operate differently to those in other parts of Scotland. From my experiences during the fieldwork, this could be a result of the lack of diverse ethnic Muslim cultures in Dundee as many of the Muslim communities are from South Asian backgrounds. Along a similar line of thought, the overall lack of Muslim communities in rural areas in Scotland may signify a greater need by those living in those areas to contribute to micro community activities and relations to maintain their sense of religious identity. Wardak (2002) argues that mosque spaces can often give Muslims a sense of place when they feel excluded from social and political spaces in a extending beyond their religious communities. Moreover, he comments that the space of the mosque creates a 'closed community of believers' (2002: 208), however, Wardak pays little attention to the ways in which the mosque is used as a gendered space.

"There was erm, there wasn't really a sort of a Dundee new Muslims group as such but there was a lot of like erm you know like I went to Halaka regularly and there was a lot of ladies there and then they would invite me to their houses" (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

Carrying forward further evidence of community disintegration in Dundee, Jasmine, a Muslim convert, recollects how Muslim converts previously received much support after a recent conversion, however, this support has all but withdrawn now, leaving many of converts in Dundee to fend for themselves, emotionally and practically.

"Stuff like that you see, so much I don't know but I'm so interested in learning about stuff like that but even in Dundee, there's nothing, like to learn stuff like that you can go to Glasgow or Edinburgh but there's no classes on in Dundee" (Beena, Dundee, 20th April, 2010)

A recent revert¹² to Islam, Beena argues that there is much difficulty in gaining access to information regarding Islam, often having to travel outside of Dundee to places like Glasgow and Edinburgh. Similar to Smith's (2004) argument, access to informal relationships with male relatives and being a full time mother prevents her from much of this and she is often left to ask advice from family and friends as opposed to the Islamic academic community which exists in Glasgow and Edinburgh in the form of Islamic scholars.

“Boring [laughs] I just think if you want to be in a peaceful environment then you should be here but if you are the type of person that you want a busy environment and you want people around you then you're better off in Glasgow and Edinburgh but here it's just... quiet” (Falak, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Falak goes on to assess how she feels Dundee is different from both Glasgow and Edinburgh, recognising the economic and social distinctions of both places, she describes Dundee essentially as a placid place in comparison to the more cosmopolitan lifestyles applicable to Glasgow and Edinburgh. There is also a hint of dissatisfaction in Falak's statement as she is a young practicing Muslim and she notes that the majority of opportunities to socialize with others of her background are in the bigger cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and indeed places in England.

In terms of actual practice, Sajidah reflects upon the community separations in Dundee which greatly affects the cohesiveness of Muslim relations within the area. She recognises that celebrating religious festivals is integral to the solidarity of Muslim communities alongside being cautious of the absence of agreement over religious festivals and the influence this can have upon wider representations of Muslims.

“Even with Eid we can't decide the same day before of the different mosques. It's just like... I know that some of my friends start a day before or after but it's like we celebrate Eid on one day and we can't even celebrate together and it's just silly like that. I think last year it was all one day which was good. Last year was different so that was really good. I still remember when [a] certain number of Muslims were off and others weren't and the teachers would be like

¹² In the case of the participants in this study, I address a number of them as 'reverts' to Islam and by this I refer to a journey 'back' to Islam after being born into an Islamic family or community and subsequently dissolving their religious identity.

I thought Eid was on one day and you have to say it's different for different people and it shouldn't be like that, it should all be on one day" (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June, 2010)

Sajidah, a 23 year-old office worker, pays close attention to the ways in which discrepancies between mosques has a knock on effect on the ways Islamic practices are perceived elsewhere, in her case, in school. Having to be answerable for inquisitions from her teachers in school, Sajidah plays close attention to the message this plays out, arguing that Muslims should unite in their religious celebrations rather than rejoice separately.

"I know it shouldn't be any different but it is a big issue in our community. I mean, what am I doing, it's not Haram you know women in Pakistan do hookah, so hookah and smoking is the same thing, it's all about taking something inside you. But for an Asian woman it's like oh no, even now look at the Asian women now thirty five and they still hide and smoke" (Beena, Dundee, 20th April, 2010)

Beena here discusses the ways in which social stigma can often be the reason for a breakdown in community relations. She uses herself as an example, an Asian woman who smokes and immediately relays how this action can be construed as *Haram*. While she is aware of these stigmas attached to her actions, she is also sensitive to her faith and argues that the custom of 'Hookah' is an accepted form of smoking due to its cultural history and backdrop. Bradby (2007) discusses how identities for young British South Asians can often be scrutinised as a result of their tobacco, alcoholic and social practices, rendering them less Islamic or religious. Similarly, Beena, a divorced mother of two is wary of how her social practices impact her reputation, however, she is also mindful these practices are rooted in gendered histories which view women with much higher expectations than men.

7.5.4 Local repercussions of global events

The idea of being disconnected in this section stems from dread of reprisal after global events such as September 11th, 2001 and July 7th, 2005. The women, through an increase in social awareness, were mindful of the impact of terrorist activity upon their identity as Muslims and were fearful of persecutory actions in public places. Jasmine describes her apprehension in airports and in public spaces as she chooses to wear a Jilbab and Hijab,

furthering her visibility as Muslim and drawing particular meanings to her practice of Islam:

“Just the whole airport security thing because I was like... I hate going through the airports anyway now with the Hijab and erm I just thought it’s gonna be a nightmare getting through the airport now and that’s it. It was so worrying because it was back here where this had happened in the UK. Although we’d already decided previously to move back, that was us actually moving back from Tunisia after living there for a year. I thought, what’s the place gonna be like now we’ve made a decision to go back to the UK? Things are gonna change now so that’s quite a big thing” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January, 2010)

Jasmine’s decision to move back to the UK after spending a year in Tunisia came at a particularly difficult time, shortly after September 11th, 2001. Therefore, she is exceptionally wary of her physical appearance in airports and places of high security. Below, Zubeidah previously lived in London and is noticeably concerned. She identifies this concern as one which is deeply rooted in the actions subsequent to September 11th, 2001 and July 7th, 2005:

“We lived in south east, we felt and where these incidents happened were just up the road and people just down the train line just a few stops considered London far from them and didn’t feel connected but we were totally right when 9/11 happened you know I really felt this is gonna impact on us erm when [the] July bombings happened” (Zubeidah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2009)

Zubeidah, a 45 year-old mother-of-five lived in Balham, London for most of her childhood after her family emigrated from Karachi. The move to Edinburgh came not only as a result of her husband’s career but also as a step away from London and much of the hostility she felt her family may endure. In another discussion in Dundee, the proximity of the men involved with the terrorist attempt at Glasgow airport proved too much for Afra as she discusses it with her fellow students at Al-Maktoum, a college for Islamic and Arabic studies based in Central Dundee.

“Yeh, I was here. Even I know of someone people who know this man, the Jordanian man at Glasgow airport. We were talking about it, I was in Al-

Maktoom at the time. We discussed it during the lectures and it's just disgust" (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

This particular passage is useful in countering the image of a cohesive Muslim community who will often stand together. Afra indeed remembers how her colleagues and she were greatly saddened by the actions of that day as she was personally familiar with people related to the attacks. Deeba discusses how mannerisms can deflect attention from negative stereotypes as she works continuously to present herself to her friends and neighbours. This particular passage reflects on the forms of agency Muslim women embody as they become increasingly aware of the attention they are unjustly given in spaces outside of the home.

"Without your outer... erm I don't know I think you can show you're a Muslim by your actions like by being polite and smiling and being generally nice and erm I don't know how I would say I'm Arab to people without speaking the language to be honest" (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Furthermore, Deeba describes how her mannerisms are manifested within an Islamic set of guidelines, noting that it is crucial that she carries out her Islamic duty through everyday interactions with her friends and neighbours. It is the behaviour practices of Deeba that are evidently the priority and gateway to social interaction. Deeba's identity here is made up of a number of different strands, religious, national and cultural and there is heavy work involved in maintaining all three concurrently. The practice of maintaining these identities also shows a wider recognition from the study that women are forming autonomous relationships with other Muslim women. I discuss below how women in the study have acknowledged an overall lack of identification of service needs relating to religious practice and how they have worked to overcome particular barriers within their locale to form groups and organisations, cliques and inner circles to support each other in their religious journeys.

7.5.5 Family, work and faith practice

Practising their faith came in a variety of forms for the women in the study and here, they discuss their experiences accesses facilities for Islamic knowledge and education, alongside the various support networks available in local communities for Muslim

women. The previous section uncovers the segregation within Muslim communities across Scotland and the participants here discuss the relevance of a support network and how they worked to unearth and develop these. Raniya, a Pakistani mother-of-two moved away from Dundee to Pakistan after having lived there for five years, and subsequently returned after eight years. The family moved back to Dundee as they had previously created a social network in the city which they renewed upon their return. Raniya discusses how it was difficult for women previously to create and maintain these networks, which further illustrates the reason why they chose Dundee, a known city for their family, somewhere which they could relate to without having to create new networks:

“I think because of education, they are well aware, like this generation like [Nazli]. Before our people, they were not educated enough, they were just housewives, they didn't want to participate in any sort of events or if there is some sort of erm conference or erm seminars or any informative things going on, they used to just hide behind their you know doors and they don't want to come out and erm they were just er prefer to be housewives. But this generation, they're educated, they're well aware, they want to do actively something positively something for Muslim people” (Raniya, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Raniya has since lived in Dundee for many years and has experienced a profound change among the younger generations of Muslim women in Scotland. She talks about the generational difference she has been witness to, arguing that previously inactive Muslim women were now gaining a platform of agency to drive their aspirations through education and work.

“At that time in Dundee, there wasn't that many Muslim people, the Asian community kept themselves to themselves, there wasn't a big Arabic community so I really didn't see anyone apart from when I went to Gaza to see my husband's family and that really was the turning point for me to learn Arabic and to know more about Islam” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

When Erina had embarked on her conversion to Islam, a major obstacle was her non-ability to speak Arabic, which is her husband's first language and the language in which her children would go on to learn in after-school Islamic classes. As a mother Erina felt it

critical to share this experience with her children. She goes on to argue here how a trip to Palestine had invited her to explore Islam a lot further. Below she discusses her experience of meeting another convert in Dundee. Together they created a support network which was crucial to furthering the understanding Erina had of Islam and of Muslims. In an earlier chapter Erina reflects on the lack of support she received from the wider born Muslim community:

“And I met a lady called Lana and she lives in Perth and she actually taught us how to pray properly erm and she erm learnt Surahs and things like that and that was just a turning and from there I learnt myself. We practised Islam properly really and it was lovely, I’m indebted to her for all the teachings that she gave us, such a nice lady” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

This particular example showcases how Muslim converts have a separate support network they are able to turn to, and similarly Moosavi (2012: 116) offers a further critique of the experiences of white Muslim converts in his work. He argues that new Muslims are ‘authenticated’ into their new religious roles and by ‘praying properly’, Erina is being taught how to adopt religious practices, and in turn creating cultural capital in the form of other Muslim converts.

In terms of participation with local Muslim communities, Deeba discusses how women in Dundee often come together at Halakas to share knowledge in a female only environment. Dissimilar from Islamic classes, the Halakas represent something of a more informal nature which transcends across all Islamic doctrines. These Halakas are also mentioned by Jasmine previously as she reports on an absence of local information networks. Therefore it is evident that fractures within Muslim communities, especially in Dundee, can lead to a lack of awareness of these institutions which are vital to the everyday practice of Muslim women:

“No it’s just a ladies only thing. So I see people of all ages, like the mothers bring their daughters so we’re all the same age. My friends come to it. The uni girls come to it like on their own erm you’ve got like all the converts that are new to Islam. It’s a good way for them to learn because I don’t think there’s a lot of ways to get answers to the questions you have by somebody who has studied Islam like a scholar or something like that” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

The *Halaka* represents an autonomous space for these women, somewhere which is uninhibited by men, controlled and led by women which not only empowers the groups, but also leads them to question their roles outside of the group setting. In Glasgow, Foziah is a spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Scotland, the largest organisation representing Muslims in Scotland. The significance of an event being hosted at a mosque illustrates not only a stepping stone in the advancement of gender relations in Muslim communities, but also a deep-seated level of sexism which has previously prohibited women from entering spaces occupied by men. This is further evident in the lack of facilities available to women in a space which is universally known as accepting 'all' people:

"So for example the work that I'm doing with the Muslim council of Scotland, we very often rotate our meeting in different mosques and some of the mosques have never had women in them. So it's very small steps and erm our last AGM which we had was in a mosque you know where there are no facilities for women, the AGM had men and women at it and erm so the very fact that mosque has agreed to host an event that had men and women at is the very first steps. And you know where we want to get to is if women choose to be on the committee, then there's a process and there's a process that says our committee needs to have men and women and younger people and its accepted as the routine here but erm we need to begin to erm create, create that reality" (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Foziah is a mother of four and a council worker in Glasgow alongside an active member of her local Muslim community. She is sensitive to the need to have liberal processes to empower women, allowing them opportunities to step into formal roles in mosque management and development. In Basit's (1998) of the aspirations of British Muslim girls, she found that as a result of the close knit community relations and lack of gateways to wider religious edict, women were often less adapted to the world inside the mosque, therefore limiting their contact with local and wider religious institutions. Also previous attention has been drawn to the lack of facilities for religious edification in Dundee, elsewhere Falak, an 18 year-old nursery worker discusses her experiences in the workplace and the ways her employers are open to providing her with a space to practice her faith. This signifies the subjective experiences that Muslim women have, on one hand

they are excluded from religious spaces within their own communities and on the other, they find opportunities for religious practice in non-faith institutions:

“Oh no I don’t think they discriminate here. I think if you go into work and that, if you need to pray they’ll give you a room and even when I was in school they gave you a prayer room, the boys got it and they had everything beside it, they had a bit of understanding here. Even when you’re fasting they’re really good in schools and that” (Falak, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Working and living in Dundee, Falak talks about her experience of praying in her workplace and carrying on her Islamic duty through fasting rituals. She argues that she feels her workplace, a local nursery, is relatively impartial, giving her access to special facilities for prayer. Although, later in the interview, Falak discusses her experience of a particular male colleague who had chided her choice of Islamic dress, the incident was met with serious consequences from management who disciplined her male colleague for his comments.

This section, filled with numerous examples of the ways in which women experience social spaces of interaction, create autonomous spaces of religious debate simultaneously recognises how women are also excluded from particular spaces and places throughout Scotland as a result of gendered differences and sexist practices. I go on to illustrate in more detail how women in parts of Scotland are identified by others and themselves as part of an ethno-religious group which distils the notions of community disintegration debates.

7.5.6 Awareness of faith in Scotland

Firdaus is a 57 year-old volunteer who works between London and Dundee. Here, she reflects on the ways in which she sees Muslim women in London as different, ‘more practical’, more cosmopolitan as they work, managing a family while concurrently having some sense of occupying social spaces. I use this quote to illustrate how Firdaus feels that young girls in Dundee are not offered the same opportunities because of cultural backgrounds and lack of assimilation which leads to gender segregations in the workplace as well as in public places:

“The Muslims in London, they are more, they are practical... they are practical here as well but more in Dundee they go out to do something like going for school they finish and just stay home and get married but in London because there is good education and work, they get married and have a family. Its different settling, these Scottish girls, they are Muslim as well, they are following Muslims in purdah Muslims, like not go out and meet men and in England, they go out for the job, they do meet men at work... I don’t know how much you can compare the two” (Firdaus, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Firdaus draws comparisons between her life in London and Dundee. She feels that the Muslim community in Dundee suffer practical limitations. She likens the nature of Dundee to something similar to a big village as opposed to the fast-paced lifestyle of London. Below, Kamila is a mother-of –two, a white Muslim convert of Norwegian background and as she discusses the lack of integration between Muslims in Dundee, she also pays attention to the numerous mosques in the city. On the one hand, Kamila may not be aware of the gender segregation practices in the mosque, and on the other, she may also be excluded from Muslim groups, similarly to Erina as she has not been ‘authenticated’ (Moosavi, 2012: 116):

“I don’t know if it’s because it’s an Asian mosque. I don’t know, I’ve heard from friends that the Asian women don’t usually go to mosque on a Jumma. Yeh that’s what I’m saying, culturally, it’s not Islamically, it’s culturally. It’s got another Victoria mosque as well which is not far from the city centre as well, I heard that one’s got a sisters area as well. And there’s another mosque which is more a spiritual mosque... like a Sufi mosque, they do this er spiritualism... more of a sect kind of thing so... and also there’s university mosque as well. There are a lot of Muslims there as well but you never see them, it’s like... you don’t socialise, they just stay by themselves, and they’re like a little group” (Kamila, Dundee, 26th January, 2010)

Speaking about access to mosques, Kamila defines here how different mosques are used by different members of the community. According to the Muslim Directory (2008), there are three main places of Islamic worship in Dundee (Tayside Islamic & Cultural Education Centre; Jamaa Masjid - Dundee Islamic Society and Jamia Masjid Billal (Scottish Islamic & Cultural Centre)). And although this is useful as it facilitates

discussions surrounding diversity and community integration debates, it is also difficult in terms of practice and selecting which Islamic institution would be appropriate for Kamila in Dundee. Cultural practices also play a large role in drawing distinctions between groups, as Afra describes below:

“In Arabs, we just hug and kiss and ask each other how we been, what we are doing. For others, I find it, they don’t bother, they don’t even shake hands. I seen them, even I spend a lot of time with them. They see me after five, four years, how are you, how are you, Salam Aleykum, that’s it” (Afra, Dundee, 13th May, 2010)

Afra here reflects on her interactions with Muslims from other ethnic backgrounds and how she feels there is a lack of solidarity among the Muslim women. As an Arab Muslim, Afra is a minority in Dundee as the majority of Muslims come from a south Asian background. She is discussing the ways in which Pakistani Muslims greet her, and how this is very different from her usual customs of affection through hugging and kissing. Clarifying the differences within Muslim communities through cultural practices and behaviours. Tibah describes herself as a Muslim revert with an African/Pakistani background. She speaks here of the difficulties she experienced when associating her faith with ethnic and cultural traditions, she further decided that she was unable to fulfil these traditions appropriately and instead focused upon her faith as her identifying factor:

“So then I thought well... I think I just want to be a Muslim, I don’t really care what you know what background I’m from and luckily in Edinburgh, the mosque was very close to us and I started to go to the mosque when I was finding out about Islam” (Tibah, Edinburgh, 17th December, 2010)

Ease of practice differs from locality to locality, which is drawn out by Tibah here. Her decision to practice Islam as a Muslim revert was made easier through the access she had to her local mosque, Edinburgh Central. The mosque became a unique space in which Tibah met other Muslim women through women’s groups and events held by the mosque. It allowed her the sense of ‘community’ she needed to feel a part of Islam. Elsewhere in Scotland, access to mosque space as a form of religious practice as well as social space has been made accessible. The central mosque of Dundee Jamaa Masjid is a purpose built

mosque erected in 1996¹³. Deeba demonstrates how purpose built mosques are an advantage for Muslim women as there is often pre-planning to be gender inclusive:

“Erm yeh ladies have got a floor so erm and there’s like two doors, so basically the men go in one entrance and the ladies go in one entrance, so that’s there for any you know women to go to anytime. During Ramadan, they go and pray taraveeh there as well and they’ve got the whole of the top floor. It’s like massive erm like the bottom basically is like really big and the top one is just as big as well and there’s little rooms as well for like the kids that learn Qur’an and stuff but what we do is in Ramadan, they know that the top floor is for ladies but then when we go to Halaka, we go into one of the littler rooms because there might be men about but there are like... my mum and her friends, they do one on Thursday and they go to the mosque as well... and you don’t need to book or anything you just go” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Above, Deeba argues that there is access for women in local mosques, asserting a very different approach to Afra and Kamila in Dundee who discuss the difficulty in admission and awareness of mosque practices. Deeba’s experience of institutions in the local is very different from Kamila’s for a number of reasons. Firstly, she is a born Muslim (Moosavi, 2012) and has had high levels of contact with Muslims and Islamic organisations from a young age. On the other hand, Kamila is a Muslim convert and also a migrant from North Eastern Europe from a country which has had little opportunity to interact with wider Muslim communities, therefore her move to Dundee was initially a positive one, allowing her a greater link with the diverse Muslim communities, however, she has since had negative experiences of Muslims in her move to Dundee and finds the practice of faith in Dundee a difficult one to perform. Ending the chapter with a quote from Saira, a trainee lawyer in Glasgow, she argues that Scottish principles have enhanced her experiences, drawing particular attention to nationalist values:

“They’re more tolerant than other countries I would say, and tolerant in the sense that, they make, I think Scotland makes more of an effort with all this kind of multicultural Scotland, all these kind of different events you’ve always got on and stuff, there’s that so they’re more... not tolerant, I wouldn’t say tolerant because that shows the fact that they’re tolerating us, I wouldn’t say

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http://www.dundeecentralmosque.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=127

that. I would say accepting and integrated, I would say because it's quite integrated" (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

In Glasgow, Saira considers her outlook on Scotland's attitude to Muslims. She finds them initially to be 'tolerant' yet corrects herself as she feels Muslims should not have to be 'tolerated', they are part and parcel of Scottish communities and the relationship with Muslims across Scotland is vital to the wider social integration and diversity. She argues that multiculturalism is a priority within Scotland and there are numerous examples of ways in which Scotland can be deemed a diverse society e.g. events. This is particularly interesting as Saira, although working in Glasgow, lives in a rural area outside of the city where her family are amongst the only Muslim and south Asian families in the village. Her perception of Scotland, then, as a multicultural society is also informed by her experiences living in rural Scotland, experiences which are unlike Kamila and others living in the smaller city of Dundee, showcasing the importance of place-based faith and experiences as the forefront of the ways in which nationalist Scottish values can be understood by people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

7.6 Conclusion

As Bhachu argues "there is virtually nowhere in the world in which a pure nation state exists" (1985: 21) and Britain is certainly no exception. Its increasing multicultural community continuously alters political and social thought. For Muslims in Britain, their participation within the political and social sphere has changed ways in which their children are taught in schools, the discriminations they may face at work and the notions of community solidarity. This chapter has demonstrated the various ways in which Muslim communities exist not in harmony but instead in contention through their cultural and religious practice. Alongside this I explore their subjective experiences of faith communities across Great Britain, noting striking differences between cosmopolitan London, quieter, slow-paced Dundee, and the gendered exclusions of Muslim women in Glasgow in mosque spaces. The addition of one woman in mosque management in Edinburgh provides a turning point for observing that these spaces are being created, albeit at a very slow rate. They are also mismanaged as I argue there must be a collective understanding among Islamic places of worship to include and integrate women into their infrastructure rather than as an attachment or placed under a separate set of conditions.

In terms of access to religious edict and institutional practice, Muslim women are distinctly invisible in the planning, application and administration of mosques throughout Scotland, although the Muslim Women's Network is currently working with mosques to re-educate and reconstruct mosque practices to include women and assess their practice needs. Ansari (2004) argues that the trends which exclude Muslim women from mosque participation only work to further reinforce patriarchal structures, disabling the autonomy of women who want to access administrative support and become significant actors in the building and execution of mosques as religious institutions but also as multicultural spaces in Scotland. There is a growing need, however, to recognise the contribution women can make within religious and faith organisations and with the coming on purpose built mosques and multicultural centres, there is often an agenda set in place enabling women to create spaces of interaction and autonomy.

Chapter Eight

Muslim women and Scottish National Identities

8.1 Introduction

This chapter interrogates how the participants in the study felt, experienced and contested identities and identity formation when considering the discourses of nationalism and nationality. I argue that insights into identity encourage discourses surrounding ethnic, religious and national identity, bringing together various narratives of identity and subjectivities for Muslim women in Scotland.

Mead (1934) argues that identities are constructed through a delicate process of symbolisation, and dynamic thought which allows individuals to connect themselves to their wider social world (Woodward, 2004). Beginning with a brief introduction to the literature which focuses on the discourses between what are ethnic, faith and national identities, I discuss how the formations of various interconnected identities have changed as a result of social and political upheaval during the 1980s and onwards. Analyses of data draw attention to the construction of identities by Muslim women in Scotland, arguing they are not only fluid, multiple and contextual but that these women play a large role in forming these identities in light of local, national and global events. The chapter

highlights the uniqueness of the Scottish context in identity assertion as Muslim women in Scotland emphasize a particular ethno-religious-civic-personal identity and practice them in subtle yet palpable ways, through professional lives, family experiences or social contexts in Scotland. I also introduce how five of participants were able to capture what they viewed as aspects of their identity through photo-taking exercises. I share these visual aids throughout the chapter to illustrate the ways in which the women are continually re-engaging with processes of asserting identity and constructing spaces of belonging throughout Scotland. The photo-taking exercises were introduced to the women in primary interviews and focus groups and then followed up with brief 5-10 minute conversations once the images had been captured and developed. I asked the women to comment on their decisions to take particular images, which they felt were resonant of particular themes I had given them. The aim here was to allow the women to introduce primary data into the study, become empowered and deliberate the data collection process as it focused on their lives and experiences. The ways in which these identities are formed and practiced provide much of the basis to position the discourses of this chapter as ones which engage with wider academic thoughts around the representations of British Muslim women as a whole, highlighting the salience of Scotland as a separate space of transformative experiences.

8.2 Forming identities: ethno-religious constructions

During the 1980s and into the 1990s, theories around identity took a unique yet unexpected turn into exploring forms of religious and faith identities, extending the boundaries of identity theory to also include the relationships between religion, faith, practice, autonomy and identity. (Modood, 2005). There was an appreciation for the ways Asians in Britain were beginning to contemplate their identities within a broader framework of identity politics, further considering the significant role that religion played in their understandings of identity and identity formation (Dwyer and Shah, 2009). As a result, increased scholarly attention has been paid to analysing the contributions of religion to identity, within wider social and political changes in public policy, immigration and citizenship (Abedin and Sardar, 1995). During the mid 1990s, those from South Asian backgrounds, who had begun to assert their Muslim identities and the rights that came with these were doing so within the realms of a much changed political

landscape (Husband, 1994). Identifying with faith became a new autonomous exercise and Muslims across Britain and indeed Western Europe were using their ethnic backgrounds much less than before to manage their personal identities and more to view them as a means of identifying their cultural practices and values. Instead they were using their religious backgrounds alongside their contemplation of nationality to identify themselves within social situations (Modood and Ahmad, 2007). I use the empirical evidence in this chapter to argue that Muslim women in Scotland are still being racialised or are racialising others, making an ethnic identity as important as a religious or civic identity. Simultaneously, I use Chapter Six to highlight how ethnic and religious differences have led to particular exclusions within Muslim communities and this is further reflected in their use of social spaces as ways to include and exclude other Muslim women. It has been argued that an increased ability to recognise the salience of amalgamating religious identity with national values has led to Muslims in Britain ‘self-integrating’ (Modood and Ahmad, 2007), the process by which one adapts their thoughts and behaviours to not only comprise of their faith values but also doing so without rejecting their relationship with Western culture (Roy, 2004).

The changing focus which saw a turning point from race to religion in which religious identity has been fostered has been home to a unique set of changes, including the coming of New Labour in the 1990s and their climb to political power and government office. Their anti-racist politics and commitment to multiculturalism gained a large degree of loyalty from ethnic and religious minorities in Britain (Back et al, 2002). Modood (2005: 195) considers the relevance of these political transformations arguing ‘identity politics in this political climate are not implicit and private but are shaped through intellectual, cultural and political debates’. Newly created ideas of citizenship were open to debate and arbitration (Modood and Ahmad, 2007) and Muslims who had begun their journey to political power were feeling particularly optimistic with the introduction of strategic guidelines and discourse around faith politics. In Scotland, Maan (2008) describes how the first Muslim organisation (Jamiat ul Muslimin) was set up as a sister organisation to a counterpart in London in 1933 and Maan himself was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 1968 indicating “the acceptance of the Muslim community in Scotland and a sign of their integration into Scottish society” (Maan, 2008: 202). Political participation began to grow during the 1990s steadily as Muslims were showing more interest in civic participation and social mobility (Maan, 2008). Unfortunately, much of Maan’s work neglects to examine the identity formation of Muslim women in Scotland as a separate

group, instead focusing upon a collective Muslim identity, one which is often portrayed by the successions of male community organizers or political leaders. This is something I relate to in my thesis quite frequently as I explore how Muslim women are contributing to civic participations and community activism.

The articulation of faith identity comes in many forms and its subjectivities are often diverse (Mohammad, 2005; Dwyer and Shah, 2009). We must consider the dialogue between and from different paradigms such as culture and practice, public and private, conformity and non-conformity to Western behaviours or religious values. Physical signifiers of identity, particularly for Muslim women are often demonstrated through their practice of Islamic dress or the embodiment of *Hijab* practice (these are further discussed in Chapter Five). The use of the *headscarf* as a physical signifier takes many forms of analysis, from patriarchal forms of the Islamic religion (Ahmed, 1992) to more postmodern resistance to western dress and dominant cultural western values (Ansari, 2004; Tarlo 2010; Lewis, 2007). Afshar (1994) contends that Muslim women are regularly observed through a discourse of dissemination of cultural values and “the standard bearers of the groups’ private and public dignity” (1994: 130). As a result, Muslim women are made aware of their social conduct, and challenged to behave with a sense of morality and civility as to not tarnish their reputations or that of their families (Modood et al, 1994). Dwyer’s work with school girls in South-East England found that particular transmitters of identity could be recognized within the school as a site of contestation through a range of constructions such “‘race’, religion, education and nationalism’ (Dwyer, 1993: 147). She further argues that identities are expressed in a multitude of ways and behaviours (Dwyer and Shah, 2009). These behaviours, which can also be viewed as expressions of cultural and religious identity, can be further examined using practices of national identity, nationality and nation (Hobsbawm, 1992; Jenkins, 2008).

8.3 Forming identities: Nationalisms

The fluidity of identities associated with nation, nationalism and place illustrate that it is not only ever-changing, but must be defined and redefined with a view to consider historical, political and social factors and potential expectations such as changes within public discourse (Parekh, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1999). Nationalism transcends across a

number of idioms including “different movements, cultural patterns, state policies or other projects” (Calhoun, 1997: 8) and as such, we must then visualise nationalism and national identity through a number of theories and using a range of frameworks. As I argue for a feminist framework which understands the lives of women with a religious, cultural and national focus, I find that feminist theorists of national identity place the roles of women at the forefront, claiming they are paramount to “national processes as biological, cultural, ethnic and symbolic reproducers of the nation” (Hall, 1999: 52; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989). Other writers have argued that women from ethnic minority backgrounds have been absent in academic literature as more attention has been paid to black men or white women (Çaha, 2011). Hooks has criticised previous movements, arguing ‘when black people are talked about the focus tends to be on ‘black men’; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on ‘white women’. Nowhere is this more evident than in the vast body of feminist literature’ (Hooks, 1992: 7). More recent studies, however, suggests a growing body of literature pertaining to the experiences of women from minority groups and grass roots level and it is here that my work contributes to a much wider debate around the lives of Muslim women in Europe. In her work with Danish Muslims, Jensen (2008) argues that immigration fears exacerbated by right-wing political parties threaten Denmark’s hegemonic national culture. Furthermore, she argues that Muslim Danes are viewed with the ‘immigrant’ status, and those who convert to Islam are doing so at the risk of losing their Danish heritage. Further in this chapter I use excerpts from the interviews to consider how Muslim women in Scotland experience notions of ‘Scottishness’, if at all, and those who present a dissimilar form are further questioned about how and why they cannot consider Scottishness as part of their wider personal identities.

Postcolonial theorists view national identity as rooted within historical processes and political movements (Hall, 1999). As Hall argues, ‘nations are not made once and forever. Rather they are constantly remade and re-imagined, the boundaries redrawn’ (Hall, 1999: 47) and we must consider the benefits of negotiating ethnic forms of belonging, further contemplating the insider-outsider relationships using a framework of nationalism (Jenkins, 2008). Furthermore, Llobera (1994: 214) considers the place of ethnicity within wider dialogues of nationalism, arguing that ‘in order to make a bid for nationhood, the first thing you must have is a reservoir of ethnic potential’. I argue in this chapter that Muslim women have created spaces in which they comfortably practice their identities, yet also incorporate what it means to be Scottish in this. They use specific Scottish

physical signifiers in social contexts to express their Scottishness, and to also to draw a sense of belonging in particular social spaces, for instance when speaking to members of the public or staff in a restaurant. For the women involved, this allows them to define their own social interactions, communicating and articulating as directly as they can, withdrawing attention from their racialisations and their physical signifiers of Islamic dress. This is further evidenced by the use of visual aids throughout the chapter.

Social theories of ethnicity present a number of claims to nationalism and in doing so they argue for a definitive analysis of group membership using a model of ethnicity through collective identities (Jenkins, 2008; Connor, 1978; Williams, 1989). They also argue for an exploration into identity formation at the individual level. For example, literature around multiculturalism in Britain finds that young people are increasingly identifying themselves as British and Pakistani or British and Indian or indeed British and Bangladeshi, therefore perpetuating the relationship between ethnicity national identity, belonging and participation (Jenkins, 2008). Through externalising these characteristics, the women in the study engage with a number of identities, some ethnic, some religious, others social, while altogether comprising them under the umbrella of feminist identities. Jackson and Penrose (1993) argue that particular attention needs to be paid to spatial scales, local, national and global in order to fully comprehend how race and nation are expressed by people at an individual level. They argue that 'racialisation' theory has become an umbrella term for theories of race, initially fashioned by Miles (1982) they seek out to root nation and race within a historical paradigm (Jackson and Penrose, 1993). In this chapter, using physical attributes, I explore how the participants express their local identities, for instance, those in Dundee make use of local dialect in public spaces to display their 'Dundonianism'.

Racism and nationalism has been a much debated area of focus for sociological theory. Theorists such as Hall (1992; 1996), Back and Solomos (2000) and Solomos and Back (1996) draw attention to post-war era as a particular political period which sought to not only exclude ethnic minorities in Britain from wider social and economic opportunity, they were furthermore subject to exclusionary rights of citizenship and a black British national identity and ethnic and individual autonomy (Mac an Ghaill, 1999). I use Chapter Three to discuss how the movements of Muslims in Scotland has been considered as they made autonomous decisions to reside and work in particular parts of Scotland. This has inevitably led to unique social histories which have led to a delineation of social and political identity by Muslim communities in Scotland as they consider how and where

they are able to interact, and view social spaces as their own. Political membership or participation in political activities is therefore also required at some level to be considered a citizen of a state, although this does not always apply and I use this chapter to highlight how Muslim women may use different ethnic and nationalistic identities ahead of their Scottishness (Verdery, 1993).

The ideas around citizenship, social and political participation are further discussed in Chapter Six, however the basic premise here is that identity and citizenship are interlinked in more ways than one and we must look at historical processes, political change and social exclusions to understand how Muslim women in Scotland are continually adapting their subjectivities in light of a changing political climate, as many ethnic and religious minority people have done so before them. It is an on-going process which recognises the deliverance of national identity as a discourse which applies universally, not just for those who have historical connections to a place through kinship and ancestry but also those who have sought and created connections to particular spaces and places throughout Scotland. I use this chapter to highlight that Muslim women have created and utilised such spaces, not only as a result of the need to solidify a sense of belonging but also because they view that space as their own. These spaces may include a part of Glasgow city centre, a shop they visit often or indeed a space or room inside of their home which they have control in and are empowered by. Some of these spaces are engulfed in religious artefacts which further illustrate how the women are continually maintaining religious identities alongside their need to be viewed under the guise of ‘Scottish’, ‘female’, and a particular ethnic trait, if it applies.

Previously, it was argued that Muslims give religion a preference over national identity (Modood and Ahmad, 2007), however, this chapter explores the subjectivities of Muslim women in identity formation to highlight that national identity is increasingly becoming a priority for Muslim women. As new research emerges (Hopkins, 2007; 2008a), *Scottishness* has become the new *British* for Muslims in Scotland as they begin to assert national identities through various degrees (Modood, 2005), whether it be assimilation, cultural homogenisation or simply living in a particular part of Scotland, therefore following the social norms and accepting the social values of that place. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) explore the boundaries which enable the changing nature of social identities, including political and cultural, and Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins (2002) argue that the term ‘identity’ can be further associated with two narratives; the identity being asserted and the representation of that identity.

During the empirical section of this chapter, I draw upon my analysis of the women's words to highlight how they feel representations of Muslims throughout the world have on one hand thrust them into the spotlight, and on the other, neglected to represent their individual qualities, rendering them invisible (See section 8.4.3). Hopkins (2004) illustrates how Muslim markers of identity such as dress, physical appearance and skin colour draw representations of them and work to associate them with political and cultural ideologies which impact identities they portray and experience. He argues that these markers of identity can be closely linked with the acceptance or exclusion of Muslims in Scotland as the more they associate with the markers, the more they are distanced from the non-Muslim, white population. Hopkins' study which researched young Muslim men, found that since September 11th 2001, the significance of religious markers have increased for Muslim youth, drawing them closer to their faith (Hopkins, 2004). In another paper, Meer et al (2010) argue that women are not only 'biological reproducers' (Yuval-Davis, 1989: 7) of ethnic cultures, they also represent nations and nationhoods in a separate way than men do, through the 'construction, reproduction and transformation of national categories' (Meer et al, 2010: 85). Moreover, they contend that because the 'veil' acts as an indicator of difference, Muslim women in the UK are testing the boundaries for a multicultural regime as they wear the veil or headscarf (Lewis, 2007), which could jeopardise the ways in which they embody nationalisms and an identity that embraces a nationalistic attribute. Working as a 'contested signifier' (Dwyer, 1999), the constructions of Islamic dress are viewed as contextualised articulations of religious practice which can often work to obscure how Muslim women appeal for a national identity. Although this is further explored in Chapter Five, I do draw attention to the process of 'difference' as the women discuss how they face overbearing social categorisations at the cost of other identities, including specific faith and nationalisms.

Mir's work (2007) explores the intra-city mobilities of Pakistani Muslims in Glasgow, arguing that the dispersal of Muslims in the city has changed as a result of economic affluence and the movement from inner city areas to suburbia indicates not only success but also 'professionalizing and evidently hybrid identities of Scot born Pakistanis' (Mir, 2007: 57). Mir further argues that Muslims in Scotland, particularly Pakistani Muslims' subjectivities have been 'rendered insignificant by their much more extensive counterparts south of the border in England' (Mir, 2007: 57), however this change in social and economic mobility emphasises a need for research into the everyday lives and

identity formation of Scottish Muslims and ways in which these are embodied, practiced and adapted.

The remainder of the chapter explores the empirical data arguing that the women in the study were practicing a range of identities, formulating a number of subjectivities whilst also being aware of how religious signifiers can be contested, reworked and articulated given particular contexts. The aims of the chapter are less to discover what the women feel about their religious subjectivities, as I have explored these in previous chapters in the form of embodying Islamic dress, participating in communities and the formulations of religious communities in Scotland. Instead, I look at what makes the participants feel ‘Scottish’ and the ways in which they can or cannot assert a Scottish nationalism in their everyday lives. I further support these ideas with the use of photographs taken by participants themselves, explaining how they view ideas of ‘home’, ‘Scottishness’ and belonging.

8.4 Embodied Subjectivities and Identity Assertion

The discussion begins with analogies of national belonging. For some of the women their nationalism comes at the price of their cultural heritage which may not be embedded within Scottish history. Representations of religious and ethnic identities are also explored to determine how faith is rooted within race and nationalism whilst also exploring how faith is lived in the everyday and practiced simultaneously with nationalisms and ethnic cultural traditions.

8.4.1 A *religious nationalism*

Muslim women in Scotland embody their individual identities in many ways, and one of the discourses explored here, *signifiers of identity*, highlights not only the need to further dissect how Muslim women are creating identity in a devolved Scottish state but how these identities are different from those experienced and practiced by Muslims in England. Here, Nazli, a full time working mother-of-one, discusses the various ways in which she embodies a Scottish identity, using not only physical signifiers such as accent

and heritage, but also the political climate within Scotland as a means to further empower her as a Scottish Muslim woman:

“My blood from my mum, the fact that I live in Scotland, I don’t live in England... just for those facts... because I live in Scotland, Scotland’s the country that I live in, the NHS is the NHS Scotland, you know the police force, it’s the Scottish police force erm... everything around us I feel is Scottish, the only thing that’s British is my passport” (Nazli, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Her idea of identity is not only encapsulated by culturally recognised signifiers, but also formal recognition of citizenship, her access to an NHS service which is specifically built for Scotland and those living within Scottish borders and, the influences at work within the Scottish Police service. Nazli is referring to the addition of free prescription medication which is a conditional service throughout the rest of the UK. Working in a non-governmental organisation gives Nazli increased access to other wider institutions such as the Police, the Health Service and Immigration and Borders Control, therefore this could also indicate a closer working and personal relationship Nazli shares with Scotland, which she has enlarged to incorporate her autonomy as a Muslim woman in Scotland. Similarly, Saira, a trainee lawyer in Glasgow also distinguishes Scotland from England through civic and professional engagement:

“Because Scotland’s quite different from England. Erm politically, economically it’s really different as well, I mean there’s a lot of things in Scotland that we have that you won’t have in England such as education, you don’t get a degree, a grant for your education, you don’t get you get partly funded healthcare that kind of stuff so I feel like economically it’s quite different from England as well and England is too far to be honest, it’s too remote so you know we’ve got our own kind of Scottish parliament as well, more of a collective country” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

She argues that the politics of belonging in Scotland are different to England and as a result, this changes her sense of belonging as it can be defined in various ways and practiced through various institutions such as education, healthcare and Parliament. Below is a photograph taken by Saira of the Scottish Government in Victoria Quay, Edinburgh:



Figure 8. The Scottish Government (Edinburgh) taken by Saira, Glasgow

When asked to discuss why she chose to take this image, she told me that she felt the building symbolized the start of the devolved government, allowing Scotland to have greater control over its policies and politics. She argues, “it makes Scotland, Scotland”. What these two participants have done, perhaps knowingly, is to distance themselves from discussing their identities as ‘British’. For both of these women, having been born, brought up and living in Scotland, their identities bear particular characteristics which are Scottish, whether it is a health service which is different to that of England or an education system which they feel gives them extra support for ‘being Scottish’. I illustrate this further with a photograph (See Figure 7) taken by another participant in Glasgow, a young optometry student, Maria:



Figure 9. Social work and Criminal law in Scotland, taken by Maria, Glasgow

The book, Maria argues gives an insight into how she feels Scotland is different and presents a parallel to England. She highlights Scottish law, the health service and education as signifiers of difference. Furthermore, as a young student in Glasgow, she feels comfort in knowing her university fees are paid for by her government which gives her opportunities which would otherwise be unavailable outside of Scotland. For Foziah, being Scottish encompasses much more than a single nationalism, it consists of the personification of Scottish values, which she understands as being separate from England and growing up in a 'Scottish' environment:

"Well in terms of being Scottish... I do around interfaith in Scotland, it's about being someone of this country, of this nation, erm being concerned about communities working together, concerned about communities understanding each other as Scottish people and then as people of different faiths and so I express that in terms of my Scottish identity in terms of those parameters. But also because I think that, it's not only being accustomed to this way of life, it's the way that Scots think, and what I mean by that is, for Scottish people generally, the feeling of being Scottish is very important and that's how I've been brought up. You know I've been brought up within the wider society so you know Scottish versus English. You know there's this very strong sense of

erm being Scottish and it's not because I'm an Asian that I feel it, it's also because of generally, Scots feel they have to say they're Scottish" (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Foziah makes reference to the ways in which her job takes her through a number of social journeys. Inter-faith work in Scotland is becoming an increasingly important social and political matter, with a number of inter-faith agencies throughout the country. Foziah also contends that her upbringing cemented a Scottish identity which was in direct parallel to an English identity, as she argues "Scots feel they have to say they're Scottish". This suggests an indication that a Scottish identity must be spoken about aloud in order to strengthen the nationalism associated with Scotland. Interestingly, Foziah also discusses how she has embodied her Scottish identity through her historical connections with the local community, political change since the devolved power being given to Scotland from Westminster and "collective conversations":

"I think it's about the... collective erm conversations that you might be in with people who live in. So it's not a physical thing, it's a sense of erm... it's a sense of, of being in a place where you've been brought up where you're connected to something historically that's happened maybe a hundred years ago or around you know the, the devolvement of Scotland from, well Scotland becoming part of England and then the devolvement of that. you know it's being part of that historical psyche so it's not a physical thing but if you've been kind of brought up from you know a very young age and the message you are getting is you know erm Scotland er was colonised or you know all of those messages and it becomes part of who you are as well and you behave how other Scots would behave from the cultural perspective" (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

Foziah's notion of nationalism here is particularly engaging with community solidarity and she asserts that her national identity is part and parcel of her upbringing in Scotland, as the previous quote also suggests. A wider sense of nationalism here certainly occurs when discussing it in relation to the rest of the UK, however, more interestingly, Foziah argues that those individuals who believe themselves to be Scottish often have to formally assert this identity as a direct parallel to a broader British identity. A participant in

Edinburgh and an English Muslim convert, Nuha shares her experiences of this direct opposition:

“But actually that's an interesting dialogue to have with somebody so if you get an English hating Scottish person who's maybe a little bit looking down on you and you say actually I'm not really English, my family are from Ireland and then they're kind of like, oh where do I stand now then? You're alright then, I think, maybe. It's interesting to see the sort of switch and people would, because we're all sort of freckly and white and pale looking and ginger and everything, people instantly think we're from here or Ireland anyway. And then they see us as a unit, my husband's got the red beard you know so it's interesting and then they hear the English accent obviously and its... it's ridiculous. It's like not liking the ideology rather than the person but the person represents the ideology, actually the ideology isn't really there for a lot of people” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

As a healthcare worker who lives in Edinburgh, her relationship with Scotland is a unique one, as she describes her history from Ireland when speaking with an indigenous Scottish person as a somewhat aggressive reaction to her English accent, emphasising the role of accent and speech as critical in the formation of identity and belonging. Furthermore, Nuha's religious signifiers are obscured through her choice of dress, what may be termed as 'Western' clothing and a bandana instead of a headscarf would certainly erode any suspicion that she can be physically recognised as Muslim. She illustrates here how she overcomes a preconceived prejudice by asserting her Irish ancestry at the risk of not defending her English background. Furthermore, other physical signifiers, freckles and red hair, she argues, would indicate a non-English heritage, making it 'safe' for her in Scotland. This particular passage highlights how non-Scottish Muslims living in Scotland may have to work harder to assert their rights of belonging within Scotland, less as a non-Scot, yet more as a non-English person. It is the English characteristic which seemingly causes most alarm in these instances.

Below, Erina, another Muslim convert in Dundee discusses her experience of being Scottish goes some way into her ethnic background, her ancestral history and she uses the idea of traditional Scottish values as a way of formulating her identity and empowerment as a Scottish Muslim woman:

“Erm my accent, my features... you know if you go to the airport and get on a plane, how many people look like me? And you can relate to that... so yeah my features, my hair, I'm Caucasian you know a typical white British female, Scottish female. So yes I love my accent, I love to hear people talk in the same way I do erm I love my... I love my Scottish music. I love the way my parents have carried on traditions and songs and family traditions you know like we eat around the table and discuss and things like that erm family values you know things that are embedded into me” (Erina, 21st April, 2010)

Taking the discourse involved here, signifiers of identity include accent, skin colour and physical features for Erina which could be typically described as Scottish. She explains that she prefers familiar Scottish voices and the harmony she feels in Scottish music. In addition, Erina is in a small category of women who are white indigenous Scottish Muslims who have converted to Islam. She articulates here that she is often not the pinnacle of attention at airports as a result of her ‘features’ and ‘accent’. Simply put, she feels that she does not ‘look’ Muslim, and this is further embodied in her familial background. A number of her family traditions, music, arts, history and food are carried through onto her own children. Here, Rahma, a 32 year old participant from Glasgow, takes a picture of her husband holding a bottle of *Irn Bru* against a backdrop of an Arabic and Islamic image:



Figure 10. *Irn Bru* and Islamic/Arabic image, taken by Rahma, Glasgow

Speaking of this photograph, Rahma says it represents ‘True Scottishness and true Islam’. *Irn Bru*, a fizzy drink popularly noted for its Scottish roots is often used as a way of highlighting a sense of loyalty to Scotland and Scottish values (see Fernie and Wolve, 1995). Although Rahma feels she cannot associate with Scotland through her choice of dress, she does contend that she is able to identify with her Scottish values through the drink. She argues that because it is made in Scotland, it is ‘Glaswegian’ and has spread out across the world, marking its place in a global society. Going back to Erina, she makes reference to a distinct attribute of Scottish people: their accent. The role of speech, accent and language cannot be understated or categorised as unworthy of discussion as other participants also viewed accent and language as vital for identity assertion. Below, Beena demonstrates how accent are not only nationalist indicators of identity, they also provide a localised signifier:

“I’m always getting onto my kids about speaking, make sure you get onto your s’s and t’s you know speak proper, I’m not having you not speaking proper. You know I don’t want you speaking all the Dundonian ‘aye’ and ‘aer ken’ means I know, you know but you find yourself when speaking to people like that you do automatically find yourself speaking like that you know. One of my sister’s friends is really like that, like ‘oright baj’ and I see her and I’m like ‘why do you speak like that, don’t you speak like that’ and she’s like ‘well you only do it a few times’. I know you have to speak proper but I think it’s just you feel like you have to do it I think it’s just when your speaking to someone like that, you just get into it because you’ve been in Dundee that long, you grew up speaking like that, went to school speaking like that, as you get older you know that’s not right, you need to speak proper, proper aye you know, using proper words” (Beena, 20th April, 2010)

For Beena, the style of language and the use specific vocabulary draws attention to the uniqueness of place and the understanding of Dundee as a particular space within Scotland which holds its own attributes and physical signifiers of speech. ‘Accent makes a significant difference’ in ones application to identify themselves as Scottish (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2008: 1255), as does birth, residency and race. McCrone and Bechhofer propose that national identity is one which is often taken for granted and not actively assessed by those who feel enabled to identify themselves as Scottish, English or British (2008). As Beena argues, through familiarity of place, she recognises when others are

from Dundee, although she also debates whether this can be described as a positive recognition. Her belief that “speaking proper” is the contradictory to a typical *Dundonian* accent suggests that she is aware of educational standards within a wider socio-economic bracket. Beena, having grown up and lived in Dundee all her life, is also acutely aware of the opportunities given to her two young sons if they can successfully articulate their language, adding “I’m not having you not speaking proper”. Similarly, Beena is also aware of how other signifiers of identity can contribute to other forms of prejudice and discrimination. She later discusses how her use of traditional Scottish speech has allowed her to overcome prejudice when facing hostility as a result of assumed social categorisation of her race. She remembers here a particular occasion when ordering dessert at a drive through fast food restaurant when she felt she was being discriminated. The extract, comprising of the quarrel, shows how Beena identified the discrimination, was able to overcome it whilst also using very specific identifiers to describe those who she felt were discriminating against her:

“I went to McDonalds and there was this Asian guy, we went to the drive through and you can tell he must have been new, didn’t know much English either, he was serving. And he gave me a toffee sundae and I went ‘no, actually I asked for a strawberry sundae, it was definitely strawberry I ordered, no one eats toffee, it was strawberry’. So the white girl comes over and she’s like ‘no’, she went ‘it was a toffee one’. I was like ‘it wasnae’, that’s the way I said it, I went ‘it wasnae, tell Awasi [drive-through assistant] it was strawberry’, she went ‘... oh right’ and the poor Asian guy is just standing there, it was the way she came over really arsy and that I went, I was like ‘NO’. This is what you have to do when people speak to you like that you know, coz she must have thought oh Asian girl, not a word of English. As soon as I opened my mouth her face just went, oh right, oh right okay then, well nah it was a toffee one you ordered, they way she said it, she was a right chav, I was like NAH, I says to the lassie strawberry, strawberry, she went oh right, as soon as I said that she just looked at me like oh she just totally slammed some Dundonian that girl” (Beena, Dundee, 20th April, 2010)

Her use of ‘Asian’, ‘must have been new’ and ‘white girl’ emphasises how Beena applies physical signifiers to others and although she successfully overcame prejudices against herself, she was not hesitant to apply them to others. She made particular assumptions

about the first assistant's background, which she then applied to the behaviour towards herself by the second assistant, nevertheless simultaneously presuming to recognise the socio-economic background of the second assistant. This particular extract highlights not only the physical signifiers of Muslim women in Scotland in relation to those who are South Asian but also the ways in which Muslim women in Scotland practice physical signifiers and apply them to others.

For another participant in Dundee, her experience of language as an identity tool is practiced in a different way. It is her mother tongue which is the identifying characteristic, rather than her Scottish accent. Deeba begins to remember how others have used language as an instrument which can lead to private discussions in public places. The utilisation of foreign speech here works as an intentional social barrier:

“Well the thing is, is like if you’re with your family and you’re speaking in a different language then they’ll assume that you don’t know how to speak English but, it’s the same with my group of friends like we’re all Muslim but the only language we can all speak in is English because we’re all from different backgrounds. But it’s only when they hear you talking in your like original language that they assume...” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April, 2010)

Language here becomes a key aspect of identity for Deeba, a student who was born and raised in Scotland by Libyan parents. In contrast to previous participants, it is not the Scottish language or accent which draws a group together, rather the second language or ‘home’ language that allows Deeba to communicate a particular social message to her family and friends. Albeit, she uses her ‘home’ language at the risk of being identified as foreign to those who are unaware of her Scottish background.

Going back to the previous discourses surrounding identity politics and citizenship, Humera argues that she would only feel like a citizen if she had formal recognition as a member of the community, through her immigration status, showing how the ideology of citizenship plays a larger role in identity assertion:

“I think if I have the citizenship I will feel that I will be more er... like I feel belonging so you know I will feel that I belong to this country because of the citizenship you know” (Humera, Edinburgh, 12th May 2010)

National identity as a narrative has been under much examination in feminist geography over the last number of decades (Curthoys, 1993). Theorists from many disciplinary areas

have sought to describe these transformative processes using a number of narratives. As I have illustrated in previous pages, the role of women in representing nationalisms is different to that of men as they engage in social and cultural traditions, are the personification of customs and they embody characteristics such as language, dress and other features which position them as the reproducers of nationalisms (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1992; Meer et al, 2010). In my study, it is evident that Muslim women were the bearers of not only a civic nationalism which was viewed as important through their contributions to social and political spaces, but also bearers of ethnic and faith identities. Their faith identities are being subsumed within their social and personal identities which are evidenced through social and physical signifiers such as accent. In this section I have illustrated how Muslim women in Scotland are using these ‘features’ (language, dress, accent etc.) to articulate their Scottish nationalisms. They also attribute particular Scottish values and politics to their sense of national identity, arguing that healthcare, education, arts, food and so on are part and parcel of what they see to be Scottish and of Scottish making. It is also clear that the women practice their ‘Scottishness’ in contextualised circumstances, whether those be at a drive-through, commandeering a localised accent or at work through inter-faith dialogue. Nevertheless, it is clear that not all the participants felt an overarching responsibility to explicitly demonstrate a Scottish identity and I further discuss this as I draw attention to the ways in which identities are considered mobile and fluid.

8.4.2 Mobile and Immobile gendered identities

Fluid identity has been at the centre of much academic debate, particularly since September 11th 2001 as social geographers challenge characterisations of religious, civic and cultural identities (Woodward, 2003) during a time of insecurity and uncertainty. In her research with Muslim women in Columbus, US, Kwan (2008) argues that terrorism has conflated Islam with violence and aggression, leading to a considerable rise attacks against Muslims and ‘Muslim-looking people’ (Kwan, 2008: 665). Additionally Kwan suggests that Muslim women are changing their behaviours and practices not only to avoid such harassment, yet to also distance themselves from portrayals of Muslims as aggressive and violent, leading to a subjugation of some aspects of their identities.

Below Deeba discusses how she prioritises her identities, giving her faith the foremost importance. Similarly Modood and Ahmad argue that Muslims in Britain often prioritise their religious identities above national salience (2007), and here Deeba exercises multiple national identities consecutively as a result of her ethnic background and her parents' heritage:

“[O]bviously I’d put religion first because that is what I believe and when somebody looks at me that’s what they think straight away so. But at the same time Scottish because that’s where I’m from, where I live, my everyday life is here, the language I speak the most is English. But obviously I couldn’t, Arab is quite important to me as well because my family are Arab, speak that with them, when we go on holidays to like Arab countries to see family so yeh I’d say they’re all important to me and make up my identity but probably put Muslim first” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

The relationship between faith and personal identity is among the most sacred of connections. Deeba highlights how she gives religion precedence, not only because of her ethnic heritage but also as a result of what she feels she must represent. She argues that her Scottishness is similarly important, yet, her responsibility to her faith precedes any other qualities she may present. Below Hajra considers the multiplicity of identity, arguing that she embodies various identities at the same time and unlike Deeba, there is more to her person than her religiosity:

“Erm we all have a lot of identities, I don’t think we should just be seen as Muslims erm, one of my identities will be that I’m female and another will be that I’m a mother and there’s quite a lot erm but I don’t want to just be seen from my religion, it’s a personal thing” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January 2010)

Her role as a mother plays a key part in her life as she explains it has been a learning experience for her. In this sense, Hajra has embraced the idea of hybrid identities as she performs several of her identities simultaneously. Mohammad (1999) argues that as mothers, women become responsible in representing nations and groups. It is because they are often viewed as educators of culture, values and religio-ethnic traditions. Similarly, Zubeidah debates her identity as a mother of five children as something sacred and an unconditional identity which is not so much practiced by lived in the everyday.

Her identity as a mother encapsulates her life through her behaviour to those outside of her family and within a civic sense as she works closely with the local community. When asked to describe their identity using three words as an exercise letting the participants attempt to compress their identities, many women described themselves as Scottish or Muslim or female, or even all three¹⁴. The majority of the women picked out particular subjectivities which they felt defined their individuality. Zubeidah, however, preferred to discuss her personality traits which best characterized her identity:

“I’m a mum because that exerts every bit of my life, not because I’m a mother of 5 children but because my attitude to other people and other situations, I run everything I do as if I’m a mum organising life so I do, in the, in the organisations I help in, I think I’ve really realised this is my identity. The first thing would be I think I come across, even to people my own age, motherly. I’ve been told that that I’ve been going to their house and I’ll just start washing their dishes and stuff and they’ll say ‘oh you know, it’s just like a mum’ and I think, I’m not surprised by that because I feel like that so that’s the first word, mum...” (Zubeidah, Edinburgh, 17th December 2009)

Zubeidah engages with a particular form of gendered identity which sees her as ‘nurturing’ and ‘mother-like’. Alcoff (1988) argues that *cultural feminist theory* looks to re-understanding women and gender through the lens of female attributes, namely sentimentalism and forms of nurture. She argues that women can find ‘free spaces’ in which they assert their ‘love, creativity, and the ability to nurture’ (1988: 409). In her work with Muslim women in Glasgow, Siraj (2012) argues that women who ‘do femininity’ and ‘do gender’ are often characterised as ‘compassionate, empathetic and sensitive to others’ (2012: 187). Motherhood can be described as a distinctive characterisation of feminine identity (Walby, 1990), and the role of mothers in Islam is placed in high regard (Schleifer, 1996). Zubeidah is specifically identifying with a female identity here, emphasizing her autonomy within her home space as the mother of five children, the carer which also transcends beyond the boundaries of the private space as she enters social spaces, carrying on this inclination to nurture and care for others.

¹⁴ This could be an indication of the impact the interview setting had upon the women, although responses were varied, the women were aware they were discussing their everyday lives as Muslim woman living in Scotland or as Scottish Muslim women. The methodology used in the research is further discussed in the Chapter Three.

Referring back to hybrid identities, Saira from Glasgow discusses how the two identities she maintains independently, religious and national, are practiced in separate contexts:

“It’s really really integrated in the sense that erm it’s as if I’ve got two identities, when I’m out I’m wearing western clothes I’m speaking English, I’m really fluent in English etc I’ve got an education erm I’ve got an education in Scotland and stuff, just that when I go home it’s different in the sense that I’m wearing Asian clothes and it’s every day I do this, not occasionally. Every day I go home to my parents and stuff, I speak Urdu at home erm and the way we live our life is to do with my culture, it’s Pakistani and it’s Muslim, the way I live but then my kind of professional stroke everyday life is Scottish as well” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

In this extract, a cultural identity comes to the fore also through the embodiment of cultural dress, which is set separately from religious dress, as discussed in Chapter Five. Varying her clothing between social, work and family to fit appropriately and changing between languages, Saira is almost living two separate lives, one western and one religious/cultural. She does this as she recognises her parents’ culture is different from her own in many respects yet she is able to shift between the two as she feels fit. The mobility of her identity shines through here as she confidently asserts that it is an everyday practice she is now accustomed to. In addition to the same in dress between the space of the home and outside, she also practices and asserts her varying identities through a change in language. Although I have previously discussed the use of language as a way to affirm a Scottish nationalism, it works here to show an appreciation of her parents’ culture and their heritage. Previously Erina (see Section 8.4.1) has discussed her national identity as a concept rooted in cultural practice, recognised tradition and Scottish art and music. Here she discusses how she feels able to exercise her identities within social situations, adding that she does not question people’s religious background as it is unimportant to her:

“For me, I’m proud to be Scottish but I’m also proud to be a Muslim, but it’s not something I would shout about, that’s something which is personal to me. When I meet people I don’t say what religion are you? You know it’s just not something that I find really important, people come first, I’m mixed with everybody and anybody regardless of skin colour or where they’re from” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

Erina's words highlight how the assertion of a religious identity does not always take precedence when discussing how she may or may not form a hierarchical representation of her identity. She argues that 'people come first', which separates her from many other participants in the study who felt their faith identity was first and foremost. This could be an indication of her indigenous Scottish heritage as she values her family background, family cultures and has a deep passion for Scottish arts and music. Furthermore, I argue that Erina is not separating her identities into some form of categorisation, rather she is providing a scope with which we can understand how various identities work simultaneously, Zubeidah has also previously demonstrated, being a mother, an intelligent female, a Muslim and a community worker.

Taking both her religious and national identity, Kalsoom explains how she dislikes formal categorisations of ethnicity as they lack the discursive meanings attached to identity:

"I would describe myself as Scottish Muslim erm and when it comes to censuses and stuff I would write myself down as other and then say I'm a Scottish Muslim because I don't feel, if you just tick the white, British type box, that's not me. It doesn't feel to me that that's me anymore, that's who I was but it's not who I am erm so if they wanna know who I am, I would say I'm Scottish Muslim erm which is short because I'm a Scottish Muslim etc, etc but as a shorthand I would say I'm a Scottish Muslim because yes I do feel at home in Scotland, this does feel like where I belong erm I don't feel coz I was born in England, I was born in London and I hate London, it's so impersonal, it's so big erm most of my life I've been in Scotland, Scotland's beautiful, we've got lovely mountains, I quite actually quite like variations in the weather, although everybody moans about it, it's beautiful today" (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January 2010)

She speaks with a local Glaswegian accent and works with local inter-faith organisations around Scotland. One cannot simply be Scottish or British as it overlooks incredibly significant subjectivities such as religious, social, cultural and personal. Her identity as a Scottish Muslim takes form from not separating herself out from English people, but also identifying the landscape of Scotland as unique to Scottish history. Kalsoom discusses here how she feels she 'belongs' in Scotland, although having been born and raised in Southern England for the first few years of her life. She finds the beauty in the Scottish landscape, arguing that although 'everybody moans about it', she finds it serene and

idyllic. The extract highlights how she would prefer to be understood as Scottish through the representations of Scottish landscape. I use the two images below to help demonstrate how other participants felt about 'landscape' and 'weather'.



Figure 11. Scottish snowmen, taken by Saira, Glasgow



Figure 12. Rapeseed, taken by Dalal, Dundee

Figure 9 shows a set of twin snowmen built by Saira and her sister. Similar to Kalsoom she feels that although Scottish weather is cold and wet most often, that it can also be fun and interactive. Dalal in Dundee, a property manager is responsible for providing the image in Figure 10. When asked to discuss the image, she felt it portrayed how she viewed Scotland, a vast landscape, lots of scenery and open fields. Unlike other participants, Dalal was not attempting to make a comparison with the landscape in Dundee, instead she was trying to capture a particular scene which she felt demonstrated Scottish land and landscape.

I have used this section to illustrate how the participants understood and exercised their gendered identities. The variations in Scottish identity formation exemplify how Muslim women assert their identities while being mindful not to exclude their cultural or ethnic backgrounds, such as trainee lawyer, Saira. While I argue that these identities are fluid and women do embody a sense of Scottish nationalism, I also claim that not all Muslim women in Scotland express such a desire. In this final section, I use the women's words to highlight how they are being excluded, made invisible or put through the process of social categorisation to set them or themselves apart from other Muslim women in Scotland.

8.4.3 *Fragile Scottishness*

Salih's study (2009) of Muslim women in Italy argued that Muslim women who practice Islam publically do so at the cost of creating social contentions as secular communities feel it is a challenge to a wider secular identity. Salih (2009) further comments that although Islam is not an alien religion to Italy, as it is not to Britain, the debates around the challenge of Islam and responsibility fall to those who practice it. Similarly, discourses in Britain have sought to deconstruct stereotypes of Muslims and to demonstrate fragmentations within religious practice.

Afra who has lived in Scotland for many years, is originally from Libya and finds it difficult to fully commit to a wholly Scottish identity. One of the reasons she adds is her citizenship status in the country as she still holds a foreign passport:

"Er... to get the... I mean it's hard to feel you are, your Scottish identity, it's not an easy thing and even then, my kids are not that confident too, if you ask

them what's your nationality they would say Libyan, not Scottish so this... gives you the feeling you are not a complete citizen in this country so you don't er try to get your own rights, you would sacrifice some of them just to live peacefully here without asking for more..." (Afra, Dundee, 13th May 2010)

This highlights how lack of formal status can condense feelings of belonging and formal identities. She finds it difficult to fully develop her national identity as Scottish as ultimately it may mean she sacrifices other valuable identity formations, in this case her Libyan background, and as she describes also some of the rights bestowed upon her as a woman living in Scotland. Evidently, not all participants in the study felt 'Scottish' or incorporated a Scottish significance into their identity formations. Among some of the participants, there was a reawakening of identity due to global events, and in particular, Foziah, who at the time of the September 11th attacks was representing Scotland as a delegate in Durban, South Africa at an anti-racism conference, remembers how the political climate suddenly changed and people were either feeling a sense of belonging or a sense of exclusion:

"I think actually some people did, some people did and also hearing others who changed their names so they may not you know, they were Muslims but they didn't look like it so they changed their names... erm so taking off the Hijab and other people changing their names and I remember at that time er the journalist name, female journalist, Brown, Alibhai-Brown... Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and she were writing an article herself and saying I don't feel as if I belong here and that was quite strange coming from Yasmin Alibhai-Brown so there was certainly a sort of deep effect on people on September 11th. So that whole idea of identity and exploration for many people was that time. The Iraq war again, erm that had, had a different feel to it and it had a feel to it that loads of people, Muslim and non-Muslim were so totally against the war and you know following closely what's happening and that totally feeling of disempowerment when our governments are not listening but across the whole world, there were people who were demonstrating and protesting that the war is not right. So you probably felt more in a collective" (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March 2010)

She describes it as a point of "inward exploration" as Muslims began to look at their inner selves and their identities, some changing physical signifiers and characteristics, others

bounding together to creative collective identities, supporting one another in a wider discourse around the question of legality during the Afghanistan takeover and the Iraq War. Kwan (2008) further explores how Muslim women may have made changes to their everyday dress to evade public hostility and harassment. The penalty of a badly informed government came at the consequence of Muslims' mistrust in their political leaders, feeling disempowered and neglected. Nazli, who previously spoke of her Scottish national ancestry (See Section 8.4.1), now discusses why it is problematic to overcome stereotypes associated with Muslims in Scotland, using the parallels of Asian and Muslim to describe the signifiers at play:

“Yeh because we do have to represent... I try to be nice to everybody I meet so that, if I was the only Muslim they met then they would have a good impression of me in the way that I treated them erm things like giving gifts to non Muslim, we you know, if you've got extra food, give it to your neighbours, that kind of thing I think is really important but then I get annoyed when our religious education teacher says to me you know oh you're so nice, you should come and speak to the kids in my class and tell them that oh look coz you're not terrorists and that did annoy me because I thought that's not my responsibility, you're a professional, that is... things like that I will not stand up and speak for the whole Muslim community and say I am not a terrorist, I don't believe that's my job but I do believe to be a nice, a decent person, because unfortunately there are so many Muslims that are not nice like Asian guys doing fraud or this and that, it's all in the media and it just makes us sound not good” (Nazli, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

She feels she must work harder to eradicate these labels through her behaviour and mannerisms. Linked to wider social debates around the criminalisation of many Muslims, Nazli identifies how critical it is in her professional and social capacity to eradicate these stereotypes. Moreover, because she is asked to represent a particular kind of Muslim, the caring, forgiving kind, her own personal identity is being obscured, rendering her as a simple representation of a much bigger Muslim image.

In Edinburgh, Tibah's experiences with Pakistani women have left much to be desired. As a small-business owner, her ethnic background is African and Pakistani, however, she makes a decisive move to use her African heritage as her identifying feature:

“Yeh I don’t like it [laughs] I don’t like being called a Pakistani... not because it’s a bad thing but just because of the cultural thing, I don’t like all that culture, I don’t want to be associated with that at all... I’ve had so many bad experiences with Pakistanis that I don’t wanna be associated with being called a Pakistani” (Tibah, Edinburgh, 17th December 2009)

Later in the interview Tibah speaks of particular cultural traits which she feels belittles the traditional values of Pakistani culture, such things as haggling when she sells her products as well as their ‘erratic’ behaviours in funerals, weddings and other social occasions. Other participants felt their ethnicity played a large role in their everyday assertions and formations of identity. This is evidenced here by the following photograph taken by Afra in Dundee:



Figure 13. Collection of Libyan artefacts, taken by Afra, Dundee

The collection of items in the picture above shows an obvious Middle Eastern culture. The tea light, the fan and tea set, Afra argues are part and parcel of her Libyan ancestry. The small green drum is used on celebratory occasions and all of these items can be found in various places inside her home in Dundee. Assembling the items, she felt they represented a small part of her cultural and ethnic heritage, something which she holds very dear as she contends that she has no strong links to Scotland or Scottish values, having received no formal citizenship.

Alongside asserting a particular form of identity, the participants also noted how they were met with situations whereby their identities would need mitigating to appropriate them within particular professional setting. Conforming identities played a large role in securing an important work position for Saira:

“I know how I put myself across erm but there are certain situations where you need to kind of dilute yourself a little bit, dilute your identity a little bit, doesn’t make me happy, doesn’t make me happy at all” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

By ‘diluting’ her identity or particular characteristics of her identity, Saira feels she is able to conform to her professional setting as a trainee lawyer in Glasgow. Saira also discusses how she is discouraged by a wider global Muslim identity as a direct result of terrorist activities:

“I’ve not let it hold me back and I’ve not felt I’m going back in my shell, I can’t say I’m a Muslim and I can’t say this kinda stuff. At the end of the day that’s who I am, I don’t identify with those people that did it but erm it’s got nothing to do with me but that’s, they’re of the same religion as me but that’s about it” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

Although she agrees she shares some religious distinctions with other Muslims, she is very firm to disregard that they share anything further with her. For Saira, global unity does not stretch further than her Muslim identity as the values from various Muslim groups are not mutual, homogenised or culturally shared (I use Chapter Seven to explore this further). As indicated by Saira’s and Nazli’s excerpts, there is a sense of growing anger among Muslim women who feel obligated to not only eradicate stereotypes of radical Islamists in the UK, but also to distance themselves from mobilized anti-Western sentiments (Bonnett, 2004). The participants have acknowledged that they are often represented as part of a united global *ummah*, they also refute this claim, arguing that their autonomous identities are being blurred by overarching portrayals of Muslims worldwide. Furthermore, when asked to comment on Muslim action worldwide, they are simultaneously and indirectly being asked to jeopardize or close down their various national and ethnic identities. Saira and Nazli are among a few of the participants who choose to reject this assertion that they are representative of Muslim action across the

globe, however, this adds to the debate concerning the social positions of Muslim women in Britain, the ways in which they are portrayed and formulate their various identities.

8.5 Conclusion

Brah argues that we must distinguish between “Muslim women as a category of discourse and Muslim women as concrete historical subjects with diverse and personal biographies and social orientations” (Brah, 1993: 443). This chapter highlights how constructions of identity by Muslim women in Scotland are varied through a number of social, political and personal practices, further complicating the annals of identity within social geography. The participants here have discussed how they are able to formulate and practice Scottish national identities, how they are able to reference Scotland and Scottish values in their everyday interactions, ranging from a simple meeting in a drive-thru restaurant to speaking with family members and friends. Religious identities, although particularly critical for the women, were part of a much bigger narrative in their personal lives, with some participants arguing that motherhood, professional subjectivities and social personalities are wound together, rather than working individually or discursively. Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans (2009) comment on the religious aspect of ethnic identities, giving close consideration to the cultural representations of Muslim groups. They argue that these identities have been essentialised as representative of social and political change, however, the mobilities involved in Westernising Muslims in Britain overlook how historical changes have impacted their cultural identities (Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans, 2009). The investigation of Scottish Muslim female identities, then, draws upon this body of literature to argue that heritage, whether it is Scottish or non-Scottish, plays a significant role in identity formation with participants who have lived in Scotland for many years still feeling reject or rejecting Scottish national values as they are not in possession of a formal citizenship. Similarly, the racialised constructions for white Muslim women have been further explored here and I argue that Muslim convert women in Scotland are silenced in the debate for identity formation when attempting to practice both their faith and national identities. Erina discusses how she is Scottish as a result of her heritage, shared common values and skin colour, her exercising of a faith identity is a very physical effort she must make to allow a faith identifier to become visible. These kinds of racialisations are now being provided a platform with which we can further articulate and identity the inner workings of what it means to be part of a Muslim

community. The chapter also identifies how wider, global changes have impacted identity and the ways in which Muslim women are contributing to 'impressive identities' as a way of eliminate negative radical Islamist stereotypes. I was unable to exhibit some of the images taken by participants due to technical difficulties and focus issues in development, however, they were key for a number of participants. For example, in Dundee Dalal took a photograph of a 'strawberry top', a kind of dessert cake specific to Scotland. She would present these cakes at functions and dinners held in her own home as a way of showcasing her admiration for Scottish food. The use of visual aids in this chapter allowed me to gain an insight into what the participants felt best represented 'Scottishness' and Scotland. For some it was the weather, others it was books representing Scottish education whereas some took particular interest in landscape pictures, places they felt a sense of belonging. In essence, I provide some unique discussions with the women are they discuss the various ways in which they not only formulate a civic Scottish identity, but also simultaneously do so while practising and exhibiting particular cultural and religious identities. Scottishness for Muslim women in Scotland, for those who choose to practice it, makes up a large part of their identity makeup as they access a sense of belonging and history with the Scottish landscape. The final chapter in this thesis explores how the participants understood, experienced and managed anti-Islamism in Scotland.

Chapter Nine

Anti-Muslimness in Scotland

9.1 Introduction

Bonnett (1993: 13) argues that ‘the representation of ‘racial’ difference and identity is one of the most controversial areas of contemporary cultural and political life’. The Muslim communities in Britain have been under particular scrutiny since the emergence of physical religious signifiers. Although the debate surrounding ‘difference’ has only been bolstered by events such as September 11th 2001 and July 7th 2005 (Dietrich, 2011), the reality is that Muslim communities in Britain have been under heavy security surveillance for many years. It is almost impossible to discuss the social and political movements surrounding Muslim communities without referring to particular political events such as the Salman Rushdie affair in the 1980s, which have overshadowed and produced the very stereotypes that are currently being examined (Dietrich, 2011). Edward Said’s work in Oriental Studies has emerged as one of the most prolific projects in race and culture. His work *Orientalism* (1978), which has provided the groundwork for many subsequent studies into the representation of Islam and Muslims, argues that Muslims have been viewed as ‘barbaric, degenerate and tyrannical’ (Daniel, 1960; Miles and Brown, 2004:

27). It exemplifies Islam as a religion and as a culture which has become the sole bearer of understandings of the Muslim religion, Muslim communities and perceptions by the Western world of the Muslim world (Dietrich, 2011).

Furthermore, bearing the responsibility of these particularly negative characterisations and, as a result, the interpretation of Islam to the rest of the world has been one previously entrenched in aggressive patriarchal dominance, polygamous relationships, ‘sodomy and general sexual laxity’ (Miles and Brown, 2004: 27). These interpretations, although not necessarily relevant now, do come together to provide a steady stream of historical ideas and thoughts with which we can begin to understand how Islam and Muslims have come to be known as ‘outsiders’ and ‘others’ in contemporary understandings of placing faith in everyday social and political discourses throughout the Europe and the Americas. The Orientalist discourse is one which places ideological and imagined parts of the world into one of two categories, the *Orient* and the *Occident*. Using a two-fold approach, *Orientalism* as a discourse considers the micro and macro consequences of negative stereotyping of Muslims and Islam and in deconstructing these paradigms, Said observes that Western structures have gained an understanding of the Orient which has been deemed appropriate enough to view Islam through the lens of ‘the Other’ (Dietrich, 2011). My research here focuses on how the representations of the ‘imagined’ communities of Muslims in Scotland have led to Orientalist notions in spaces of the social, impinging on the everyday lives of Muslim women. Said argues that much of the depictions around Islam and Muslims have not only been positioned in ‘outsider’ debates, but are ‘designed to show the religion’s inferiority with reference to the West, which Islam is supposed to be hell-bent on opposing, competing with, resenting and begin enraged at’ (1997: xxv).

Using evidence analysed from the field study, this final empirical chapter will explore the reactions by Muslim women of the representation of Muslims in the news and media, more specifically, how these representations have fuelled hatred towards Muslims and the creation of Islamophobia as a term to explain this particular fear and dislike of one faith in Scotland. I value the use of language in this particular part of the thesis as the participants argued that current terms and definitions are unable to account for their subjective experiences of religious racism. As a result, I use the terms ‘anti-Islamism’ and ‘anti-Muslimness’ as more appropriate terms to discuss the experiences of the participants. The participants discuss in varying detail how anti-Muslimness has impacted on their lives and everyday experiences in Scotland, alongside the impact of anti-

Muslimness on social cohesion and the processes involved in reporting Islamophobic incidents to local authorities and third parties.

9.2 Islamophobia and anti-Islamism

The term Islamophobia, although popular in dialogue since 1997, was formulated as part of a wider Orientalist discourse by Edward Said in his article *Orientalism Reconsidered* (1985) when discussing ‘hostility to Islam’ (1985: 9). Allen (2010) has considered the separate use of the term by French writers Etienne Dinet and Sliman Ben Ibrahim in their 1925 piece *L’Orient vu de l’Occident* although he argues that this was paying particular attention to the Prophet Muhammad and ‘not employing the term in such ways that it reflects the contemporary concept or usage’ (Allen, 2010: 5). In his book, *Islamophobia*, Allen goes on to offer further examples of the usage of the term including feminist literature during the Iranian Revolution, arguing again that the term was used under very different circumstances, ‘as a means of describing *Muslims* frightened of Islam’ (Allen, 2010: 6). Its first use in print media was by the magazine *Insight into the News* in 1991 (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). Described as ‘a dread or hatred of Islam, and therefore to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims’ (The Runnymede Trust, 1997: 1),

‘Islamophobia’ has ultimately been created to explain the sense of real anti-Muslim sentiment which is becoming increasingly prevalent in Western societies. The political constructions of freedoms of speech has all but made this sentiment palpable, however the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997) argue that the relationship between Islamophobic sentiment and freedoms of speech is a ‘confusing rhetoric’ (1997: 10) due to the heavy reliance on specific Muslim cultures which are presented as binary opposites to Western cultures.

As previously argued, Muslims have become the sole bearers of all actions deemed Islamic or those with a large degree of subjective Islamic interpretation and, as a result, the wider social observations into Islam are those which have been previously grounded in violence, gendered repressions and aggression. These perceptions have been completely revived in a political reawakening when Muslim terrorists took over the control of airplanes heading to New York and Washington, their actions bringing Islam as a religion and culture into a deep, dark well of on-going disrepute from which it may

never recover (Halliday, 1996; Said, 1997; Commission for British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997; Brown, 2000).

The current ‘Islamophobic’ climate is one which is geared less towards Islam, Halliday (1999) argues, but more directed to Muslims themselves, therefore, making this an anti-Muslim racism, not a religious one. He argues that in order to fully comprehend the terminology, we must carefully consider its use as ‘anti-Muslim’, not ‘Islamophobic’ (1999: 878). Political manoeuvring has established Islam less as a religion and more as a context-driven philosophy and ‘it has come variously to refer to a religion, a culture, a civilisation, a community, a religious revival, a militant cult, an ideology, a geographical region and an historical event’ (Karim, 2002: 108-109), depending on who is referring to it and in what political and social space (Morey and Yaqin, 2011). Essentialist notions viewing Islam as parallel to Western cultures of democracy and freedom (Dietrich, 2011) have gone on to shape wider discussions and produced dominant ideologies of Islam.

Dietrich (2011) argues that idealised debates about Islam would portray it as a globalised system of unity which transcends across social, political, historical and economic boundaries, bringing together a set of essential positive stereotypes, however, a contemporary attitude towards Muslims see them as separate and distinct from the ‘pluralist culture of the West’ (Dietrich, 2011: 5). It is the process by which anti-Muslimness becomes a form of religious racism that Muslims are represented as being incompatible with Western democratic values (Brown, 2000) and Islam is characterised as a religion tainted with terrorism and global threats (Miles and Brown, 2004). Amiraux’s (2004) work in France closely after the passing of the 2004 act prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols in schools (*The New York Times*, 11th February 2004) argues that for the French especially, Islam was an indication of a wider movement to sustain a ‘fifth column’ which challenged the secularist values of the state and, therefore was scrutinised as a cultural threat (Amiraux, 2004; Morey and Yaqin, 2011).

In America, tremendous increases in Qur'an sales soon after September 11th 2001 evidenced not only the growing numbers of converts to Islam but also a significant need for Americans to understand the driving force for the September 11th 2001 attacks, and, of course being frustrated at the lack of evidence within the Qur'an justifying such an attack (Miles and Brown, 2004).

9.3 Anti-Islam in Scotland

Levels of anti-Islamism in Scotland are often deemed much less significant than those in England and across the rest of the United Kingdom (Hussain and Miller, 2006). Indeed Scottish nationalism and multicultural belonging plays a large role in this, however, the levels of Islamophobic sentiment are relative to those throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. Heath and Smith (2005) argue that because nationalist ideologies within Scotland are often more ‘civic and benign’, they are based on a separate philosophy than English nationalisms.

The devolution of Scotland from the politics of Westminster has created a new dimension within multicultural Scotland as it situates itself different from England politically, socially and culturally (Hussain and Miller, 2006). Rather than producing conflicting debates, the growth of Scottish national identity goes hand in hand with a wider ethnic grasp, encouraging grass roots level conversations among ethnic minorities in Scotland in light of a devolved Scottish Parliament. Initial discussions about anti-Muslimness in Great Britain produced a report funded by The Runnymede Trust and edited by Robin Richardson as part of a wider debate prompted by *The Runnymede Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia*. It concludes by presenting several recommendations including ‘a greater range of positive images in the media, more Muslim spokespersons... inclusion of Muslims into the media’ (1997:20). Chapter Six highlights the role Muslim women are playing in the constructions of social and political spaces in Scotland in more detail. It also explores the encouragement by government institutions to fund projects directly related to Muslim community issues, such as domestic violence, befriending projects and creating multicultural awareness – The Runnymede Report highlights the importance of funding projects to recognise the important of community participation in and with Muslim communities in the UK (The Runnymede Trust, 1997).

9.3.1 Identifying religious racism

When discussing anti-Islamism or their understanding of religious racism, it was evident that my participants’ experiences and outlooks were varied, not in part because of the differences in their cultural backgrounds but also as a result of their social, economic and political standpoints. I use the varying experiences here to draw out how and why the

women feel ‘Islamophobia’ is not the most appropriate term to define their experiences and instead they prefer the inclusivity of religion and faith identifiers alongside markers in history which may help to differentiate why anti-Muslimness could be better understood as religious racism.

For Hajra, anti-Islamism elicits a repetition in history as she recalls her knowledge of the stigmatisation of Jewish people post World War Two:

“Somebody likened what, what the Muslim community is going through to what the Jews went through erm some decades ago... yeh erm and I would, I would agree with that. I think... at points of time, there are a group of people, there’s somebody to blame and I think we’re going through that phase now and it seems to be getting worse and I’m not sure how long it’s going to last or what the repercussions are going to be” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January 2010)

She does, however, argue that the blame associated with Muslims is a representation of the growing fears by the wider communities and it is difficult for her to fully comprehend the consequences of anti-Muslimness for future multicultural relationships. Her argument here displays a hope that anti-Islamic sentiments represent a transition in social history, almost a repetition and comparable to earlier examples of stigmatisation.

In Dundee, Sajidah highlights how the actions of a small minority of Muslims are held to be idealistic to the wider Muslim community, and within the realm of Islamic fundamentalism, Islam is associated negatively with terrorism:

“Erm I think it’s negative because it’s... a lot of people end up thinking that this is what Islam’s about. Because we’re being associated with terrorism and we’re being associated with suicide bombers, I think that’s why we’re never being associated with anything good, never been praised for any of the things that we do. And I’m sure we do a lot of good, we do a lot of charitable work or we do a lot of good things but we’re never in the news for that, it’s always completely negative, always an attack on this and that, completely negative” (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June 2010)

In a previous chapter (Chapter Six) I identify how Muslim women understand perceptions in news media. Here, I feel it is important to clarify again those perceptions as Sajidah highlights how anti-Islamic sentiments can be further increased, exemplified and transported through social and news media. Through negative association, the majority

law-abiding Muslim community are tainted with equivalent negative perceptions, similarly Hussain and Miller (2006) argue that Muslims in Scotland are increasingly more productive than their English counterparts.

Interestingly, Kaneez combines anti-Islamic thoughts with the perpetual and intentional use of negative portrayals by non-Muslim groups of Muslims and Islam, situating it as a form of religious racism which has been engineered specifically by non-Muslim groups:

“To me it means when erm non Muslim groups say negative things about Islam or hyping them up or non Muslims are creating this image, a negative image of Islam” (Kaneez, Edinburgh, 28th January 2010)

Although Kaneez has interpreted the origins of anti-Islamic sentiments to be rooted within a racist framework, she understands that it an image-destroying social issue. For Hajra, the term itself, as Halliday (1999) has previously suggested, is problematic as she views Islamophobia or religious racism as a lens through which Islam and Muslims are made scapegoats for wider social problems, although Hajra argues that the fear is associated with a religion, rather than its believers:

“Some people have actually said it’s an incorrect term when I’ve read about it, a phobia is when you have a fear of something and in this case it would be a fear of Islam. Islamophobia, technically that is what it should mean, is it a fear of Islam that people have? Or is it a fear of new religion? I think that might be the case, I think that might be rising that actually fear of Islam more than people but other than that I think its erm more a case of hatred, related hatred and erm wanting to hate erm, in every case there’s always some kind of scapegoat, there’s always somebody to blame and I think erm probably this is probably the time to blame Muslims... for everything that’s going wrong” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January 2010)

The suggestion that Muslims have become the scapegoat for an overarching debate into whether Islam should be a feared faith is one that Hajra draws close attention to. It is critical to highlight here how Muslim women use the terminology to better understand the conditions Muslims are exposed to. Staying in Glasgow, Aisha uses the term ‘Islamophobia’ to attempt to discuss its seriousness while also highlighting how it is often not viewed as a priority for community relations:

“I think myself and a lot of other people like me in Scotland, try to play Islamophobia down because in general we are able to integrate much better here, we have much better community relations here and the perpetrators of discrimination don’t outnumber those who are comfortable with one another and wish to coexist happily with one another. But it is still there, it’s very much there and I do have to live with it in my own family and I know it’s around. Erm what I think is interesting is the fact that I think a lot of people who would probably express those feelings towards me, don’t express them because of my visual impairment. Erm I think that makes my position very different” (Aisha, Glasgow, 10th March 2010)

She confidently asserts that although she recognises how people around her may be Islamophobic, it is her visual impairment that negates them from verbalising their concerns. Nonetheless, Aisha has been previously spoken about being a victim of religious racism at work (See Section 5.6.6) and it is further highlighted here how she feels her visual impairment has perhaps ‘saved’ her from further negative association and discrimination. Aisha’s sentiments towards a multicultural Scotland draws upon her experiences as a worker within the local community. Although she suggests anti-Muslimness is played down due to better integration and cohesiveness within community groups, she also recognises that it is prevalent and this may be an outcome of previous concerns against the introduction of increasing numbers of asylum seekers across Scotland, especially in Glasgow soon after the invasion of Afghanistan (Hussain and Miller, 2006). The language used by the participants here highlights the importance of grasping and understanding how Islamophobia and religious racism can work differently, on one hand they can be defined as a fear of Islam and on the other, a process of ‘scapegoating’ Muslims through negative association. The participants here have spoken of their own definitions of Islamophobia and the ways in which it does or does not work to fully appreciate how Muslims are affected.

9.3.2 Understanding religious racism and anti-Muslim sentiments

The majority of participants argued that news and print media had a large role to play in perpetuating Islamophobia and social trends of religious intolerance. Rahma in Glasgow discusses how media presents itself as a social outlet with which people can associate.

She argues that negative stereotyping by news organisations, which have consistently portrayed the degradation of Muslim women as dominated, has led to a larger retaliation against Islamic culture:

“I think it’s just the media and because they don’t understand that people... people have a lot of misunderstandings about Islam and especially women and I think that’s something which needs to be addressed more openly, we need to talk about why we do not do certain things and why we don’t speak to men and why we don’t wear skirts, like why is this happening because people will just take what they say on TV and they literally just erm... and they shouldn’t do that but then at the same time it’s kind of difficult not to. Like they judge so quickly” (Rahma, Glasgow, 27th January 2010)

Morey and Yaqin (2011) pay close attention to media images and the consequences of perpetrating particular news stories about Islam repeatedly. Using ‘Islamic Rage Boy’,¹⁵ as an example, they argue that particular news images correlate Islam with aggressive behaviour and intolerance for Western society as a default and become an overarching ideal for print media when discussing stories about Islamic fundamentalism or aggressive Islamic action. For Hajra, anti-Islamism exists as a social problem as it is an item of profound newsworthiness. Simultaneously, she begins criticising the owners of media for influencing headlines:

“There are a lot of underlying reasons and you could sort of go really far. Some people would go and say there is some kind of conspiracy theory erm that well there’s this new world order, some people will say it’s er the influence of the Jews who want to take over the world which I am aware myself they have a very, very prominent position within the media. Erm some people will say it’s just Islamophobia, some people will say it’s blatant racism erm just erm also to just make news” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January 2010)

In another interview, Erina in Dundee also associates unconstructive media attention with the level of control some Jewish individuals have in the media. In some ways this helps to form the argument between understanding how conspiracy theory and media propaganda

¹⁵ *Islamic Rage Boy* is a term coined to describe a picture of a young angry man protesting across Pakistan against a number of Western political decisions. The image has become globally popular, however, the story behind the picture is one seethed in family devastation as a young man (Shakeel Ahmad Bhat) grieves for his sister who was killed in a police raid on their home (Morey and Yaqin, 2011: 22-30)

and real-life experiences can take place. On the one hand, Hajra is highlighting the ways in which *others* can identify Islamophobia and on the other, understanding that *blame* needs to be attributed somewhere. According to Hajra, it is not the responsibility of Muslims to bear the brunt of negative media, therefore, the fault must lie in others' understanding of Muslims and their diverse cultures. In Dundee and similarly, Jasmine uses the Invasion of Afghanistan and the Iraq War as the justification the media has put forward for its phenomenal use of anti-Islamic images and news headlines:

“Well to sell... to sell papers and things like that and the sensational headlines go back. I don’t know if the people behind the scenes have interests that are fuelling them as well, I don’t know because it’s so hard these days to know the truth of what’s going on, what the motives are to get peoples head around one way to build up to the war even..” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January 2010)

Jasmine, a mother-of-two and married to a Turkish man, explains how she feels helpless in understanding the roots of Islamophobia and anti-Islamic sentiment. Interestingly, however, she says little about the ways in which Islamic extremist acts could be responsible for an increasingly amount of news attention given to Muslims and focuses instead on large-scale movements within government as a means to justify economic development. Kamila in Dundee argues:

“Lack of education. Lack of knowledge... lack of understanding because there’s just this... constant issue. It’s just with Muslims, it’s not like that with Jewish people or Buddhist people... it’s just with erm Muslims. They’re scared I guess, I don’t know. It’s not like we go and say oh we’re gonna... force them to convert. And even er US, the amount of people who converted after 9/11, there was a big increase because when they seen the towers go down, they seen this stuff happening they think, how can religion do this? Religion should be peaceful, so they look at it and do research and they find that oh this is not a religion that says we are gonna kill people, let’s convert” (Kamila, Dundee, 26th January 2010)

A Muslim convert since 2008 finds that those seeking revenge by using Qur’anic justification for the acts of September 11th 2001 have instead pursued a peaceful revolution through converting, and this act is one which is situated as parallel to Western values. She also adds that the racism experienced by Muslims is on a separate scale than

that experienced by Jewish, Buddhist or those of a different faith, directly linking her idea of anti-Islamism as one which is directed to a single faith, rather than faith as an institution. In a sense, she provides an extreme generic interpretation of why Muslims are in the media spotlight. Again, it is not the Muslims who are seen as perpetrators of their depiction, but as helpless victims. Furthermore, she argues that unless viewers/readers seek out further information around Islam and Muslims, they are caught in a circle of unfounded statements, which inevitably will lead to anti-Islamic reactions.

Taking this further, Deeba in Dundee delicately expresses how those who have not had the opportunities to interact or converse with Muslims or Islam are in a difficult position as they do not possess the understanding of Muslim culture and are susceptible to a negative media association with Islam:

“The media... I think it impacts a lot on people who don’t know Muslims. So if you’ve never interacted with a Muslim and you read that, that’s all you’re gonna believe. But personally I really think that if you, as a Muslim, integrate well with others and you’re nice to them and polite, like say for example, my neighbours, after the nine eleven thing, they never changed the way they spoke to us or got suspicious because they know what we’re like. They probably know that there’s a lot more to it than the media says. So I think a person that knows a Muslim will not think that but a person that hasn’t really talked to a Muslim or had any interaction with Muslims, they will be the more racist ones and believe all that” (Deeba, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

Deeba is the first here to speak out and argue that Muslims themselves must integrate, sympathise and work with their local communities in order for negative association to be dismissed. One of the younger participants in the study, Deeba, 22, is a young activist in Dundee. She has experienced first-hand the impact of depictions of Muslims and works with various local organisations to help stem social stigma. Her reaction is strikingly different to Kamila’s who argues that lack of education and knowledge are reasons for the increase in anti-Muslim feeling. There are a number of reasons which could account for the discrepancies between the two, firstly, Kamila is a Muslim convert, originally from Norway, converting sometime after September 11th, 2001, having married a Muslim man and sought out an appreciation for Islamic history and culture, whereas Deeba, a born-

Muslim, had acquired much knowledge about her faith and culture from a young age, therefore, her understanding of why and how anti-Islam exists works differently.

In a moment of profound reflexivity, Kalsoom in Glasgow argues herself that she had many prejudices about Islam, Muslims and Islamic history before converting to Islam. It is when she was positioned within that specific space around Muslims that she was able to identify these discriminations that existed within her and then was able to also challenge and change them. Within this, she recognises the role of the media in maintaining prejudices:

“I think media does you know does have a big impact because that’s where most people learn about Islam and Muslims, but there’s also a whole long history of you know British engagement with Islam, a lot of which is negative. I mean to be honest, to be really honest, I would have said I wasn’t prejudiced against anybody, I’m talking about when I was younger, I wasn’t prejudiced against anyone but I think it was only when I actually met and got to know some Muslims who actually talk about their faith and so on that I realised that actually I did have” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January 2010)

She goes on to sympathise with Islamophobic sentiments as she argues that people are unaware of the religion, similar to Kamila arguing lack of education has led to an awakening of religious racism. This lack of awareness and religious racism placed Kalsoom in an extraordinary position where she was able to observe anti-Muslimness firsthand through the lens of racial discrimination where she identifies the changing nature of racism:

“So, it’s not surprising that people are suspicious but it has got worse since 9/11 so you know, after any of these things, in the immediate aftermath, it gets much worse and then it dies down a bit but generally I think you know if you compare with, where are we now, 2010, yeh say ten years ago erm people were much less aware of Muslims so that’s why I’m saying people would call me paki, they wouldn’t have thought of me as a Muslim, they’d have thought of me as oh she’s kind of joined, kind of joined the pakis if you like [laughs], to use that horrible word. Erm so part of it is about racism having changed its idiom if you like because everybody looks different, gets assumed they’re a Muslim whether or not they are so it’s about changing the idiom. But some of

it is, is also a bit more of the fear of Islam or built on the fear of Islam”
(Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January 2010)

‘Islamophobia’, according to Hussain and Miller (2006) is the direct result of a number of social issues including lack of education, especially higher education passed school level; generational differences (as discussed further in this chapter); ‘cheap mass transport which has globalised the mental world’ (Hussain and Miller, 2006: 57) and indeed globalisation itself has wore down the levels of information articulated by the knowledgeable and un-educated.

In the final part of this section, I draw attention to Hajra in Glasgow and Nuha in Edinburgh who discuss, on two separate occasions, the impact of the Glasgow Airport attack in 2007:

“In Glasgow? Yeh I did, that made me worry actually for a while. I did think gosh if it’s happening in my own city, what’s going to happen erm, I think that was two years ago... erm yeh that, that did make me think... I can’t remember, but that did make me worry, I wondered what would happen, how would that upset the community here in Scotland and in Glasgow. I know that there were random attacks or premeditated attacks erm against Muslims. Erm but I wondered if... the rise of intolerance erm would be on par with England”
(Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January 2010)

For Hajra, the attack itself was not as serious as the consequences it may have upon the Muslim community in Scotland, as she refers to her counterparts south of the border in England and the backlash of 7th July, 2005. For Nuha, the attack led to a rise in enquiries about the activities of local Muslims in estates across Glasgow and subsequent Islamic classes being held for young children. This kind of scrutiny leads only to further exclude Muslims from wider debates around inclusion and community relations with an increase in community tensions:

“Yeh I do, I do I think quite a lot of people ... say you live in a block in Glasgow and a Muslim family moves in... Quite a lot of people would be like, what are they doing down there? If there was a lot of young men coming and going, they would be sure it was something to do with terrorism, they wouldn’t

think it might be an Arabic class or someone teaching martial arts or whatever, it would have been yeh, they're building a bomb" (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January 2010)

This particular passage challenges the notions of secularism and acceptance that is often associated with Scotland and Scottish nationalism. Nuha, although living in Edinburgh, understands how negative association can impact even the most tolerated and accepting of communities, demarcating the ways in which localised experiences have been impacted by both local and global events. Indeed, it was the repercussions on the local Muslim communities that had more effect than the event itself and indeed throughout Scotland as it was marked as an incident which affected many Muslims and their communities throughout Scotland.

9.3.3 Experiencing religious racism in Scotland

It is important here to highlight Islamophobia acts as a different kind of discrimination from religious racism in order to fully grasp the experiences of and racism that the participants were victims of or had observed in different spaces across the UK. In their study of Muslim students in New York, Nadal et al (2012) came across subtle forms of Islamophobia and religious racisms. They argue that six categories exist which help to encompass the experiences faced by victims of religious racism and Islamophobia which include: the assumption that all Muslims are terrorists are a result of social stereotyping; typically viewing Muslims are foreign and therefore exotic; generalising practices of all Muslim cultures and groups and rejection of prejudicial behaviour. The range of experiences are vast, some participants recognising the anti-Islam factor engraved in their exchange, others recognising a racialised form of prejudice seated within their experiences.

Here, Beena in Dundee focuses upon race as a determiner for discrimination, simultaneously correlating it with religious intolerance as a form of anti-Muslimness. The excerpt highlights how subtle forms of Islamophobia can be construed as racial discrimination:

"A few times I have said, is there something wrong? My son's like mum... I'm like no, they're just treating us different because we're a different colour, my

brother gets really embarrassed, he's like why did you say that. I'm not no, you shouldn't let people treat you like that, because we're a different colour, I said no, you need to let them know. Obviously look, that's one thing I look at and I really sort of focus on that. When I go somewhere I focus on that, how that person treats me, whether I'm going into an office, sometimes they're brilliant. But if you're sitting in an office or waiting in a queue and you see somebody else gets treated differently, get spoken to nicely and your turn comes and they're different, it's because you're Asian and that's what it is" (Beena, Dundee, 20th April 2010)

Nadal et al (2012) discuss 'microaggressions' as a form of subtle Islamophobia and religious discrimination, arguing that those within minority groups experience religious racism constructed as less obvious forms of discrimination. Beena here recalls some of the experiences she has had in social and public spaces. It is evident that those around her feel less need than Beena to retaliate or speak up about the discrimination, however, she does associate it with a racialised form of anti-Islamism. Foziah, a council worker in Glasgow recalls a number of experiences her and her family have lived through, in particular, the victimisation of her Hijab-wearing daughters. In this respect, they experienced ongoing racial and religious discrimination as a family unit:

"Yeh... no both of them wear Hijab. So as a family we kind of experienced the backlash to that and generally erm this kind of erm scholars saying that you know what if you feel unsafe then take off your Hijab because life is higher than you know that safety, feeling of security is higher than you looking like this" (Foziah, Glasgow, 10th March, 2010)

My earlier chapter (See Chapter Five) finds the women interpreting *Hijab* and the ways in which it is practiced. It is therefore inconceivable to some women that their headscarf, their form of protection is now used against them in public spaces. Living in a small village outside of Glasgow, Saira explains how locality plays a role in whether a Muslim would become a victim of racism or Islamophobia. She argues that inner city parts of Glasgow are more likely to anti-Muslim, however, the more prosperous regions of the city, namely the suburbs, will bring a separate form of intolerance, one which is often not visible as she says "they do manoeuvre themselves around and stuff". This particular passage draws attention to the various spaces in which subtle anti-Islamic sentiments are

growing, and indeed, it is those areas of impoverishment and lack of economic growth which are highlighted by Saira:

“I think that depends on, I mean a lot of it depends on their social background, I think. You’ll see the people who are from kind of more deprived kind of areas and stuff that are not very. I don’t know, I think it depends, I think you go to a rough part of Scotland or you’ll go to a rough part of Glasgow and they won’t really give a crap what you look like you know they’ll say stuff and they’ll be quite racist as well, really really racist they are erm but then if you go to a more affluent area you go to, they do manoeuvre themselves around and stuff, they do. Because they’re quite cautious of how they look and it’s for selfish reasons coz they don’t wanna look as being bad, that’s what it is. They probably go home and talk about you as well but erm to your face they’re more careful” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

Further along in the interview, Saira discusses a recent experience by her parents in her village just outside of Glasgow. She describes her village as quaint with a much less significant Muslim population. On this particular occasion, she felt her parents were unable to defend themselves against the harassment due to language constraints. She agrees that although the behaviour of the perpetrators is out of sync with village life and the behaviours are separate from those that reside there, she is also acutely aware of the generational differences that her parents were victim to:

“And my mum and dad, it makes me really really really angry the fact that my mum and dad have experienced racism to a certain degree, they have. And I just wish I could have been there and done something about it. Small example, in my area, it’s not a bad area at all, I come from quite a good area. It’s a small little village just past, just next to Glasgow airport, now the area itself it’s very very small. And the people there, they’re mostly kind of older people there erm so it’s really really peaceful, not a lot of youngsters at all. But my mum goes ‘oh I’m gonna go for a walk’ and my mum wears a headscarf and my mum went for a walk and she comes back she’s quite annoyed. And I was like ‘what happened’, she goes ‘oh there’s a bunch of boys that drove past and they chucked paper at me and they were calling me paki’ and I was just like ‘what’. And I’ve never heard that happening in my area before, never and I

was just like what. And a few days later she's goes 'oh forget it I'm gonna go for a walk' and the same thing happened again, people shouting stuff at her and it makes me really really really angry... My mum and dad they do speak English but not the way, not fluently so sometimes I feel quite sorry for them in the fact that they can't put themselves across as well as I could which is why I just wish that I was always around them so I could stick up for them coz it really annoys me when people are quite judgemental coz people are really judgemental when they can't speak English and when you don't look a certain way, it's true" (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

Garland and Chakraborti (2006) argue that rural racisms often go unnoticed as one would assume that the lack of minority groups in rural areas would lend itself to little or no racism. Furthermore, they argue that this is a misguided logic and indeed forms of rural racism exist which 'can result in a process of exclusion of perceived 'outsiders' from many village communities' (2006: 160). It is the idyllic-ness of rural areas which can cause a disarray of thought when discussing racism, moreover because these experiences occur in Scotland, a land which is often noted for its fairness and toleration, examples of religious racism in rural areas are further distanced from debate surrounding integration and assimilation. Saira's example gives light to the need to recognise the ways in which Muslim women experience anti-Muslimness, religious and cultural racism in the rural areas they live in. This excerpt is also evidence of the ways in which generational differences can account for the interpretation of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim discrimination. Saira's reaction to her mother's experience illustrates how younger Muslims are more prepared to stand up to victimisation and prejudice.

For Falak, the recognition of Islamophobia in Scotland is relative to England, although, as argued by Hussain and Miller (2006), it is still a significant social problem. She recalls her experiences when shopping in England. Similarly to Saira, Falak identifies generational differences between her reaction and her mother's when faced with an aggressive situation. The excerpt highlights the importance of generational gaps as the parents in both these circumstances are the victims who are evidently defended by their children who identify the discrimination based on racial and religious intolerance:

"Do you know, because I've been to England and that as well because my dad lives there, I have noticed that the people here are a lot friendly than the

people there and the people there [England] think they can treat people the way they want. When I was walking through town and my step mum was there, she had loads of bags on her trolley and a bag must have just touched a lady and she said to her ‘watch where you’re going’ and I said to her ‘no, you watch where you’re going’ and she kinda... she never said nothing because I had said something back. But I think she thought she could chance it with my step mum” (Falak, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

In Dundee, Jasmine offers an approach to identifying neighbourhoods which may be lax in their reaction to multicultural homogenisation and there is a likelihood that particular areas in the city will assert a particular kind of dominant ideology when it comes to racial and ethnic identity and belonging. She recognises the ways in which this everyday racism has been altered to include her Islamic dress choice, whereas previously, she argues it would not have been an issue:

“I think it’s to do with the area I live in erm I think it’s more... it’s not as open here as it maybe it is in the city centre erm they’re just like you know oh look at that white woman dressed as a paki and erm here’s trouble coming and you know things like that but nothing really... I don’t know I mean it just shows the ignorance, that’s what I’m doing, dressing up <laughs> they don’t even equate it with Islam even, well at that point they didn’t, they probably do now but that was a long time ago but erm... yeh I mean Alhamdulillah I’ve been okay really compared to a lot of people” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January 2010)

Changes in racial prejudice since September 11th 2001 have been presented in a number of ways. Here, Jasmine and Beena, both in Dundee, discuss changes in airport security which they view as anti-Islamic as they are recognised through physical signifiers (Hopkins, 2006):

“Yeh, that was, that was... it was 2008 was it not? Nothing, nothing really erm... I find personally when you go to the airport, you’re more looked at more personally. Something happened, something did happen and you think why are we getting checked, why are they not getting checked? And it’s because we’re Muslims, they look at the name you know” (Beena, Dundee, 20th April 2010)

Jasmine here talks about how her return to Scotland from Tunisia was a journey filled

with dread at being stopped at immigration alongside the unknown reaction her community would have to her and her family upon her return after the events of 7th July 2005 in London:

“Just the whole airport security thing because I was like... I hate going through the airports anyway now with the Hijab and erm I just thought it's gonna be a nightmare getting through the airport now and that's it. It was so worrying because it was back here where this had happened in the UK. Although we'd already decided previously to move back, that was us actually moving back from Tunisia after living there for a year. I thought, what's the place gonna be like now we've made a decision to go back to the UK? Things are gonna change now so that's quite a big thing” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January 2010)

These participants, both in Dundee identified how their awareness is raised by global and national events pertaining to creating social stereotypes of Muslims. Racial and religious profiling in airports and public places are all too often driven by physical signifiers and aimed at those who draw a physical resemblance to pre-confirmed descriptions.

In Edinburgh, Romana, a teacher at her children's school understands how physical signifiers of religious identity can draw attention:

“I would say that you do get looked at a lot sometimes, if you're wearing a scarf or the men get looked at because they've got a beard. So I think that's quite negative generally because of the body language, that's something that goes on regularly I would say” (Romana, Edinburgh, 24th June, 2010)

In Dundee, Sajidah, a paid volunteer, recalls fears of reprisals after media stereotyping of Muslims which branded them as terrorist and aggressive. She contemplates how these perceptions altered her definition of local community cohesion as she was afraid to step outside:

“Again I suppose the whole 9/11 thing, when that happened and Muslims came into it and I felt really bad, I felt really scared to go out, even... unless it was just paranoia, even just going out I was wondering if that person's thinking in a bad way, I wonder if they're thinking erm that kind of stuff. And I

think a lot of people did stereotype Muslims as being terrorists” (Sajidah, Dundee, 16th June, 2010)

On a positive note, Nuha in Edinburgh recalls a particular occasion when a non-Muslim neighbour came to the aid of local Muslims at a mosque and tells the story of how this experience taught her to further appreciate how non-Muslims were also affected by religious racisms and anti-Islamic sentiment:

“And there were lots of stories that you were starting to hear and the little Masjid around the corner from us had some graffiti put out in front of it, although somebody had said that had happened again recently, the way they heard the story was beautiful because the guy who was telling the story he said you know, having passed the Masjid, he can see somebody scrubbing something on the floor and he’s gone to see what’s going on and basically somebody’s written some graffiti on the floor outside the Masjid and the non Muslim neighbour is scrubbing it off saying ‘I’m just disgusted with what people have done this and I’m taking it off and I’m ashamed of these people that have done this and standing up for the Muslims, these people are lovely people, they’ve never done us any problems’. So it was an interesting, interesting event” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January 2010)

At the time of this event, Nuha explains that there was an increase in BNP activity around the area as it occurred soon after September 11th 2001. The BNP had stepped up their campaigns and presence around Edinburgh, and indeed Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom and this particular occurrence shows a parallel behaviour as on one hand the rise in BNP related activities led to the graffiti of the Mosque building, and on the other, a local non-Muslim had taken it upon themselves to wash away the discrimination left by those who would willingly invite him to become a member of their racist ideologies.

In other areas across the United Kingdom, racism is as much a social issue in Scotland:

“In Coventry there were quite a few incidents. Like I was walking on the bridge and these young kids they said ‘we’ll push you off the bridge’ or you know just people swearing or saying things about Islam or erm... Northern Ireland erm was, is a place I will not ask any Muslim to go to. No erm we had things thrown at us, people were staring and these kids had their guns with plastic pellets, they shot at us in the city centre, it was horrible. So I guess it

varies all over the country but in Edinburgh I think it's... I'm fine so far..."
(Heba, Edinburgh, 28th January 2010)

In their research, Hussain and Miller (2006) argue that England is 14% more Islamophobic than Scotland. Using their data gained from focus groups and 1500 telephone surveys, they conclude that Muslims living in Scotland see it as a 'safe-haven' (Hussain and Miller, 2006: 7) and that Muslims experience less Islamophobia than those in England. I argue here that using Nadal et al's (2012) model of categorising religious racism alongside Garland and Chakraborti (2006) and de Lima's (2001) concepts of rural racism, that the experiences of anti-Islamism and anti-Muslim sentiment, although lower in physical numbers are still as serious and consequential as those in other parts of the country. The range in levels of Islamophobia is seen to be the difference in social and economic backgrounds of Muslims in Scotland. Here, Heba related her experiences elsewhere in the UK to those in Edinburgh, highlighting how anti-Islamism may not seem to be an issue for Scottish multiculturalism, however, it is relative to the numbers of Muslims in Scotland and their social and economic conditions (Hussain and Miller, 2006):

Similarly, Heba raises concerns to the recent ban on religious symbols in schools and the illegality of wearing veils in public spaces as an act of profound religious racism. The political move by secular France has received a large number of opposing views by Muslim communities but also fears that an act prohibiting specific religious attire goes against the very foundations of multiculturalism:

"People are already applauding, you know the British people are already applauding the, er France on maintaining its culture and not letting the outsiders change things and they're talking about how we should embrace that. Erm so yes that's one thing that I can certainly think of that has an impact on the Muslims in this country" (Heba, Edinburgh, 28th January 2010)

Tibah in Edinburgh found a sympathetic ear in her manager at work, an Irish woman who had been previously stigmatised by the English:

"Erm I suppose just when the 9/11 happened or you know those sort of things and then you kind of feel like what are they.... what are these non Muslims gonna think about us? They're gonna think that we're all in the same category really... Actually my manager, she said to me that you know I know exactly what you're going through and we're totally behind you, I don't want you to

think that just because a Muslim has done this, we don't think any less of you or anything so that really helped me. But I must admit in the first week I was a bit aware of what are people gonna think of me, what are people gonna think about us. And then there were all these stories all of a sudden that Muslims were attacked" (Tibah, Edinburgh, 17th December 2009)

Tibah's finds some positive affirmation in the words of her manager, yet this passage also highlights how those working around Tibah have united in some way to 'protect' her from outside discrimination. Her worries here are less about her experiences at work, instead they address her fears outside of her workplace and in spaces which she would normally occupy e.g. her local mosque, a convenient store, even her home.

This section has highlighted how Muslim women in Scotland are not only experiencing different forms of religious racism but are simultaneously drawing different interpretations which vary across generational differences. I now present some of the ways in which Muslim women have reported or not reported incidents of religious discrimination and the importance they place upon the power of legislation and local police.

9.3.4 Reporting religious racism

The process of reporting anti-Islamism and anti-Muslimness has changed drastically as a result of growing intolerances towards religious groups in Britain (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007). In the study, the number of Islamophobic experiences far outweighed the number of reports that participants took further to police and community/neighbourhood authorities. This is a sign of the growing everyday racisms which is experienced by Muslims in Britain, de-prioritising the impact anti-Muslimness has upon local community relations by Muslims who are victims of it. Furthermore, racial profiling has led to a rise in non-Muslim victims of religious racism (See Kwan, 2008; Meer and Modood, 2009). For those few participants who did report their discriminations, the channels through which they went were varied from local community groups and non-governmental organisations to police and government bodies. Hajra reflects on her 'bus' experience as a result of intervention from others when attending a conference on Muslim women talks. The discrimination she faced came in the form of a bus driver when travelling home who demanded she remove her luggage from the luggage rack for the remainder of the ride for

safety reasons, until he later allowed a white male to store his open tool box in the very same space:

“Erm there was a series of events that took place here in Scotland called the Muslim women talk erm it might be useful for you to check that out, it’s kind of touches on some of the things that you’re talking about and it was getting Muslim women’s perceptions after the 7/7 issue and erm I related this scenario there erm... but I think it made me think... were it to happen now I would challenge it because I think because as the years have gone by I have become stronger and more aware, more aware of my rights as well erm so I would challenge it, I’ll give as good as I get now [laughs]” (Hajra, Glasgow, 7th January, 2010)

Interestingly, Hajra felt confident enough to challenge the incident, if she were to be placed in such a position again, although unfortunately it took intervention from a third party for this to happen, which illustrates how critical third party intervention can be, before and after such occurrences. Below, Hira recollects reporting an incident to AMINA-The Muslim Women’s Resource Centre through third-party reporting whereby they would take the initial complaint forward to the necessary bodies:

“Er I was upset but er the other time I reported to MWRC at that time and I think they’ve done third party reporting or something to First Buses and there was another, there was a big one happened two years ago, one girl like your size exactly and she came and grabbed me and she said ‘what do you have in the F bag?’ and she was just swearing” (Hira, Glasgow, 20th May 2010)

On another occasion, Hira considers how she is lucky to have English as a second language as her colleague in ESOL would struggle to report a crime of racial discrimination:

“I just phoned the police, I just switched my mobile on but I was just thinking of the... one of my friends, she couldn’t do anything because she couldn’t speak English but they’ve been here for 20-30 years. I know my friends mum she’s now I think 65 and now she’s in ESOL class, after she’s been here over 45 years and now she’s in ESOL class and I was thinking what they would feel. I mean I do counselling for ladies, Islamic counselling and I was so nervous and I told the police that ‘it took you 45 minutes to get here, what if I

was another lady who doesn't speak, she's not confident' but that's me, confident. But I nearly collapsed' (Hira, Glasgow, 20th May 2010)

When the reporting of a crime of racial prejudice is forwarded to the correct authorities, a much more complex process begins to take place. The process becomes more intricate when the racial prejudice is against white Muslim converts, as Nuha describes her experience when reporting an incident to the local police:

“Yeh and he's white as well so it's particularly just because we were Muslims and the police really didn't know what to do with that because it wasn't... they couldn't file it under racism because it clearly wasn't, because all our kids have got red hair, Scottish accent, you know there's no racism going on, it was just religious. So then it was down as a hate crime but then it wasn't so... religious intolerance and because of that... ” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January 2010)

The ambiguity of the law begins to surface when white Scottish Muslims are not offered the same level of protection against religious intolerance as the general Muslim population as religious intolerance is categorised under racial intolerance and discrimination. Moreover, the experiences women have had in reporting these crimes have different outcomes as a result of the process involved in treatment of the crime itself. For some participants, they feel unable to confront their aggressors, whether they are bus drivers or youths at a bus stop, whereas with intervention or knowledge of intervention, the participants felt empowered enough to react and report the crimes.

9.3.5 Re-defining Islamophobia

It has been over twenty years since Islamophobia was used in print to describe the growing fears of Islam in the West. The remaining empirical excerpts show that the Muslim women in Scotland feel it is an outdated term, one which does not take into account the increasing stereotypes of Muslims and Islamic culture, one which feeds too deeply into situating itself within a scapegoat definition and one which no longer validates the experiences of Muslims and non-Muslims through a process of racialisation and racial profiling. Like Halliday (1999) argues, the term becomes homogenised to include all aspects of Islamic religious intolerance and is too rooted in historical Western discourses which overlook contemporary everyday experienced racisms. Below, Kaneez

argues that the term has become ‘hyped’ as it is utilised greater than ever in print media. It distorts the everyday racisms experienced by Muslims through generalising:

“I don’t like that term... I don’t like that and I also feel that it’s one of those hypes... it’s hyped too much” (Kaneez, Edinburgh, 28th January 2010)

Kaneez’s suggestion that ‘Islamophobia’ is a ‘hyped’ term comes from the level of attention given to Muslims in news media. Propagating the term and using it to reproduce a number of stereotypes has led to Kaneez rethinking how the term is and should be used. Taking this further, Nuha in Edinburgh, a health worker, feels the problem with Islamophobia lies in the terminology and associated language. She feels it is too centred upon Muslim behaviour rather than Islamic doctrine, therefore, it should be defined as a phobia against Muslims, not Islam:

“No I don’t, I think if you really wanted to use the term I think it should be more Muslim-phobia because it’s not the religion, it’s the problem, as is always the problem with religion. Essentially religions are really nice it’s just the people that twist them around” (Nuha, Edinburgh, 21st January, 2010)

Similar to Halliday’s (1999) argument, Nuha asserts that the victimisation impact of anti-Islamism and anti-Muslimness is silenced or absent as a result of the language and terminology of the word itself. She further contends that Muslim-phobia is a more appropriate term to use as it takes into account the experiences of Muslims. Although this term may not account for non-Muslim victimisation through racial profiling, it does introduce the level of sophistication needed to address the impact it has on a micro-level on the individual.

In the same way, Jasmine in Dundee also agrees that term terminology is mistaken as it lacks the overall fear of Muslims much more than Islam itself, although the initial apprehension stems from the representation of Islam as backwards and aggressive (Said, 1978, 1997; Daniel, 1960, Dietrich, 2011):

“It probably is actually okay as a term... I think there is a wee bit of fear there, but maybe not the level of a phobia, that’s a bit strong. It’s a fear of certain Muslims isn’t it, rather than a fear of Islam” 29th January 2010)

Here, Saira, a lawyer in Glasgow argues that Islamophobia represents a wider racist discourse within society as she explains how religion and racism go hand in hand when discussing anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment. Participants in a study carried out by

Hussain and Miller (2006) argued that English nationalism is more concerned with an ethnic dimension whereas nationalisms within Scotland are more diverse, focusing on civic identities rather than racial:

“What is this about, it’s about religion and stuff then why not racism. Racism against Muslims. Or fear. It’s not fear of... you say fear of Islam and it’s just stupid because it’s just... it’s dislike, it’s not fear, it’s not fear because then that’s showing that there’s something to fear about, there’s something to be scared of and there’s not in Islam at all. they’re gonna be more careful about it because they don’t wanna look like they’re discriminating or being racist or whatever but Islamophobia’s just been thrown around like that and it’s been accepted as well, it’s socially accepted. I just think again, it’s just a word”
(Saira, Glasgow, 14th December, 2009)

Understanding anti-Islamism through a racial lens proved vital for Saira as she further explains that intolerance against Jewish people is not termed ‘Jewishophobia’ which conveys a more profound and political context which needs to be considered:

“The word itself has got negative connotations, the word itself has got negative connotations, it’s got Islam in it, it’s got phobia in it. You don’t hear of ‘Christianophobia’, you don’t hear of ‘Jewishophobia’, you know it’s just complete rubbish. And again, it’s directed at Islam and it’s not just because of all these terror attacks, it’s not that at all. There’s a deeper, there’s something deeper inside it. I don’t know what it is, I’ve not got down to it but there’s a deeper meaning to all of it. Obviously because of political reasons, economical reasons as well but erm there’s a reason why all this is happening” (Saira, Glasgow, 14th December 2009)

In Dundee, Jasmine, a housewife and mother-of-two feels that police powers have increased since interventions into Islamophobia have taken hold within the criminal justice system. Similar to the participants in Hussain and Miller’s study (2006), Jasmine argues that an increase in racialisation of Muslims has led to growing numbers in ‘stop and search’ by police:

“Yeh just people erm Islamophobia seems to me just people being targeted to be picked up by the police or whatever because they may look like they’re Muslim or whatever” (Jasmine, Dundee, 29th January 2010)

Jasmine refers to the increase in police power as a result of racial profiling. She finds that anti-Islamism, rather than be recognised as a crime, is more a way of justifying the numbers of stop and search exercised implemented by law enforcers.

In Edinburgh, Zubeidah, a volunteer who teaches children at the local mosque, emphatically declares that police powers are clouded with anti-Muslim judgements and the process involved in stop and searching and racial profiling violates the very same human rights upon which police powers have been founded:

“Oh it’s completely Islamophobic, there’s er there’s no doubt about that, they are specifically targeting Muslims, young Muslim men and if you’re Asian as well, that’s it, you’re done for. Er stop and search, everything, your rights denied, your normal human rights are being violated and we’re hoping we can stop it and I’m part of Scotland against criminalising communities group and that’s exactly the kind of work we’re doing. The anti terror laws is what promote...” (Zubeidah, Edinburgh, 17th December 2009)

She also begins to discuss the work she carries out in the local community (<http://www.sacc.org.uk/>) to begin an overhaul of representing Muslims in a positive light. This is further discussed in Chapter Six.

For the final two excerpts, the participants, Kalsoom in Glasgow and Elizabeth in Dundee, both Muslim converts, discuss how they recognised a change in attitude shortly after the events of September 11th 2001. Kalsoom speaks about an argument with her father who demanded she take off her Hijab when in public to draw less attention. She refused to do this, arguing that it would compromise her faith, regardless of anti-Islamic sentiment attached to the Hijab at the time:

“I just refused I mean we had a big fight about it and my mum was saying it’s just coz he cares about you, I said I know but I can’t do it, it just is wrong, I mean I know there’s some scholars including Zakia Badawi here in the UK who said to people you can just take it off for safety but I didn’t feel that was something I could do. So yes to me I would feel really naked going out without mine” (Kalsoom, Glasgow, 18th January 2010)

On the other hand, Erina, a white Scottish Muslim possesses none of the physical signifiers identifying her as Muslim. A blonde, blue eyed white woman who does not wear Islamic dress but dresses within the guidelines of Islamic modesty – she argues that

anti-Islamism is as much a social issue in Scotland as it is throughout the rest of the United Kingdom:

“I think... yes obviously it’s a problem in Scotland as well as throughout the UK and throughout Europe and as long as people are going to blow other people up and say this is in the name of Islam, it’s will be a problem. I don’t think people have a problem with what you wear and that’s fine, don’t tell me what to wear and I won’t tell you what to wear” (Erina, Dundee, 21st April 2010)

In a previous chapter (See Chapter Five), Erina, although not wearing Hijab or adopting a physical form of Islamic dress recognises that she is often privy to conversations as a result of her non-disclosure of her faith in public places. She argues here that people are less inclined to pay attention to her dress, although as a Muslim woman who does not fit the typical racially profiled physical attributes of a Muslim woman, her experiences are vastly different to those who do conform to the pre-determined characteristics. This section has demonstrated how Muslim women throughout Scotland engage with anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments, arguing for a less ambiguous and illustrated definition which can be better associated to the experiences they have had in work places, public spaces and stories they have read in news media. The examples I have provided typify the awareness the participants had of understanding what can and cannot be deemed anti-Muslim or religious racism alongside highlighting how ‘Islamophobia’ and anti-Muslim sentiments are very much a serious problem throughout Scotland.

9.4 Conclusion

When discussing anti-Islamism in Scotland, it is useful to have a comparison point and in the case of the study, England represented that point very well as a country which has experienced Islamophobia in the form of social intolerance, economic prejudice, political manoeuvrings and historical relationships representing Islam and Muslims as the strange ‘Other’. ‘New Racisms’ (Barker, 1981) are frequently being produced to give rise to a discursive set of ideologies about Islam and Muslims. Barker argues “theories and arguments are identified as racism if they see as biological or pseudo-biological groupings which are the result of social and historical processes (1981: 4). A revival of fears surrounding Islam and specific Muslim fundamentalist behaviours since September

11th 2001 have led to large numbers of Muslim communities being heavily observed and their behaviours scrutinised if they appear to be outwardly parallel to the performance of nationalist values (Morey and Yaqin, 2011). This situates Muslims in a difficult position, on one hand they are obliged to carry out forms of religious practice which inevitably will see them praying, fasting and dressing in methods not accustomed to Western behaviour, and on the other, they must also abide by national characteristics and show loyalty to their Scottish values. For Muslims living in Scotland, resentment exists from the non-Muslim community as a result of the growing economic status awarded to Muslims (Hussain and Miller, 2006) and although levels of anti-Islamism and anti-Muslimness are statistically lower than those in England, it is still however a significant social concern for Muslims living in Scotland. This chapter highlights how Muslim women in Scotland are witness to anti-Islamic behaviour in more ways than one and often having to face repercussions of worldwide Muslim action. Unclear processes of reporting crimes on anti-Muslim or religious racism indicates that many crimes go unreported as Muslims are continually relaying their experiences as an everyday discourse of subtle racism with little or no consequence if they report it to a local authority. Media portrayals of Muslims which reinforce anti-Islamic sentiments are more often directed towards Muslims and less towards Islam as a religion (Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004). The chapter seeks to illustrate the ongoing problems faced by Muslim women as they argue against the terminology and language associated with Islamophobia, indicating a more contemporary discourse is required to fully comprehend the experiences of victims of religious intolerance and racial discrimination and the processes by which these experiences take place.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

Recent years have witnessed an upsurge in geographical research in human geography, in particular paying attention to faith geographies. To gain an understanding of faith communities signifies a growing move to show that they are not only becoming more visible to our social worlds, but that they are affecting change to our everyday experiences. Communities of faith are interacting with wider social spaces in a number of different ways and this thesis highlights some of these ways as it accesses privileged understandings of the everyday experiences of Muslim women. It is, however, important to clarify exactly why studies concerned with communities of faith are moving into a new era of research and I do this by drawing attention here to the key contributions this thesis has made. I identify a number of significant additions to current knowledge and discourse, the majority of which is centred on the lives of Muslims in Britain. Throughout this thesis, Scotland is represented as a separate area of study as it offers different migration histories, economic variations and a multitude of social and political contributions being made by Muslims. I have identified three significant areas of contribution: Muslims in Scotland; *Hijab* practice, and Gendered experiences and exclusions while also integrating scale, faith and politics alongside the embodiment of faith as further narratives.

10.1 Key Contributions

10.1.1 *Muslims in Scotland*

Firstly, the scales of local and global and the impact of understanding scale in studies of Muslim communities find that Islam has become a globalised religion (McDonald, 2006). Kong (2010) refers to a ‘global shift’ in studying geographies of religion as they offer a way into recognising the surge in political activity and identification centred on Islam. Furthermore, in a conference paper discussing Globalization and Democracy, Secor (2002) argues that ‘the rise of Islamic politics has been viewed as part of the global phenomenon of “identity politics”’ (2002: 2-3). The increase of global movements of ideas, cultures and people has garnered strength in the form of religious identity for Muslims in non-Muslim societies as they draw a sense of belonging from others who practice faith from a similar set of guidelines, backgrounds and cultures as them. I discuss in greater detail the migrations and history of Muslims in Scotland in Chapter Three. These histories involve significant contributions to a Scottish economy, and to social and political communities. The level of interaction between Muslims and the Scottish state has increased as a result political participation and the emergence of nationally-led political parties such as the SNP, whose policies are geared towards being faith-‘friendly’. A post-devolved Scotland has led to Muslims in Scotland experiencing a sense of belonging which encompasses both nation and faith (Hopkins, 2008b). I argue that Muslim women are increasingly becoming part of the everyday landscape of Scotland, and by embodying what it means to be ‘Scottish’ (See Chapter Eight), they are in turn adopting a number of fluid identities which are made up of their religious, social, national, cultural and personal characteristics. Some participants highlight specific parts of Scottishness that they often impart in their identity formations, such as the weather, the National Health Service, and education in Scotland. Localised formations of identity find that those in Dundee use accent and local culture to identify and practice their Scottish nationalism.

10.1.2 *Hijab practice in Scotland and activism*

Secondly, the local-global dichotomy is further considered in reviewing Islamic fashion and the ways in which *Hijab* has been reconsidered to reflect the widening tastes in dress

style and variations of Muslim cultures. Muslim women are continually shaping and reshaping how Islamic dress can be delineated through different styles, fabrics, colours and accessories. By doing so, they are offering a number of parallels to how Muslim women are widely presented and represented. Firstly, the variation in style gives way to presenting evidence that there is no dominant Muslim culture and the feminised understanding of Islamic dress are diverse and engage deeply with contemporary fashion. Secondly, the autonomy given to those who wear headscarves as a way of practising *Hijab* is overlooked. Instead, we are often presented with overly naive social representations that describe headscarf wearers as ‘brain washed’, living in patriarchal religious cultures and are dominated by those cultures. Absent are the real-world representations of Muslim women in positions of power, wearing the headscarves as a political response to growing global manifestations of seeing Islam as a threat to national security, national identity and nationalistic variations of culture, politicising the practice of the *Hijab* (Haw, 2009). Going back to Chapter Five I present a number of excerpts from the participants who speak about their notions of *Hijab* practice and understandings of female role models in Islam. It is clear here that Muslim women are continually exercising their autonomy to reflect their growing knowledge about Islam and Islamic history. I use Tarlo’s (2010) study to illustrate that ethnic cultures are reproduced and refashioned through the *headscarf* and that women understand *Hijab* practice as something more than the physical form of dress, it also includes aspects of behaviour and modesty in speech. It is also important to consider how Muslim women who do practice *Hijab* in a physical sense by wearing a headscarf are becoming increasingly visible across the Scottish landscape. Their level of professionalism is increasing as a number of participants in the study worked at managerial levels in government or as highly skilled workers in other sectors. This highlights a growing confidence for Muslim women as they move out of domestic spaces and into other settings which seek to engage with and accept their faith identities. Nevertheless, I do need to highlight that some participants spoke of how they received negative feedback when expressing their faith through the embodiment of dress, therefore it is critical to understand that these experiences of faith in the workplace are increasingly subjective. The research here adds to a growing bulk of academic knowledge on Muslim headscarf wearers, their experiences, interpretations and everyday routines. Alongside using studies such as that of Emma Tarlo’s (2009), I consider how Muslim women are continually reshaping what *Hijab* practice means to them, how they interpret and understand Islamic and cultural doctrine in terms of what

they believe is Halal and Haram in *Hijab* practice and whether they deem the headscarf to truly be a significant adherence to the Muslim faith.

To investigate the relationship between faith, politics and the role of faith within political and social rhetoric is to acknowledge that faith plays a much larger role in bringing forward a subtext which views Islam itself as highly politicised and full of political discourse. Faith becomes a marker for debates around multiculturalism and diversity in Britain as they seek to either recognise the place of faith in everyday narratives of politics and social policy as a positive development towards engagement or, understand that the presence of faith in the social system allows policy makers and political advocates to scrutinise and observe faith politics in the UK (Dietrich, 2011). It is critical to identify the growing contributions being made by Muslim women in Scotland as they interact with local-level politics, engage with non-Muslim communities in an environment which allows them to speak about their faith, their philosophies and how they embrace their Scottish cultures. I decided that my research would be inclusive to any participant who identified as 'Muslim' and 'female'. At this juncture, I was not prepared to receive interest from numerous Muslim convert women from a range of different backgrounds. I think my research here highlights the growing numbers of Muslim converts in Scotland which warrant their own research arena and discourse. Moosavi's (2012) research indulges in some of these discourses, arguing that Muslim converts are often pressured to 'authenticate' their faith through religious practice. I highlight some of the experiences of the Muslim women involved in the study to concur with Moosavi's findings, however, there further exists a gender dimension to their experiences as they speak of their exclusions from local women's groups and events, lending itself to a wider rhetoric concerning 'sameness' and 'difference' in feminine accounts of sisterhood and belonging.

Growing activisms by Muslim women across the world signify a change in political discourse attributed to gender and politics. A mounting presence of women in local and national political arenas not only exemplifies their absence from previous representations, or indeed that they were being misrepresented but also emphasizes how Muslim women are now working to represent themselves alongside highlighting their social, economic and political needs. Specifically in Scotland, I use at least two case studies to focus attention on the growing numbers of Muslim women in local level politics. In particular, some of the participants in the study had taken it upon themselves to create awareness in their own social spaces of the everyday experiences of Muslim women, providing a platform for other Muslim women to engage socially and politically. Furthermore, fresh

and innovative campaigns have been launched across Scotland to specify the significance of place in identity formation. ‘I Speak for Myself’ is a recent initiative using visual methods to target Muslim women across Scotland, and the UK to give them a sense of empowerment. The new campaign, which hopes to help eliminate social stereotypes of Muslim women, is just one of many proposals which recognise the gendered experiences of Muslims in Scotland.

This study has offered a stage for a number of these experiences to be showcased, highlighting the importance of research carried out in Scotland. The participants in the study were simultaneously describing themselves through a number of discourses, ranging from religious to cultural, and social to national. Furthermore, the local-ness of the study speaks to a number of social policy projects and initiatives, in particular those concerned with multicultural and faith politics in Scotland. I discuss the contributions of the study to social policy in section 10.3.

10.1.3 Gendered experiences and exclusions

Gendered exclusions within mosque practice and management are further significant contributions to paradigms focusing on Muslims in Britain. Mosque spaces, often argued to be inclusive, work to set apart women which has led a number of women to retreat back to their home space. Phillips’ (2006) work on Muslim women and ‘home spaces’ plays particularly well into this narrative as she considers the ways in which Muslim women are creating spaces of belonging in the private sphere of their home and I illustrate here how Muslim women are able to contribute to civic participations through the virtual domain. These are spaces where they may dominate particular personal spaces, but their exclusion from mosque management has also resulted in a rise in opposition to patriarchal cultures within mosques and Islamic institutions. In Edinburgh, women play a large role in creating spaces for other women in the mosque, allowing them to come together in a mother and baby group making this a very select and conditional cluster. Nonetheless, the inclusiveness of a woman in mosque management in a central Edinburgh mosque showcases how a simple female presence in Islamic places of worship can lead to a wider engagement from more Muslim women. There still exist a number of community groups and interventions in Scotland which highlight the service and faith needs of Muslim women and, although their numbers are few, Muslim women still play a large role in

organisations such as The Muslim Council of Scotland. Other government funded groups are raising awareness to Muslim women to speak out against issues of domestic violence, racial and religious harassment and sectarianism in Scotland, denoting a mounting presence of activist groups of Muslim women who work within their local communities to disparage policies which hinder women's social, political and economic growth.

These issues raise crucial concerns about how Muslim communities in Scotland are contributing to a devolved state. The impact they have upon the landscape is further explored throughout the thesis and I hope that it goes some way in introducing Scottish Muslims are a key area of academic research. Furthermore, the increasing presence of Muslims in Scotland inevitably leads us to consider how they play a large role in social and political policy as more numbers of Muslim women become proactive and willing to take part in a post-devolved Scottish economy.

I bring to light in Chapter Two the idea that 'faith' can be viewed as a constant in identity formation as it can be seen as a 'sacred embodiment' by those who endeavour to practice it, although these embodiments grow stronger and weaker at particular moments. Furthermore, I have highlighted in this thesis how faith is confronted with a set of cultural hierarchies and I use empirical data in Chapter Seven to argue that Muslim communities are enveloped in numerous and diverse cultural rituals and practices. These practices are a result of ideas centred on contextualised and varied religious interpretations as well as a many customs and traditions borne out of ethnic cultures derived from these interpretations. I also consider how Muslim communities living in a small geographical space show particular social inclusions and exclusions. For instance, in communities that have higher numbers of Pakistani Muslims, those from a non-South Asian background are often socially rebuffed by the way of declining hand gestures, the lack of response to greetings, and the absence of invitation to and engagement at community and local social events. I argue that due to the diverse nature of Muslim communities, it is no longer, nor has it ever been, appropriate to speak about a Muslim 'community' and, instead we must consider speaking about 'communities of faith' or Muslim 'communities' (Peach, 2002). Furthermore, Muslim converts were also victims of segregation due to a reversed racialisation process by immigrant Muslim groups. Some of the white Muslim women in my study highlighted the ways in which they were racialised by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, taking issues of 'whiteness' into account. I discuss this further in Section 10.3, but I am keen to highlight Bonnett's (2008) work on exploring 'whiteness' as a key literature into which future studies could be situated. In some cases, it was the absence of

their headscarf which allowed them to be privy to social conversations about Muslims and the threat that they are thought to represent to national culture, and in others, convert Muslim women were given specific advice and directives on how to dress and ‘be Muslim’ by other Muslim women. This showcases how Muslim converts are less considered to be ‘proper Muslims’ and increasingly thought of as a way for specific Muslim communities to highlight their own significant cultures and increase their cultural presence in certain places (Moosavi, 2012).

Moreover, the thesis is equipped with understanding feminist narratives of faith, and as such, I designate a number of the workings here to feminist understandings of religion and religious practice. I argue, similarly to Minnow (1997), that women of faith can simultaneously become members or non members of that faith of their own choosing. As illustrated by some of my participants, they argue that they are not ‘only’ Muslim, their identities are submerged within various membership groups, and similarly, they are fully aware of how this affects their everyday lives. What is critical to note here is that these women are not sacrificing one identity in place of another, yet are managing and mediating between several concurrently. Furthermore, the growing activisms by Muslim women in Scotland demonstrate that they are moving away from cultures practised within patriarchal settings. Rather than argue that women have just as many rights as men, which would only work to reinforce that patriarchy within religion exists, the participants in my study move beyond the remits of aggressive dominant cultures, showcasing that women have a separate and critical role to play in their faith practices (Wadud, 2006). Furthermore, this thesis has drawn close attention to the contributions made by Muslim women through social, political and cultural events. Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that there has been a deconstruction of the social and cultural consciousness to examine the role that gender plays in breaking down boundaries. Feminist literatures often discuss that a state cannot exist within the inclusion of the female (Yuval-Davis, 1997) and I draw attention to the various relationships Muslim women have with political discourses, entering in previously non-Muslim dominated space to begin the much needed conversations which consider faith and politics as a critical part of Muslim women’s lives.

10.2 Review of thesis

Rooted in feminist narratives of faith, this thesis has explored a number of different aspects of the lives of Muslim women in Scotland. I have presented several dialogues concerning the understandings of Islamic dress and the embodiment of *Hijab* practice. In addition, I also illustrate how Muslim women are becoming active citizens in their local communities through a number of organisational initiations and interventions, however, there still exist a large number of barriers to participation for the women. Gender roles within the private spaces of the home become resilient for women as they look to seek out opportunities for local community engagement.

Previously in the thesis I introduced a number of research questions the study was confronted with. I review how the thesis has considered and understood these questions in relation to the lives, knowledge and experiences of Muslim women in Scotland. To reiterate, I was concerned with investigating the following:

- 1) How do Muslim women understand the concepts of *Hijab* and incorporate Islamic dress into their everyday lives?
- 2) How do Muslim women participate in social and civic activities in Scotland?
- 3) What are the gendered ways in which Muslim communities be identified as non-homogenised?
- 4) In what ways are religious, social and cultural identities formulated, practiced and expressed?
- 5) How do Muslim women understand and experience Islamophobia and religious racism?

The study has presented the various ways in which Muslim women experience, represent and locate their understandings of faith, nationalism and identity. I use this section to draw together the findings from all of the empirical chapters and highlights critical and emerging themes about the lives and interactions of Muslim women in Scotland.

I begin the thesis with a review of the ways in which discourse surrounding faith, nation and gender has transformed academic understanding of specific faith groups in Britain today. Furthermore, I argue that researchers must be aware of how 'race' is experienced by researchers themselves, using Nayak's (2011) argument that 'race' and 'culture' are

experienced emotionally and we experience ‘race’ and ‘culture’ in various shapes and structures every day. I highlight the bridging of ‘faith’ and ‘race’ and I argue that ‘faith’ acts as a constant from which people experience a sense of collectivity. Furthermore, there exists a disparity between what we perceived as ‘cultural interpretations’ and ‘religious interpretations’ as we understand that Muslim communities are diverse, therefore their experiences, backgrounds and everyday lives are also varied. As we move into a new period of studying minority groups in Britain today, religious racisms and discriminations are increasingly impacting our social environments. Chapter Two demonstrates how the thesis is concerned with presenting women’s experiences and their knowledge of their social worlds. It is integral for current debates in Human Geography and other social disciplines that we discuss women’s experiences as there is an increasing presence of women in previously male-dominated spaces, such as politics and positions of power in local economy. Simultaneously, we must be careful not to essentialise women’s experiences as a result of their underrepresentation (Nagel, 2005) which could have severe consequences in impacting the ideas we can draw from these experiences.

I use Chapter Three to provide background data and some contextual support to the study. I highlight how the migration histories of various immigrant Muslim groups across Scotland have differed and that this has had some effect on their decisions to form dwellings in particular parts of Scotland. For instance, Muslim groups living in Glasgow have experienced a different economic and social history to that of Muslim groups in Dundee. They are not only larger in numbers in Glasgow, but also were not part of a specific trade and industry which albeit no longer exists, yet provided Dundonian Muslims with several economic and social opportunities. The majority of Muslim immigrants, mostly men, came to living in Dundee as part of the jute industry which was flourishing at the time of their migration after the 1950s whereas Muslim men in Glasgow were often noted for their presence in the shipping industry. I use this chapter to also highlight the absence of Muslim women from much social and policy-based research at the time, which has hindered their progress into studies accessing the lives of Muslim women. I use Maan’s (2005) subjective, locally-based research to help address some of the gaps in research such as the governance involved in creating Muslim spaces of worship alongside etching out the relationship Islam and Muslims share with Scotland. Notwithstanding, Muslim women are nonetheless removed from these discussions and I use the remainder of the thesis to underscore this as the premise for much of my work. It is apparent that the women in my study use locally-based characteristics to self-define and

self-differentiate. For example, the use of local dialect and accent was crucial to women who felt a need to express their Scottishness, alongside the use of particular places such as The Scottish Government in Edinburgh to display their national loyalties to particular places.

In Chapter Four I discuss the methodological design behind the study, using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and photo-taking exercises to gather empirical data. I contend that the study is situated in and around theories and ideas concerning feminist geographies of religion. Specifically, I argue that we must look to contextualised understandings of the everyday lives of Muslim women in order to understand how they shape, negotiate and contemplate their social spaces and their interactions within those spaces. In addition, this particular chapter is very useful in allowing me to consider placing myself in my research study as I was continually responsive and attentive to how my positionality could affect the research I was carrying out. In previous chapters I discuss how it is not a necessity for researchers to have significant similarities to their research participants, here, I explore how the commonalities I shared with my participants were often spaces filled with personal contestations, ambiguities and often led to complex conversations about how the participants viewed me as an expert of Religious Studies when I thought I was presenting myself as a student of Geography.

Chapter Five speaks of the faith interpretations the participants have in terms of their understandings of Islamic dress and how this plays a role in their everyday lives. I use this chapter to highlight how comprehensions of religious texts have been culturally interpreted to ask that women dress in particular ways, while simultaneously illustrating how Muslim women are refashioning Islamic dress to meet their contemporary fashion needs. I argue that *Hijab practice* comes in a number of forms, through behaviour, dress and physiological approaches to faith and that women embody spaces of *Hijab*. For instance, their engagements with public and professional spaces of *Hijab* differ to those of private and domestic spaces. Moreover, their increased awareness of global developments and representations of *Hijab* has led to a number of participants to reconsider how their social experiences are shaped by their choice of dress and *Hijab* practice.

Chapter Six pays close attention how the participants encourage future contributions to social and political participation by other women, arguing that further training, prospects and encouragement is needed to eliminate the underrepresentation of Muslim women in positions of power outside of the home space. I use this chapter to further illustrate how

Muslim women are alert to news media stories about Islam and its believers by creating autonomous spaces of responsiveness. I contend that this responsiveness is fuelled by a need to represent Muslim women in their everyday spaces, ones which are often absent from generalised and homogenous representations of Muslim women. The participants discuss how there is a greater need to create spaces of empowerment for women and it is through local interventions that they have identified how and where they are able to contribute to localised social politics of faith and faith involvement.

In further chapters (See Chapter Seven) I demonstrate how Muslim communities throughout Scotland are non-homogenous, often diverse in their Islamic and cultural practices which highlight a number of serious issues about how gendered experiences for women in mosque spaces are being mismanaged by those within superior positions of mosque infrastructure. Some of the women also discuss their experiences of being with other Muslim women in social and public spaces, and how these spaces are often overpowered by particular groups from dominant ethnic backgrounds. For instance, the experiences of Muslim converts differ greatly from those of born Muslim backgrounds and I argue that the intricacies of community interactions and multi-layered aspects of faith can lead to exclusions within local spaces.

I draw further conclusions about the roles that gendered nationalisms play for some of the women involved in the study. Chapter Eight explores a number of the conversations I had with participants whereby they discuss their perceptions of identity formation, how they understand the role of nation and nationalism in those formations alongside the ways in which they are presented and represented through language, discourse, accent and other qualities they enlist as 'Scottish'. I use some of the photographs taken by participants to highlight their visions of 'Scottishness', 'Home', 'Culture' and 'Belonging' and these act as aids to wider discussions.

Finally, I introduce the nuanced ways in which Muslim women are still experiencing religious racism in Scotland. The gravity of some of these incidents highlights how Muslim communities are very much still the victims of inadequate social cohesion policies and that the adaptations of criminal laws to recognise the growing numbers of offences relating to religious racism is going unnoticed alongside other interventions by local authorities to give Muslims the support needed to showcase their harassment and report it to appropriate bodies.

10.3 Implications for social policy and practice

A key significant finding was the exclusion of Muslim women from mosque management. Future studies with Muslim communities in Scotland could work to uncover specific exclusionary policies within faith institutions which could lead to a significant overhaul in guidelines to reconsider an engaging space for women in mosques. This could also lend itself to some vital encouragement from local policy makers as the need to engage with faith institutions across Scotland is growing as the numbers of institutions themselves increase. With the recent emergence of Muslim women's groups across Scotland, a social policy re-evaluation would involve a further consideration of the ways in which faith institutions write women into their policies and guidelines alongside offering support, encouragement and a necessary outline for women to be involved at all levels in their decision making.

Also, my work on Muslims' experiences of anti-Muslimness in Scotland could reach out to government research and reports. A key limitation of the study was that it was unable to seek out a larger number of rural experiences of anti-Muslimness and anti-Islam. Practitioners here could be further concerned with how Muslims are being affected by subtle forms of religious racism and how this could speak to policy and practice within rural areas throughout Scotland. Some of these ideas have already been taken forward in a report looking into anti-Islamism in Scotland and how it could be increasingly addressed for policy-makers, however, such research must also consider the impact religious racism has for Muslim converts and Caucasian Muslims in Scotland.

10.4 Future Research Directions

As pointed out in the introduction, I understand that my research may have limitations and I present a number of significant points that could introduce new paradigms to research and the ways in which we explore and think about Muslims in Britain.

A number of methodological innovations could be sought to introduce new ways of studying Muslim communities in Scotland and indeed the rest of the UK. I argue here that Participatory Action Research (PAR) would draw a number of new contributions to studies pertaining to minority groups, vulnerable groups as well as those which are often

hidden and/or unseen. PAR presents research with an approach to study phenomena as it occurs in its spatial context and to comprehend how these phenomena help to shape ones, or a communities' identity, thought processes and perspectives (McIntyre, 2003). Pain describes PAR's current position within the academy as:

'a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory world view... [and] bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of practical issues of concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities' (Reason and Bradbury, 2006: 1).

Illustrating this further, PAR becomes less a method and more a methodology and process within which research is conducted (Reason, 2004 and Kesby et al, 2005). PAR places heavy emphasis upon inquiry and orientations of knowledge as outputs of research. Its mode of inquiry disputes mainstream methodological approaches, giving authority to participants at every stage of the research, enabling them to change, question and interpret their own thoughts.

Using PAR with Muslim female groups would further give them the opportunity to become empowered by the research and McIntyre's research with working class women in Belfast, using PAR studied the perceptions of place and how these perceptions were shaped by gender, class and religion as well as how their identities as women living in Ireland at a time of wide scale violence and social change affected their experiences of these places (2003). Leyshon (2002) takes this further by emphasising the meaning of self-empowerment within PAR as a critique to the understanding of empowerment as a gift to participants.

Furthermore, Muslim groups and organisations are increasingly using the World Wide Web to create, manage and inform spaces of faith and religiosity. Recent campaigns on Facebook and Twitter demonstrate that virtual connectedness is allowing some Muslim women to communicate their experiences outside of the home without leaving their domestic spaces. Another aspect of research with Muslim communities in Britain could look to exploring how Muslim women are using interactive virtual spaces and social networks to formulate, consider and illustrate their understandings of faith, nationalism, belonging and home.

Another key development in research would be the contribution of female Scottish Muslim converts, as I have previously argued in Chapter One and in a number of the

empirical chapters also. Bonnett's (2008) work on whiteness would allow for a more in depth reflection on how 'whiteness' has become a normative function of differentiation among Muslim convert communities. The roles played in the everyday by Muslim women are considered multi-layered and fluid as they move between the domestic spaces of the home, the professional spaces of work and social spaces in public. The convert experience would add another dimension to the already complex and intricate understandings of Muslim women's faith, their national ideologies and cultural and ethnic identities. I would anticipate that future research would allow for a more pressing look into the lives of female Muslim converts to seek out their journeys into the Islamic faith, their gendered narratives of faith practice and identity and the ways in which these may differ from born female Muslims in Scotland.

Finally, I hope that this thesis and the research conducted goes some way into contributing to future studies of Muslim faith practice in Britain alongside creating an awareness to the lives of Muslim women in Scotland, the roles that they play in the public and the private and the significant contributions they are making to Scottish society.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Registered Islamic institutions and organisations throughout Scotland.

Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	City
Mosque & Islamic Centre of Aberdeen	164 Spital (off King Street)			Aberdeen
Musalla As-Salaam	97 Whins Road			Alloa
Saraji Islamic Studies Centre	5 Whitburn Road			Bathgate
Dumfries Islamic Society & Mosque	243 Annan Road	(near Noblehouse School)		Dumfries
Tayside Islamic & Cultural Education Centre	2 Wellington Road	(off Victoria Road)		Dundee
Jamaa Masjid - Dundee Islamic Society	6 Miln Street			Dundee
Jamia Masjid Billal (Scottish Islamic & Cultural Centre)	5-7 Dura Street			Dundee
Dunfermline Mosque & Islamic Centre - Feizan-e-Madinah	125 Wood Mill Road			Dunfermline
Idara Taleem-ul-Quran	4 & 8-12 Temple Park Cres.	Polwarth		Edinburgh
Pakistan Community Centre & Anwar-e-Madina Mosque	43-45 Annandale Street			Edinburgh
Shajalal Mosque & Islamic Centre	8a Annandale Street Lane			Edinburgh
Central Mosque & Islamic Centre	50 Potter Row			Edinburgh
Mosque & Islamic Community Centre (Roxburgh Street Masjid)	12 Roxburgh Street			Edinburgh
Falkirk Islamic Centre	10 Burnhead Lane			Falkirk
Fife Muslim Education & Cultural Cntr.	22 Main Street	Kinglasie		Fife
Dawat-ul-Islam Mosque	31 Oakfield Avenue			Glasgow
Ahl Al-Bait Society	25 Woodside Place			Glasgow
UKIM - Glasgow Islamic Centre (Masjid Al-Furqan)	19 Carrington Street			Glasgow
Madrasa Zia-ul-Quran	257 Kenmure Street			Glasgow
Masjid Noor	79 Forth Street	Pollockshield		Glasgow

Name	Address1	Address2	Address3	City
Jamia Islamia (Anjaman-Ehyae-Islam)	275 Tantallon Road	Shawlands		Glasgow
Madrasa Taleem-ul-Islam	159-161 Nithsdale Road	Pollokshields		Glasgow
Masjid-e-Khazra	138 Butterbiggins Road			Glasgow
Langside Mosque	196 Langside Road			Glasgow
Al-Huda Islamic Centre	65 Albert Road			Glasgow
Masjid Al-Farooq & Muslim Community Centre Glasgow	32-38 Dixon Avenue	Cross Hill		Glasgow
Glasgow Islamic Centre & Central Mosque	1 Mosque Avenue	Gorbals		Glasgow
Madrasa Alarabia al-Islamia	490 Paisley Road West	Ibrox		Glasgow
Fife Islamic Centre	786 Poplar Road			Glenrothes
Kirkcaldy Islamic Education & Cultural Centre	1 St. Marys Road			Kirkcaldy
Fife Islamic Centre (Kirkcaldy)	Cumbrae Terrace			Kirkcaldy
Anwar-e-Madina Mosque	1 Craighill East Road			Livingston
Central Mosque Lanarkshire	5 Clydesdale St.	Mossend	Bellshill	Motherwell
Perth Islamic Centre	65 Glasgow Road			Perth
Central Scotland Islamic Centre	Burghmuir Road			Stirling

(Muslim Directory, 2011)

Appendix 2

Name	Address	
Saheliya	10 Union Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LU	Edinburgh
Edinburgh & Lothian's Race Equality Council	14 Forth Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LH	Glasgow
Stepping Stones	Old Fire Station, 27 East Norton Place, London Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5DR	Dundee
Volunteer Centre Edinburgh	45 Queensferry Street Lane, Edinburgh, EH4 4PF	
Edinburgh Mela	NEAC, 15a Pennywell Court, Edinburgh, EH4 4TZ	
Edinburgh Islamic Society (University)		
Taleem Trust	311 Calder Street, Glasgow, G42 7NQ	
Glasgow Women's Library	2nd Floor, 81 Parnie Street, Glasgow, G1 5RH	
Meridian - Black and Ethnic Minority Women's Centre	30 Clyde Place, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, G5 8AQ	
Glasgow Muslim Student's Association		
Bharatiya Ashram	Dudhope Centre, 5 St Mary Place, Dundee, DD1 5RB	
Dundee Voluntary Action	Number 10, 10 Constitution Road, Dundee, DD1 1LL	
Dundee International Women's Centre		
Dundee Islamic Society (University)		

Appendix 3

E-mail sent to organisations

Dear [Name of organisation],

I'm currently doing research looking at exploring the everyday lives of Muslim women in Scotland. The research will take place in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh and I would like to invite you to participate in the research which will be using focus groups and interviews. I will be, with the help of a number of voluntary organisations and public sector agencies, be looking to increase my network and contact base, and would greatly appreciate any input you would like to have.

This research is the first of its kind to take place in Scotland and hopes to fully engage Muslim women with the project and allow them to comfortably inform the research how they feel they are represented within Scotland and has been officially established by the Scottish Government and the Economic and Social Research Council.

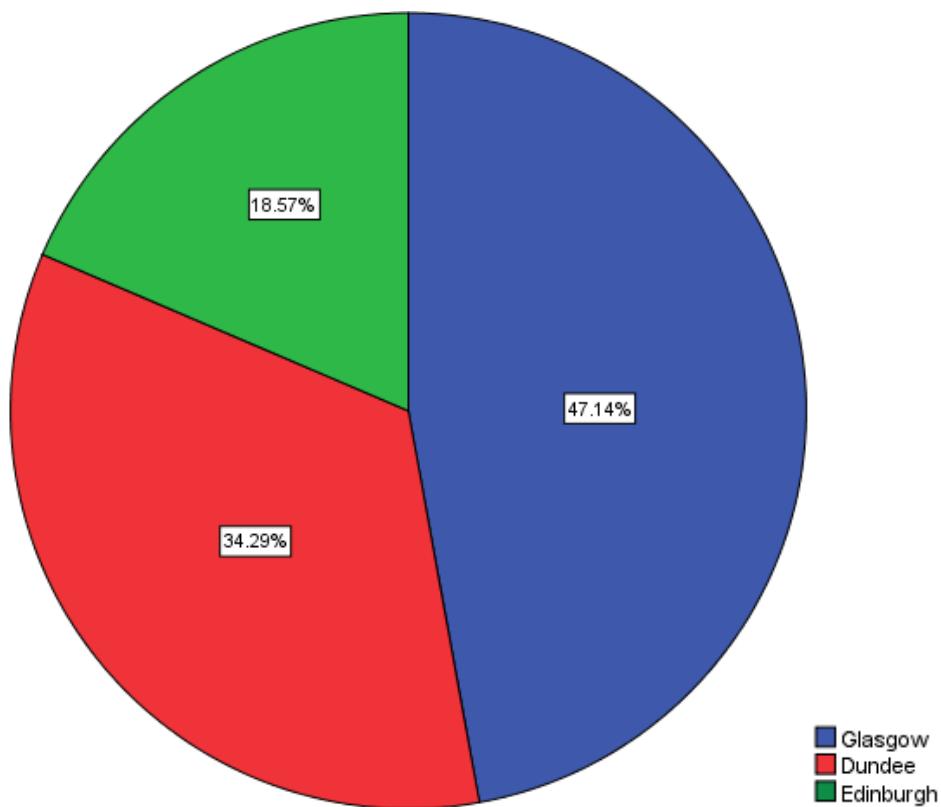
I will contact you next week by telephone to discuss this further.

Many kind regards,

Rahielah Ali

Appendix 4

Pie chart – total participant sample.



Appendix 5



Title: Muslim Women in Scotland: Global Events, National Issues, Local Lives

Interview Schedule:

1. The group/person will be asked if they have understood the information sheet and signed the **consent form**, these will be followed prior the focus groups/interviews commencing.
2. The women will firstly be asked about their **experiences of migration** (whether it be their own migration or the experience of a friend or relative) :
 - If not Native Scottish then participants will be asked their about their background and origins, whether this be their origins or parents and asked to describe their experiences of migration
3. **Faith and practice:**
 - ❖ What does Islam mean to you?
 - ❖ How well do you feel you understand the structure of Islam and the role of women within the faith?
 - ❖ What is your opinion of the role of women in Islam and the way Islam represents women as opposed to media or public representation?
 - ❖ How do you feel Scottish/Muslim women are represented in the media?
 - ❖ How much is Islam incorporated into your everyday life?
 - ❖ How well do you feel Scotland and Scottish life is open to the ways and cultures of Islam?
 - ❖ Can you describe one negative and one positive experience you've had of expressing your faith in a social situation?
4. **Identity:**
 - ❖ What is your understanding of a religious identity?
 - ❖ How important is clothing in identifying you as Muslim e.g. Niqaab, Hijaab, long frontal covering etc.
 - ❖ In what ways do you express your religious/social/national identity?
 - ❖ Can you describe ways in which you feel/do not feel you are able to express these identities within Scotland?
5. **Nationality and Nation:**
 - ❖ How well do you feel engaged with the Scottish community and Scotland as a nation?
 - ❖ Do you see yourself as Scottish, <ethnic background>, Muslim or all three? How so? What has led you to this way of independent thinking?
 - ❖ In what way(s) do you feel Scotland is your home? (vice versa if they feel the opposite way)

- ❖ Can you tell me how you would describe Scotland in terms of your personal experiences of social, political and family life?

6. Media and public perception:

- ❖ In your opinion, how do the media portray Islam and its believers?
- ❖ What affect do you feel this has upon public perceptions?
- ❖ If this media portrayal is negative, why do you think this is? (I envisage this question will lead onto a discussion surrounding 9/11 and 7/11 and Glasgow Airport attack)

7. Global and National events:

- ❖ How have the events of 9/11, 7/11 and Glasgow attack affected your life? Changes in routine, networks and social life?
- ❖ What were your first thoughts when you heard about 9/11 and 7/11? Was this any different when you heard about the attack on Glasgow airport? How?
- ❖ What other global or national events have affected the way you express your faith and nationality?
- ❖ Have you ever been in a situation where you feel you're at risk for expressing your faith? If so, can you tell me a bit more about this? This question will lead onto other themes around Islamophobia and experiences.

8. Participants will be given the opportunity to give further comments or ask the researcher questions during and at the end of the interviews/focus groups.

Alongside these questions, other topics may arise depending on the discussion with participants. Not all questions may be asked depending on timing restrictions. Questions are also subject to change with literature reviews and supervisor comments.

Photo-Taking Task

A small number of participants will be asked to think about and then take pictures of what they feel best expresses the following:

- Home
- Scotland
- Scottishness
- Islam
- Muslim
- Their identity – can be more than one picture
- Culture – it is decided by the participant what culture they plan to photograph, could be Scottish, Islamic or ethnic
- Diversity
- Community

These pictures will be discussed at focus groups and/or interviews.

Appendix 6



Informed Consent

Title: Muslim Women in Scotland: Global Events, National Issues, Local Lives

Aims: To explore the everyday lives of Muslim women and understand ways in which key events have shaped the identities and engagement into Scotland by Muslim women. The study will provide Muslim women with the opportunity to speak about their experiences on migration, work and employment, social and family life as well as their understanding of events such as 9/11, 7/7 and other global incidents which may have affected them.

Before you take part, please read and sign the consent form below. If you need any further explanation, please do not hesitate to ask.

You have the right to:

- Participate voluntarily and without force
- Be informed of the nature of the research
- Not to be misled unnecessarily or in any way that might be harmful
- Withdraw from the research at any time
- Be informed of the results of the research at the end of the study
- Expect that any information given is absolutely confidential and private
- Expect that no participant will be in any way identified in the report or publications
- Expect that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained if an interpreter is present

Participant Consent

I, _____, have been informed about the research and agree to voluntarily participate. I have read and understood this form and I understand that all rights will be guaranteed to me.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please contact me, Rahielah Ali, on rahielah.ali@newcastle.ac.uk at anytime if you need further information or would like to withdraw from this research.

Thank you for taking part

Appendix 7

Coding Scheme

Code – Practising of Faith in Scotland

- Islamism and faith – spirituality and strength
- The links between Islam, faith and Scotland
- Practising Islam as a way of life in Scotland – Islam in the everyday – the dynamics of living in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee
- Expectations of Islam from previous knowledge – e.g. family and community
- Expectation of the Muslim using Islamic knowledge
- Knowledge of Islam belief, history and structures within Islam
- Knowledge of diversities within Islam
- Changes in the practising of Islam following further study
- The role of women in Islam – empowerment?
- Female role models and applications of in the everyday
- Knowledge of other faiths in Scotland
- ‘Exposure’ to Islam and Muslims – some participants discussed how their view of Islam had changed as they met Muslims from traditional Islamic backgrounds
- Changes in the practice of faith due to Muslim communities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee
- Changes in the practice of faith due to wider social perceptions
- Changes in the practice of faith due to media perceptions
- Solidification to Islamic faith after global events
- Disconnecting from Islam after global events
- Faith and religious practice in the workplace
- Religious practice and civic responsibility
- Social/civic responsibilities of the Scottish Muslim woman or Muslim woman in Scotland
- Representations of Muslims – socially, politically and religiously – impact on practise and spirituality in Scotland
- Practicing Islam in Scotland – access to mosques, information and communities in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee

- Awareness of how other places practice Islam – distinguishing between places and cities

Code – Identity

- Signifiers of identity – visual and physical, mental and spiritual
- Ways in which identities are practised and asserted
- Ways in which local identities differ from national – participants discuss their lives in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee
- Amalgamations of identities
- Mobile vs. immobile – fluid nature of identity and problematising identity
- Empowerment and identity
- Identity in the local and national compared to global identities – drawing upon distinctions from global ummahs and meanings behind this
- Activism and Islam
- Good Muslim/bad Muslim
- Role models and identity assertion
- Everyday experiences of identity assertion in Scotland, in the local and national
- Everyday experiences of identity assertion outside of Scotland
- Awareness of Islamophobia and impact on identity
- Barriers to identity assertion
- Positive experiences linked to identity
- Negative experiences linked to identity
- Practising Islam in Scotland
- Importance of identity for Muslim women in Scotland
- Awareness of the impact of media and social perceptions
- Representations of Muslims, socially, politically and religiously
- Responsibilities for these representations
- Responsibility for civic nationalism when asserting identities

Code – Muslim women in Scotland and the concept of dress

- Islamic belief and dress code – what is the concept of Hijab
- Traditional clothing
- Islamic clothing

- Diversity of beliefs
- Everyday Hijab as a practice in the local – prayer and spirituality
- Hijab vs. non-Hijab
- Journey into the headscarf and reactions in the private and social
- Hijab and Scottishness
- Changes in beliefs through Hijab practice
- Positive experiences of Hijab
- Negative experiences of Hijab
- Hijab activism and spaces of Hijab activism
- ‘space invaders’ – liberating experiences of wearing the headscarf
- Islamophobia and awareness of
- Islamophobia and the headscarf
- Islamophobia and Muslimness
- Hijab and headscarf post 9/11, 7/7 and Glasgow airport
- Fear of Islamophobia
- Representations of Hijab and headscarf in the media and social
- Impact of these representations

Code – Muslims and community participation

- Activism and Islam
- Role models in Islamic history which have led to activism
- Opportunities for activism and participation in the local, national and global
- Opportunities for activism and participation in the social, political and economic
- Different levels of activism
- ‘Openness’ of within local and national
- Cultural diversity in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee
- Awareness of cultural diversity on other scales – national and global
- Changes in participation and activism following 9/11, 7/7, Glasgow airport and other events
- Disconnectedness from within ‘own’ Muslim communities - local
- Disconnectedness from wider Muslim communities – national
- Disconnectedness from non Muslim communities
- Unification of communities post 9/11, 7/7, Glasgow airport and other events

- Access to information regarding participation and activism
- Organisations within Scotland set up specifically or dealing with ‘Muslim issues’
- Importance of community participation

Code – Service provisions within Scotland for Muslim women

- Access to information – Islamic
- Access to media sources
- Barriers to accessing information
- Technology
- Accessing everyday services – public (healthcare and council-led)
- Access to Halal services – food and clothing
- Accessing leisure facilities
- Organisations within Scotland assisting access
- Positive experiences of services access and provision
- Negative experiences of service access and provision
- Islamic awareness within service provision
- Practicing faith in the workplace
- Support from Scottish government following 9/11, 7/7 and Glasgow airport
- Diversity training within Islamic and non Islamic institutions

Code – Methodology

- Reasons for participation
- Expectations of research
- Were these expectations met?

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