

Resolving Recognitive-Power Dilemmas: The Everyday  
Experience of Sunni Muslim Individuals in Dublin,  
Ireland

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# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The Research Agenda .....	1
1.2 Exploring the Research Challenge .....	2
1.3 Summary of the Findings.....	3
1.4 Thesis Structure.....	6
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 The Muslim Population in Ireland .....	9
2.2 The Muslim Population in Dublin .....	13
2.3 Limitations of the Irish Literature .....	16
2.4 Diverging Paradigms in the European Literature.....	17
<b>Chapter 3 Theoretical Frame .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 The Development of Recognition Theory .....	28
3.1.1 Love Recognition .....	35
Relation-to-Self: Self-Confidence .....	36
Disrespect towards the Integrity of Love.....	37
3.1.2 Legal Recognition .....	38
Relation-to-Self: Self-Respect.....	40
Disrespect towards the Integrity of Universal Value .....	43
3.1.3 Societal Recognition .....	44
Relation-to-Self: Self-Esteem.....	47
Disrespect towards the Integrity of Particular Value.....	48
3.2 Constructive Criticism of the Theoretical Frame .....	49
3.2.1 The Complexity of Power .....	50
<b>Chapter 4 Research Design.....</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1 The Case Study and Units of Analysis .....	58
4.2 A Qualitative Approach .....	59
4.2.1 Fieldwork.....	61

Pilot Interviews.....	62
Semi-Structured Interviews.....	64
Focused Discussion Groups .....	68
4.3 Interpreting Everyday Narrative .....	73
<b>Chapter 5 Relations to the Non-Muslim Community .....</b>	<b>76</b>
5.1 Media Misrepresentation.....	76
5.1.1 Stereotyping, Misunderstanding and Discrimination .....	76
5.1.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self .....	83
5.1.3 The Need for Understanding, Representation and Participation.....	86
5.2 Discrimination .....	89
5.2.1 Structural Exclusion and Everyday Discrimination.....	90
5.2.2 Transitional Phenomena as Common-Ground .....	103
5.2.3 Affect on Relation-to-Self .....	106
5.3 Limitations of Rights of Residence.....	109
5.3.1 The Uncertainty of Denizenship Status .....	109
5.3.2 Civic Stratification and Familial Disruptions .....	111
5.4 Limiting Access to Opportunities.....	113
5.4.1 Education and Freedom of Movement.....	113
5.4.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self .....	117
5.4.3 The Need for Civic Participation and Contribution .....	121
5.5 Perceptions of Identity .....	124
5.5.1 The Supersession of Sameness by Difference.....	124
5.5.2 Being “Different Irish” .....	129
5.5.3 Transnational Identities and the Problematic Perception of Others .....	132
<b>Chapter 6 Relations to Spiritual Recognition .....</b>	<b>137</b>
6.1 Religious Support .....	139
6.1.1 A Comfort and Coping Mechanism.....	140
6.1.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self .....	145
6.2 Religious Solidarity .....	147
6.2.1 The Regulative Function of the Religious Collective .....	147
6.2.2 Friendship and the Youth’s Search for Common-Ground.....	149

6.3 Islam’s Civic Component .....	153
6.3.1 Interpreting Civicness from Islam .....	153
6.3.2 The Civic Example of Prophet Muhammad .....	159
<b>Chapter 7 Intergenerational Relations .....</b>	<b>164</b>
7.1 Parent/Elder Perspective.....	164
7.1.1 Constituting the Next Generation .....	165
7.1.2 Protecting the Youth from “Negative” Cultural Influence .....	168
7.2 Children/Youth Perspective.....	174
7.2.1 Critiquing Rigid Inflexibility.....	174
7.2.2 Critiquing Patriarchy.....	178
7.2.3 Pressure to be a “good Muslim”.....	182
<b>Chapter 8 The Youth’s Search for “Authentic” Islam .....</b>	<b>189</b>
8.1 Differentiating Between Islam and Culture .....	190
8.2 Debating Everyday Dilemmas.....	195
8.2.1 Handshaking.....	195
8.2.2 Travelling with a Mahram.....	200
8.3 Filtering “Negative” Culture and Searching for “Authentic” Islam .....	202
<b>Chapter 9 Discussion .....</b>	<b>212</b>
9.1 Challenging Communitarian and Security Paradigms .....	212
9.2 Recognition and Power .....	215
9.2.1 Domineering Power.....	216
Public Discrimination.....	216
Patriarchy .....	219
Exclusionary Civic Stratification .....	221
9.2.2 Constitutive Power .....	225
Shaping the “good citizen” .....	225
Shaping the “good Muslim” .....	226
9.2.3 Resistive Power .....	230
Resisting familial and community norms.....	231
Resisting societal norms .....	235

9.3 Resolving Recognitive-Power Dilemmas.....	239
<b>Chapter 10 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>242</b>
10.1 The Research Findings.....	242
10.2 Contribution to the Literature.....	246
10.3 Policy Implications.....	247
10.4 Recommendations for Future Research.....	248
Bibliography.....	252

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Muslim Population in Ireland 1991-2011 .....	11
Table 2.2: Descriptive Statistics for Muslim Population in Ireland, 2011 .....	11
Table 2.3: Dublin Muslim Population per Council Area 2011.....	15
Table 2.4: Descriptive Statistics for Muslim Population in Dublin, 2011 .....	16
Table 3.1: The Structure of Relations of Recognition.....	35
Table 4.1: Screening Attributes .....	62
Table 4.2: Pilot Interviews by Sex, Generation and Citizenship Status .....	62
Table 4.3: Interview Guide .....	65
Table 4.4: Semi-Structured Interviews per Month .....	66
Table 4.5: Formal Interviews by Recording Time .....	67
Table 4.6: Formal Interviews by Sex, Generation and Citizenship Status .....	67
Table 4.7: Pseudonyms of SSI Research Participants .....	67
Table 4.8: Discussion Group Attributes .....	70
Table 4.9: Conversation Guide .....	71
Table 4.10: Finalised Focused Discussion Groups.....	72
Table 4.11: Pseudonyms of FDG Research Participants.....	72

## List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Positioning Recognition around Habermas' Communicative Action.....	34
Figure 4.1: A Sequential Qualitative Methodological Approach.....	61

## List of acronyms

Cit	Citizen
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCC	Dublin City Council
DCU	Dublin City University
Den	Denizen
DIS	Dublin Islamic Society
ECPR	European Consortium for Political Research
EMO	Emotional Hardcore
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUI	European University Institute
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
F	Female
FDG	Focused Discussion Group
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIP	Information Group on Prisons
ICCI	Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland
IFI	Islamic Foundation of Ireland
IfS	Institute for Social Research, Frankfurt-am-Main
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRCHSS	Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences
JMMA	Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs
M	Male
NUIM	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
OSI/OSF	Open Society Institute/Foundation
PI	Pilot Interview
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him (Muhammad)
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland
QUAL	Qualitative
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RTE	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SARI	Sport Against Racism Ireland
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
SfR	The Struggle for Recognition
TD	Member of Dáil Éireann, the Lower House of Parliament
TV	Television
TG4	Teilifís na Gaeilge
UCD	University College Dublin
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
1 <sup>st</sup> Gen	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation
2 <sup>nd</sup> Gen	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation

# Resolving Recognitive-Power Dilemmas: The Everyday Experience of Sunni Muslim Individuals in Dublin, Ireland

Des Delaney

## Abstract

In recent years, due to the increased visibility of immigrants and the rise of Islamic terrorism, there has been a dramatic increase in studies that aim to gain a deeper understanding of Muslim populations in the West. In the European context, such empirical studies invariably focus on core nation-states whilst a dearth of research pertains to peripheral countries, such as the Republic of Ireland. In addition, the Irish literature tends to be scant whilst European studies are overly reliant upon communitarian and security paradigms.

To fill the above research gap, this study aims to demonstrate the complexity of recognition relations by examining how Sunni Muslim individuals living in Dublin perceive how they are recognised within various spheres of everyday interaction i.e., within the spheres of love, legal respect and social esteem and how such perceptions of recognition provide a deeper insight into identity formation and maintenance. To conduct such a study, Axel Honneth's social critical theory of recognition has been utilised to frame a range of grassroot interviews and focused discussion groups. Such a grounded qualitative study, with emancipatory intent, challenges the communitarian assumption that minority groups simply seek to have their "particular" culture and associated beliefs endorsed by a majority and the security paradigm that narrowly views Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism.

In terms of research findings, this study highlights the fact that forms of disrespect and misrecognition permeate multiple social spheres to varying degrees with the vast majority of criticisms directed towards the wider societal sphere of interaction. The participant narratives, particularly the use of small stories, verify that misrecognition negatively affects an individual's relation-to-self leading to a struggle to regain positive forms of recognition, relation-to-self and perceived self-worth.

The study also gains a deep understanding of the complex intertwinement between recognition, power and integration processes. Individuals (and groups) strive to gain recognition from others yet must negotiate the powers that reside within each sphere of interaction. Such powers legitimate and regulate social norms and "normalised" identity standards. This complex interlacing creates a variety of *recognitive-power dilemmas* that must be resolved by individuals-in-context. In terms of top-down power, the empirical information illustrates how domineering social pathologies exist extensively in terms of public discrimination, patriarchy and exclusionary civic stratification whilst the nation-state's constitutive power shapes the 'good citizen' within the legal arena and traditional authority figures shape the 'good Muslim' within the familial and community spheres.

A substantial additional finding is that individual and collective resistive power is identified in the process by which 2<sup>nd</sup> generation youth are resisting traditional authorities and redirecting their legitimating recognition towards counter-authorities that facilitate greater social flexibility. Such agentic bottom-up power aids an identity transformation in which Muslim youth are returning to a “purified” form of Islam and filtering-out “negative” ethno-cultural traditions in order to gain positive recognition from multiple social spheres of interaction e.g., to strengthen their recognition to God, to enhance and create a common-ground to their Islamic family, friends and community and also to extract deeply-embedded civic principles, from an interpretation of the Islamic sources, in order to gain recognition as active Muslim citizens, who can positively participate within and contribute to society.

Such an identity movement helps Sunni Muslim individuals avoid total assimilation and isolation by enabling the creation of a balanced integration strategy – referred to as *integration without dilution*. This alternative form of integration helps Muslims interact and participate within the Irish-European context but with the added benefit of being able to maintain and strengthen an Islamic identity. It does so by placing more emphasis on an *Islamic-civic identity* rather than accentuating interconnections between a religious identity and ethno-cultural and/or nationalistic affinities.

Generally the above findings illustrate how recognition, power and identity intersect within everyday life and also verify that humans are not static entities but remain dynamic – fluid beings – in constant forms of transformation due to the interactive context of everyday life. Such insights are pivotal in proving that although such an identity shift may be construed as “natural” – when viewed through a recognitive lens – it becomes apparent that such transformations are an identity construction, which aim to resolve *recognitive-power dilemmas* that occur within the immanent context of everyday life.



Inherent in our everyday language is a sense that human integration owes its existence, at a deep level, to the patterns of approval and recognition that we have been attempting to distinguish. For up to the present day, in the self-descriptions of those who see themselves as having been wrongly treated by others, the moral categories that play a dominant role are those – such as ‘insult’ or ‘humiliation’ – that refer to forms of disrespect, that is, to the denial of recognition. Negative concepts of this kind are used to designate behaviour that represents an injustice not simply because it harms subjects or restricts their freedom to act, but because it injures them with regard to the positive understanding of themselves that they have acquired intersubjectively.

Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*

### 1.1 The Research Agenda

In recent years, due to the increased visibility of immigrants and the rise of Islamic terrorism, there has been a dramatic increase in studies that aim to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of Muslim populations living in the West. In the European context, such studies invariably focus on either terrorism, security and/or issues relating to multiculturalism within core nation-states such as the United Kingdom (UK), France and Germany, who have large immigrant populations, whilst a dearth of research pertains to the everyday experiences of individuals, who belong to the grassroots of various Muslim communities residing within peripheral European countries such as the Republic of Ireland (ROI).<sup>1</sup> The above is exacerbated by the fact that much of the existing Irish literature tends to be overly descriptive and lacking in theoretical, methodological and empirical sophistication. This results in a loss of a more nuanced understanding about the Muslim experience in Ireland. To remedy the above situation, innovative studies are needed to expand our knowledge about how the Muslim

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<sup>1</sup> See Delaney, D. Perceptions of Mis/Recognition: The Experience of Sunni Muslim Individuals in Dublin, Ireland. Chapter 7 *IN*: Martikainen, T., Mapril, J. and Khan, A.H. (eds). 2015. *Muslims at the Margins of Europe: Finland, Greece, Ireland and Portugal*. Leiden: Brill. Throughout the rest of the thesis, the term “Ireland” refers only to the Republic of Ireland. It is also important to clarify that *italics* will be used to emphasise or highlight words of importance. Also double inverted commas (“ ”) will be used for voicings within quotations whilst the same commas outside quotations refer to phrases that are relative to individual perceptions of experience such as “being”; “to be”; “who one is”; “a good life” etc.

“Other”<sup>2</sup> is recognised within the bounded and particular context of the Irish nation-state.

A gap-in-knowledge has been identified and this study aims to challenge it by critiquing two academic paradigms. By utilising Axel Honneth’s theoretical frame, this thesis challenges the Taylorian multiculturalist communitarian view, which assumes that minority groups simply seek to have their culture and beliefs endorsed by the majority community. Furthermore, through the use of an emancipatory perspective, the study makes concerted efforts to give a more rounded account of the experience of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin and openly challenges the dominant paradigm that narrowly views such people through the lens of political extremism. With the above in mind, the research agenda and challenge to be explored is as follows:

To demonstrate the *complexity* of recognition relations in regards to the experience of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin Ireland, with particular focus on three distinct spheres of interaction:

- Relations to the non-Muslim community in regards to interaction as citizens within the legal sphere and as particular individuals within the wider social sphere.
- Relations to an abstract spiritual deity.
- Relations between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations’ within the Sunni Muslim community with particular attention being paid to familial and community interaction.

## 1.2 Exploring the Research Challenge

It can be questioned as to why anyone should care about the outlined research agenda that aims to critically challenge the multicultural and security paradigms? The question is valid and can be answered affirmatively by stating that such knowledge is important for all individuals within Irish society in that it will create more understanding about the

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of being “Othered” or “Othering” has been defined by various academics from many different intellectual traditions. The following is a comprehensive definition, stated by Jensen, who defines “Othering” as ‘discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way, which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate’. See Jensen, S.Q. 2011. Othering, identity formation and agency. *Qualitative Studies* 2(2): pp. 63-78.

experience of a religious and ethnically diverse minority in Ireland. It may develop a better insight into integration processes that emerge from below and also generate a fuller appreciation of how recognition and respect matter, especially in foreseeing and limiting the rise of social suffering and conflict. Furthermore, and most importantly, we should care about understanding recognition dynamics as it is an indicator of the degree of democratic freedom and non-domination that enables individuals “to be” themselves within multiple spheres of life as lived in Ireland.

Another question to be asked relates to how the research is to be examined i.e., what theoretical frame, methodological stance and empirical data will be utilised, deployed and interpreted in order to bring the research agenda to fruition? In brief, the research is a qualitative study that is inspired by Axel Honneth’s social critical theory of recognition, particularly its multi-dimensional perspective on social life and critical aim of identifying social pathologies that disrupt individual freedom. In other words, the research sets out to understand how Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin perceive the everyday *recognition order*<sup>3</sup> that they live and intersubjectively interact within. To empirically explore the above aim, the study relies on qualitatively interpreting the ‘moral grammar’ that has been collected sequentially through a range of pilot interviews; semi-structured interviews and focused discussion groups.

### **1.3 Summary of the Findings**

In terms of the main findings, this qualitative study utilising grassroots narratives and framed by Axel Honneth’s multidimensional modes of recognition (love; legal respect and social esteem) demonstrates the complexity of recognition relations by making visible a deeper understanding of the experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin, who utilise the language of recognition to convey their everyday struggles within various social spheres. Such a grounded qualitative study, with emancipatory intent, challenges the communitarian assumption that minority groups simply seek to have their “particular” culture and associated beliefs endorsed by a majority. It also

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<sup>3</sup> The term *recognition order* refers to the respect and esteem “dispositive” that exists within any particular society. As Zurn states, such an order is a ‘reigning set of interpretations of the specific principles that society uses to accord respect and esteem’. Zurn, C.F. 2015. *Axel Honneth: A Critical Theory of the Social*. UK: Polity Press. p. 133.

challenges the security paradigm, spurred on by the “War on Terror”, that too narrowly views Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism.

Alternatively to such perspectives, this study provides a space for the research participants to voice their everyday concerns and experiences of misrecognition within multiple social spheres i.e., within the spheres of love; legal respect and social esteem. The everyday narrative evidence illustrates how intersubjectivity is pivotal for *all* human beings, who strive to be recognised as the “same” – in terms of being fully recognised as legal citizens endowed with “universal” rights and obligations to others – yet also as “different” to others – in terms of having one’s meritocratic underlying abilities and associated achievements recognised as contributing positively to the generalised value-horizon of society. In other words, there is a need to be seen “universally” as human and to be recognised for one’s meritocratic “particularity”.

With this said however, this study highlights the fact that forms of disrespect and misrecognition permeate multiple social spheres to varying degrees. The research participants, particularly through the use of small stories, verify that misrecognition negatively affects an individual’s relation-to-self leading to a struggle to regain recognition and a positive relation-to-self. Such a process can vary and involve violent or non-violent action.

By focusing on negative forms of recognition a range of social pathologies are identified that enable a deeper understanding of how misrecognition and power intertwine. The narratives illustrate how domineering power exists extensively in terms of public discrimination, patriarchy and exclusionary civic stratification whilst constitutive power is identified in terms of the nation-state shaping the ‘good citizen’ within the legal sphere and authority figures shaping the ‘good Muslim’ within the familial and community spheres. Importantly, the study also conclusively shows how forms of individual and collective resistive power agentially contest domineering and constitutive top-down power.

The most compelling sociological finding emanating from this study relates to resistive power, particularly in relation to how Muslim youth utilise individual and collective agency to resist domineering social pathologies and forms of constitutive power, which thereby creates space to enact a new Muslim identity that corresponds positively to various intersubjective social spheres within the Irish-European context. It

has been identified that an identity transformation is in-process within the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin, particularly in relation to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Muslim youth, who are actively attempting to return to a “purer” form of Islamic identity by filtering-out perceived “negative” forms of ethno-cultural tradition that are viewed as distorting the “correct” practise of Islam and spiritual recognition to God. Such an identity transition relates to recognition in that this process is a way to *resolve cognitive-power dilemmas* that manifest within a variety of social contexts. It is a form of resistive power in that young Muslims must agentially resist and struggle against inflexible social norms and static identities within the love and wider societal spheres by bypassing traditional authority figures and redirect their legitimating recognition to a plurality of decentered counter-authorities. Advanced media technology facilitates such resistance and enables young Muslims to contest the inflexible social norms and rigid socialised traditional identities that formulate what it is to be a ‘good citizen’ and a ‘good Muslim’. This new terminology emphasises how individuals strive for positive recognition; yet simultaneously, they must negotiate the authoritative domineering and constitutive powers (plus forms of misrecognition and associated social pathologies) residing within interactive arenas that socially regulate norms and identities to formulate what is considered “normal” and worthy of replication.

By returning to the “real” Islam, such individuals are strengthening their recognition to God; enhancing and creating a common-ground to their Islamic family, friends and community and also extracting deeply-embedded civic principles, from an interpretation of the Islamic sources, that facilitates recognition as active Muslim citizens, who can positively participate within and contribute to Irish society. This identity transformation helps such individuals avoid total assimilation and isolation by enabling the creation of a balanced integration strategy – referred to as *integration without dilution*. This alternative form of integration strategy helps Muslims interact within the Irish-European context but with the benefit of maintaining and strengthening their core foundational Islamic identity. It does so by placing more emphasis on an *Islamic-civic identity* than a religious identity that accentuates interconnections between ethno-cultural or nationalist tendencies. This is a substantial finding as it illustrates how recognition, power and identity intersect within everyday life and verifies that humans are not static entities but remain dynamic – fluid beings – in constant forms of

transformation due to the interactive context of everyday life. Such findings are pivotal in proving that although this identity shift may be perceived as “natural” – when narratively viewed through a recognitive lens – it becomes apparent that such transformations are an identity construction, which aim to resolve everyday social dilemmas.

#### **1.4 Thesis Structure**

The following section concisely outlines the structure of the thesis, which is constituted by ten chapters that, when taken together, fully examine the aim of the research. After this introduction, Chapter 2 gives a descriptive account of the existing literature that examines the Muslim population broadly in Ireland and then specifically within the Dublin region. The limitations of the Irish literature will then be explored and the chapter ends by examining the security and emancipatory paradigms that broadly structure the wider European literature.

Chapter 3 will give an overview of the development of recognition theory, particularly by critiquing Charles Taylor’s multiculturalist communitarian model of recognition and then justifying the selection of Axel Honneth’s structured multidimensional model as an inspirational theoretical frame. Particular attention will be paid to the theory’s tripartite typology that separates social life into three distinct spheres of recognition, constituted by the normative criteria of love, legal respect and social esteem. Lastly, the chapter will elaborate briefly on the various critiques of Honneth’s work and then focus on a continuing concern related to his conception of power. This will be explored and critiqued with reference to Foucault’s more nuanced understanding of power and by McBride’s focus on authority and social norms.

Chapter 4 descriptively outlines the qualitative methodology employed with particular attention being paid to justifying the case study, units of analysis and elaborating on the conduction of the fieldwork – comprising pilot and semi-structured interviews and multiple focused discussion groups. This chapter will also contain a brief section on the interpretation of everyday narratives.

Chapters 5 to 8 are empirical chapters that recount the everyday narrative recognition experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin. Chapter 5 explores narratives related to societal and legal recognition; Chapter 6 explores the comforting

and coping mechanism related to spiritual recognition; whilst Chapter 7 explores intergenerational recognition relations in terms of how the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations' critically perceive and relate to each other. The last empirical chapter – Chapter 8 – explores how Muslim youth have redirected their legitimising recognition to a plurality of online sources, thereby, challenging the Islamic identity and practice espoused by local authority figures. Such resistance produces creative space for Muslim youth to filter “negative” ethno-cultural traditions and to search for an “authentic” form of Islam that complements a European democratic context.

Chapter 9 is a discussion chapter that will use narrative examples to illustrate and synthesise how recognitive relations are embedded and acted out within a complex range of power relations. In this regard, three dynamics of power and their associated positive and negative actions will be examined i.e., power over the actions of others in terms of domineering and constitutive power as well as bottom-up resistive power that works from within forms of top-down power and is inextricably connected to how research participants recognise varying authorities or counter-authorities, who give legitimacy to competing social norms and identities.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings, assessing how this study contributes to the existing literature, determining the research project's influence on local policy, and recommending avenues for future research to pursue, that may have social and political implications at national and international levels.



This chapter will explore the existing literature related to the Muslim community living in Ireland. The first section will give an account of the Muslim population in Ireland, focusing on how it developed historically. The second section will focus in on the case study – the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin – and aim to differentiate it from the Muslim communities residing outside of Ireland’s capital city. The chapter identifies that the existing Irish literature related to Muslims in Ireland is sparse when compared to the extensive output in the UK and mainland Europe. The last section will take a closer look at the literature related to the experience of Muslim communities in Europe and identify the security and emancipatory paradigms that broadly structure this literature. To conclude, the chapter focuses specifically on relevant theoretical and empirical research conducted by Tariq Ramadan and Konrad Pędziwiatr, respectively.

### **2.1 The Muslim Population in Ireland**

Since the 1950s, in similarity to other countries within the European continent, the Republic of Ireland’s population demographic has slowly transformed into a multicultural environment, spurred on by the Celtic Tiger economic boom of the 1990s and by economic globalisation generally. This process has seen Ireland move away from being an extremely homogenous Caucasian society, dominated by a conservative Catholic ethos, to one of increasing population heterogeneity in race, religion and culture. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a portion of the new entrees into the Irish community were of the Muslim faith and of a variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds that differed from Irish cultural norms. Although remaining inconspicuous, to the point of invisibility, over time the Muslim community has increased in size. Examples of this include elite recognition of the Muslim population, the construction of facilities by the new community, and the establishment of social provisions such as Islamic education, provision of halal food within public institutions and demarcation of burial sites.<sup>4</sup> Today

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<sup>4</sup> Ireland’s integration policy at local and national is firmly based around interculturalism and inter-religious interaction. For an official account of this policy, see Office of the Minister of Integration. 2008. *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management*. Dublin: Stationery Office. For an in-depth academic report that specifically

in modern Ireland, the visibility of different people signifies a new transformed society that runs parallel to the globalising tendencies, which are manifest throughout the rest of Europe and the world. This study aims to explore such processes through the individual perceptions of the lived experience emanating from the grassroots of a minority religious group that finds itself at the apex of cultural fluctuations. Academics interested and cognisant of such social and economic change, such as Kuhling and Keohane, have reclassified the Irish nation as, ‘Cosmopolitan Ireland’.<sup>5</sup> Although critical of Ireland’s transformation in terms of the continuing persistence of economic inequality and the ‘short-sightedness of Irish immigration policy’, they recognise that since the 1990s the Irish Republic has experienced:

Major social and cultural changes, which in some ways has secularised, liberalised and cosmopolitanised Ireland: emigration was reversed, which facilitated a ‘new multiculturalism’; divorce and homosexuality were legalised; the shift from the rural to urban patterns of living accelerated. Most significantly, Ireland was effectively transformed from a premodern, peasant rural community to a postmodern, high-technology urbanised society. The period coincided with the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, culminating in the Belfast Agreement in 1998, the decommissioning of IRA weapons in 2005, and the emergence (albeit fragile) of a post-nationalistic political discourse.<sup>6</sup>

The following two tables – Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 – provide population data that illustrates the growth of the Muslim population in Ireland over the last twenty years and also presents descriptive statistics from the most recent Irish census conducted in 2011.

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tackles the Irish hijab debate, see Honohan, I., and Rougier, N. 2012. *Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Ireland: Concepts and Practices*. Work Package 5 of the Accept Pluralism Research Project. Florence: European University Institute (EUI). Importantly, this report states that ‘there has been limited research on Muslims in Ireland and few surveys on the perceptions of Muslims in Ireland’. p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Kuhling, C. & Keohane, K. 2007. *Cosmopolitan Ireland: Globalisation and Quality of Life*. London: Pluto Press. For an analysis of historical transformations in Ireland during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, see Ferriter, D. 2005. *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*. London: Profile Books. For an overview of contemporary Ireland as a “changing society”, see O’Malley, E. 2011. *Contemporary Ireland*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

**Table 2.1:** Muslim Population in Ireland 1991-2011<sup>7</sup>

Year	1991	2002	2006	2011
Population	3, 875	19, 147	32, 539	49, 204
Percent	0.1%	0.49%	0.78%	1.1%

**Table 2.2:** Descriptive Statistics for Muslim Population in Ireland, 2011<sup>8</sup>

Age Range		Population	
0-14		16, 584	
15-34		18, 804	
35-85+		13, 816	
Total		49, 204	
Irish	18, 223	Male	28, 127
Non-Irish	29, 143	Female	21, 077

It must be acknowledged that the Muslim population in Ireland is extremely heterogeneous, composed of over fifty different nationalities and incorporating regional links to Europe, (South)Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> The Sunni sect of Islam is by far the most populous group, whilst a few thousand Shia and a growing Sufi population are also present.<sup>10</sup> In parallel with other European countries, immigration to Ireland was initiated due to economic and professional necessity. The first migrants to Ireland were medical students, practicing doctors, aircraft mechanics and businessmen. However, it must be borne in mind that discriminatory practices within the South African apartheid regime acted as a catalyst for South Africans' of Pakistani origin to immigrate to Ireland in the 1950s in search of better social and economic opportunities. Today, many Muslims are well-represented in occupations within the health, sales and personal/child care services.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Central Statistics Office (CSO). 2011. Profile 7: Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers. *Census*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> CSO. 2006. Volume 13 – Religion. *Census*. Dublin: Stationery Office. A dataset combining national and religious attributes is available from the author upon request.

<sup>10</sup> Sakaranaho, T. 2006. *Religious freedom, multiculturalism, Islam: Cross-reading Finland and Ireland*. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>11</sup> CSO. 2006. *Op. cit.*

Historically, Ireland's Muslim community traces its origins back to the late 1950s, when a small group of South African students attending the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSI), established an Islamic committee, known as the 'Dublin Islamic Society' (DIS), to organise religious needs for the Muslim holidays and weekly prayers on Fridays. After many years of national and international fundraising,<sup>12</sup> the DIS changed its name to the 'Islamic Foundation of Ireland' (IFI) and established the first Islamic centre on the southside of the city known as the Dublin City Mosque.<sup>13</sup> However, the Muslim community remained a small *invisible* community in Ireland until the early 1990s, when the country's economic fortunes began to change:

The Irish economy grew by an average 6.8 per cent per annum, peaking at 11.1 per cent in 1999. Unemployment fell from 18 per cent in the late 1980s to 4.2 per cent in 2005, and the Irish Debt/GDP ratio fell from 92 per cent in 1993 to 38 per cent in 1999. This rapid economic growth meant that labour market demand began to exceed what the Irish labour market could supply, which encouraged the Irish government actively to seek to encourage migrant workers to relocate to Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

As the Irish economy transformed throughout the 1990s, the Muslim population increased dramatically due to an influx of political refugees, particularly from Bosnia, Somalia and Albania, who were fleeing their war-torn countries. By the end of the decade, there was a substantial increase in asylum seeker applications from individuals emanating from Africa and the Middle East.<sup>15</sup> This increase brought with it practical and logistical issues relating to physical and religious space i.e., the limits of space within existing mosques and the lack of Islamic education and corresponding facilities. In November 1996, the second purpose-built mosque in Ireland,<sup>16</sup> the Islamic Cultural

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<sup>12</sup> As well as personal donations, international donations were received from the Qatari and Kuwaiti authorities.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed history of the development of the Muslim community in Ireland, see Flynn, K. 2006. Understanding Islam in Ireland. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. 17(2), pp. 223-238.

<sup>14</sup> Crowley, U., Gilmartin., M & Kitchin., R. 2006. *Vote Yes for Commonsense Citizenship: Paradoxes at the Heart of Ireland's "C ad Mile F ailte"*. Maynooth: National University of Ireland (NUIM). p. 12. *IN: Kuhling, C. & Keohane, K. 2007. Op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> After 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, refugees from these war-torn countries began to seek asylum in Ireland.

<sup>16</sup> In 1987, the Ballyhaunis mosque became the first purpose-built mosque in the Republic of Ireland. The mosque was built by businessman Mohammed Sher Rafique and catered for the Muslim population living and working within the County Mayo town.

Centre of Ireland (ICCI) was officially opened. This large purpose-built mosque, located in the middle-class Dublin suburb of Clonskeagh, was initially administered by the IFI but was then subsequently managed by the al-Maktoum Foundation, which is closely linked to and receives funding from authorities in the United Arab Emirates.

Since the 1990s, advances have been made in opening and increasing the space available for the Muslim community not only in Dublin but throughout the island of Ireland. At present, there are four large mosques.<sup>17</sup> Three of the larger mosque complexes and many of the smaller prayer halls are located in Dublin whilst the first purpose-built mosque – the Ballyhaunis mosque – and at least sixteen small prayer halls are located in major towns and cities throughout the country.<sup>18</sup>

Outside of Dublin, Muslim communities have developed in towns that contain regional economic resources and associated opportunities. For example, Cavan town has a Muslim population, who benefit from close proximity to a hospital that provides medical services for the wider provincial area. Also in County Kerry, the small town of Tralee has a significant Muslim population, who avail of the important tourist industry in which the sales and services thrive. A local newspaper published an article on the Muslim population increase in the town by stating that ‘in the county capital [Tralee], Islam has overtaken Protestantism to become the second most practised religion in the town’.<sup>19</sup>

## **2.2 The Muslim Population in Dublin**

Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Dublin has a rapidly growing and permanent Muslim community, which is composed of multiple and identifiable generations – the 1<sup>st</sup> generation being immigrants that settled in Ireland and their offspring – the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation – being those who were born or primarily raised in Ireland.

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<sup>17</sup> Ballyhaunis Mosque; Dublin City Mosque (IFI); Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre (Shia Hussainia); and the Clonskeagh (ICCI) mosque complex. Recently, planning permission has been granted to construct Ireland’s largest mosque to date in Clongriffin Dublin 13, which will cater for Muslims that live on the northside of the city and its surrounding hinterland. This €40 million development will construct a three-storey domed mosque that can cater to up to three thousand visitors during the Eid festival.

<sup>18</sup> See Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI). 2015. *Mosques and Prayers Rooms*. Dublin: IFI. Available at <http://islaminireland.com/services/mosques-and-prayer-rooms>.

<sup>19</sup> See ‘Muslim Population in Kerry Doubles in Four Years’. 2007. *The Kerryman*. December 5<sup>th</sup>. Available at [www.kerryman.ie](http://www.kerryman.ie)

It must be acknowledged that there are significant differences between the lives and experiences of the various Muslim populations inside the metropolitan area of Dublin and of those outside the capital city. These fundamental differences can be broken down into three distinct elements to consider: (1) the demographic and geographic spread, (2) the differences in levels of institutional completeness, and (3) the differences in economic and social power concentration.

Firstly, in terms of Muslim demographic spread within Ireland, the census figures of 2011 indicate a balance in the populations resident in the Dublin region – which has a population of 25, 471 – and the rest of Ireland – which has a population of 23, 733.<sup>20</sup> Although the numbers balance on paper, it must be acknowledged that the Muslim population residing outside of the Dublin area is geographically spread throughout a variety of city and town locations. In other words, there are significant differences between Dublin and the rest of the country in terms of the geographic spread and concentration of their respective Muslim populations.

Secondly, the institutional completeness of the Muslim community is strong primarily within the Dublin region and very much weaker outside of the metropolitan area. For example, on the one hand, the capital city contains the three largest mosques and affiliated organisations; the main Muslim educational facilities in the country;<sup>21</sup> plus the majority of the economic resources, as well as close access to pre-existing social and political opportunity structures that have historically resided within the Irish capital. On the other hand, the small Muslim communities outside of Dublin are institutionally incomplete and lack access to religious, social and educational facilities such as those found in Dublin.<sup>22</sup>

Lastly, the institutional superiority of the Dublin Muslim community (particularly the large Sunni population) ensures that the economic and political power-base remains concentrated in the Dublin region. Subsequently, many of the regional

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<sup>20</sup> CSO. 2011. *Op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Sakaranaho, T. 2006. *Op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Delaney, D. and Cavatorta, F. The Exclusion of Denizens within the Irish Social and Political Opportunity Structure: The Cosmopolitan Case of Muslims in the Republic of Ireland. Chapter 8. pp. 123-153 *IN*: Sinclair, K. and Egholm-Feldt, J. (eds.). 2011. *Lived Space: Reconsidering Transnationalism among Muslim Minorities*. Hamburg: Peter Lang.

Muslim communities are dependent and reliant upon the Dublin-based Muslim mosque organisations for religious, political and economic support.<sup>23</sup>

Overall, it can be stated therefore that the Dublin Muslim community has far more social and political opportunities for recognition than their fellow Muslims spread throughout the rest of Ireland. In terms of the research, such opportunities lead us to infer that the *recognition order* in Dublin is more diverse, complex and intersubjective due to the concentration of people, institutions and power within a bounded metropolitan space. Such concentrated structures and opportunities imply that the grassroots of the Muslim community in Dublin have greater access to necessary resources to participate fully in political and social life.

The three elements above have implications for the research in that it is possible to infer that there are a variety of Muslim communities embedded within the city environment and that these communities, by necessity, must intersubjectively interact with themselves and with external others within a defined and bounded metropolitan area. Furthermore, it also becomes possible to infer that the recognition order within a city – particularly a large capital city – is different to rural locations by being more socially dynamic in terms of having a higher population concentration; more institutional completeness and higher concentrations of economic and social power. The following two tables – Table 2.3 and Table 2.4 – provide recent population data for each local authority area in Dublin and also present descriptive statistics from the most recent Irish census.

**Table 2.3:** Dublin Muslim Population per Council Area 2011<sup>24</sup>

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Dublin City</b>	<b>Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown</b>	<b>Fingal</b>	<b>South Dublin</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Population</b>	8, 979	2, 753	6, 938	6, 801	25, 471

<sup>23</sup> For example, see ‘Why Cork’s Muslim Community wants a Mosque’. 1998. *Irish Times*. February 24<sup>th</sup>. Available at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com).

<sup>24</sup> CSO. 2011. *Op. cit.*

**Table 2.4:** Descriptive Statistics for Muslim Population in Dublin, 2011<sup>25</sup>

Age Range		Population	
0-14		8, 182	
15-34		10, 291	
35-85+		6, 998	
Total		25, 471	
Dublin	25, 471	Male	14, 423
Non-Dublin	23, 733	Female	11, 048

### 2.3 Limitations of the Irish Literature

In contrast to the focus on Muslims populations in other core European countries, academic literature on the Muslim community in Ireland is limited. A common reason for this has been the suggestion that such a minority community is too small to facilitate new insights into the Muslim European experience. Hence, the Irish literature is scant. The literature that does exist tends to be overly descriptive by focusing broadly on various immigration issues<sup>26</sup> or on regional links to the Muslim world.<sup>27</sup> The work that does specifically focus on Muslim communities in Ireland tends to lack theoretical framing. For example, the theme of recognition can be identified in much of the literature yet it is never explicitly explored. Much of the work in the JMMA special edition,<sup>28</sup> implicitly explores issues relating to public (legal and societal) misrecognition of Muslims in Ireland yet the issue of intimate familial and internal community forms of recognition are largely ignored.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, much of the work is either, on the one hand, broadly descriptive, or on the other hand, too one-dimensional. A key example is

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> See Fanning, B. 2007 and 2011. See also Messina, A. 2009. The Politics of Migration to Western Europe: Ireland in Comparative Perspective. *West European Politics*. 32(1), pp. 1-25.

<sup>27</sup> Miller, R. 2004a. The Politics of Trade and Diplomacy: Ireland's Evolving Relationship with the Muslim Middle East. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*. 15, pp. 123-145. See also Miller, R. 2004b. The Politics of Trade and Diplomacy: Ireland's Evolving Relationship and Future Prospects. *Eire-Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies*. 47(2).

<sup>28</sup> *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs (JMMA)*. UK: Routledge.

<sup>29</sup> Hogan, C. 2011. Accommodating Islam in the Denominational Irish Education System: Religious Freedom and Education in the Republic of Ireland. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. 31(4), pp. 554-573. Richardson, E. 2011. Islamic Finance for Consumers in Ireland: A Comparative Study of the Position of Retail-level Islamic Finance in Ireland. *JMMA*. 31(4), pp. 534-553. In terms of challenges for and within the Irish educational system, see Selim, A. 2014. *Islam and Education in Ireland*. Dublin: Ali Shehata Abdou Selim.

James Carr's work on Islamophobia. Whilst shedding light on the important issue of discrimination, this study is one-dimensional in its focus by not exploring various social pathologies that exist within other recognitive spheres of everyday life.<sup>30</sup> Moreover empirically, the literature tends to focus on descriptions of Islamic organizations<sup>31</sup> and elite perspectives,<sup>32</sup> thus, there is no bottom-up approach to exploring *lived Islam* through the narratives of the grassroots.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.4 Diverging Paradigms in the European Literature

In the 1950s, after the catastrophe of World War II that devastated much of Europe, many European countries replenished their stocks of working individuals by facilitating mass emigration from former colonies. Britain looked towards its former colonies of India, Pakistan and the West Indies; France enticed allied war veterans from Algeria and West Germany introduced a guest worker (*gastarbeiter*) program to ensure a steady flow of temporary Turkish workers into its refurbished industrial economy. The vast majority of transnational migrants, who entered Europe during this time originated from postcolonial territories comprising large Muslim populations. For the first time, in European history, large numbers of Muslim immigrants were accepted into Europe for the purpose of labour. Whilst short-term labour quotas were filled by immigrant workers, such international migration policies brought Europe slowly into a new period of societal development and instigated a necessary period of social transformation.

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<sup>30</sup> Carr, J. 2010. Measuring Islamophobia. *Socheolas: Limerick Student Journal of Sociology*. 2(2). pp. 39-57. To understand the need to recognise the reality of Islamophobia, see Allen, C. 2010. *Islamophobia*. UK: Ashgate Publishing. Carr also, without substantial evidence, categorises the governing apparatus of the Irish state as racist plus he conflates racism and Islamophobia into a single term - Anti-Muslim racism. See Carr, J. 2014. *Experiences of Anti-Muslim Racism*. Ireland: IRCHSS and the Hate & Hostility Research Group.

<sup>31</sup> Scharbrodt, O. and Sakaranaho, T. 2011. Islam and Muslims in the Republic of Ireland. *JMMA*. 31(4), pp. 469-485. See also Scharbrodt, O. Islam in Ireland: Organising a Migrant Religion. Chapter 17. *IN: Cosgrove, O., Cox, L., Kuhling, C., and Mulholland, P. (eds.). 2011. Ireland's New Religious Movements*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

<sup>32</sup> Sakaranaho, T. 2006. *Op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> For an advocacy of the need to explore *lived Islam* in Ireland, see Khan, A.H. 2011. Transnational Influences on Irish Muslim Networks: From Local to Global Perspectives. *JMMA*. 31(4), pp. 486-502. For an interesting analysis on *lived Islam* within the German and Danish contexts, see Jeldtoft, N. 2011. Lived Islam: religious identity with 'non-organized' Muslim minorities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(7): pp. 1134-1151.

Whilst positive about the growth of transnational societies, Castles and Miller argue that such transformations have brought significant challenges to the European polity.<sup>34</sup> For example, at the macro-level, such change challenges the myth of nationalism and national identity,<sup>35</sup> whilst at a micro-level, transnationalist practices challenge and transform pre-existing homogenous culture.<sup>36</sup> These problems were compounded by the fact that many European nation-states viewed their immigrant populations as temporary economic workers, who would eventually return to their homecountries.<sup>37</sup>

It was not until the middle to late 1970s that a small group of sociologists began to take an interest in the everyday experiences of Muslim populations resident in the European sphere. A pioneer of this advocacy and participatory research was a sociologist of Pakistani origin – Muhammad Anwar – who dealt specifically with the everyday experiences of the growing number of Pakistani immigrants in the UK. Between the periods 1979 to 2009, Anwar produced key sociological work to highlight the everyday experience and evolution of the UK-Pakistani community from its state-sponsored migratory origins from the hinterland surrounding the Mangla dam in the Mirpur region of Kashmir to the detailing of such migrants gaining access to UK society whether that be in employment, education or within the political system. Anwar exposed the *Myth of Return*, highlighted issues of discrimination and elaborated on how the biraderi-kinship system aided political mobilisation and challenged far-right extremists. In his later work, he acknowledged the growing role of Islamic identity, particularly after the Rushdie affair.<sup>38</sup> Whilst highlighting the pathological issues facing ethno-Muslim communities in the UK, Anwar also stressed that the plight of Muslims in mainland Europe was – in all likelihood – worse considering that a considerable number these people lacked legal recognition as citizens:

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<sup>34</sup> Castles, S and Miller, M.J. 2009. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan. pp. 1-3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> Layton-Henry identified how European nation-states' viewed migrants primarily from an economic perspective and limited the recognition of their social and political needs. One of the prime challenges made explicit by Layton-Henry is the differentiation of local and national political rights between citizens and non-citizens, who reside in the European polity. Layton-Henry, Z. (ed.). 1990. *The Political Rights of Migrant Workers in Western Europe*. UK: Sage.

<sup>38</sup> Anwar, M. 1979; 1985; 1994; 1998; 2009.

Many Muslims face multiple discriminations as they belong to ethnic groups as well as to a religious group. Second, if British Muslims as British citizens face all the issues outlined above, then what is the situation of Muslims in the rest of Western Europe where a vast majority of them are not yet citizens of their home countries of residence. All the available evidence shows that their legal and socio-economic situation is generally worse compared to British Muslims. The recent debate about wearing the headscarf by Muslim girls in French state schools is a good example in this context.<sup>39</sup>

With the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1988 and the return of trained Muslim jihadists (mujahideen) to their countries of origin, Western academia, particularly in the field of International Relations (IR), refocused its attention on the rise of Islamic militant fundamentalism and its version of political Islam. The impact of the Persian Gulf War in 1990 and the Bosnian war in 1992, had the affect of concentrating attention on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Key texts published in this period include John L. Esposito's account of the characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism and its associated myths<sup>40</sup> and the positivist meta-theory of Samuel Huntington, which proposes that the ideological contrasts between socialism and capitalism have come to an end with the conclusion of the Cold War and now humanity has entered the ultimate *Clash of Civilisations* between Christian-West and the Islamic-East. Essentially, this theory suggests that 'in the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among people are not ideological, political and economic... [but] cultural'.<sup>41</sup> Huntington places significant emphasis on the religio-cultural clash between the predominantly Muslim people of the East and the predominantly Christian people of the West. It is suggested that where these two groups live beside each other – in geopolitical space – at the borders of the West and East, conflict has often occurred or is expected to continue to occur more frequently in the coming future. A good example of a civilisational fault-line in flux would be the Balkan region and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Huntington identifies the growth and revival of Islam, especially among the youth by stating that 'Muslims in massive numbers... [are] turning toward Islam as a source of

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>40</sup> Esposito, J.L. 1992. *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>41</sup> Huntington, S. 1996. *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster. p. 21. Furthermore, for the positivist argument that humankind has reached the pinnacle of political evolution within a liberal-democratic model, see Fukuyama, F. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.

identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power and hope'.<sup>42</sup> However, he is also highly sceptical and pessimistic about any positive interaction between the two main religio-cultural civilisations, which have strong historical geopolitical demarcations:

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilisation, whose people are convinced of their superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, influenced by Huntington's hypothesis, numerous academic works gave considerable attention to Islamic fundamentalism and the development of political Islam in the Middle East and around the world.<sup>44</sup> After the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, academics heightened their attention and focus on Islamic fundamentalism and political Islam in order to better understand and comprehend existing Islamic terrorist networks. This resulted in a plethora of studies on Islamic terrorism, its associated fundamentalist ideology and in a broad sense, political Islam.<sup>45</sup>

The terrorist attacks upon the United States of America (US) and the associated evidence that some of the hijackers had lived and planned the attack within Europe<sup>46</sup> together with the 2004 Madrid train attacks and 2005 London bombings (the recent 'Charlie Hebdo' attacks in Paris in 2015 can be added to the list) have all prompted European nation-states and academics to focus significant resources and attention on Islamic fundamentalism and political Islam in Europe. This has created a significant problem in that academic accounts have to a large extent been too narrowly concerned with viewing Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism whilst the advocacy and participatory paradigm – developed by Anwar – has had its role and significance reduced.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>44</sup> See for example, Maddy-Weitzmann, B. & Inbar, E. (eds.). 1997. *Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*. London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd; See also Esposito, J.L. 1997; Gerges, F.A. 1999.

<sup>45</sup> See for example, Kepel, G. 2002. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris. See also Gunaratna, R. 2002; Tibi, B. 2002; Fuller, G.E. 2003; Hafez, M. M. 2003; Milton-Edwards, B. 2004; DeLong-Bas, N.J. 2004; Burgat, F. 2008; Varady, D. 2008.

<sup>46</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. 2004. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*. London: W.W. Norton & Company. pp. 145-169.

In a broad sense, European academic literature has tended to follow two distinct trends. The vast majority of the literature follows a positivist *security paradigm*, which explores European security issues and Islamic fundamentalism in the aftermath of the European terrorist attacks.<sup>47</sup> For example, Heinz Gartner and Ian M. Cuthbertson place particular focus on the common intergovernmental European Security Strategy (ESS) which ‘seeks to improve EU coherence in foreign and security policy’ and to prevent further terrorist attacks in Europe.<sup>48</sup> Freidrich Steinhausler, within his chapter contribution on strategic terrorism in the same anthology, stresses the general security concerns that exist within the modern European landscape – a continent that has transformed radically, in demographic terms, through large-scale transnational migration. His risk assessment recommends improvements in intelligence gathering, physical protection of sensitive sites, research and development in technical countermeasures, and a need to educate and communicate more with the European public. This assessment also identifies the whole Muslim population in Europe as a possible security threat or *suspect community*.<sup>49</sup> Alison Pargeter and Rik Coolsaet provide accounts of the continuing rise of Islamic fundamentalism throughout Europe, particularly amongst the younger Muslim generations residing in European states. As Pargeter states:

Traditions and cultural norms imported from the Islamic world are often still applied even within the second and third generation...Isolation and marginalisation within Europe and the individual’s response to Western society are repeatedly cited as the main drivers behind the radicalisation process.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of the second research paradigm, its aim is to develop a holistic understanding of the everyday experience of Muslim populations in Europe. Such an approach belongs

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<sup>47</sup> Gartner, H. & Cuthbertson, I.M. (eds.). 2005. *European Security and Transatlantic Relations after 9/11 and the Iraq War*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan. Pargeter, A. 2008. *The New Frontiers of Jihad: Radical Islam in Europe*. UK: I.B Tauris; Coolsaet, R. (ed.). 2008. *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*. UK: Ashgate Publishing. See also Amghar, S., Boubekeur, A., and Emerson, M. (eds.). 2007; Jones, S.G. 2007.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Steinhausler, F. Strategic Terrorism: Threats and Risk Assessment. *IN*: Gartner, H. & Cuthbertson, I.M. (eds.). 2005. *Op. cit.*, p. 63. To understand the construction of Muslim individuals as *suspect*, see Hickman M.J *et al.* 2011. ‘*Suspect Communities*’? *Counter-Terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain*. London: London Metropolitan University.

<sup>50</sup> Pargeter, A. 2008. *Op. cit.*, p.109 and p. 206.

to the *advocacy and participatory paradigm* and stands in contrast to the neorealist security-orientated agenda. Although, this form of research does analyse sensitive issues such as – radicalisation and integration – overall, the work tends to take an emancipatory position. It aligns with critical social theory by striving to understand the Muslim population in its everyday relationship and interaction to European society. By extracting the negative and positive aspects of this relationship, common themes within the literature arise, such as accounts of the experiences of discrimination and Islamophobia; access to education and the formation of Islamic schools; access to employment and social services provision; and the development of political participation and community representation.

Some of the literature takes a broad perspective. Jack Goody explores the positive historical and present-day influence of past interactions between Eastern Islam and the Western European continent.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, H.A. Hellyer attempts to understand the Muslim experience at a higher European level and defines Muslim populations' in Europe as "Othered". He states that with increasing terrorist attacks, the 'idea of a dangerous Muslim "Other" [has] become ever more entrenched'<sup>52</sup> but that maintaining such a conception also has long-term ramifications for 'the development of European civilisation and, consequently, [for] European identity'.<sup>53</sup> Hellyer is highly critical of the exploitation of the Muslim "Other" for nationalist political gain:

The rise of the extreme right-wing, whether in Holland or in Britain, may use the Muslim communities as scapegoats for various issues, but the issue at the root of their collective obsession is not really the 'Muslim Other'. Rather, just as in many situations where the 'Other' is emphasised, the real issue is the 'us'; a concept of 'Self', perceived as withering and emaciating before European eyes. European identity has been challenged on several fundamental levels in the last fifty years and, as yet, the ambiguity has not been clarified.<sup>54</sup>

Some work is more particular in focus by being state-centric i.e., dedicated to understanding Muslim populations living and residing within a specific European state. This enables academics to explore a resident Muslim populations' relationship to a

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<sup>51</sup> Goody, J. 2004. *Islam in Europe*. UK: Polity Press.

<sup>52</sup> Hellyer, H.A. 2009. *Muslims of Europe: The 'Other' Europeans*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

nation-states corresponding *recognition order*.<sup>55</sup> Extensive priority and focus has been given to the larger *core* European states (or a combination of these) such as France,<sup>56</sup> Great Britain<sup>57</sup> and Germany<sup>58</sup> that historically have much larger Muslim populations within their borders. However, academia is beginning to refocus its attention onto the experience of minority Muslim populations within *peripheral* European nation-states.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, there has also been a growing interest in research focusing on the experiences of Muslims communities within European cities.<sup>60</sup>

With the advent of further civil division and strife in the Middle East and parts of Africa (e.g., in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Sudan), academic focus has begun to take an interest in the correlation between such conflicts and the rise of Islamic radicalisation amongst a small proportion of Muslim youth across Europe, who have or may leave Europe to participate in armed struggles abroad. Certainly, there has been a growing interest in how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Muslim youth in Europe are negotiating identity issues.<sup>61</sup> Whilst this issue may seem to be strongly positioned within the remit of the security paradigm, two studies – by Tariq Ramadan and Konrad Pędziwiatr – have opened up the experience of Muslim youth to the emancipatory paradigm and have also enabled a differing perspective on the issue of youth radicalisation.

Tariq Ramadan's theoretical advocations have opened up new ways to view the future development of the experience of Muslim youth in Europe. He examines how the identity of the younger Muslim generation is transforming its relationship to the Islamic

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<sup>55</sup> Nielsen, J.S. 1999, 2004 and 2013. See also Klausen, J. 2005; Hunter, S.T. (ed.). 2002; Shadid, W.A.R. and Von Koningsveld, P.S. (eds.). 1996a and 1996b.

<sup>56</sup> See Kepel, G. 1997. *Allah in the West: Islamic Movements in America and Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>57</sup> Anwar, M. *Op. cit.*

<sup>58</sup> Fetzer, J.S. and Soper, J.C. 2005. *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>59</sup> See Martikainen, T., Mapril, J. and Khan, A.H. (eds). 2016. *Muslims at the Margins of Europe: Finland, Greece, Ireland and Portugal*. Leiden: Brill. See also Larsson, G. & Sander, A. 2007. *Islam and Muslim in Sweden: Integration or Fragmentation? A Contextual Study*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.

<sup>60</sup> In recent times, academic research has focused on Muslim populations situated within European cities. See Bemelmans, Y., and Freitas, M.J. 2001. *Situation of Islamic Communities in Five European Cities: Examples of Local Initiatives*. Netherlands: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). See also Open Society Institute (OSI). 2009. *Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities*. London: OSI.

<sup>61</sup> See Phalet, K., *et al.* Ways of 'being Muslim'. *IN: Cruil, M., et al.* (eds.). 2012. *The European Second Generation Compared: Does the Integration Context Matter?* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

religion and to citizenship.<sup>62</sup> He advocates that Muslim youth should return to the Islamic sources – the Qur’an and the Sunna – in order to contextualise and interpret Islam to a European environment. He determines that such action will be aided by the concept of *ijtihad* (critical reasoning when the sources are silent) that is gaining more traction amongst various Islamic scholars (ulama), who regulate Islamic jurisprudence (usul al-fiqh).<sup>63</sup> In essence, Ramadan is proclaiming that Islam is not a rigid and immutable system of belief that is entrenched in time but one that can be flexibly interpreted for the European context, without compromising the religion in terms of creating excessive innovation (*bida*). He is highly critical of the “Othering” of Muslims in Europe<sup>64</sup> and the identity struggles between total integration/assimilation and isolation that Muslim youth encounter by living ‘in Europe [yet] out of Europe’.<sup>65</sup> To counter this, he advocates for more participation amongst 2<sup>nd</sup> generation educated Muslim youth, who he determines have the ability to find a *balance* between the interpretation and practise of both a salient Islamic identity and European citizenship; and thereby, develop confidence, respect and esteem as *new citizens* in the European polity by maintaining their religious identities as Muslim and contributively participating in the wider social sphere. As he states on the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation experience within the European context:

The youth are coming back to an Islam which is purified from the accidents of its traditional teaching. For the more educated, it is no more an Islam of Moroccan, Algerian or Pakistani countryside but a return to the basics of Islamic teaching through an immediate contact with the sources, Qur’an and the Sunna. This is a fundamental development for it sets the seal on the break-up between, on the one hand, Islam, and its actualisation in North Africa or Asia and, on the other, the way it should be thought, adapted and lived in the West.<sup>66</sup>

The second study of importance relates to Konrad Pędziwiatr’s sociological cross-comparative study of young educated Muslim elites in London and Brussels.<sup>67</sup> Through

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<sup>62</sup> Ramadan, T. 1999. *To be a European Muslim*. UK: The Islamic Foundation.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>67</sup> Pędziwiatr, K. 2010. *The New Muslim Elites in European Cities: Religion and Active Social Citizenship amongst Young Organized Muslims in Brussels and London*. Germany: VDM Verlag.

in-depth interviews, this research identifies empirical narrative evidence that young educated Muslims in both cities, who are aged between 18 and 36, are fusing their salient Islamic identities with the notion of participatory civicness. Such a process of identity transformation aims to *find a middle-ground* between maintaining a salient Islamic identity and enabling wider societal civic participation. Pędziwiatr identifies the distinct advantage Muslim youth have over their immigrant parents in terms of gaining full citizenship at an early stage; but more importantly, by possessing ‘not only full citizenship rights [but]...a range of forms of tacit knowledge, competences and taken-for-granted assumptions’ that enable them to actively use their citizenship to become active within wider society.<sup>68</sup>

Importantly, these young Muslims ‘by socially engaging’ become key players in the representation of identities to wider society. In fact, he assumes that these active young Muslims have taken on the societal ‘role of the new religious brokers’.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation are developing what Pędziwiatr calls *Muslim civicness*<sup>70</sup> in that they are in the process of defining a new identity – a ‘high Islam’ – that is based around citizenship as well as a strong normative individualised Islamic faith and identity that challenges securitised notions of Muslims as suspect. For Muslim youth, this new conception of identity transforms existing power structures by challenging the social norms that delineate outsiders from the established whilst also challenging ethno-cultural influences that emanate from the ‘low Islam’ of 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrant Muslims.<sup>71</sup> In terms of participation, Pędziwiatr suggests that the process of rediscovering and practicing the Islamic religion, which normally occurs in their teens or as adults in university, ensures that young Muslims obtain a more participatory element to their identity. As he states on the recognition of authority in Islam and civic agency:

by subjecting themselves to [the authority of] Islam they have not only become much more assertive religious subjects, but also societal subjects. In other words, subjecting themselves to the religious authority did not deprive them of agency, but on the contrary, stimulated it positively. Islam, in their case, did not

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 17-20 and pp. 412-417.

<sup>70</sup> Pędziwiatr associates anti-nationalist and geo-political forms of active radical Islamist identity with the term *uncompromising Muslim*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-45.

constitute a barrier for interactions with non-Muslim Belgians and Britons, but the opposite of it: it encouraged and facilitated such interactions...Their practise of Islam enabled them to generate both bonding and bridging social capital [to the wider societal sphere].<sup>72</sup>

To conclude, Pędziwiatr reaffirms the challenges that await the young Muslim population in Europe, who are determined to ‘self-invent’ and develop their civic identities in parallel to their religious identity in order to struggle more efficiently against stigmatising and stereotypical caricatures of Islam and Muslims that are prevalent within West European societies:

The improvement of the situation of the Muslim communities in Europe will depend not only on the effective struggle against at least some of the forms of exclusion and disadvantage faced by the members of these communities, but also on the results of the Muslims’ efforts to reinvent and position themselves as citizens and full members of the European polities. The latter objective is particularly difficult to attain. Before European Muslims achieve this goal they will need to work tirelessly to reconstruct popular images, assumptions and representations of their religion and their communities within wider societies.<sup>73</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 3 – will give an overview of Axel Honneth’s social critical theory of a Struggle for Recognition, which has inspired and framed this study.

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.



The aim of this chapter is to examine the theory that acts as the inspiration and the general frame for this study. The theory is Axel Honneth's social critical theory of recognition. To begin, this chapter will critique the communitarian recognition model, as advocated by Charles Taylor; such an assessment will enable a strong justification for utilising Honneth's structured multi-dimensional typology. Attention will be paid to the theory's advantages, particularly its tripartite structure, which gives a deep understanding of the interconnected forms of mis/recognition, relation-to-self and disrespect that manifest within the spheres of love, legal respect and social esteem. To end, the chapter will elaborate briefly on the varying criticisms of Honneth's philosophical-anthropological work and then pinpoint an ongoing concern about Honneth's conception of power. This will be explored and critiqued with reference to Foucault's nuanced understanding of power and by McBride's focus on authority and social norms.

### 3.1 The Development of Recognition Theory

Recognition has been a concept of importance for academics for hundreds of years going back to Rousseau,<sup>74</sup> Fichte<sup>75</sup> and most productively, by Hegel.<sup>76</sup> In recent years, the concept of recognition has come back to the fore, spurred on by Charles Taylor's 1992 essay *The Politics of Recognition*.<sup>77</sup> Within this work, Taylor re-energises the intersubjective concept of recognition by exploring its ontological and internalised links to identity and how forms of nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm by 'imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being'.<sup>78</sup> Taylor identifies three forms of recognition to do with relations within the private intimate

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<sup>74</sup> Neuhauser, F. 2008. *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>75</sup> See Williams, R.R. 1992. *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*. Albany, US: State University of New York.

<sup>76</sup> See Williams, R.R. 1997. *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*. London: University of California Press.

<sup>77</sup> Taylor, C. 1992. *The Politics of Recognition*. IN: Gutmann, A. (ed.). 1994. *Multiculturalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

sphere and relations within two public spheres that he refers to as the ‘Politics of Universalism and Difference’, respectively.<sup>79</sup> For Taylor, the ‘Politics of Universalism’ relates to citizenship and how *all* people should be the same in terms of having equal rights and obligations to each other as citizens whilst the ‘Politics of Difference’ relates to the human need to be recognised for one’s individual and group uniqueness. Through acquiring such forms of recognition, people gain a close proximity to an authentic self in terms of increasing the potential for self-fulfilment and self-realisation.<sup>80</sup>

Taylor is highly critical of how the procedural liberal notion of the uniform application of individual equal rights negates and becomes ‘inhospitable to difference’.<sup>81</sup> Whilst this model does not seek to abolish cultural difference, he maintains that it is not culturally neutral and lacks respect for the survival of collective cultures of difference. Taylor takes a strong communitarian stance that stresses the need to respect minority cultures within a multicultural environment by enabling these cultures to reasonably ‘defend themselves’, have their worth respected and to survive into the future.<sup>82</sup> In other words, he advocates for a non-procedural liberalism that is committed to equal concern for others but not uniform treatment. Fundamentally for Taylor, all cultures deserve a degree of respect:

The claim is that all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings.<sup>83</sup>

Simon Thompson has been highly critical of Taylor’s form of recognition theory for not being systematically presented as a structured typology.<sup>84</sup> Whilst the theory defines an intimate and two public spheres of dialogic recognition, such dimensions could have been explored further and structured into a viable typology that draws on Hegelian philosophy.<sup>85</sup> By expanding on each sphere in detail, Taylor would have avoided the zero-sum rivalry he enacts between the ‘Politics of Universalism and Difference’, where

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Thompson, S. 2006. *The Political Theory of Recognition: A Critical Introduction*. UK: Polity Press.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

a gain for one sphere is a loss to the other.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Thompson also identifies that Taylor makes a significant error by emphasising the need to respect both universalism and difference yet not distinguishing between respect within the universal sphere and esteem within the sphere of difference.<sup>87</sup>

Taylor's advocacy of multiculturalism has come under significant attack in recent years as nation-states such as the Netherlands and the UK that once advocated strong multicultural positions have turned away from such integration policies that are believed to have failed and created parallel ghettoised communities.<sup>88</sup> Although multiculturalism is still strongly advocated by the main mosques in Ireland, Irish integration policy – at both local and national levels – is firmly based around interculturalism and inter-religious interaction.<sup>89</sup>

With the above in mind, this study turns to the structured typological recognition framework developed by Axel Honneth. Importantly, this study is not a test of the theory but is merely inspired by Honneth's multidimensional and structured perspective, which distinguishes between legal respect and social esteem. It also enables the identification of social pathologies through an exploration of 'moral grammar'. It must be noted that Honneth's theoretical frame is broad by encompassing cultural and economic considerations;<sup>90</sup> however, this study has purposively narrowed its focus to the cultural dimension of recognition and explicitly endorses Honneth's view that struggles for recognition, particularly in the case of ethno-religious cultural minorities, are best understood as struggles for respect and esteem. However, although Honneth has proposed that Taylorian cultural struggles may constitute a 'fourth recognition principle'<sup>91</sup> understood as 'revolving around the 'mutual respect for the cultural

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54-55.

<sup>88</sup> Examples include West, E. 2015. *The Diversity Illusion*. UK: Gibson Square; Malik, K. 2014. *Multiculturalism and its Discontents: Rethinking Diversity after 9/11*. UK: Seagull Books; Barry, B. 2002. *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. US: Harvard University Press.

<sup>89</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>90</sup> For an overview of how Honneth's theory broadly focuses on cultural and economic considerations, see Zurn, C.F. 2015. *Op. cit.* Within this book, Zurn provides a detailed broad overview of Honneth's recognition theory.

<sup>91</sup> Fraser, N. and Honneth, A. 2003. *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. UK: Verso. p. 159

particularities of groups or collectivities’,<sup>92</sup> he added the caveat that such forms of recognition inevitably lay claim to the ‘principle of legal equality’,<sup>93</sup> which pressures the state to eliminate denigrating and humiliating obstacles that ‘unjustifiably disadvantage or have disadvantaged a social group in carrying on its cultural way of life relative to the majority culture’.<sup>94</sup> Importantly, Honneth stresses that individuals or groups cannot meaningfully demand esteem for a particular culture ‘for its own sake’<sup>95</sup> but that certain traits-abilities-achievements,<sup>96</sup> which emanate from within a particular culture can be valued for their contribution to a society’s continually evolving value-horizon. This point is emphasised in the following statement:

Certainly, cultural minorities can nurture hopes or have expectations of being especially valued by the majority for the achievements reflected in the fact of developing a distinct language and value orientation.<sup>97</sup>

Turning to Honneth’s theory of recognition itself, which is a Social Critical Theory that traces its lineage back to the works of Hegel and Marx and is firmly rooted in the heterogeneous and interdisciplinary Frankfurt School tradition,<sup>98</sup> Joel Anderson has assessed the development of this tradition through three successive generations of academics, who have applied and developed a critical theoretical perspective within their work.<sup>99</sup> For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation (Horkheimer and Adorno; Fromm; Lowenthal; and Marcuse) focused on exposing social pathologies such as

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>96</sup> Distinguishing characteristics or surface-level traits can be divided into two sub-groups – genetic and constructed. Naturally-determined genetic traits relate to attributes such as sex, race and ethnicity whilst socially-constructed traits relate to attributes such as gender and religion. Within the thesis from this point on, the word *traits* relates to both genetic and constructed aspects of identity held simultaneously by individuals.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>98</sup> For an analysis of the varied and diverse strands that constitute the paradigm of social critical theory today, see Tyson, L. 1998. *Critical Theory Today*. London: Routledge. For further clarification of the conceptual foundations of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Frankfurt school, see, Rush, F. Conceptual Foundations of early Critical Theory. Chapter 1. *IN*: Rush, F. (ed.). 2004. *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>99</sup> Anderson, J. Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition. *IN*: Petherbridge, D. (ed.). 2011. *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays: With a Reply by Axel Honneth*. UK: Brill.

totalitarianism, alienation and reification<sup>100</sup> whilst the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (Habermas;<sup>101</sup> Schmidt; Apel; and Offe) were primarily concerned with linguistically understanding ‘the possibilities of democratic politics... [and] the task of revealing the distortions of contemporary politics’.<sup>102</sup>

For Anderson, there is a new 3<sup>rd</sup> generation – with Axel Honneth as the figurehead – that specifically focuses on social pathologies of misrecognition. Furthermore, three central themes of importance highlight the direction of this new wave of critical theorists. Firstly, influenced by Hegel, conflicts and struggles for recognition by individuals within social groups are deemed to be the *motor of progress* and elevate history towards higher ethical values and a pluralistic conception of a “good life”. Secondly, such theorists are interested in topics such as integration, cultural identity and nationalism and they have a ‘greater openness to the Other’.<sup>103</sup> Thirdly, unlike past generations, this new generation is normatively interested in subjective and intersubjective experiences.

A major difference between the new wave in comparison to older generations is their relationship to normativity.<sup>104</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> generation suffered from a ‘normative deficit’,<sup>105</sup> which led the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to focus on ‘universalistic principles of morality, justice and truth’.<sup>106</sup> However, in reaction to the position of the previous generation, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation are ‘skeptical about the abstractness and uniformity’<sup>107</sup> of an idealistic approach. Instead, the new generation has given much more attention to individual *lived experiences* of respect and disrespect, which leads directly to an investigation of moral

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

<sup>101</sup> Habermas, J. 1984 [1981]. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and Rationalisation of Society*. Boston; Beacon Press; Habermas, J. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon Press; 1990. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>102</sup> Anderson, J. 2011. *Op. cit.*, p. 35. For an understanding of the history and work of the 1<sup>st</sup> Generation and the rise of and transition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, see Wiggershaus, R. 1994. *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*. UK: Polity Press.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>104</sup> For a good analysis of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Frankfurt school traditions, see Held, D. 1980. *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas*. London: Hutchinson.

<sup>105</sup> Anderson, J. 2011. *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

claims and social struggle.<sup>108</sup> As Zurn has stated, despite such differences all the successive generations are linked together by the Frankfurt school tradition that utilises an ‘interdisciplinary social theory with emancipatory intent’ to diagnose social pathologies that negatively affect individual freedom.<sup>109</sup>

Honneth’s theory focuses on interpretations of embodied experience and aims to explore the existence of a basic need to be recognised that precedes any communicative act. The individual need for recognition results in a communicative transaction, which leads to *recognition*, or the opposite result, *misrecognition*. From this point, the relationship is then defined in positive or negative terms, with the negative aspect having the potential to lead towards a struggle for recognition.<sup>110</sup> Figure 3.1 positions Axel Honneth’s recognition theory in relation to Habermas’ theory of communicative action and provides a good visual illustration of the process:

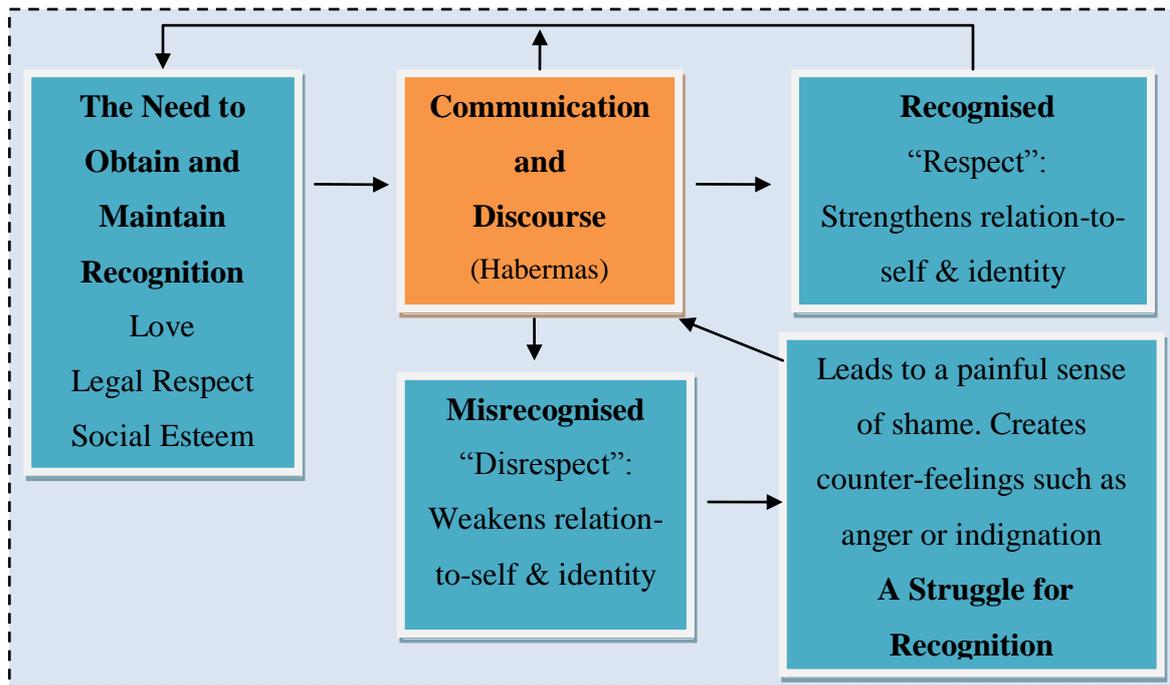
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<sup>108</sup> McNay is highly critical of social theory that is *socially weightless* by being non-applicable to embodied experience and everyday life. In her viewpoint, ‘a focus on negative social experience, qua suffering, is an intrinsic part of political theory, understood as *disclosing critique*’. McNay views Honneth’s SfR framework as a disclosing critique in that it unmasks social pathologies related to power and domination and ‘reveals possible paths to emancipation’. See McNay, L. 2014. *The Misguided Search for the Political: Social Weightlessness in Radical Democratic Theory*. UK: Polity. Loc: 4122.

<sup>109</sup> Zurn, C.F. 2015. *Op. cit.*, pp. 92-126.

<sup>110</sup> For a deep analysis of how recognition theory has developed and moved beyond Habermas’ theory of communicative action, see Deranty, J-P. 2009. *Beyond Communication: A Critical Study of Axel Honneth’s Social Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill.

**Figure 3.1:** Positioning Recognition around Habermas' Communicative Action



By reconstructing Hegel and Mead, Honneth developed a theoretical key to unlock three modes of recognition – (1) love (2) legal respect and (3) social esteem. These three modes systematically correspond to three forms of disrespect or misrecognition – (1) abuse and rape (2) denial of rights and exclusion (3) denigration and insult. The experiencing of such misrecognition directs social actors into a *struggle for recognition* to regain a positive relation-to-self. The corresponding three aspects of relation-to-self are: (1) self-confidence (2) self-respect and (3) self-esteem. The following section will briefly outline Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition with particular attention being paid to its tripartite multidimensional structure as depicted in his seminal work *The Struggle for Recognition* (SfR).<sup>111</sup> Of note is that the following section will pay acute attention to SfR but efforts will be made to contextualise subsequent amendments and revisions.

<sup>111</sup> Honneth, A. 1995 [1992]. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. UK: Polity Press.

**Table 3.1:** The Structure of Relations of Recognition <sup>112</sup>

Recognition Theme	Love	Legal	Societal
<b>Mode of Recognition</b>	Emotional Support	Cognitive Respect	Social Esteem
<b>Dimension of Personality</b>	Needs and emotions	Universal moral responsibility	Particular traits and abilities
<b>Forms of Recognition</b>	Primary Relationships (Family; Friends; Lovers)	Legal Relations (Rights; Obligations)	Societal Relationship (Solidarity; Societal value and merit)
<b>Relation-to-Self</b>	Basic Self-Confidence	Self-Respect	Self-Esteem
<b>Forms of Disrespect</b>	Abuse and Rape	Denial of Rights; Exclusion	Denigration; Insult
<b>Personality Threat</b>	Physical Integrity	Social Integrity	“Honour”; Dignity
<b>Public/Private</b>	Private	Public	Public
<b>Principles of Social Justice</b>	Neediness (Care/Intimacy)	Equality	Achievement as Contribution

### 3.1.1 Love Recognition

For Honneth, love relationships are defined and confined to primary relationships between small groups of people. In his opinion, love recognition ‘represents a symbiosis refracted by mutual individuation’,<sup>113</sup> which in essence means that recognition is a mutual *double process* by the fact that each social actor within a love relationship is released within his or her own individuality yet is also inextricably tied or limited by the individual he or she loves. Thus for Honneth, ‘love recognition is ‘an affirmation of independence that is guided – indeed supported – by care’’.<sup>114</sup> This freeing of the individual self yet inextricable link to others through *care* is seen as an essential element for the production of ‘the degree of basic individual self-confidence for autonomous

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. The last two rows of Figure 3.1 are additions to Honneth’s original table. The second last row indicates whether a mode of recognition is located in the private or public realms whilst the last row indicates the principle of justice that relates to each mode of recognition. Importantly, to operationalise each mode (love; legal respect; social esteem) concepts (such as respect, relation-to-self and disrespect) can be transposed from Table 3.1 into Figure 3.1; thereby, illustrating the *movement* of recognition.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

participation in public life'.<sup>115</sup> Hegel's work on love reciprocity and recognition proved to be pivotal for Honneth's own development of the concept within his theory. This point is confirmed when he states that

For Hegel, love represents the first stage of reciprocal recognition, because in it subjects mutually confirm each other with regard to the concrete nature of their needs and thereby recognize each other as needy creatures...The key for translating this topic into a context of scientific research is represented by Hegel's formulation, according to which love has to be understood as 'being oneself in another'.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly to Hegel, Honneth views love relationships as 'referring to primary relationships' in which there are 'strong emotional attachments among a small group of people'.<sup>117</sup> However, unlike Hegel, who dealt with the institution of the family, he broadens the conception of love to include not only familial relations but also love between friends and erotic lovers. Love relationships are bound together through the mutual recognition of need. In other words, 'subjects know themselves to be united in their neediness, in their dependence on each other'.<sup>118</sup> For this reason, it can be stated that love relationships are based on complex interactions between dependency and independency. In terms of the boundaries of love relations, it is important to note that love is kept within a bounded space by the fact that these caring relationships, due to their intersubjective and mutual content with people close to us, 'cannot be extended at will...to cover a larger number of participants'.<sup>119</sup> To support such theoretical thinking, Honneth moves away from the work of Mead towards Winnicottian object relations theory in order to provide empirical evidence and support for the development of intersubjective relations of dependent attachment and independence.

### ***Relation-to-Self: Self-Confidence***

Within SfR, Honneth develops love recognition by discussing how the recognition of love can mutually benefit individuals by enabling them to 'acquire basic self-confidence

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

in themselves'.<sup>120</sup> The development of this original form of relation-to-self is the premise upon which he states that love recognition is 'both conceptually and genetically prior to every other form of reciprocal recognition'.<sup>121</sup> Through this statement, love recognition is given a primary role. Love is needed by individuals first and foremost because it is through this form of recognition that individuals develop a relation-to-self in which a basic level of self-confidence is attained, which enables individuals to confidently interact within the culture of public life. In other words, love generates within all human beings, 'the psychological foundation for trusting one's own sense of one's needs and urges'.<sup>122</sup> This self-confidence enables the individual to interact as an independent and autonomous unit outside of the comforting sphere of love. Honneth states this point by writing that 'the intersubjective experience of love helps [constitute]...the psychological precondition for the development of all further attitudes of self-respect'.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, love relationships produce 'the degree of basic self-confidence [which is] indispensable for autonomous participation in public life'<sup>124</sup> i.e., the dynamics of love recognition have a powerful influence on an individual's capacity to interact productively within the wider legal and societal spheres.<sup>125</sup>

### ***Disrespect towards the Integrity of Love***

In terms of disrespect related to the recognitive sphere of love, Honneth determines that physical abuse or 'forms of practical maltreatment'<sup>126</sup> represent a form of misrecognition i.e., that disrespect can detrimentally affect a person's relation-to-self. In being physically maltreated, 'a person is forcibly deprived of any opportunity freely to dispose over his or her own body [and this] represent[s] the most fundamental sort of personal degradation'.<sup>127</sup> In other words, the taking control of another person's body

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> In his most recent work, Honneth has acknowledged that love relations and their corresponding institutions have developed and transformed through history, in similarity to legal respect and social esteem. See Honneth, A. 2014 [2011]. *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*. London: Polity Press.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

against their will causes the victim to feel a ‘degree of humiliation’.<sup>128</sup> He or she feels a sense of shame as their sense of their own worth is reduced. For Honneth, this form of disrespect against an individual’s physical integrity, commonly associated with rape, spousal abuse and torture is the ‘most destructive’<sup>129</sup> form of disrespect that can be directed towards a person’s identity because it is physical pain combined with psychological control. The victim feels a sense of defencelessness and insecurity related to the impending psychological fear of coming under physical abuse. Honneth’s theoretical model argues that forms of disrespect through physical maltreatment do immense ‘damage to one’s basic self-confidence [learned through love] that one can autonomously coordinate one’s own body’.<sup>130</sup> In opposition to this disrespect, love nurtures the relationship between emotions and the physical body building a sense of trust in oneself and towards others. However, the destruction of physical integrity breaks what love enabled and this form of suffering can lead to a ‘dramatic breakdown in one’s trust in the reliability of the social world’ and bring about ‘a collapse in one’s own basic self-confidence’.<sup>131</sup>

### 3.1.2 Legal Recognition

Contra to love recognition is the universal recognition of rights. Once again, Honneth takes from Hegel and Mead the point that rights and obligations are essentially formulated, understood and practiced through the utilisation of mutual recognition in that social actors can only come to understand themselves as legal persons and the validity of their claimed rights, by taking ‘the perspective of the generalized other’.<sup>132</sup> Within SfR, Honneth adds the clarification that legal relations are inextricably composed of mutual recognition through historical development, therefore, they contain the added characteristic of being transformative. Thus, the development of equal legal rights was founded on a rational agreement between individuals in that modern communities regulated by law are grounded ‘on the assumption of the moral

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108. See Mead, G.H. 1934 [1972]. *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

accountability of all its members'.<sup>133</sup> The ramification of this statement is that *all* individuals under the law are seen as morally responsible entities, which also provides the tool for the transformative potential of legal recognition by the fact that morally responsible individuals are consistently 'fleshing out the moral idea' in terms of legal content and advocating for the expansion of the scope of individual rights within the collective will-formation of society. As he states on this point:

As a result of the introduction of the principle of equality into modern law, the status of a legal person was not only gradually broadened with regard to its content, in that it cumulatively incorporated new claims, but was also gradually expanded in the social sense that it was extended to an ever increasing number of members of society.<sup>134</sup>

Within his reflections on legal recognition, Honneth makes the important differentiation between social esteem in both the legal sphere and within the societal sphere of recognition. Through legal respect, individuals garner self-respect through the universal mutual recognition that the individual is recognised by others in society as a morally responsible person with rights claims and the power to advocate for further expansion of their rights within society. However, this self-respect must be differentiated from esteeming people, which is a more particular and individualist form of recognition. As he states in relation to this point:

What makes esteeming someone different from recognising him or her as a person is primarily the fact that it involves not the empirical application of general, intuitively known norms but rather the graduated appraisal of concrete traits and abilities.<sup>135</sup>

Honneth illustrates the strong connection between law and recognition by referring to Hegel and Mead, who both viewed law and its development as a form of mutual recognition in which we 'can only come to know ourselves as the bearers of rights'<sup>136</sup> to the extent that 'we have taken the perspective of the "generalised other", which teaches us to recognize the other members of the community as the bearers of rights'<sup>137</sup> in

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

universal similarity to ourselves. Honneth relates respect to legal recognition by stating that legal recognition is a –

...situation in which self and other respect each other as legal subjects for the sole reason that they are both aware of the social norms by which rights and duties are distributed in their community.<sup>138</sup>

Legal recognition is formed through historical processes of development, which Honneth identifies as progressing from traditional law – in which membership of a community and legal entitlement were intrinsically connected to the exceptions and privileges linked to the division of labour – to post-traditional law in which ‘the expression of the universalisable interests of all members of society’<sup>139</sup> has come to prominence. Within this new universalised system of law, ‘exceptions and privileges are no longer admissible’<sup>140</sup> and legal norms are codified in agreement with ‘free and equal beings’ that reciprocally enter into a lawful relationship ‘based on rights’.<sup>141</sup> Honneth views the historical development of the legal sphere as a process of *deformalisation*, which involved a decoupling of legal recognition and social esteem and *universalisation*, involving the opening up and democratisation of the legal sphere to include *all* persons based on their existence as human beings.

### ***Relation-to-Self: Self-Respect***

As can be viewed above in relation to love recognition, Honneth determined that recognition and misrecognition both affect a person’s internal relation-to-self. Love recognition enables individuals to develop, through the bond of love, a form of relation-to-self that is viewed as a basic form of self-confidence. This relation-to-self enables an individual to act autonomously outside of various small affective spheres i.e., within legal and societal relations. Having identified the processes of deformalisation and universalisation, which transformed traditional law into a modern system that is built

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

upon by being open to change and applicable to all, the question must be asked – what relation-to-self is related to universal legal recognition?

Honneth makes a theoretical and conceptual argument, with reference to the work of Joel Feinberg, that the granting of and obtainment of rights is intrinsically connected to ‘the central psychological phenomenon’ of self-respect.<sup>142</sup> In other words, by being granted the same rights as others, the individual comes to learn that he or she is respected as an autonomous and morally responsible person by others and that this mutual intersubjective recognition creates a sense of self-respect in which ‘one is able to respect oneself, because one deserves the respect of everyone else’.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, as stated by Honneth, the ‘granting of rights’ increases an ‘ability to relate to oneself as a morally responsible person’<sup>144</sup> and gives the individual, who has been granted legal recognition by the conferral of rights, ‘the possibility of seeing their actions as the universally respected expression of their own autonomy’.<sup>145</sup> In relation to modern law, the argument is that dual processes of deformalisation and universalisation have deepened and widened the possibility of more individuals and groups experiencing legal respect, thereby, gaining a sense of self-respect. However, Honneth is adamant that the legal system should not recognise the social status or particular traits-abilities-achievements of individuals but must view people uniformly as *human* i.e., people who are citizens deserving of mutual rights towards each other. In actual fact, this condition is an important differentiation between traditional law and subsequent modern forms of legal recognition:

What is required are conditions in which individual rights are no longer granted disparately to members of social status groups but are granted equally to all people as free beings, only then will the individual legal person be able to see in

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118. Feinberg connects the granting of legal rights to the obtainment of self-respect by using the conceptual argument of 'Nowheresville' – an imaginary town, whose inhabitants live a normal day-to-day life apart from one crucial difference – in this town, individual rights do not exist. Feinberg's point is that due to the lack of rights, individuals lack the capacity to develop relations of self-respect towards themselves and to others. See Feinberg, J. 1980. *The Nature and Value of Rights. Rights, Justice, and the Bounds of Liberty*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 143-158.

<sup>143</sup> Honneth, A. 1995. *Op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

them an objectivated point of reference for the idea that he or she is recognized for having the capacity for autonomously forming judgements.<sup>146</sup>

From a realistic perspective, the above quote does not mean that individuals and groups are automatically conferred with legal recognition. In fact, civic stratification has been a common tool used by nation-states to regulate the rights and obligations of their respective populations by categorising people into a variety of civic statuses such as denizens,<sup>147</sup> refugees and asylum-seekers.<sup>148</sup> Social struggle is an important process in the granting of recognition by others. The historical examples of this are many and varied. The most obvious example would be the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, in which dark-skinned people, predominantly African-Americans, struggled to attain basic legal recognition on par with light-skinned people, thereby, gaining a sense of self-respect as human and as a people, who are equal to others. An Irish example would be the civil rights movement that developed in Northern Ireland in the 1960s that involved Catholic nationalists publicly protesting against their unequal treatment within the predominantly Protestant-controlled province of Northern Ireland. Through these examples, it becomes apparent that social struggle, through actions of violent or non-violent protest and resistance, are important individual and collective tools used to counteract social shame. It is a struggle for recognition of one's right to be legally the *same* as others i.e., an autonomous human being, who can partake in moral decision-making processes as others do. In relation to these struggles, Honneth states that

In these exceptional historical situations – such as the one represented by discussions in the civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties in the US – the psychological significance of legal recognition for the self-respect of excluded collectivities breaks the linguistic surface: in the relevant publications one regularly finds talk of how the endurance of legal under-privileging necessarily

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>147</sup> Thomas Hammer categorised resident third-country nationals, who enjoy civic and social rights yet limited political rights within a host country as a new form of social status known as denizenship. See Hammer, T. 1990. *Democracy and the Nation State. Aliens, Denizens and Citizens in a World of International Migration*. Aldershot: Ashgate. For an analysis of denizenship dilemmas in contemporary Europe, see Benhabib, S. 2004. *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. For a further detailed discussion about status of denizenship and exclusion, see also Beckman, L. 2009. *The Frontiers of Democracy: The Right to Vote and its Limits*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>148</sup> See Carolan, Mary. 2015. Direct Provision residents feel they 'belong to the last class'. *Irish Times*. April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Available at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com).

leads to a crippling feeling of social shame, from which one can be liberated only through active protest and resistance.<sup>149</sup>

### ***Disrespect towards the Integrity of Universal Value***

The next form of disrespect identified by Honneth relates to social integrity within the legal sphere. This form of disrespect or misrecognition is intrinsically linked to the concept of equality in terms of the conferral of universal rights and being treated the *same* as others within society. Honneth roughly defines rights as

...referring to those individual claims that a person can legitimately expect to have socially met because he or she participates, with equal rights, in the institutional order as a full-fledged member of the community.<sup>150</sup>

An example of this personal form of disrespect is when an individual is 'structurally excluded from the possession of certain rights within a community'.<sup>151</sup> In terms of a person's relation-to-self, this exclusion from obtaining universal rights can affect a person's self-respect in that 'he or she is not being accorded the same degree of moral responsibility as other members of society',<sup>152</sup> therefore, the ostracised individual feels that he or she is 'not enjoying the status of a full-fledged partner to interaction, equally endowed with moral rights'.<sup>153</sup> Such a denial of rights curtails a person's capacity to be autonomous in their actions, in essence, it is a 'violation of the intersubjective expectation to be recognized as a subject capable of forming moral judgements'.<sup>154</sup> This loss of self-respect, by being denied universal rights on par with others, impedes the ability of ostracised individuals to look upon themselves as fully equipped legal beings, who are equal to the people they interact with. This is an important issue because it relates to the right to be recognised legally as *human* and afforded the same rights and obligations to others, thereby, not being excluded from the ability to fully interact and voice one's opinion within the social and political opportunities that exist within a democratic state. The legal cognitive sphere is susceptible to historical change, i.e.,

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<sup>149</sup> Honneth, A. 1995. *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

‘the semantic content of what counts as a morally responsible agent changes with the development of legal relations’.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, this form of disrespect must always be measured in terms of *universalisation* but also in terms of the substantive scope of established rights.<sup>156</sup>

### 3.1.3 Societal Recognition

The third mode of recognition relates to societal recognition, which was seen by Hegel and Mead as a higher mode of recognition that rises above affections of love and universal legal identifications by the fact that people have a need for a ‘form of social esteem that allows them to relate positively to their concrete traits and abilities’.<sup>157</sup> Honneth develops on his predecessors by suggesting that a key component to social recognition is ‘an intersubjective shared-value system’ in which individuals mutually esteem each other as unique persons only by sharing ‘an orientation to those values and goals that indicate to each other the significance or contribution of their qualities for the life of the other’.<sup>158</sup> What differentiates societal from legal recognition is the fact that this form specifically relates to intersubjective recognition of *traits, abilities* and *achievements* held by an individual in *difference* to others. Unlike the universal legal form, societal recognition is based on the recognition of difference, uniqueness and individuality. Therefore, it is inextricably linked to ‘social esteem which is directed...at the particular qualities that characterize people in their personal difference’.<sup>159</sup> The social esteem of a person’s traits-abilities-achievements are furthermore linked to the overall perception that these unique individual characteristics are beneficial to society as a whole i.e., they contribute to the value-horizon of society. However, it must be considered that a dominant culture may have power-over the direction of a particular

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121. In contrast to the past reference to ‘concrete traits and abilities’, Honneth, in his recent work, has narrowly tied esteem recognition to the issue of contribution through work; however, like Zurn, this study adopts a revised view of social esteem that broadly considers contributions to go beyond economic considerations in that esteem recognition can be related to the ‘differential regard given to individuals based upon the degree to which their *traits, abilities, and achievements* are taken to make social contributions’. See Zurn, C.F. 2015. *Op. cit.*, p. 83. This stance opens up the possibility that morally admirable traits practiced through overt religiosity may also provide the basis for recognitively claiming esteem.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

value-horizon and be in a position to control what is deemed to be contributory to it. Consequently, the larger the degree of plural value-horizons within a society, the larger the scope and the more symmetrical relationships of recognition will be. On this point, Honneth suggests that:

The cultural self-understanding of a society provides the criteria that orient the social esteem of persons, because their abilities and achievements are judged intersubjectively according to the degree to which they can help to realize culturally defined values. This form of mutual recognition is thus tied to the presupposition of a context of social life, whose members, though their orientation towards shared conceptions of their goals, form a community of value.<sup>160</sup>

In parallel to the two previous modes, Honneth advocates that societal recognition is also an arena of conflict in which societal groups struggle for the dominance and hierarchical validity of their own ‘accomplishments and forms of life’ within the public sphere. This conflict is a permanent arena of social struggle in which the worth of individuals and groups is incorporated or not into the value-horizon of society:

In modern societies, relations to social esteem are subject to a permanent struggle, in which different groups attempt, by means of symbolic force and with reference to general goals, to raise the value of the abilities associated with their way of life...the more successful social movements are at drawing the public sphere’s attention to the neglected significance of the traits and abilities they collectively represent, the better their chances of raising the social worth or, indeed, the standing of their members.<sup>161</sup>

The complexity of social recognition is elaborated by Honneth when he suggests that although societal recognition should be an assessment of an individual’s traits-abilities-achievements, it has been consumed into group-orientated *status struggles* for recognition within modern societies. Thus, the unique traits-abilities-achievements of the individual are assimilated into a collective in order to advocate to the rest of society for the benefits of that “way of life”. As a result, a person’s individual form of honour or dignity, which comes to fruition in the form of social esteem for his or her traits-abilities-achievements, is now collectivised into a form of ‘group-pride and collective

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

honour'.<sup>162</sup> Generally speaking, these societal groups are cohesive and generate high levels of internal solidarity by the fact that the 'intersubjective value-horizon'<sup>163</sup> amongst individuals within these groups is mutually recognised. However, he views esteem, harnessed by collective lobbying, as having a greater transformative potential when applied back to the individual. He states in this regard:

The individual no longer has to attribute [to] an entire collective the respect that he or she receives for accomplishments that fit social standards but can refer them positively back to him or herself instead. Under these altered conditions, the experience of being socially esteemed is accompanied by a felt confidence that one's achievements or abilities will be recognized as 'valuable' by other members of society. We can meaningfully term this type of practical relation-to-self 'self-esteem'.<sup>164</sup>

With the decoupling of legal recognition and social esteem within the system of modern law, the third form of recognition comes into view – social esteem through societal recognition. Social esteem is recognition of a person's particular traits-abilities-achievements that people need 'above and beyond the experience of affectionate care and legal recognition'.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, unlike universal legal recognition, social esteem is related to recognising individuals in terms of their 'particular qualities'<sup>166</sup> that 'characterize people in their personal difference'.<sup>167</sup> Honneth makes the further point that social esteem is connected to an 'intersubjective value-horizon' in that the individual esteeming of self and others must be related to a shared sense of values and goals 'that indicate to each other the significance or contribution of their qualities for the life of the other'.<sup>168</sup> This 'open and porous'<sup>169</sup> horizon comprises values and goals that are accepted as beneficial within society and come to form the cultural understanding of that society. It therefore serves as 'a system of reference for the appraisal of particular features',<sup>170</sup> which are perceived as valuable and worthy to the mutual attainment of societal goals. Honneth views the historical development of the

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

wider social sphere as a process of *individualisation*, which emphasises horizontal individual attainments of esteem against hierarchical status group esteem; and *equalisation*, in which the scope of who can be esteemed is opened up to individuals within society based on merit and not on positions of asymmetrical social status.

### ***Relation-to-Self: Self-Esteem***

Honneth argues that the process of social esteem through societal recognition gives an individual a sense of self-esteem. However, societal goals can only be obtained through group interaction. Therefore, a sense of esteem is obtained by individuals through collective group membership, solidarity and action because ‘only the group as a whole can feel itself to be the addressee of esteem’.<sup>171</sup> Collectives are composed of individuals, who stand in solidarity to each other i.e., ‘they esteem each other symmetrically’.<sup>172</sup> For Honneth, war is a good example of a symmetrical relationship of esteem in that it ‘represents a collective event that is able to create spontaneous relationships of solidarity and sympathy across social boundaries’.<sup>173</sup> However, with the individualisation of social esteem, individuals can now associate accomplishments ‘positively back to himself or herself’<sup>174</sup> instead of through a collective status. For Honneth, these ‘altered circumstances’<sup>175</sup> ensure that ‘the experience of being socially esteemed is accompanied by a felt confidence that one’s achievements or abilities will be recognized as valuable by other members of society’.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, this *feeling of self-worth* is defined as a ‘parallel category to the concepts of basic self-confidence and self-respect’.<sup>177</sup> He refers to this form of relation-to-self as *self-esteem* and argues that the ‘extent to which every member of society is [in] a position to esteem himself or herself, one can speak of a state of societal solidarity’.<sup>178</sup> However, it is important to note that societal recognition of an individual’s traits-abilities-achievements is not an equal practice as unique individuals vary and cannot be accorded an equal level of

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

esteem. Therefore, individuals do not have an immediate right to a standard level of esteem, but more realistically, should be given *an equal chance or opportunity* to obtain social esteem from others. Honneth comments on the difference between the principles of equality and achievement by stating that:

The fact that ‘symmetrical’ cannot mean here that we esteem each other to the same degree is already clear from the essential openness to interpretation of every societal value-horizon...‘symmetrical’ must mean instead that every subject is free from being collectively denigrated, so that one is *given the chance* to experience oneself to be recognized, in light of one’s own accomplishments and abilities, as valuable for society.<sup>179</sup>

### ***Disrespect towards the Integrity of Particular Value***

The third type of disrespect identified in Honneth’s theoretical model is related to the integrity of an individual’s value. Essentially, what Honneth is talking about here is how individuals or members of groups are valued by the society they live within. Disrespect comes about when a “way of life” is denigrated by the cultural norms of a society i.e., a particular “way of living life” is not valued by others. For Honneth, this ‘form of behaviour [is] ordinarily labeled insulting or degrading today’.<sup>180</sup> When a person is socially esteemed, it modifies a person’s honour or dignity – today commonly called *status* – by the fact that the person’s “way of life” or the person’s manner of self-realisation is accorded value by the ‘society’s inherited cultural horizon’.<sup>181</sup> However, the opposite is the case when a person’s “way of life” is socially misrecognised. In this instance, the “way of life” of the person (or the collective they belong to) is not valued by individuals (or other collectives) within society due to the perception that it is in opposition to the shared values and goals that constitute the continuing trajectory of that society’s value-horizon. For Honneth, the ramifications of social devaluation are related to a person’s self-relation. In this case, societal misrecognition affects a person by ‘bringing with it a loss of personal self-esteem’.<sup>182</sup> In other words, an individual feels

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

that the worth of his or her particular traits-abilities-achievements is undervalued by the society he or she resides within.

### 3.2 Constructive Criticism of the Theoretical Frame

As stated above, this study is positively inspired by Honneth's recognition theory in terms of its structured typology that distinguishes between respect and esteem; its multi-dimensional perspective on social life; and its ability to identify social pathologies through an exploration of everyday 'moral grammar'. However, there have also been a number of substantial critiques of Honneth's broad theoretical frame over the years. This chapter will examine these criticisms. Such an exploration is an important undertaking as it enables a positioning of this research project to Honneth's theory of recognition. Since the publication of SfR, Honneth's theory of recognition has been acclaimed but also criticised. Such criticisms have come from outside sources but also from within the Critical Theory tradition itself. For the sake of brevity, a detailed account of these criticisms will not be conducted but merely listed. Such criticisms relate to the questioning of –

- whether the theory is anthropological and/or historical (Petherbridge)<sup>183</sup>
- the use of social psychology (Fraser)<sup>184</sup>
- the scope of recognition (Laitinen)<sup>185</sup>
- the relationship between recognition and redistribution (Fraser)<sup>186</sup>
- the political focus of the theory (Deranty and Renault)<sup>187</sup>
- the teleological ideal of ethical life (Thompson)<sup>188</sup>
- the causal mechanism of a Struggle for Recognition (Thompson)<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Petherbridge, D. 2013. *The Critical Theory of Axel Honneth*. Lanham, US: Lexington Books. See also her doctoral thesis, Petherbridge, D. 2010. *The Critical Theory of Axel Honneth: Anthropology, Recognition and Power*. PhD Thesis No. 11108. Dublin: University College Dublin (UCD).

<sup>184</sup> Fraser, N. and Honneth, A. 2003. *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. UK: Verso.

<sup>185</sup> Laitinen, A. On the Scope of "Recognition": The Role of Adequate Regard and Mutuality. Chapter 14, pp. 319-342 IN: Schmidt am Busch, H-C, and Zurn, C.F. (eds.). 2010. *Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. UK: Lexington Books.

<sup>186</sup> Fraser, N. and Honneth, A. 2003. *Op. cit.*

<sup>187</sup> Deranty, J-P., and Renault, E. 2007. Politicizing Honneth's Ethics of Recognition. *Thesis Eleven*. 88, pp. 92-111.

<sup>188</sup> Thompson, S. 2006. *The Political Theory of Recognition: A Critical Introduction*. UK: Polity Press.

Of note is that many recognition theorists have claimed that Honneth's theoretical notions are too positive and optimistic.<sup>190</sup> This chapter will specifically deal with a major criticism of Honneth's theory that has been identified by numerous reviewers of his work. This problematic relates to his conception of power. It must be stated that Honneth has always been open to debating with others and has remained flexible in terms of any amendments that are deemed necessary.<sup>191</sup> However, the lack of a complex understanding of power is a recurring critique, which has not yet been adequately tackled by Honneth and has ramifications for this study that is inspired by his framework.

### 3.2.1 The Complexity of Power

Stephen Lukes gives a powerful account of the persistent problems and disagreements within academia in terms of how to view the complexity of power.<sup>192</sup> Inspired by broad yet refined Foucauldian insights, Luke's turns away from the view that power is specifically related to power-over others as coercive domination but that power-over others can also be positively beneficial and involve agentic resistances.<sup>193</sup> Returning to the Foucauldian view, McNay states that Michel Foucault 'was concerned to examine how power relations of inequality and oppression are created and maintained in more subtle and diffuse ways through ostensibly humane and freely adopted social practices'.<sup>194</sup> As is well known, he penetrated the 'micropractices' of power-knowledge dynamics enabling his conceptual thinking to evolve overtime from disciplinary power to biopolitic power and eventually to governmentality.<sup>195</sup> Importantly, Foucault identified dual forms of power-over others in terms of negative *power as domination* and positive *power as constitutive*. Examples of this dual power include the

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Institute for Social Research (IfS). 2013. *The Ambivalence of Recognition*. International Workshop. April 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Frankfurt-am-Main: IfS.

<sup>191</sup> See Honneth, A. 2010. Grounding Recognition: A Rejoinder to Critical Questions. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*. 45, pp. 499-520.

<sup>192</sup> Lukes, S. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> McNay, L. 1994. *Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. UK: Polity Press. p. 5.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hoffman, M. 2013. *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power*. London: Bloomsbury.

asymmetrical relationship between mother and child; doctoral supervisor and student; or the legal system and its regulation of rights for the benefit of citizens. In McNay's words, he identified that 'power constrains individuals but it also constitutes the condition of possibility of their freedom'.<sup>196</sup> Thus, power can be domineering but it can also be productive in that it can constitutively shape an individual's identity and "way of being" as well as forms of resistance.

Even though in his personal life, Foucault agentially engaged and resisted forms of domineering power by working within the Information Group on Prisons (GIP), enthusiastically supporting the Iranian revolution, and working on behalf of the Solidarity movement in Poland;<sup>197</sup> paradoxically within his later work, he never fully sustains power as a positively productive force nor fully examines an agentic margin of freedom that enables an individual and/or collective to develop practices to resist. Instead, Foucault consistently slips back into an understanding of power-over in terms of domination by material or technical control.<sup>198</sup>

To examine the possibilities of identifying power as domination in contrast to top-down productive or bottom-up agentic forms of power, we turn to the work of Philip Petit, who defined domineering power as existing only to the extent that the domineers have the (1) capacity to intentionally or unintentionally interfere negatively with others (2) that the 'making of things worse' via interference is done on an arbitrary basis (3) and that it is common knowledge that the above interference restricts certain choices the other is a position to make.<sup>199</sup> For Petit, interference can be coercion against a body or will or even manipulation that escapes common knowledge and productive powers, such as laws and norms that constitute identity, must be established to regulate relations and guard against forms of domination.<sup>200</sup> Examples of Petit's regulatory

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<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>197</sup> Hoffman, M. 2013. *Op. cit.* Hoffman insists that there exists a dialectical interplay between Foucault's everyday political resistances and the development of his complex analysis of power.

<sup>198</sup> McNay, L. 1994. *Op. cit.*

<sup>199</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 52-61.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*. Schuppert presents a sufficientarian principle of justice, which is 'a demanding account of global justice in the spirit of non-domination, non-alienation and mutual recognition' (Loc: 4408). Furthermore, he differentiates between two forms of domination or arbitrary interference over others in terms of *dominium* (by private actors in the public sphere) and *imperium* (by institutions or agents of the state), Loc: 3502. See Schuppert, F. 2014. *Freedom, Recognition and Non-Domination*. Kindle Edition. Netherlands: Springer.

power include a culture of legal rights that can protect children and women from patriarchal abuse or employment regulations that guarantee appropriate labour conditions for workers.<sup>201</sup> Importantly, the above dynamics are always context-dependent.<sup>202</sup> For Petit, non-domination is a ‘gateway good’ in that a mixed constitution and a communicative contestatory citizenship act as prerequisites for the realisation of social justice in the form of republican freedom.<sup>203</sup> In terms of everyday interactions, Petit mentions that freedom from domination can be examined by the simple use of the user-friendly “eyeball” test that requires that

...people will be adequately resourced and protected in the exercise of their basic liberties to the extent that, absent excessive timidity or the like, they are enabled by the most demanding local standards to look one another in the eye without reason for fear or deference. They are able to walk tall [with confidence]...enjoying a communal form of recognition that they are each more or less proof against the interference of others; in that sense, they command the respect of all.<sup>204</sup>

In terms of assessing Honneth’s stance on power dynamics, since the publication of SfR, a number of criticisms have been presented that tackle the positioning of the concept of power within Honneth’s theory of recognition.<sup>205</sup> One of the most succinct and in-depth investigations emanates from Danielle Petherbridge. In her latest book, she criticises not only the accuracy of Honneth’s reconstructive method but also his conception of power and how it developed from his early to most recent work.<sup>206</sup> She contends that his early work had a much more nuanced understanding of power reflecting on the work of Habermas and Foucault.<sup>207</sup> Although he did not share a systems-theoretic notion of power like Foucault, his action-theoretic notion of power

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Petit, P. 2012. *On the People’s Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 5.

<sup>204</sup> Petit, P. 2014. *Just Freedom: A Moral Compass for a Complex World*. US: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd. p. 99. See also Petit, P. 2012. *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>205</sup> For a variety of articles about the relationship between recognition and power, see Van Den Brink, B., and Owen, D. (eds.). 2007. *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge, US: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>206</sup> Petherbridge, D. 2013. *Op. cit.*

<sup>207</sup> See Honneth, A. 1991. *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*. MA: MIT Press. See also Honneth, A. 1990. *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*. US: State University of New York Press.

was highly influenced by Foucault's claim that the social world is constituted as a field of intersubjective struggle.

In his early work, Honneth is much more aware of social life as revolving around action-theoretic forms of *micro-power* i.e., an individual's capacity to agentially act against domination within an open field of social struggle and contestation. However, this perspective is diluted in SfR, when he moves from the Habermasian notion of mutual understanding to the concept of mutual recognition and from the Foucauldian idea of *power/struggle* to the Hegelian concept of *recognition/struggle*.<sup>208</sup> Thus, in Petherbridge's opinion, a more nuanced conception of power is lost in the move from an action-theoretic perspective to the Hegelian notion of a struggle for recognition.<sup>209</sup>

In more recent work, Petherbridge takes notice of Honneth's re-engagement with the 'problem of power'<sup>210</sup> by acknowledging his reformed opinion 'that recognition can take ideological forms and that power can operate in ways that are productive of identity'.<sup>211</sup> She views Honneth's article – *Recognition as Ideology* – as a gesture 'towards Foucault'<sup>212</sup> in that it attempts to remedy the problem of power within recognition theory and to tackle questions such as what counts as a legitimate struggle for recognition and how does power impinge upon recognitive relations?<sup>213</sup>

In this article, Honneth attempts to differentiate between legitimate and ideological forms of recognition.<sup>214</sup> In his assessment, he characterises ideological recognition as having four prime characteristics: it must give affirmation to those it addresses; it must be credible; it must be contrastive in the sense of being an historical progression; and lastly it must contain a degree of rationality to be believed.<sup>215</sup> However, although ideological recognition does contain a degree of rationality, Honneth

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Honneth, A. Recognition as Ideology: The Connection between Morality and Power. Chapter 5, pp. 75-97. IN: Honneth, A. 2012. *The I in the We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>214</sup> Like invisibilisation and reification, recognition as ideology is a 2<sup>nd</sup> order social pathology in that its negative contents and ramifications cannot be reflected upon by individuals in everyday life. See Zurn, C.F. 2015. *Op. cit.*, p. 99. In contrast, 1<sup>st</sup> order pathologies such as patriarchy, insecure citizenship status and discrimination can be reflected upon within everyday life.

<sup>215</sup> Honneth, A. Recognition as Ideology IN: Honneth, A. 2012. *Op. cit.* pp. 78-85.

determines that it can be identified and separated from positive forms of recognition by acknowledging its irrational core and its inability to fulfil promises. This aspect of ideological recognition provides the solution for differentiating it from legitimate and ethically justified recognition. The irrationality found within ideological recognition is found within the ‘discrepancy between evaluative promises and material fulfilment’.<sup>216</sup> In other words, ideologies may rationally propagate that they contain potential benefit (whether that be internal and external), however, in reality, the inherent irrationality built into ideology ensures that these promises do not materialise. In brief, ideologies do not have any substantive substance. For Honneth, the inability to materialise propagated promises is the solution to identifying the irrational core of ideological systems. Such forms of recognition identified by Honneth include advertising and neoliberal working practices, in which the worker is transformed into an ultra-flexible and self-marketing *entployee*.<sup>217</sup>

Despite Honneth’s reformed opinion, Petherbridge remains critical of his conception of power as lacking complexity by being overly focused on *domineering power* yet not exploring how top-down *constitutive power* can be positively beneficial by being productive in constituting and shaping identities and also how agentic forms of bottom-up *resistive power* relate and interact with the two forms of power-over in terms of the legitimation of authority.

With the limitations of Honneth’s conception of power identified, the work of Cillian McBride comes into focus in terms of giving an informative account of the interaction between recognition, authority and agentic resistance. In terms of struggles over the recognition of our perceived identities and issues of power and authority, McBride puts into question whether recognition-sensitive individuals can transparently understand their identities and whether they are ‘best placed to possess that knowledge’.<sup>218</sup> In contrast to Honneth’s developmental account of recognition, McBride’s interactionist approach determines that it is through intersubjective relations to others that our self-conceptions are adapted and revised ‘in light of our encounters with others’,<sup>219</sup> leading to enlightening and/or disturbing revelations about “who we

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<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>218</sup> McBride, C. 2013. *Recognition*. UK: Polity Press. p. 135.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140.

really are”.<sup>220</sup> Thus, recognitive relations play a pivotal role in the ‘project of maintaining and realizing oneself’.<sup>221</sup>

For McBride, struggles for recognition are essentially *struggles over authority*, ‘firstly, over our self-interpretations, and secondly, over the authority of the normative expectations which we have of others and of ourselves, and which others in turn, have of us’.<sup>222</sup> In other words, recognition from B is valued by claimant A only if A recognises the judgemental authority of B and vice versa. Furthermore, he stresses the need to take into account the ‘role of objective social norms in our self-interpretations’.<sup>223</sup> In other words, social interaction is composed of informal social norms that guide our beliefs and actions about what is acceptable as “normal behaviour”. Such norms inform the variety of social roles we occupy and the normative expectations brought to bear upon us by occupying such roles.

Of note is that norms may be related to forms of domineering power. The example of “honour killings” within ethno-Muslim communities provides a good example of how social norms acted out to obtain social esteem can be socially pathological and unreasonably legitimised by the authority of patriarchal power.<sup>224</sup> On the other hand, another example by McBride is the role of “the good mother” and how women find themselves dilemmatically subjected to competing demands from various authoritative sources e.g., media experts, other mothers, family members, and employers etc., who determine how mothers ought to act in order to reach the “correct” standard of what constitutes “the good mother”.<sup>225</sup> For McBride, it is up to the agency of the ‘individual woman’ to resolve such struggles by working out ‘for herself how best to define and inhabit the role and cope with the inevitable mixture of recognition and misrecognition that must accompany her judgement’.<sup>226</sup> Such agency may involve

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161. Smyth highlights three roles that are adopted by mothers – expressivist, rationalist and pragmatist – which, as coping strategies, help mothers negotiate their actions and the ‘social politics of motherhood’ that is regulated and controlled by the opinion of ‘an array of authorities’. See Smyth, L. 2012. *Demands of Motherhood: Agents, Roles and Recognition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

‘an appeal to an alternative audience’,<sup>227</sup> thereby, legitimising the authority of one source over another in regards to what constitutes “good mothering”. Beneficially for this research project, McBride opens up and connects recognition struggles to authority and the pressure of social norms. As he states on this matter:

...we must always attend to the way the social world is constituted by social norms, the informal rules which govern social interaction, from the ways we eat, dress and speak to one another, up to the roles we occupy and the constitution of social, economic and political institutions. These unwritten rules govern every aspect of our lives in ways we find so familiar that we often do not even notice that we are following these rules, applying them to ourselves and to others, and having them applied to ourselves in turn.<sup>228</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 4 – will descriptively outline the research design developed to facilitate the conduction of the empirical element of this study.

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.



This chapter will discuss the research design and aims to clarify the methodological stance but also to describe the processes through which the research was conducted, highlighting the outcomes alongside the hurdles encountered and overcome. The chapter is divided into two sections – the first section will verify the case study and units of analysis of interest; the second section will briefly describe the methodological approach and discuss the practical side of conducting research in terms of the methods and strategies employed in the field. To end, a brief section on the interpretation of everyday narratives will be presented.

#### 4.1 The Case Study and Units of Analysis

Like most narrative studies, this project examines particular individuals that constitute a group or a case study. This research project focuses on one particular case study – the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin – with individual experience within this community acting as the unit of analysis for the study.<sup>229</sup> As has been stated in Chapter 2, the narrowing of the case study focus to individuals within the Sunni Muslim community can be justified by the fact that this element of the Muslim community has moved beyond basic needs (1) by being rooted and highly concentrated in the Dublin metropolitan area (2) by having high levels of institutional completeness and (3) by being the economic, social and symbolic power centre for the Muslim community throughout Ireland.

Within academia, the utilisation of case study research has been debated, particularly in terms of the trustworthiness of narrative inquiry and the ability of the researcher to generalise to a population from a non-probability sample. An important paper by Bent Flyvberg tackles this debate head on and criticises the mainstream

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<sup>229</sup> ‘Sunni Muslim’ is defined as a Muslim, who is associated with the four Islamic madhabs of the Sunni tradition - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi or Hanbali. Sunni Muslims may also be connected to various sub-traditions such as Deobandi, Barelwi or Ahl-i-Hadith. The schism between Sunni and Shia relates historically to a leadership dispute over who should succeed Muhammad (PBUH) after his death, whether that should be a caliph (chosen from the Prophet’s companions) as the Sunni sect believe or a descendant of the Prophet as the Shia sect believe. Sufi sects traverse the above branches of Islam and emphasise a mystical dimension to Islam. No disrespect was intended by including or excluding specific Islamic traditions from this study.

approach to generalising.<sup>230</sup> Within this paper, he discusses five common misunderstandings about case-study research. These are that:

1. a case study produces detailed context-dependent knowledge, which can prove to be essential for the development of a field or research agenda.
2. that much academic progression has been built upon by experiments and cases that utilise continuous reflection towards data.
3. that examining particular cases can develop and extend the theory of a general problem.
4. a case study is uniquely related to everyday social life and its advantage is in the depth of detail it produces about common social practices.
5. and lastly, a case study is primarily focused on narrative detail or the examination of stories told by participants in the field.<sup>231</sup>

Taking the aspects of this study into consideration – for example, that Honneth’s recognition theory has rarely been utilised as a frame and that the academic literature on the Muslim community in Ireland, particularly the grassroots, is limited – then Flyvberg’s advocacy of case study research can be taken as a sound approach that connects with the aim of this study. Thus, a detailed case study specifically focused on Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin has the ability to deliver new context-dependent knowledge that has remained dormant.

Furthermore, such a reflexive approach may also open up new directions of viewing the case at hand, thereby, expanding knowledge and developing new contextual understandings about everyday life as lived by Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin.

## 4.2 A Qualitative Approach

In terms of methodology or the strategy utilised to obtain access to knowledge, the researcher agrees with positivists or naturalists that the ‘world is filled with repetitions and regularities’.<sup>232</sup> However, from a constructivist perspective, these patterns ‘are socially constructed even as the world appears to us as objective fact’.<sup>233</sup> With this said, the project aim is to ‘identify these socially constructed patterns in the world, and [to]

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<sup>230</sup> Flyvberg, B. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *IN*: Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F., and Silverman, D. (eds.). 2004. *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: Sage. pp. 420-434.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

understand them in light of the contexts that give them meaning'.<sup>234</sup> This study takes a pragmatic stance in relation to methodology in that 'the question, the purpose and the sources at hand must determine the method'.<sup>235</sup> As Bazeley has stated, pragmatists view knowledge as tentative and in need of 'testing against experience'.<sup>236</sup> William James, John Dewey and G.H. Mead viewed actions of experience as pivotal to understanding knowledge as an interactive human construction. Mead viewed a strong link between actionable experience and intersubjectivity in that humans come to know their internal selves and external society through intersubjective relations to and with others.<sup>237</sup>

As with many research projects that are grounded in the lives of research subjects, this study has had to be flexible in terms of its methodological approach and in its ability to adapt to changing circumstances in order to enable the participants to interact with trust, ease and in comfort. Thus, methodological flexibility has been a key element for this study and the need to add to and subtract from the project, based on participant needs and requirements, has been a substantial aspect of such a process. Although a mixed-method strategy was initially planned – this strategy aimed to utilise in a sequential manner qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey – however, it soon became apparent that such an approach lacked feasibility due to the lack of trust towards and difficulties in obtaining a useable and reliable survey. Therefore, a decision was made to revert back to a fully qualitative research design, which concentrates on a tripartite methodological structure that sequentially utilises pilot interviews, semi-structured interviews and multiple discussion groups. Importantly, in an interview in 2002 into the role sociology has for empirical investigations, Axel Honneth clarifies the importance of qualitative interviews and focused discussion groups that attempt to gain new insights into social pathologies. On this point, he states the following:

I believe that empirical research mainly depends on a clear hypothesis of certain social developments, preferably social pathologies. The way to prove those hypotheses empirically would be by connecting different empirical methods. I would say, as a starting point, that traditional methods of structured interviews and group discussions would be useful. The latter is a method which we, at the Institute for Social Research (IfS), would like to use in a wider way. Group

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

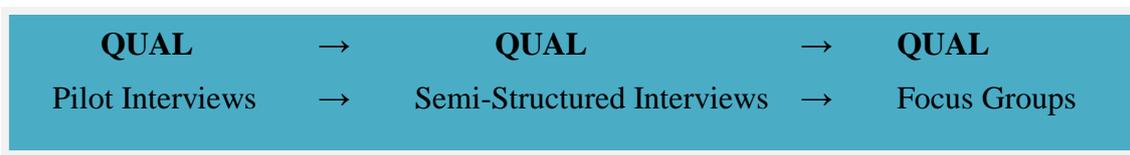
<sup>236</sup> Bazeley, P. 2013. *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical Strategies*. London: Sage. p. 22.

<sup>237</sup> Thayer, H.S. 1982. *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

discussion, by giving certain thematic incentives and then letting people discuss those questions that were brought to them by the researchers.<sup>238</sup>

The sequential design for this research project is illustrated visually in Figure 4.1 below:

**Figure 4.1:** A Sequential Qualitative Methodological Approach



#### 4.2.1 Fieldwork

With a flexible methodological stance initiated, the fieldwork was conducted within three sequential stages over a period of time, beginning approximately in June 2011 and ending in November 2013. The empirical narrative data was retrieved from the following sources – sixteen informal pilot interviews (PIs); twenty-five formal semi-structured interviews (SSIs), and four focused discussion groups (FDGs). Methodologically, these were all qualitative in nature and were specifically implemented to capture the everyday subjective experiences of recognition and identity from individuals, who belong to the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin.<sup>239</sup> The following screening attributes were identified as the common characteristics that each individual unit of analysis should possess in order to be included as an interviewee or focus group discussant:

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<sup>238</sup> Petersen, A and Willig, R. 2002. An Interview with Axel Honneth: The Role of Sociology in the Theory of Recognition. *European Journal of Social Theory*. 5(2), pp. 265-277. p. 268.

<sup>239</sup> At this point, it is important to highlight the ethical approach of the research project. Firstly, the names of all interviewees and discussants were anonymised and replaced with pseudonyms. All information that may potentially identify a research participant was changed to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Of note is that ethical guidelines were limited during the conduction of the pilot and semi-structured interviews. A consent form was signed but no official ethical approval was sought. However, ethical approval was sought and obtained for the conduction of the multiple focused discussion groups.

**Table 4.1:** Screening Attributes

Attribute	Common Characteristic
Islamic Sect	Sunni
Residential Location	Dublin
Age Status	18+
Citizenship Status	(Duel) Citizen or Denizen
Gender	Male or Female
Generation	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup>

### *Pilot Interviews*

During the month of June 2011, sixteen pilot interviews were conducted with Sunni Muslim individuals throughout Dublin. At this point in the research project, background knowledge had been completed through the utilisation of academic books; journals; reports and various media articles. Although such knowledge was quite extensive at this juncture, the pilot interviews acted as the first instance of interaction – at a personal level – with the units of analysis and also initiated the beginning of the fieldwork process. As Dexter has stated, ‘field research...always ought to be and frequently is, a process of continuing discovery. One is learning how to reformulate or at least modify one’s formulation of a problem; one is locating new data’.<sup>240</sup> Within the research design literature, informal pilot interviews are a key instrument in progressing towards formal semi-structured interviews. The pilot interview is an exploratory tool into which preliminary insights can be explored and grounded. Table 4.2 below provides the breakdown of the sixteen pilot interviews in terms of generational, gender and citizenship status:

**Table 4.2:** Pilot Interviews by Sex, Generation and Citizenship Status

Generation	Male	Female	Citizen	Denizen
1 <sup>st</sup> (12)	12	0	9	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> (4)	3	1	3	1
<b>Total</b> (16)	15	1	12	4

The sixteen pilot interviews were informal discussions in which no question script had been prepared. In fact, these interviews were left open by intention. Commonly, the

<sup>240</sup> Dexter, L.A. 2006. *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. UK: ECPR Press.

interviews took place over food and refreshments in various locations around Dublin, such as in coffee shops, universities, mosques, or other places of work. The length of time for each interview varied, but in general, most exploratory interviews lasted approximately an hour. However, some interviews could be much longer. In one instance, an interview lasted up to three hours and within that timeframe many topics were covered relating to the Muslim community in Ireland and abroad. The participants were recruited using a chain-referral sampling method, which is also commonly known as a *snowball* technique.<sup>241</sup> Of note is that none of the pilot interviews were recorded, however, concise mental notes were taken directly after the interview.

The pilot interviews proved to be extremely beneficial in two instances – (i) in building community contacts and social networks and (ii) in redirecting the preliminary research question to a matter of primary concern to the everyday lives of the participants. In terms of (i), the pilot interviews were the first contact with the subjects under study. This initial contact enabled, on the one hand, the building of trust towards the research project and, on the other hand, the creation of a list of valuable community contacts that would prove to be a reliable social network that could help develop and promote the successful completion of the other empirical methods – the semi-structured interviews and the multiple discussion groups. Such contacts proved pivotal in keeping abreast of developments within the Sunni Muslim community relating to specific events, public discussions and general concerns.

Secondly (ii), the pilot interviews enabled the grounding of the research question and allowed it to be explored in terms of its relevance to the Sunni Muslim community. At the beginning of the project, the research question was tentatively structured around the theme of political participation. The pilot interviews opened an avenue to explore the efficacy of this line of research and to determine whether it should, in fact, be a relevant question on which to base a thesis. Through the conduction of such interviews, it became apparent that the interviewees did not view political participation within the

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<sup>241</sup> In other words, after an interview has been completed with a particular interviewee, who shares common characteristics with the targeted unit of analysis, the interviewer then requests to be referred to a similar subject that the interviewee may know of and would be willing to participate in the research. Accordingly, the snowball sampling technique is related to various link-tracing methodologies that utilise everyday social networks to obtain and expand the number of subjects that may consent to participating within a particular study. In practical terms, normally at the end of the interview, this transaction takes place with the interviewee aiding the researcher by sharing contact details.

community as a pressing issue of concern. In general, it was perceived as a realm still primarily focused on informal practices i.e., lobbying with formalised participation. Notably, voting in elections is at low levels throughout the community. Generally, the primary concerns that emanated from the sixteen pilot interviews revolved around the themes of recognition, experience and identity than with matters relating to political participation. Therefore, it must be stated that the pilot interviews had an important part to play in redirecting the research towards the recognition paradigm.

### *Semi-Structured Interviews*

By the end of June 2011, with the pilot interviews conducted and analysed, the research project had found a new direction. Firstly, the informal pilot interviews had highlighted the need for the direction of the project to change from being related to political participation to themes related to recognition, experience and identity. Secondly, through the snowball technique, the pilot interviews had enabled the researcher to make useful contacts within the community. This social network could then be utilised to facilitate the conduction of the next step in the empirical investigation – the semi-structured interviews.

There are many different ways of conducting an interview – from an unstructured to a highly structured approach. This study has opted for a flexible middle-ground approach by utilising semi-structured interviews, which is the most common of all qualitative interview techniques within the social sciences. This approach is concerned with asking specific questions to retrieve answers that can then be compared or contrasted to the answers from other interviewees.<sup>242</sup> It aims to gain balance between asking structured questions yet enabling an element of flexibility ‘so that other important information can still arise’.<sup>243</sup> In terms of practical application, an *interview guide* should be developed, which is a ‘list of specific questions or a list of topics to ensure continuity’.<sup>244</sup> The guide is updated throughout the process to ensure important topics that arise are incorporated into the research.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Dawson, C. How to Choose Your Research Methods. Chapter 3. *IN*: Dawson, C. 2009. *Introduction to Research Methods*. UK: How to Books Ltd.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

Unlike Nadel’s confrontational approach to interviewing,<sup>246</sup> this study utilised Lewis Anthony Dexter’s interviewing approach of *sympathetic understanding*,<sup>247</sup> which gains co-operation from the respondent by adopting a neutral role and listening without judgement,<sup>248</sup> which thereby enables the interviewee to enjoy the process by taking it as an opportunity to adopt the role of teacher and to teach the interviewer about his or her everyday life.<sup>249</sup> Dexter also emphasises how the social distance between the interviewer and interviewee enables the building of trust and for sensitive information to be transacted without the possibility of being judged or disrespected:

[They] often have no real opportunity to talk to an understanding stranger – meaning, by a stranger, someone who will presumably make no claims, no use of remarks, which will affect the speaker in the future.<sup>250</sup>

Overall, seventeen questions were developed, which together constitute the interview guide. These questions incorporated pilot interview topics such as political participation and newly discovered topics such as recognition, everyday experience and identity. Table 4.3 below is a concise list of the broad themes that were questioned during the semi-structured interviews.

**Table 4.3:** Interview Guide

#	Topic
1	The most important issues and concerns facing the Muslim community at present
2	The lived experience in Ireland as compared to mainland Europe
3	Representation of Muslims in Irish and/or International Media
4	Recognition within the Familial, Community, Legal, Societal and Spiritual spheres of everyday life
5	Islamic-civic identity, especially in relation to the work of Tariq Ramadan
6	The process of returning to a “purer” form of Islam
7	The importance of <i>usul al-fiqh</i> to develop an Islamic-civic identity
8	The importance of the concept of <i>ijtihad</i>
9	The extent of formal and informal political participation

<sup>246</sup> Nadel, S.F. The Interview Technique in Social Anthropology. *IN*: Bartlett, F.C., Ginsberg, M., Lingren, E.J., and Thouless, R.H. (eds.). 1939. *The Study of Society: Methods and Problems*. New York: Macmillan.

<sup>247</sup> Dexter, L. A. 2006. *Op. cit.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<b>10</b>	The development of a national Islamic organisation
<b>11</b>	The affect of the Arab Spring on the Muslim community in Dublin
<b>12</b>	The experience of discrimination and Islamophobia in Dublin
<b>13</b>	Sport and food as integration tools
<b>14</b>	The relationship with the Gardaí and the Irish Army Intelligence
<b>15</b>	Feelings related to the future of the Muslim community in Dublin
<b>16</b>	Are there any questions not asked, that should have been? (Self-reflection question)
<b>17</b>	Are Muslim women at the front of debate about integration? The role Muslim women have in countering misunderstanding and misrecognition of Islam in Irish society (For females only).

Utilising social networks that had been cultivated by a chain-referral snowball technique, the formal stage of interviewing extended over a six-month period. Table 4.4 is a concise breakdown of the number of interviews conducted throughout each month:

**Table 4.4:** Semi-Structured Interviews per Month

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>
October	17
November	12
December	5
January	2
February	1
March	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>

In terms of overall numbers, thirty-eight individuals (31 Muslims and 7 non-Muslims) were interviewed from various Islamic sects (Sunni, Shia, Sufi and Ahmadiyya) and societal organisations such as Sports Against Racism Ireland (SARI) and the integration offices within Dublin City Council (DCC) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). Throughout the interviews, males were over-represented, with thirty-two males and only six females. In addition, five male interviewees (one from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation and four from the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) declined to be audio recorded but consented to recording via note-taking. Table 4.5 below gives various descriptive statistics in relation to the thirty-eight semi-structured interviews:

**Table 4.5:** Formal Interviews by Recording Time

Description	Minutes	Hours
Total Recording Time	1793.57	29.89
Longest Interview	210	3.5
Shortest Interview	18	0.3
Average Interview	43	0.71

Through a process of elimination, the interviews were reduced down to a sample of twenty-five conducted with Sunni Muslim individuals living in Dublin, who would constitute the final sample. Table 4.6 below gives a breakdown of this sample by sex, generation and citizenship status:

**Table 4.6:** Formal Interviews by Sex, Generation and Citizenship Status

Generation	Male	Female	Citizen	Denizen
1 <sup>st</sup> (10)	13	2	11	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> (15)	7	3	8	3
<b>Total</b> (25)	20	5	19	6

Table 4.7 below shows the pseudonyms given to each of the interviewee participants from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. Of note is that the symbol \* denotes female interviewees whilst ^ denotes interviewees, who have denizenship status.

**Table 4.7:** Pseudonyms of SSI Research Participants

#	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation
1	Akhtar^	Mahir
2	Hakim	Ayyub
3	Sayyid	Aziz^
4	Mazhab	Daleela*
5	Firaq	Aamil
6	Ubaid^	Furat*
7	Nazir	Azad
8	Saad	Isra*^
9	Yaseen	Nurdeen
10	Adeeb	Adam
11	Dahlia*	
12	Safeerah*	

13	Kaleem	
14	Iqbal^	
15	Nabeel^	

### *Focused Discussion Groups*

At the start of June 2012, the process of developing the third method to be deployed in the field – multiple focused discussion groups (FDGs) – began. Krueger and Casey’s methodology book proved to be an invaluable guide in bringing this method from the design stage to its conduction and eventual completion.<sup>251</sup> As they have explicitly stated the focused discussion group is a special type of method in terms of ‘purpose, size, composition and procedures’.<sup>252</sup> In terms of purpose, discussion groups are conducted in order to ‘listen and gather information’ and as a way ‘to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, product or service’.<sup>253</sup> For this reason, discussion groups are ‘used to gather opinions’.<sup>254</sup> However, these opinions are not gathered from individuals in isolation but from within a group of participants, who are selected because ‘they have characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group’.<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, in similarity to Dexter’s *sympathetic understanding* interview technique, the environment is one in which participants are actively encouraged by the moderator ‘to share perceptions and points of view without pressuring participants to vote or reach consensus’.<sup>256</sup> Of importance is the point that discussions should have a ‘comfortable, permissive environment’ in which the moderator is accepting of all statements and should be careful not to be judgemental.

For Krueger and Casey, the moderator’s role is to ‘ask questions, listen, keep the conversation on track and make sure everyone has a chance to speak’.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, the phrase discussion groups signifies plurality. Therefore, it is important to note that such methods are conducted multiple times ‘with similar types of participants so [that] the

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<sup>251</sup> Krueger, R.A., and Casey, M.A. 2009. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. UK: Sage Publications Ltd. The researcher prefers the use the term focused discussion group rather than focus group.

<sup>252</sup> Krueger and Casey, *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

researcher can identify trends and patterns in perceptions'.<sup>258</sup> This 'careful and systematic'<sup>259</sup> design, conduction and analysis 'provide[s] clues and insights as to how a product, service or opportunity is perceived by members of the groups'.<sup>260</sup> Thereupon, Krueger and Casey define the discussion group as –

A carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. Each group is conducted with five to ten people led by a skilled interviewer. The discussions are relaxed, and often participants enjoy sharing their ideas and perceptions.<sup>261</sup>

Krueger and Casey outline the five fundamental elements of a focused discussion group. These are the ingredients of the method and relate to (1) people, who (2) possess certain characteristics, (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest.

In essence, this method *focuses-in* on important questions, which are 'carefully predetermined and sequenced' and phrased appropriately so that the participant will understand the question and its logic.<sup>262</sup> The researcher should, on the basis of his or her research question, theoretical framework and deep lengthy reflection, develop a variety of open-ended questions that when combined constitute a natural and sequenced questioning route i.e., a *conversation guide*.<sup>263</sup> This should make use of general questions that open up the conversation within the group but also utilise tailored questions to tackle more complex issues. Overall, the discussion group is not attempting to discover an ultimate "truth" but its purpose is to obtain a better understanding of the opinion, experience and identity of the participants as perceived within their everyday intersubjective lives.

In terms of this project, extensive planning was conducted from April 2012 onwards. Aspects to be reflected upon include – who are the units of analysis; what questions will be asked of these individuals; where will the discussions take place; will the discussions be recorded; and how will the speaker be connected to the audio

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

recording. September 2012 was set as the deadline for the conduction of the multiple discussions groups. Thereby, a six month period was the time-frame allotted to design, structure, pilot, attract participants, and finally conduct the discussion groups.

The number of focused discussion groups to be conducted was finalised to four. Each group would last approximately one hour and thirty minutes and contain between six to ten participants. In order to compare and contrast emerging topics such as the relationship between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations; male versus female Muslim experience; and various recognitive relationships, a strategic decision was made to keep the groups homogeneous by studying Sunni Muslims individuals, who are aged over 18 years and who live in Dublin and yet differentiate between heterogeneous attributes. In other words, although each group would be composed of Sunni Muslims, who have lived many years in Dublin, each discussion group would have a varying demographic makeup. Thus, external variation was created between each discussion group by a generational (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>) and sex (male/female) division whilst internal variation within each discussion group was created by a citizenship status division between citizens and denizens. Table 4.8 outlines the design of each of the discussion groups in terms of their homogenous and heterogeneous attributes:

**Table 4.8:** Discussion Group Attributes

<b>Homogeneous Attributes</b>	<b>Heterogeneous Attributes</b>
Sunni Muslim  Lives in Dublin  Over 18 years of age	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation (37+) Male Citizen or Denizen
	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation (37+) Female Citizen or Denizen
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation (18-36) Female Citizen or Denizen
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation (18-36) Male Citizen or Denizen

The next stage involved reflecting on what questions would be asked of the participants. Through the pilot and semi-structured interviews, three themes were identified as

important and in need of further focus – recognition, experience and identity. A *conversation guide* was worked on throughout the summer of 2012. This contained all the questions and sub-questions that would be asked within each of the four discussions. Table 4.9 below gives a concise summary of the themes, time allocations and questions pertaining to the discussions:

**Table 4.9:** Conversation Guide

Theme	Time Allocation	Question
Introductions	5 Minutes	Please state your name, something about your background and something about your interests or hobbies.
Experience	20 Minutes	In your opinion, what is your particular experience of being Muslim in Dublin, whatever that may be?
Identity	30 Minutes	Broad discussion about the interrelation between various identities
Recognition	30 Minutes	Recognition within different spheres of everyday life

For two weeks in late June 2012, the conversation guide was piloted to young Western Muslims attending an academic conference.<sup>264</sup> Such piloting provided vital feedback that enabled the script to be cut, edited and eventually finalised. The first recruitment drive took place from July to August 2012 with the discussion groups planned for a week in mid-September. Although the recruitment process went better than expected, only one focus group – related to 1<sup>st</sup> generation males – attracted a suitable number of participants.

Consequently, a more flexible approach was adopted, which involved the participants taking a lead in organising each group. The remaining discussions were obtained slowly over a period of a year – from October 2012 to November 2013. Like the semi-structured interviews, each discussion group was recorded to a digital device

<sup>264</sup> Dialogo Global. 2012. *Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles, Theology of Liberation and Islamic Revival*. International Conference. Granada Spain, June 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

and then transcribed verbatim. Table 4.10 outlines information about the four finalised FDGs:

**Table 4.10:** Finalised Focused Discussion Groups

<b>Date Conducted</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Discussion Group</b>
<b>Wed 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012</b>	6	Dublin City University (DCU)	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation (37+) Male 4 Citizens/2 Denizens
<b>Thurs 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012</b>	11	Local Community Centre	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation (37+) Female 10 Citizens/1 Denizen
<b>Mon 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013</b>	7	Dublin City University (DCU)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation (18-36) Female 3 Citizens/4 Denizens
<b>Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013</b>	8	Mosque	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation (18-36) Male 7 Citizens/1 Denizen

Table 4.11 below shows the pseudonyms given to each of the discussants from the four discussion groups. The symbol ^ denotes discussants, who have denizenship status.

**Table 4.11:** Pseudonyms of FDG Research Participants

<b>#</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Gen. Male</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Gen. Female</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Gen. Female</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Gen. Male</b>
<b>1</b>	Idris	Dahlia	Saiba	Nejeed
<b>2</b>	Labeeb^	Elmira	Bisma^	Masud
<b>3</b>	Abdul	Aisha	Fusaila	Hussein^
<b>4</b>	Farid	Sadiyya	Isha	Aswad
<b>5</b>	Amir	Maja	Rifa^	Siddiq
<b>6</b>	Rashid	Fazia	Mahala^	Azaan
<b>7</b>		Ghazalah^	Sumayya^	Aban
<b>8</b>		Saadiqa		Yusuf
<b>9</b>		Ayan		
<b>10</b>		Meera		
<b>11</b>		Hurriyah		

### 4.3 Interpreting Everyday Narrative

As a sociological project, this research relies on the interpretation of narrative.<sup>265</sup> The use of narrative has varied over the years – from Labov’s structured narrative analysis to the 1980s period that developed a more flexible approach in an attempt to shift away from standardised methodologies. The use of narrative is not tied to one particular discipline but traverses many i.e., it is interdisciplinary. Running parallel to the hermeneutic or *interpretative turn* in the social sciences, narrative interpretation runs counter to realist assumptions of the natural sciences and instead aims at explicating the complexity of social life, particularly as human action through discourse.<sup>266</sup> Reissman states that it ‘takes as its object of investigation from the story itself...to first-person accounts by respondents of their experience’.<sup>267</sup> Due to the fact that researchers cannot live the experience of their subjects, narrative interpretation is a method in which perceptions of experience are explored via ‘talk, text, interaction and interpretation’.<sup>268</sup> The purpose of doing such an exploration is to ‘see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives’.<sup>269</sup> Thus, this approach ‘examines the informant’s story and analyzes how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws on, and how it persuades a listener of authenticity’.<sup>270</sup>

Academics dealing with narrative have various and multiple opinions about the relationship of narrative to “truth”. This study is agnostic in how it views subjective narrative perceptions of “truth”. Therefore, the complexity of obtaining “truth” must be recognised in that narrative interpretation involves a *double hermeneutic* in that the researcher must interpret the data, which is the subject’s interpretation of their reality. Consequently, the researcher is fundamentally dealing with perceptions of reality and is perceptually distanced from the subject’s reality.<sup>271</sup> We have thus returned to the argument that there are two levels of “truth” corresponding with the two levels of nature

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<sup>265</sup> For an explication of the interrelationship between sociology and interpretation, see Furseth, I and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 1. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives*. UK: Ashgate.

<sup>266</sup> Riessman, C.K. 1993. *Narrative Analysis*. London: Sage.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-16.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

– 1<sup>st</sup> order “truth” related to *natural nature* and the 2<sup>nd</sup> order of constructed “truth” related to intersubjective *human nature*. In 1989, the Personal Narratives Group wrote of narrative “truth” that –

...when talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. *Yet they are revealing truths*. These truths don’t reveal the past “as it actually was”, aspiring to a standard of objectivity. *They give us instead the truths of experiences*... Unlike the Truth of the scientific ideal, the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretations, paying careful attention to the context that shape their creation and to the world views that inform them. Sometimes the truths we see in personal narratives jar us from our complacent security as interpreters “outside” the story and make us aware of our own place in the world plays a part in our interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them.<sup>272</sup>

As Reissman indicates, narrative interpretation is linked to the everyday. In a later work, she briefly and generally defines narrative as an aspect of ‘everyday oral storytelling, [in which] a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story’.<sup>273</sup> With this in mind, it is important to state that narrative interpretation is a social construction that is strongly linked to social interaction and intersubjectivity. Such communication is studied through the interpretation of text in thematic and storied form. It is a case-centered approach that can comment broadly on intersubjective everyday life via a variety of subjective narratives. Reissman makes the important point that

A good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text, and there is a move toward a broader commentary.<sup>274</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 5 – will begin the empirical exploration by exploring relations to the non-Muslim community in terms of forms of wider societal and legal misrecognition.

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<sup>272</sup> Personal Group Narratives. Truths. *IN: Personal Narratives Group. (eds.). 1989. Interpreting women’s lives: Feminist theory and personal narratives*. USA: Indiana University Press. p. 261.

<sup>273</sup> Riessman, C.K. 2008. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage. p. 3.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.



## Chapter 5      **Relations to the Non-Muslim Community**

Through an array of narratives, this section will explore how the interviewees and discussants relate to the non-Muslim community that they interact with in Dublin, Ireland. Importantly, attention will be placed on themes and sub-themes that specifically deal with perceived forms of misrecognition.<sup>275</sup> In terms of wider societal misrecognition, the focus will be on negative media stereotyping and various forms of everyday discrimination. In terms of legal misrecognition, the focus will be on how denizenship status puts direct and indirect limitations on the rights of residence and on social opportunities. The last section will deal with perception of identity, particularly with how “difference” tends to supersede “sameness”; as well as in how the participants relate to “Irishness” and how transnational identities are perceived by others.

### **5.1 Media Misrepresentation**

Through a diverse collection of interview and focused discussion group narratives, this section will explore the pertinent issue of wider societal misrecognition in terms of media misrepresentation. This topic will be examined in terms of how such representation is negatively viewed as sensationalist stereotyping in that it creates misunderstandings about Muslims and perpetuates discrimination, which negatively affects an individual’s positive relation-to-self and manifests a lack of trust between Muslim individuals and societal media. Lastly, narratives that normatively claim for more positive understanding, better representation and increased participation will be explored.

#### **5.1.1 Stereotyping, Misunderstanding and Discrimination**

A large volume of the narratives from the interviews and focus groups relates to stereotyping, which is perceived as creating a negative perception of Islam and its followers. For example, a working journalist Akhtar, takes the view that if Muslims

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<sup>275</sup> Throughout the following empirical chapters, participants from the semi-structured interviews will be referred to as *interviewees* while focused discussion group participants will be referred to as *discussants*.

‘start practising Islam properly’<sup>276</sup> then the ‘stereotypes about Muslims’ would ‘prove to be false’.<sup>277</sup> This statement indicates how this interviewee views personal action as a means to transform societal media representations. He continues by stating that ‘there is a question of acceptability’ in relation to whether the Muslim youth in Ireland will be accepted for ‘the way they are or cast aside as foreigners, as [the] children of foreigners’.<sup>278</sup> Nazir agrees that some people within Irish society have ‘a very negative picture of Muslim’.<sup>279</sup> In his opinion, the media feeds such a perception by conveying a ‘negative picture of Islam’.<sup>280</sup> Saad also agrees that ‘sometimes we [the Muslim community] get bad publicity’.<sup>281</sup>

The two female interviewees – Dahlia and Safeerah – also do not feel represented by the media in Ireland or Europe. For Safeerah, the Muslim name in Europe ‘means bad things’.<sup>282</sup> Dahlia agrees and determines that this is because newspapers and other media ‘back the stereotype again’.<sup>283</sup> Saad determines that the media’s job is to sensationalise information in order to sell media products and attract an audience. He makes reference to this by stating that ‘the media is doing their job’,<sup>284</sup> which is to ‘bring the stories that are sensational’.<sup>285</sup> Unfortunately, the ‘good news is no news’<sup>286</sup> and ‘only negative news can be sensational’.<sup>287</sup> Sayyid talks about Irish television when he states that the ‘only time when the Muslims are featured there [on RTE] is when there is some sensationalisation going on, they want to paint him [the Muslim] bad or whatever’.<sup>288</sup> This results in Muslim individuals making the decision to avoid Irish media and instead ‘watch their own programs from their [home]countries’.<sup>289</sup> Lastly, Firaq states in relation to media sensationalism:

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<sup>276</sup> Akhtar (1<sup>st</sup> Generation; Male; Denizen; Semi-Structured Interviews). Information within brackets will be abbreviated from this point forth.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> Nazir (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> Saad (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>282</sup> Safeerah (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>283</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>284</sup> Saad.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> Sayyid (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

They have to give you something that's kind of not boring in order for them to sell [their product] and for people [advertisers] to attract attention [to their products]. So media, being media, that's the way it's gonna be and we're not going to change [the nature of] it...the interesting news always when, ye know, [the media] exaggerating something and unfortunately, in this era, which we are living in [now], is where [the media is] exaggerating things about Muslims.<sup>290</sup>

The younger interviewees have a similar opinion to the elders about media and its negative affect on the small Muslim community in Dublin. They have a predominantly negative opinion towards media because it is perceived as the medium that facilitates stereotyping and has thus manifested a lack of trust. Speaking generally, Ayyub states that there are many Muslims, who do not trust the media as 'they believe the media is saying hateful things'.<sup>291</sup> Nurdeen states in relation to international news that 'you just have to look at Sky and Murdoch. It's not really news'<sup>292</sup> whilst Adam similarly states about Sky News that these media organisations 'exaggerate everything'.<sup>293</sup> A young female interviewee, Isra, comments on the link media constantly make between Islam and terrorism and how this affects Muslims in the West. She states the 'the media publicises all these kind of problems'<sup>294</sup> related to Islamic terrorism, however, this in itself 'will also probably bring a problem'<sup>295</sup> in that Muslims feel this is stereotyping and disrespectful. In other words, the media is presenting or possessing you 'for something you haven't done'.<sup>296</sup>

Similar negative opinions emanate from discussions within the young male discussion group. Notably, the theme of media misrepresentation was prominent and many discussants felt that the media tarnished the name of Islam in Europe and across the globe. Masud latches on to the word *tarnish* and clarifies that he would 'use that one

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<sup>290</sup> Firaq (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>291</sup> Ayyub (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>292</sup> Nurdeen (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>293</sup> Adam (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>294</sup> Isra (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; SSI).

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* Within the interviews, substantial criticisms exist in terms of negative media portrayals of Muslims and Islam within Irish and international media. In academia, research on this topic is extensive. See Poole, E., and Richardson, J. E. (eds.). 2006 *Muslims and the News Media*. London: I.B Tauris. Shaheen, J. G. 2009. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. MA: Olive Branch Press. See also Knott, K., et al. 2013. *Media Portrayals of Religion and Secular Sacred*. London: Ashgate.

word<sup>297</sup> to describe how the media views Islam and Muslims generally. Aban enters the conversation to opine that the media have latched onto Islam because they are afraid of the rising Muslim population growth in Europe. He asks the moderator to ‘think about it’,<sup>298</sup> especially the point that the media know ‘the religion [of Islam] is growing’.<sup>299</sup> He refers to the example in England where ‘every week Islam is growing by three percent’.<sup>300</sup> In a comment that indicates a transnational reflection, Aban criticises the media’s attention on terrorism and acts of violence against Western countries such as the US and UK, when similar acts are occurring to Muslims in countries like Burma, in which Muslims are ‘dying’.<sup>301</sup> In this discussant’s opinion, the media ‘don’t care about them at all’<sup>302</sup> i.e., the suffering of Muslims in less-developed non-Western countries around the world. In Aban’s opinion, the media subjectively looks at news from only ‘one side’<sup>303</sup> when it normatively ‘should just look at both sides’.<sup>304</sup>

Masud then re-enters the conversation and emphasises the point that Muslims are treated in a particular way by Western media. To explain his point he uses ‘the example of what happened in America’<sup>305</sup> by explaining that the actions of a mentally-ill individual involved in a high-school shooting will not be perceived by the media as an act of terrorism as the ‘guy was sick’<sup>306</sup> yet hypothetically, if that individual was Muslim or looks foreign, ‘the word “terrorist” is used’.<sup>307</sup> For this discussant, this indicates that the word terrorist is ‘reserved just for us’<sup>308</sup> and ‘that’s where the media comes in’.<sup>309</sup> This perception about the media affects Masud’s feelings in that he describes how, when he sees or hears such news items it ‘really does annoy’<sup>310</sup> him as he takes the view that ‘it’s not the truth’.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Masud (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>298</sup> Aban (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Masud.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

Another theme related to negative stereotyping is how such media create misunderstanding about Islam and Muslims generally. Within the interview narratives, Nazir has the view that misunderstanding is exacerbated by journalists who ‘don't know about Islam’<sup>312</sup> and ‘don't sit down with Muslim people’,<sup>313</sup> particularly the grassroots of the community. The two female interviewees – Dahlia and Safeerah – are concerned that such media misrepresentation has a negative impact on non-Muslims and their perceptions of Islam. As Dahlia states:

They [the media] are always talking about the bad side, [the] burka. Prophet Muhammad married how many women? What else? [voicing the media] "Many wives, many wives, you [Muslims] have". That's always [the story], I never saw [anything different], where's [the good stories]? Islam is a big, huge [religion], just only these two points and you [the non-Muslim] are left with all this [just two points].<sup>314</sup>

For Akhtar, the large gap between negative media representation and positive everyday action must be bridged by actively participating in media and by speaking to and convincing others, who are ‘far removed from Islam and Muslims’,<sup>315</sup> of the positive contribution Muslims make to Irish society in their everyday lives. Nabeel makes a concise statement that emphasises the pervasive role that the media has in disseminating knowledge about Islam to the wider public. This interviewee agrees that there is a lack of ethical recognition of Islam in Western society and that this has caused a lack of understanding about the religion.<sup>316</sup> He goes on to say: ‘because our [Irish societies’] understanding of Islam, in general, is what the media talks about [in terms of] the problems’.<sup>317</sup> The female interviewees narrate that the media does not understand Islam or Muslims. Dahlia opines that there is a ‘deep meaning of Islam’<sup>318</sup> that advocates civic participation but the ‘media will never cover it, unfortunately’<sup>319</sup> whilst Safeerah opines that the media have ‘wrong ideas’<sup>320</sup> about Islam yet it is hard for Muslim individuals to

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<sup>312</sup> Nazir.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>315</sup> Akhtar.

<sup>316</sup> Nabeel (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Den; SSI).

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> Dahlia.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>320</sup> Safeerah.

‘change it and say "this has nothing to do with Islam".<sup>321</sup> Kaleem does not trust journalists. In his opinion, ‘most journalists, they have no idea of Islam’<sup>322</sup> and are just interested in a ‘media sound bite’.<sup>323</sup> He narrates a small story about the problems he faced when the Garda Special Branch interrogated him about opinions he expressed to a journalist:

They [the special branch Gardaí] stopped me for two hours and questioned me about newspaper articles. This is very interesting thing that, after this [incident], I was speaking to my family about it and I was just saying the way, the whole media thing, they [the Gardaí] were holding up newspapers they brought, they didn't have anything like proof that I'd done anything or been anywhere, except for newspaper articles and it just hit home to me the fact that, “hold on here”, the first time that I've seen anyway, “they're taking newspaper articles, what a journalist wrote whether it's true or not, to be true”.<sup>324</sup>

For the young interviewees, the propagation of media stereotypes is connected to the continuing misunderstanding of Islam generally by wider Irish society. Ayyub strongly criticises the media for having ‘a superficial understanding of Islam’<sup>325</sup> and proclaims that Islam and its followers have become a profit-making product for capitalist media organisations in the West.<sup>326</sup> Aziz states that the ‘biggest problem is that people misunderstand Islam, especially with the media’.<sup>327</sup> He continues by emphasising the important role and responsibility the media have as the main medium ‘where people get information’<sup>328</sup> to ‘understand more about Islam’.<sup>329</sup>

Within the narratives, a number of interviewees causally link negative media portrayals to the perpetuation of everyday discrimination. Certainly, the majority of interviewees perceive everyday discrimination to be significantly caused by societal media, which manifests misunderstandings and stereotypes about Islam; thereby, negatively affecting Muslim people in their everyday interactions. Indeed, a significant proportion of the interviewees mention the impact of stereotypes on everyday people.

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<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>322</sup> Kaleem (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>325</sup> Ayyub.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> Aziz (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Den; SSI).

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*

Ayyub states that the media ‘categorises people’<sup>330</sup> and that the vast majority of people in Irish society ‘see stereotypes that have been implanted in them’.<sup>331</sup> Hakim states that the media is ‘planting racism in the minds of Irish citizens’<sup>332</sup> whilst Sayyid states something similar by referring to Irish media as a ‘racist media’.<sup>333</sup> In this interviewee’s opinion, the Irish television media is ‘too white’<sup>334</sup> even though it is financed through a general license fee and is supposed to represent a pluralistic democratic society. In his opinion, Irish media is ‘ignoring completely the immigrant community as if they are non-existent’.<sup>335</sup> Sayyid strongly states that:

...if you look from RTE to RTE2 to TG4 to TV3, all the radios, do you hear any immigrants, do you see any immigrants? TV’s too white, it’s too white, it’s too white...we are all paying license, we are paying taxes, we are paying TV licences and there’s nothing, as if the immigrant community was non-existent and that does not all go well, not for the immigrant community, who’s going to suffer [and] their own [wider] community is going to suffer.<sup>336</sup>

The above is echoed by Daleela, who asks the question: ‘when was the last time you saw a Muslim on a television programme that wasn’t a terrorist’.<sup>337</sup> Isra, another young female interviewee, comments about the negative impact the media has on Muslims in the West in terms of their interactions with others in the wider social realm. She advocates strongly that ‘it was wrong to blame all Muslims’<sup>338</sup> for the terrorist actions of a few and that media representations have a causal connection to everyday discrimination.

...those people who attack you on the street, they’ve seen what they’ve seen on the news, they heard what they heard on the news and they tell you those things they heard and they judge you but they don’t charge you as a person, they charge you with your [head]scarf and that’s a huge problem.<sup>339</sup>

Furat is deeply annoyed by the gap that exists between the media representation of

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<sup>330</sup> Ayyub.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> Hakim (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>333</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> Daleela (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>338</sup> Isra.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslims and the everyday life lived by the grassroots of the Muslim community. She is adamant that the media never shows Muslim individuals like her ‘walking down the street ever – a normal, dual-citizen, Irish brought-up Muslim girl that has a very open mind’.<sup>340</sup> Instead, she perceives that the Irish media uses its persuasive power to show only the stereotypical image of the Muslim-as-terrorist. Such a stance annoys Furat:

It annoys me a lot is that once they are doing a programme about that [Muslims], for some reason the producer has to include 9/11, ye know, the twin towers being knocked down, and so instantly they’re trying to prove to everybody, they’re trying to persuade [voice lowers], persuade them [the viewers] into thinking Muslims are this type, terrorists or what not and I haven’t yet seen a programme were it kinda shows Muslims in a good kinda light.<sup>341</sup>

### **5.1.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self**

Such negative media stereotyping, general misunderstanding of Islam and the everyday experience of being Muslim in Dublin has had vast repercussions in relation to the issue of trust between Muslims and the media. 1<sup>st</sup> generation interviewees – Akhtar, Mazhab and Nabeel – agree that there is a lack of trust generally between members of the Muslim community and the media. Akhtar states that a lack of trust has developed after journalists have taken the words of Muslim individuals and ‘twist it, turn it, fry it, boil it’.<sup>342</sup> For this interviewee, the lack of trust between the Muslim community and the media ‘is a big thing’.<sup>343</sup> He narrates a small story related to the Jihad Jane case in Waterford to illustrate how important responsible media reporting is to the Muslim community and how irresponsible reporting affects the community in terms of its interaction with wider society:

I told them [broadsheet journalists] straight forwardly – “look, if you sensationalise this [news story], the Muslim community is just going to distance itself from the media altogether, they’re just going to go into a closed closet and they will go back in”. I felt that they [the journalists] understood this situation.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Furat.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> Akhtar.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

Kaleem opines that the media ‘basically lie’,<sup>345</sup> particularly the print media, which is perceived by this interviewee as ‘very dangerous, completely negative’.<sup>346</sup> Although he has actively participated in an array of media productions, he continues to view media with distrust and as a hard-to-control communicative medium. Essentially, he doesn’t ‘believe the media will ever really say what [it should]’,<sup>347</sup> and it won’t ‘ever put me on a show and announce exactly what I believe’.<sup>348</sup> Nabeel defines the relationship between the Muslim community and the media as ‘not that healthy’.<sup>349</sup> Negative experiences related to the media production process are perceived as not conducive to developing trust. For example, Nazir states his experience of speaking to a journalist about Afghanistan, his homecountry:<sup>350</sup>

As a journalist, [she] doesn't know what is in Afghanistan, what is going [on] in Afghanistan, how ordinary people knows about that. So this is important. So journalists, most of them, are bringing negative picture of Islam and they don't know about Islam and they don't sit down with Muslim people.<sup>351</sup>

Within the interviews, there are various narratives that explicate how media affects an individual’s relation-to-self. Most of these references point to how media stereotypes negatively affect an individual’s feelings and relation-to-self. Saad reflects on how media misrecognition makes individuals within the Muslim community ‘feel bad’.<sup>352</sup> This feeling is connected to the disconnection between how Muslims are living their everyday lives and how such lives are reflected upon by the media. For this interviewee, negative media stories connecting Muslims to terrorism ‘actually disturbs’<sup>353</sup> people within the Muslim community. As he states in relation to living a good contributory life in Europe versus the negative global media image of the Muslim-as-terrorist:

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<sup>345</sup> Kaleem.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> Nabeel.

<sup>350</sup> The word *homecountry* is used consistently in participant narratives. It is a common term within the Muslim community – for both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations – to denote the *country of origin* i.e., a country or region the 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrated from and where family connections or ‘roots’ remain.

<sup>351</sup> Nazir.

<sup>352</sup> Saad.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

We feel bad that we are living in this country and we are doing quite well, we have quite positive image [in Ireland] and then when something happens maybe in England or in America and we say "oh, thank God, this is not again another Muslim" because anything will, anything, bomb explosion or anything happens like in Sweden, this is what happened, we were all praying that hopefully it is nothing to do with Muslims.<sup>354</sup>

Furat, a young female interviewee, elaborates further on media misrepresentation and how it has personally affected her own relation-to-self. She narrates a small story that conveys how the media can impact the everyday lives of Muslims in Ireland in terms of perception and misrecognition. In this narrative, Furat is embarrassed in front of her friends by a media programme that she feels misrepresents Muslims – and thereby herself – as terrorists. She is frustrated by the ability of media to denigrate her identity in front of her friends, thus, disrupting how she feels about herself and how she feels others perceive her “to be”. Her small story is as follows:

It's really, really frustrating because then like I remember one day I was sitting down and they had this program with Muslims and with all my friends there [at her house], half being Irish, half being different ethnicities and they were talking [about] 9/11 and how bad it was and I was really embarrassed sitting there because, ye know, it kinda showed me like, ye know, I didn't know where to look. My friends felt nervous themselves because they didn't know whether to look at me or not to look at me.<sup>355</sup>

Of interest is the way in which many young Muslims negotiate their feelings and actions towards media. One interviewee is of particular interest in this regard. Azad states that he does not follow Irish media anymore. He states that he ‘barely even reads [print media] because, most of the time, [when] I open something it will be like “a Muslim something, a Muslim fundamentalist, a Muslim this”’.<sup>356</sup> Further on in the interview, it becomes apparent that his agentic action to isolate himself from particular media is related to a perceived personal experience of media discrimination. He confides that: ‘something happened to me once’. The situation being referred to has to do with the publication (in a well-known Irish tabloid) of online racist comments directed towards the interviewee. He states about this incident:

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<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> Furat (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>356</sup> Azad (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

...it was years ago now, around four years ago but maybe that kind of bad experience just put me off from the media at all, to the extent that I never bothered following what the media [report], what's up in the media and stuff like that. So in a way like [I] kinda lost faith in it.<sup>357</sup>

### 5.1.3 The Need for Understanding, Representation and Participation

Although many narratives are negative in terms of criticising the media and its perceived affect on everyday life, other narratives are critical in terms of proclaiming a normative stance – a need or hope – that media should play a more positive civic role within Irish society by showing Muslims in their everyday contributory capacity that benefits society as a whole.

For example, Nazir takes such a position and advocates that the media should play a more ‘positive role’<sup>358</sup> in society. Dahlia states concisely that there is a ‘deep meaning of Islam’<sup>359</sup> and the ‘media will never cover it, unfortunately’.<sup>360</sup> For this interviewee, the deep meaning of Islam relates *to the advocacy of civic participation*. This form of critique is also expressed by young female interviewees. Daleela asserts that the media, particularly Irish media, could do more to ‘portray Muslims a bit more positively’.<sup>361</sup> In a similar reference to responsibility but with more inference to reciprocal action, Isra expresses the need for the Muslim community and European society (including Ireland) to mutually ‘show the good way that the Muslim community are doing [contributing], rather than just focusing on terrorism, terrorism, terrorism’.<sup>362</sup>

Interestingly, criticism is also reflected back towards the Muslim community itself in that the interviewees advocate for more media interaction and more proactiveness by Muslims within Irish media in order to rectify the perceived negative image of Islam and to create more positive representations that are closer to the lived experience of the Muslim grassroots. Hakim strongly advocates for the Muslim community to be ‘more proactive’<sup>363</sup> within Irish media, which he views as a

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<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>358</sup> Nazir.

<sup>359</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>361</sup> Daleela.

<sup>362</sup> Isra.

<sup>363</sup> Hakim.

‘subjective’<sup>364</sup> medium of communication. Such statements that promote participation in Irish media also indicate the existence of the opposite – that there is a tendency in the Muslim community to be inactive towards Irish media and hence, to be isolated from the representation of their own lives. Ubaid discusses this issue. He states categorically that Muslims in Ireland need to try to participate within the local and national media because the ‘only way we can change that [media] is to be part of it’.<sup>365</sup> This interviewee, who was born in Europe and lived his whole life in various European countries, is critical of the tendency of individuals within the Muslim community to consume ‘Arabic newspapers’<sup>366</sup> and other media content from the homecountry. In his opinion, such actions are ‘isolating’<sup>367</sup> and are ‘creating a bigger issue’<sup>368</sup> in terms of integration and participation. He then goes on to strongly advocate for Muslims to contribute to their community by participating within and utilising various media. Importantly, Ubaid advocates for Muslims to civically act as democratic citizens within the communicative public sphere:

What is your contribution as a community to the media, as an individual, to the media? Could you write an article? Did you, on a collective level, organise an event, conference where you invited the media and told them about your reservation? Did anything like that happen? It hasn't [happened in the Muslim community]. So, since we [the Muslim community] are living in a democratic country and Islam is also a democratic religion. Islam is for democracy. So, you can react to that democratically. Why not write articles? Why not become involved?<sup>369</sup>

As has become apparent through the above statements, many 1<sup>st</sup> generation interviewees are critical of how their own generation relate to media within the Irish and European context. Mazhab states something extremely important in relation to how the 1<sup>st</sup> generation perceive the future role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, particularly in relation to public participation and media involvement. He views Muslim youth – who have grown up in the European sphere – as having the potential to enact better communication with the wider social sphere. Due to the younger generations’ language, education and cultural

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<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> Ubaid (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

competency i.e., social capital they have a stronger capacity to represent Muslim concerns and problematic issues to the wider society. In other words, the younger generation can ‘react with the media’<sup>370</sup> in a more productive way. As Mazhab states about the potential of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to create more mutual understanding:

We [the Islamic community] are hoping that the new generation can involve more with the media, they can speak up and they are a lot of college graduated.<sup>371</sup>

However, it must be noted that action related to social struggle takes many forms. It can involve action to isolate oneself or action to participate. Contra to Azad above, who took cognitive action to avoid Irish media, which he felt disrespected him as a citizen, Aamil actively decided to take part in an RTE documentary that focused on the Muslim community in Ireland in order to publicly defend his community, culture and Islamic religion. It is therefore a very good example of how individuals use their agency to struggle against forms of power and to regain positive recognition. Importantly, Aamil’s small story clearly outlines the causal mechanism of a struggle for recognition. In the story, he hears about the denigration of Muslim women by a right-wing Irish journalist. Such disrespect creates anger in Aamil, which leads to action in the form of deciding to actively participate in the television programme in order to struggle against denigration and regain a positive recognition and relation-to-self. Aamil’s small story is as follows:

I’ll tell you what happened. There was Stefan, the director of that show. He actually came into the X [workplace] with his crew. I do know what he was looking for. He said to me, this was the first time meeting [him], he said to me “there’s a guy [a journalist], Alex, he’s against the Muslims”; so I go “in what way is he against the Muslims” because I’m not a, I’m not a faithful Muslim, you know what I mean, but I still, if somebody’s going to say “I’m against the Irish”, I’m gonna say “what way are you against the Irish, you tell me ”...He actually said a lot of different things but one of the things that really peed-me off, is it okay [to say peed-me off] yeah, he peed-me off because he actually said that the women that wear the niqab are like the characters in Pac-Man or like, the men are insulting the women by telling them to dress up like that or whatever but no, that’s not reality, the reality is, if the woman is comfortable in it...You have to go with the generations growing, growing, growing, growing, this is 2011, you know, I’m not going to tell my wife “go out and where niqab”. My wife has her

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<sup>370</sup> Mazhab (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

own will.<sup>372</sup>

For male discussant Azaan, there is a need within Irish society for equal interaction but also an understanding and appreciation of difference and diversity in everyday life. In relation to pluralism within Irish media i.e., the issue of employing presenters and newscasters from different religious and ethnic backgrounds to reflect modern-day diversity within Irish society, he states that such symbolic gestures will not ‘really matter’.<sup>373</sup> This narrative negates symbolic recognition in favour of *more concrete recognition within everyday life*, which will increase understanding between diverse people. Essentially, he is advocating that *all* people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, must try to learn to understand other cultures and not stand in isolation to each other. On this point, he states the following:

It's just the very basis of understanding different people, different ethnic minorities and understanding of peoples' different cultures because we can't really be very narrow-minded or seclude yourself to your own culture because there's hundreds of different countries all over the world.<sup>374</sup>

## 5.2 Discrimination

The following section will examine the narrative perceptions of societal misrecognition in terms of structural and everyday discrimination. The interview and focus group narratives will aim to delve into this topic under the following sub-themes related firstly to a general identification of perceptions of institutional social exclusion and how the social pathology of discrimination manifests itself in everyday interaction as the prejudice of first impressions, particularly in relation to the female Muslim experience of wearing the hijab in the public sphere. Then the chapter will focus on how discrimination affects an individual's relation-to-self, especially in terms of self-esteem. In the last section, two small stories about the cultural phenomena of art and sport will be utilised to identify the interactive common-ground that recognises ability and has the capacity to overcome pathologies of everyday discrimination.

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<sup>372</sup> Aamil (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>373</sup> Azaan (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*

### 5.2.1 Structural Exclusion and Everyday Discrimination

Firstly, in terms of discrimination, the theme of structural exclusion from institutions and social norms did arise within the interviews and focused discussion groups. Despite Dahlia and Safeerah insisting that discrimination against Muslims in Ireland is ‘not systematic or it doesn’t happen every day’,<sup>375</sup> quite a number of narratives relate to such forms of perceived systematic exclusion.

In terms of sporting culture, Yaseen references the lack of Muslims within the field of professional sport in Ireland. He states that at present ‘you don’t find a single one in athletics, a single one in rugby, nothing’.<sup>376</sup> Four interviewees mention the difficulties Muslims have in relation to the Irish educational system, especially how young Muslims find it difficult to gain access to Catholic schools that give priority placement to baptised Christian children, thereby, ensuring that Muslim children are further down on the list of potential students to gain entry into their local school.<sup>377</sup> As interviewee Hakim states in relation to educational discrimination:

In particular access to secondary schools. The Republic of Ireland still has a hierarchy policy that goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Muslim entry into schools is a secondary choice. Muslims are ninth on the list to be accepted.<sup>378</sup>

It must be acknowledged that not all Muslim interviewees agree with the promotion of denominational schooling but see the school as a common area that should be separated from the influence of religious institutions. Firaq clarifies his position about how the problem is actually the continuation of the denominational educational system in Ireland. He is against the control of any school system by one religious tradition and calls for the separation of education from religious control in order to aid integration of all people into Irish society. He states in this regard:

I think the education system will be sorted out eventually. I think, not because of the Muslim community, but because of the normal progress [of the separation of Church and State] that will happen here is that religion will be separated from schools and that will be, in my view, will offer a better school to everybody. Not

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<sup>375</sup> Safeerah.

<sup>376</sup> Yaseen (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>377</sup> Akhtar, Hakim, Ubaid and Adeeb (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>378</sup> Hakim.

just Muslims – Protestants, Presbyterians, Jews – everybody. There's no [reason for it], it's not right, it's not moderate to have Catholic schools in Ireland running the educational system and ignoring everybody else, ye know, Protestants [and Muslims]...Many other countries, advanced countries have already, like in Canada since the 1980s, they've got rid of religion of school.<sup>379</sup>

On top of Firaq's critique of the education system and its denominational character, he also criticises policing within the Irish state, particularly the Gardaí and their uniform policy in relation to wearing of hijab:

There's very few Mu[s]lims in the Gardaí...I don't know of any Muslims who have joined the Gardaí ...first because with Gardaí women they would not [accept the hijab], a Muslim woman would need to wear [the] headscarf and the Gardaí here they say "sorry", you know. They won't allow that [the hijab] in the Gardaí and as long as the Gards want to keep that attitude then they are not going to be a representative of those minority communities who are around [Ireland].<sup>380</sup>

As well as criticising the Irish police force in terms of exclusionary behaviour towards the hijab, interviewees Firaq and Kaleem also strongly criticise special units of the Gardaí and the Army for their rough handed approach to Muslim suspects, who are detained and interrogated. Along with Kaleem, this interviewee claims that individuals have had their legal rights disrespected by security forces. For example, Kaleem, a convert to Islam, who adheres to a form of political Islam and has extreme geopolitical views about the place of Islam within the global political order, makes strong narrative statements indicating that he has experienced severe physical disrespect from the state security forces for vocalising his subjective opinions. From his perspective, the following interaction occurred with the security forces that caused him significant physical and psychological distress:

The people who came to the door, the first time they were somebody else [not the Gardaí]. They were plain clothes [officers], they had machine guns. I think one or two had masks over their faces, they were something, they smelled of army, I think that's the reason why I got bounced from wall-to-wall and kicked up and down, even when they had handcuffs on, which is really bad, they broke my nose. I start[ed] reciting the Qur'an, which is really bad because, ye know, I was afraid what was going to happen, I'd always [thought about being]

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<sup>379</sup> Firaq.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

kidnapped or something, you hear about stories, ye know, Shannon is only down the road [reference to rendition flights].<sup>381</sup>

In terms of exclusion from social norms, there are narratives that emphasise the difficulties in being different to the dominant “Irish” identity standard that is firmly rooted within Irish societal culture. This is generally referred to by Daleela, who states that she has a strong Islamic religious identity, however, she adds the caveat that such a Muslim identity, which differs from the dominant standard of identity, ‘is not that compatible with [Irish] society’.<sup>382</sup>

Such differences to cultural norms and the dominant identity standard have implications for the everyday experience of Muslim youth. This is indicated by discussant Maja’s small story about her children’s experience of discrimination at school. She focuses on the problems that her children encounter in school from other children due to their difference from the identity standard and social norms of the majority. She mentions children questioning her son as to why he is not allowed to eat ham. She recounts that discussions can turn nasty between her sons and other non-Muslim children. Maja states that ‘sometimes if they’re [the other boys are] angry’,<sup>383</sup> they say to her son ‘go home. Don’t stay. Go home’.<sup>384</sup> Such comments have forced her children to defend themselves by replying: ‘No! My dad, he’s a doctor here, he’s paying tax. We are working here. It’s not your right to say to me “go home”’.<sup>385</sup> Hurriyah echoes Maja’s narrative by restating the words ‘go home to your country’.<sup>386</sup> Elmira clarifies that these words do not suggest going home to your house in Dublin but return to your homecountry, the place where your parents originated from. She clarifies: ‘Homeland! Your roots, your roots’.<sup>387</sup> Dahlia enters the conversation to support the reality that some children are ‘forcing them [Muslim children] to this kind of initiation,

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<sup>381</sup> Kaleem.

<sup>382</sup> Daleela. To generalise, it is fair to say that the dominant “Irish” identity standard relates to being a light-skinned Catholic male with nationalist tendencies. This dominant identity standard of what constitutes the legitimised social norm of “Irishness” is thus a particular mixture of ethnic, religious, and nationalist attributes.

<sup>383</sup> Maja (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> Hurriyah (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>387</sup> Elmira (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

this kind of argument'.<sup>388</sup> Dahlia and the other discussants are not happy for their children to partake in such discussions. She also states that although rare in primary school such interaction becomes more common in secondary school – a time of adolescence, which represents the 'very critical years'<sup>389</sup> of identity formation.

Despite the above references to structural exclusion, the overall majority of narratives relate to everyday discrimination. Such negative experiences revolve around the discrimination of what makes Muslims' different to the dominant Irish identity standard. Such differences relate to individual traits that differ from traditionally legitimised social norms, which are accepted as "normal" within Ireland's cultural matrix. The misrecognition of surface-level traits – in contrast to normatively recognising the underlying abilities and achievements of individuals – has been referred to by numerous interviewees and discussants, particularly females, as the *prejudice of first impressions*.

Such examples of everyday discrimination within the interviews include Mazhab stating clearly that 'there is incidents'<sup>390</sup> of discrimination, which have been exacerbated by the 'recent economic situation'.<sup>391</sup> Similarly, Iqbal states that 'there's many incidents'<sup>392</sup> and the frequency has 'gone up'.<sup>393</sup> This interviewee declares that discrimination is definitely 'on the rise'.<sup>394</sup> Nabeel takes a realistic and practical stance, by stating that the expectation of discrimination is 'something natural'<sup>395</sup> for minority groups i.e., individuals belonging to a minority religious group will have a "natural" expectation that they will suffer discrimination because their "way of life" and spiritual recognition is different to majoritarian social norms and identity standard. Adeeb emphasises how societal injustice is referred back to religious intolerance and the need to struggle against such forms of discrimination. He comments on how perceptions of injustice filter down through the generations within the Muslim community:

The mentality of the Muslims – they relate that [social injustice] to the religious

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<sup>388</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>390</sup> Mazhab.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> Iqbal (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Den; SSI).

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> Nabeel.

problem and they said “because you're Catholic and not Muslim, you're treating me like this, then you will see, then I'm delivering and passing this message to my kids – “my kids, those guys they treating us, they don't want us to be with them but we are here, we don't have any chance [opportunity].<sup>396</sup>

In terms of references to on-street discrimination, Sayyid states that he personally knows about ‘incidents of racism’;<sup>397</sup> whilst Iqbal states that Muslims on their way to the mosque were ‘pelted with stones and rocks’.<sup>398</sup> Yaseen makes an interesting comment, which relates to how Rachid al-Ghannushi, a powerful Islamist leader, felt in recognitive terms as he walked anonymously through the streets of Dublin:

While he was here [in Dublin], he comes on business, he said it, you know, "that everybody looked at him as a vendor, a fruit vendor" [laughing], because he doesn't fit our community here.<sup>399</sup>

The younger 2<sup>nd</sup> generation interviewees primarily discussed experiences of being discriminated against on-the-streets of Dublin. Generally, this misrecognition takes the form of verbal abuse, which aims to denigrate and insult; and therefore, it has the potential to create feelings of shame and to affect a person’s relation-to-self. For example, Adam, a convert of Irish ethnicity, states that ‘absolutely, you get a lot of “go back to your own country”’<sup>400</sup> and Isra recounts her ‘first time wearing the scarf [hijab] and walking down the street, [and] people said “go back to where you come from”’.<sup>401</sup> Furat, a Muslim of Libyan ethnicity, recollects how she was called a ‘Paki’ on the street. She clarifies: ‘I’m not a Paki, I’m Libyan’.<sup>402</sup>

Although most of the discrimination is verbal, sometimes it does break out into acts of physical abuse that humiliate and damage a person’s sense-of-self. Nurdeen speaks of the time he was attacked ‘down the road from the mosque’ when ‘three teenagers popped [hit] me in the nose’.<sup>403</sup> Furat described how her friend, who was walking down the street, had her hijab ripped off her head. She clarifies that the reason

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<sup>396</sup> Adeeb.

<sup>397</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>398</sup> Iqbal.

<sup>399</sup> Yaseen.

<sup>400</sup> Adam.

<sup>401</sup> Isra.

<sup>402</sup> Furat.

<sup>403</sup> Nurdeen.

for such action was to ‘humiliate her [friend] in front of everybody.’<sup>404</sup> Azad, a young dark-skinned Muslim male of African descent, narrates how he experienced physical discrimination whilst walking around his local area. He states that ‘when walking the streets you have to be prepared, like [possibly] someone's going to throw a comment or something’.<sup>405</sup> To avoid this ‘anti-social behaviour’, he will ‘try as much as possible to avoid walking down that side [of the street]’.<sup>406</sup> Interestingly, he finds not only the acts of discrimination and of avoiding it difficult but also trying to assess the reasons behind such public abuse. Was he discriminated against because he is Muslim or because of his skin colour or is it just general anti-social behaviour that he happened to fall victim to? By questioning the act of discrimination itself, he is reflecting on its complexity and is reporting that it does psychologically affect the victim, who attempts to understand the reasoning behind such abuse:

Sometimes you be like “okay he did that, the only way he did that is because I'm different or because of my skin colour or because of this, and this and this”. So, it's difficult to say, it could be anti-social behaviour or it could be racial because, I don't see it but I do experience [it], like I do experience it from time-to-time along those sides [areas of Dublin].<sup>407</sup>

Similarly to Azad, Daleela also recounts her experience of trying to assess the probable cause for the discrimination she suffered. She states that she experienced a few incidents ‘where you get called names or you clearly see that someone has a problem with you because of your religious and cultural background’.<sup>408</sup> For this female interviewee, it does create paranoia. She states questioningly that ‘sometimes you never know if it's your own paranoia or not’.<sup>409</sup> Another Muslim youth, Aziz is one of two interviewees, who mentions the issue of ‘name-calling’. He talks about the ‘joking about’<sup>410</sup> or ‘slagging’ that occurred in his secondary school<sup>411</sup> whilst Nurdeen succinctly reflects on past childhood experiences by stating: ‘I grew up being called names’.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Furat.

<sup>405</sup> Azad.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>407</sup> Daleela.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> Aziz.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> Nurdeen.

Such abuse does not stop when one reaches adulthood as Nurdeen continues to state in relation to his public activities of conducting da'wa (calling people to Islam by public preaching) in Dublin city centre. This interviewee comments on a guy, who regularly comes by the da'wa table 'every two or three weeks and gives out'.<sup>413</sup> This guy publicly calls Muslims such things as 'suicide bombers'.<sup>414</sup> When asked about the frequency of discrimination at the da'wa table, Nurdeen states that 'out of three days [of doing da'wa] you get it once or twice'.<sup>415</sup> Adam discusses his acts of da'wa and experiences of discrimination, which constantly link Islam and being Muslim with terrorism and particular acts of violence. He states that 'we've been made to feel guilty'<sup>416</sup> and 'there's not one day I stand over there at the [da'wa table that] I don't hear "oh, September 11<sup>th</sup> ...".'<sup>417</sup> He stresses that discrimination is to be expected when publicly preaching in Dublin city centre. As this convert to Islam states, 'absolutely, like you get a lot of "go back to your own country"'.<sup>418</sup> In terms of relations with the Gardaí, he states that overall relations are positive. However, he experienced one incident that made him realise the precariousness of his position as a young convert propagating a minority religion to a majority, who are either predominantly secular or Christian:

There was one incident where, a female Garda and a guy came up and he was so "Muslims are terrorists, the Prophet Muhammad was a paedophile" and he made this cutting action with his [finger], across his neck and, [he said] "these Muslims will kill you!". Now I was twenty feet away, I could hear this man shouting this, there was a Garda standing beside him and when I asked the Garda to remove him because he was inciting hatred...she said she "didn't hear a thing?"<sup>419</sup>

In terms of opinion within the young male discussion group, Nejeed comments on how class interacts with the prejudice of first impressions. He relativises that societal recognition 'depends on the person'<sup>420</sup> and then uses a class analogy that associates positive forms of recognition with higher socio-economic areas and misrecognition with

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<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>416</sup> Adam.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> Nejeed (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

disadvantaged areas of Dublin. He states – ‘for example’<sup>421</sup> in a ‘rough area’<sup>422</sup> people, who live in these areas ‘judge people from what they do’.<sup>423</sup> In other words, for this discussant, areas associated with a low socio-economic social class do not view a person’s abilities positively and will discriminate against others even though – ‘you could be one of the smartest people, you could be great at soccer, you could have some amazing talent that they don’t have’.<sup>424</sup> In these areas of the city, people are judged by their visibly recognisable genetic and constructed surface-level traits, whether that be skin colour or clothing signifying a different ethno-cultural or religious identity. Nejeed narrates this aspect by stating that ‘they’ll still like judge ye in a bad area, they’ll still be judging you, “oh yeah, you’re a Paki”’.<sup>425</sup> At this point Yusuf, who lives in a council estate and views himself as different from the other discussants in that he belongs to a lower socio-economic district of Dublin, vocally states ‘no’<sup>426</sup> in disagreement with the above comments by the other discussants. In his opinion, people who misrecognise others, based on visible surface-level traits instead of underlying abilities, are ‘ignorant’.<sup>427</sup> Nejeed agrees with Yusuf that ‘ignorance comes in[to]’<sup>428</sup> why people discriminate but then he restates his point about class that, within “good” areas, people look beyond particular difference and ‘they don’t really mind where you are from, what religion you are. They respect you more for your religion; they think that you are [a] model for your religion’.<sup>429</sup> However, in this discussant’s opinion, in a “bad” area ‘it’s all towards your religion, what you look like and everything’.<sup>430</sup>

Another male discussant, Azaan, enters the conversation and explains how discrimination is very much a present-day struggle for Muslims in Dublin. As an example, he talks about an anonymous letter received by all mosques and Muslim restaurants, the day before the discussion took place, which stated that ‘Irish people

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<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>426</sup> Yusuf (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>428</sup> Nejeed.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

want Muslims out'.<sup>431</sup> The discussant clarifies that 'obviously it was written by some[one] not representing Irish people, of course'.<sup>432</sup> Yusuf states that he had 'seen the letter',<sup>433</sup> which was being talked about in the mosque on the night of the discussion group. He states that the anonymous letter-writer is 'a really stupid person'<sup>434</sup> and provides evidence for this by stating that it had contained 'basic vocabulary mistakes'.<sup>435</sup> This statement creates laughter amongst the other discussants. For Yusuf, the perceived stupidity of the letter-writer ensures that he is 'not the scariest scumbag'<sup>436</sup> or somebody to be taken seriously. He states loudly to the other discussants: 'I was looking at it [the letter] and started laughing'.<sup>437</sup> Despite Yusuf's claim that the letter is a joke, Azaan interjects into the conversation to explain the contents of the letter and how such threats relate back to the influence of the media:

He [the letter-writer] was telling everyone, he was writing and he was saying that "everyone that is Irish, true Irish people" something like that "want all the Muslims out and they're going to attack Muslim people on the street and they're going to get their kids to attack Muslim kids in schools and they're going to do this and that" and whatever, "until Muslims are out [of Ireland]" and they said that "if any Muslim people die in the process, we hope you burn in hell". So obviously, well not I'm not 100% sure, but well like I'm pretty sure, that some of it would have to be done through media and stuff...so people, whether they are extreme or hate Muslims or not, *they will have that fear like put into them because of the media.*<sup>438</sup>

The most insightful narratives about discrimination as the prejudice of first impressions emanate from female narratives, particularly in relation to wearing the hijab and being publicly identified by others as Muslim in the public sphere. Interviewees – Dahlia and Safeerah – insist that discrimination against Muslims in Ireland is 'not systematic or it doesn't happen every day';<sup>439</sup> however, 'some kinda incidents'<sup>440</sup> have happened that

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<sup>431</sup> Azaan. See Holland, K. 2013. Hate letters to mosques referred to gardaí. *Irish Times*. November 25<sup>th</sup>. Available at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com).

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>433</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>438</sup> Azaan.

<sup>439</sup> Safeerah.

<sup>440</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

are related ‘about hijab’<sup>441</sup> or ‘about our sons at school’.<sup>442</sup> Overall, when reflecting on her life and position within Irish society, Dahlia finds herself to be ‘lucky’<sup>443</sup> to be a full-citizen and legally recognised in comparison to the isolation experienced by asylum-seekers in Ireland. However, she and Safeerah narrate an enlightening small story that illuminates how difficult it can be for Muslim women “to be” in the Irish public sphere, particularly when that “being” goes against social norms and the dominant cultural identity standard.

For Dahlia, a positive relation-to-self, particularly self-confidence is intrinsic to wearing the hijab and being different to the “normal” identity standard. However, trying to be Muslim in the wider public sphere can be a difficult everyday intersubjective struggle that is also dependent on one’s relation-to-self. Dahlia narrates a small story about her Filipino friend, who did not have the confidence to wear the hijab in public and be seen as different to others in everyday life:

Dahlia: Yes, you are confident, you understand [why Islam prescribes the hijab], you do it [you wear the hijab], I don’t care, they put me in many debates in shopping centre when I used to be, I say “I do my best to answer”, if it’s not [good enough to convince them] I don’t care, this will not affect me. *I think it depends on how you are confident* and some, like I have a friend, she was a Filipino Christian and she converted to Islam, she wear the hijab immediately, she enjoyed [it] but she find herself like "I’m a stranger, [yet] everyone look at me". I said "You think this; they are not look at you [they are looking at the hijab, what you represent], if they look at you, and it’s ok".

Safeerah: She wanted to feel, you know, [spiritually] affected.

Dahlia: She said "I want to feel [that] I’m normal".

Safeerah: The same as everybody else, yeah.

Dahlia: I said "and what’s normal?"

Safeerah: Some of them does though, some of them does [stare].

Dahlia: But that not affect me, to be honest, I am proud of what I have [the hijab covering my head and the religion that prescribes it] and then at the end [of the story about the Filipino woman], she decided to take the hijab and she took it

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<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

[off], because why? The [social] pressure.<sup>444</sup>

Some 1<sup>st</sup> generation males indicate their awareness of the issues that their female loved ones encounter in everyday interaction. For example, Firaq discusses the position of the hijab in Irish society. First of all, he states that ‘equality and discrimination is a big issue’<sup>445</sup> and that ‘women are more affected by it [discrimination] than [Muslim] men’.<sup>446</sup> He continues by narrating how his wife has experienced discrimination more often than himself. He reasons why this is the case by referring to the visibility of Muslim women in that their difference is ‘more obvious with their headscarf...and that makes [them] some kind of clear targets for discrimination’.<sup>447</sup>

Such an experience is expressed by 2<sup>nd</sup> generation interviewee Furat, who mentions her friend’s hijab being ‘ripped off her’.<sup>448</sup> She also comments that the hijab carries with it the generalised perception and connotation that Muslim women lack agency and are forced to wear the headscarf by male patriarchal powers. As she states about this perception: ‘the first thing that people think when they see the headscarf is ‘she [is] made wear it; I betcha that’s against her will; I betcha her father or her husband [made her wear it]’.<sup>449</sup> Daleela states her opinion that the hijab and prejudice are linked and that by the simple act of wearing the hijab a Muslim woman is placing herself in the aim of discriminatory acts. She states that ‘you’re the one who’s wearing it [the hijab]; you’re the one who’s facing the prejudices’.<sup>450</sup> Another female interviewee, Isra, states that in her own experience ‘you hear people saying “all Muslims are terrorists, you shouldn’t be bombing everywhere, why are you killing [people]”’?<sup>451</sup> This interviewee is adamant in her claim that Irish people ‘just do discriminate with the scarf [hijab] and they have [a] problem [with it]’.<sup>452</sup> This has impacted on the everyday lives of many Muslim women. Isra describes her interactions with other Muslim women and how discrimination consumes their daily lives: ‘I have met with a lot of young [Muslim]

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<sup>444</sup> Dahlia and Safeerah.

<sup>445</sup> Firaq.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>448</sup> Furat.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>450</sup> Daleela.

<sup>451</sup> Isra.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

women, who are facing [discrimination] everyday, almost [all] their life – on the bus, on the street, in the shops, everywhere’.<sup>453</sup>

On the link between discrimination as the prejudice of first impressions and the sphere of work, once again the three young female interviewees above – Daleela, Furat and Isra – narrate their negative work experiences and connect it to wearing the hijab publicly. Two respondents – Daleela and Furat – discuss problems of wearing the hijab whilst simultaneously attempting to obtain employment whilst Isra gives an example of the actual difficulties she faced when wearing the hijab within a public work space. Daleela once again expresses her feelings of paranoia but this time in relation to obtaining work. She states that ‘you can never know why you didn't get the job, it could be you or it could be the first impression they are going to get of your [religious or ethnic] culture’.<sup>454</sup> Furat states something similar by commenting that ‘another thing about the headscarf is that at work, sometimes you don't know whether you're kinda getting declined for a job’<sup>455</sup> because of the headscarf. To highlight the problems associated with the hijab and employment opportunities, Furat narrates a small story about a girlfriend, who always wore the headscarf but could not obtain a job interview. Within this story, the female friend ‘decided that it [the hijab] wasn't for her, [so] she took it off’.<sup>456</sup> Due to this decision, ‘as soon as she started applying for this job, she was getting call-backs left, right and centre and they were trying to woo her’.<sup>457</sup> Consequently, Furat’s friend began ‘kind of thinking “was it really that [the hijab] was kind of stopping me from getting a job”?’<sup>458</sup>

Also the following small story narrated by Isra is a good example of the *recognitive-power dilemmas* faced by young Muslims in Dublin who encounter, within the work place, challenges to their religious identity from others in positions of authority. The small story below shows that Muslim youth do struggle against forms of power that attempt to limit their freedom to express an Islamic identity in public. As shown in the narrative below, Isra successfully struggles for the recognition of her most salient identity and the freedom to express it by wearing the hijab in a public workspace.

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<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>454</sup> Daleela.

<sup>455</sup> Furat.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

Of note is that Isra is willing to sacrifice her monetary employment than give up the most salient part of her identity:

I remember one day I was [working at Dublin] airport. I was wearing my [head] scarf and the woman [a security woman in the airport] told me to remove my scarf [hijab], I look at her and say “listen, you cannot tell me some things, I'm not going to remove my scarf”. Even though, if I really can remove it? I showed her and said “listen, this is my scarf; I'm not going to remove it”. If you want to sack me, you can sack me, but I'm not going to remove it...So, the woman did understand what I'm saying and where I'm coming from and then she let me go. If that day I didn't say “I'm not going to do it”, she will keep on doing [it to] any other Muslim woman, who was passing the airport but I said “no” and then she agreed and she say “okay” and she let me go. So, that's why I said one person cannot spoil a whole thing.<sup>459</sup>

Within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Meera reasons that such societal misrecognition against the hijab is caused by a lack of knowledge and understanding of “difference”, particularly the Islamic kind. She states that, in her everyday life, she is constantly talking about Islam to other people and has come to realise that ‘some people don't really know why I wear scarf [the hijab]’.<sup>460</sup> In her opinion, there is a deep misunderstanding about Islam and Muslims in Irish society.<sup>461</sup> Hurriyah enters the discussion with a narrative that explores how knowledge is related to the themes of recognition and respect. This narrative is worth reproducing in full as it symbolises the importance that is placed on such themes:

With knowledge, they [Muslims and non-Muslims] can change recognition to us [Muslims] more. With my eyes, the recognition from the respect. If you respect yourself, people will respect you. If you yourself respect others, people will respect you – it's reciprocal. Like you cannot be recognised until when you to yourself acknowledge other peoples differences, not criticising them, you understand me, because we are very easy to judge people, you know even within myself as Muslim, we judge each other “oh, she's not wearing the hijab, she's not doing this”. Leave that to Allah to judge. So within ourselves, I would say “we have to search inside ourselves” you understand...so, in so many ways as well, recognition comes within yourself, respecting the other people and ready to work with people, without discriminating them. Then, there will be unity.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> Isra.

<sup>460</sup> Meera (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>462</sup> Hurriyah (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

In the above statement, Hurriyah is emphasising the core importance and connection between knowledge, recognition and respect. In the first line, she emphasises that a greater degree of societal knowledge about Islam will have the affect of changing the recognition that Muslims receive from others. She then succinctly connects recognition to respect and positions it as important to the self and others in that it is a *reciprocal exchange*. As she states in relation to this point: ‘if you yourself respect others, people will respect you – it’s reciprocal’.<sup>463</sup> For Hurriyah, respect and recognition is first performed by the need to respect and recognise oneself, and then a person can tolerate the differences of others instead of being judgemental. This discussant acknowledges human fallibility and the tendency to judge each other. She states that Muslims also judge other Muslims, especially in relation to the hijab. She advocates for humans to stop judging each other. In her opinion, people must use their spiritual recognition to leave judging to God, an abstract phenomenon. Hurriyah stresses how recognition is a self-relation in that ‘recognition comes from within yourself’<sup>464</sup> but that it also has an external aspect, which involves recognition of and co-operation with others ‘without discriminating them’.<sup>465</sup> For this discussant, the acting out of this internal and external knowledge will create unity and solidarity within society.<sup>466</sup>

### 5.2.2 Transitional Phenomena as Common-Ground

With forms of discrimination identified, a pertinent question comes to the fore: where is the common-ground between Muslims and non-Muslims within Irish society? i.e., a place where discrimination as *the prejudice of first impressions* can be overcome and people can be recognised equally as human and also respected for their individual traits-abilities-achievements. Two small stories – by Fusaila and Masud within the youth discussion groups – provide a reflective insight that lead to answering the above question. Both of these small stories emphasise the importance of cultural transitional

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<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*

phenomenon, to use a Winnicottian turn of phrase, as a reciprocal common-ground, which aids interaction between people.<sup>467</sup>

Isha is cognisant that when two “different” people meet there can initially be a ‘prejudice of first impressions’.<sup>468</sup> Although this is a negative aspect of the human condition, this discussant is also adamant that such discrimination can be overcome in that – through communication – people ‘start to get to know you’<sup>469</sup> and within a small timeframe – ‘like just five minutes’<sup>470</sup> – when they hear you speak English with an Irish accent ‘then they might actually see you as a person instead of as a Muslim’.<sup>471</sup> Isha’s sister, Fusaila adds a small story that elaborates on how she feels recognised within an artistic social network yet she positions this in relation to the prejudice that manifests around first impressions and how this can be overcome. Her small story is as follows:

It depends on what you associate yourself with as well because me, Isha and Rifa, we are artists, we do art. Like in our classes as well we’d be like the only [artistic] Muslims ‘cos Muslims don’t tend to do that thing. We [Muslims generally] go more into like doctors and law and all that but we’re more in the creative side. So, we associate ourselves with that kind of thing and when we like, when we go to like exhibitions and stuff like that people will, the first thing always they’ll see – “Muslim” – ‘cos we’re wearing our scarves but then they’ll like be “an artist”, I feel like we all understand each other, we’re all creative whatever so *I feel like I’m really accepted in the art world because we all have a creative understanding.*<sup>472</sup>

Within the above narrative, Fusaila clarifies that she, her sister and Rifa are not the same as other young Muslims because they have a ‘creative side’<sup>473</sup> i.e., they are artists.

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<sup>467</sup> Through his empirical mother-child studies, Winnicott developed the concept of transitional phenomena out of the primary insight that transitional objects - a thumb, a blanket or teddy bear – provides comfort to developing children. For Winnicott, such objects spread out as societal culture by providing a potential playful space for adults to obtain comfort through various cultural obsessional practices – or *little madnnesses* – that help negotiate binaries such as dependency/independency; illusion/reality; and subject/object. For an understanding of the everyday impact of cultural transitional phenomena, see Kuhn, A. (ed.). 2013. *Little Madnnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience*. New York: I.B Tauris & Co., Ltd. For an insight into Winnicott’s work, see Winnicott, D.W. 2005 [1971]. *Playing and Reality*. UK: Routledge Classics.

<sup>468</sup> Isha.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>472</sup> Fusaila (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*

The choice of such a profession is unusual for Muslims in that most young European Muslims, under parental influence, enter the medical, legal or financial professions. Fusaila speaks of her experience of going to art exhibitions and how she is immediately recognised for her particular race and Muslim traits i.e., wearing the hijab. However, in terms of abilities as an artist, she believes that she is understood and accepted by her artistic peers, who share the same professional skills and creative occupation. At the end of this statement, she confides that she generally suffers two prejudices to do with first impressions: ‘me personally, I get two prejudices when you first see me – I’m Muslim and I’m black and then later I’m Irish and I’m this and I’m that but yeah, that’s me’.<sup>474</sup>

The second small story relates to Masud’s experience of being recognised as an accomplished soccer player and how such recognition of his meritocratic abilities on-the-pitch overcomes the prejudice of first impressions off-the-pitch. Masud states that he has received recognition for his abilities as a soccer player from various people. Although traits do come into it, he stresses that in relation to the game of soccer, ability is most important. On this point, he differentiates between the recognition of traits versus that of abilities:

All over the place, people that you wouldn't know that I've never seen and they do recognise you [when you play soccer at a high level] and you are different because you stand out, like the different name, you look different, everything about you is different. So definitely ability is one thing for me. It's always stood out, it's always been there for me.<sup>475</sup>

Masud distinguishes between recognition on-the-pitch for his abilities and the prejudice of first impressions received off-the-pitch in his everyday life as lived in Dublin. He states concisely that ‘no’,<sup>476</sup> he never received discrimination ‘on the soccer pitch’<sup>477</sup> because in such *transitional arenas* ‘there is that respect’.<sup>478</sup> He acknowledges his varying experiences on-the-pitch with those off-the-pitch i.e., on the street, where ‘out of nowhere someone could come up to you and be like “ah, you're this, you're that”’. I've

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<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>475</sup> Masud.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*

had that a few times'.<sup>479</sup> Overall, this discussant feels that the recognition he receives on-the-pitch is good for him personally but also generally beneficial for Islamic identity in that other people get the opportunity to see a Muslim in a positive contributory light. On this point, Masud states his feelings about being recognised for his abilities and relates this back to his identity traits as Muslim:

*...it feels good to be recognised for what you're doing and then people know you're Muslim. Like my name is Masud...but they still know [I'm Muslim]. So it is something good. So they do know you're Muslim and there's respect and [the] coaches and all respect me for doing Ramadan and playing at the same time. So, it is good.*<sup>480</sup>

### 5.2.3 Affect on Relation-to-Self

In terms of discrimination's affect on an individual's relation-to-self, a 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussant, Hurriyah, determines that societal misrecognition has a negative all-encompassing affect on maintaining a positive relation-to-self. She states about the affect of misrecognition on the self: 'Yes it [discrimination] does [affect relation-to-self] – Mentally, physically, socially it would, it will do'.<sup>481</sup> This discussant's comments are articulated well and she has an advanced understanding of the dynamics of recognitive relations. Her remark about how societal misrecognition mentally, physically and socially influences a person's relation-to-self invokes Maja to enter the discussion and narrate a small story of her personal experience of perceived misrecognition. This story relates to her attending to a fitness centre, located within a plush hotel in Dublin. Maja narrates her small story in Arabic whilst Dahlia translates it to English:

It's a small story happened to my friend Maja, like she didn't say anything but just Maja she felt from the lady [receptionist] in general, what do you call it, five-star hotel [fitness centre] and she's [the lady is] working in a reception and everyday and day she's [Maja] go back, but she [Maja] "felt this lady doesn't respect me. She looks at me in a very bad way". This is make her at the end of the shift, "I don't want to go" and she paid the full year [fee] and she said "I don't [want to go back]" and I [Dahlia] said "why? She's [the lady is] just a receptionist. Just go, speak with the manager, say something, why you

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<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> Hurriyah.

stopping?” She [Maja] say “I don’t want to go there, I’m not happy. Her eyes, her way she talking to me”, [thump on table] ye know that smallest thing”.<sup>482</sup>

Maja’s small story is an example of how she perceived an everyday experience of disrespect from the receptionist. Such perceptions are highly influenced by her feelings in that she felt the receptionist did not respect her. This perception, backed by a cognitive-emotional reflection, is corroborated by how the receptionist looks and communicates to her. Through such communicative gestures, Maja perceives that the lady behind the reception desk does not respect her. The feeling that her visible surface-level traits are not respected has an impact upon Maja. Although she has paid full fees for the year in order to use the fitness facilities within the hotel, she is certain that she will not return and be subject to disrespect. For this discussant, respect comes before monetary considerations. In further conversation with Dahlia, Maja explicates further reasons as to why she perceived herself to be disrespected. She states that when she tried to speak to the receptionist, she was not given any attention i.e., she was made *invisible* by the receptionist. Dahlia confirms the importance of being recognised by stating ‘I respect attention’.<sup>483</sup> Maja felt that her enquiries were not being given sufficient attention: ‘she [the receptionist] said [towards] any question, she said abruptly “I don’t know, I don’t know”, like that’.<sup>484</sup> In terms of the annual fees, Maja states: ‘I don’t like war [fighting about it] anymore, I don’t care [about losing money]’.<sup>485</sup> Dahlia comments that she has lost money, but due to suffering disrespect, she has lost something more important and harder to replenish – her self-confidence. As Dahlia states: ‘I think she don’t care about that [losing money] but she lost her confidence because [of] that way’.<sup>486</sup>

The young female discussants view the link between misrecognition and self-esteem as obvious, particularly in relation to the sphere of work. When probed as to whether recognition within one’s employment gives a person a sense of self-esteem, Sumayya and Isha both concur then Sumayya then commonsensically adds – ‘isn’t that

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<sup>482</sup> Maja.

<sup>483</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>484</sup> Maja.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> Dahlia.

obvious'<sup>487</sup> – that being recognised for your abilities in employment would give an increase in self-esteem. Isha interjects into the conversation to clarify to the other discussants that: 'he [the moderator] means that if we were more recognised in society that we'd be more confident [in ourselves]'.<sup>488</sup>

In relation to Masud's small story above about being recognised for his abilities on the soccer pitch, when probed as to whether such recognition positively affects his relation-to-self in terms of self-esteem, he responds by stating that it is good to receive recognition for his abilities, even though he is different to the other players on his team in terms of traits such as skin colour, ethnicity and religion. He confidently states that on the soccer pitch, he is given respect and his abilities are recognised. Thus, he differentiates between the respect and recognition he receives on-the-pitch for his abilities and the misrecognition he receives on-the-street, where his surface-level traits are discriminated against by others. He states the following narrative about being 'in-between' in terms of identity and how the transitional phenomenon of soccer provides the meritocratic common-ground, where individuals, despite their difference to each other, can be recognised for their particular meritocratic – traits-abilities-achievements – and thereby, overcome *the prejudice of first impressions* that impedes everyday life off-the-pitch:

It's good. It's good, yeah it's good to feel recognised in a place like this [Ireland] where you're different, especially at the [high] levels maybe I've played at and I feel like I am being recognised. When I first made it onto the team at a young age, and this is the talks managers and coaches were giving, this was like "you's were the best twenty in this country that we've selected", that is definitely something good, to be fair, because I was the only different one in that changing room. *Like everyone else was pure Irish, like 100% Irish and I'm there. I've lived in Ireland my whole life but, you don't feel 100% Irish and you don't feel 100% Libyan because it's the same thing. You feel a bit excluded in a way but yet you're still living a 50/50 kind of thing.* So it does feel good to be recognised for your ability and yeah, people do know me and that's something I like. It's good to know that wherever I go, because they know me you're not going to get stick for it, so *I've some sort of respect because of soccer.* So people aren't going to come up to me and go "ah, you're a Paki, you're this" whereas, if you go to a rough area, people don't know you, they give you stick straight away, just judging you, like you've done it, you walk by them and you're going to get stick for nothing whereas here you go on a pitch, the lads won't say anything to you.

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<sup>487</sup> Sumayya (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

<sup>488</sup> Isha (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

They might be from rough areas, but then there's that respect because they've heard of you. It is something good that I've experienced anyways.<sup>489</sup>

### 5.3 Limitations of Rights of Residence

The following section will focus on aspects of legal misrecognition, particularly on denizenship<sup>490</sup> as an uncertain civic status and how such categorisation impacts negatively upon the familial sphere.

#### 5.3.1 The Uncertainty of Denizenship Status

From the 1<sup>st</sup> generation interviews, Saad references the negative experience that denizens encounter within Irish society and he vocalises what he perceives to be an issue within the Muslim community in relation to the status uncertainty experienced by denizens, who may do something 'right or wrong to obtain [a full legal] status'.<sup>491</sup> For example, there is evidence that denizens have married Eastern European women in Ireland in order to gain European citizenship; and thereby, acquire a secure citizenship status.<sup>492</sup> It illustrates the status uncertainty faced by various groups i.e., asylum seekers; refugees, illegal immigrants and denizens and how such experiences may lead to extreme actions to obtain a more secure and beneficial legal position within society. Saad narrates a small story, which cogently elaborates on how such forms of status uncertainty have a negative impact on individuals plus the society that enforces such forms of civic stratification:

Somebody who is here only a short time, four years or five years and they don't have any resident status or permanent resident status [denizenship] or some other status, they will be very uncertain and those are the people who will actually try to do something right or wrong to obtain that status so then you will see some negative stories [in the media] and then you will see that some people

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<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>490</sup> To briefly recap, denizens are resident third-country nationals, who enjoy civic and a selection of social rights yet limited political rights within a host country.

<sup>491</sup> Saad.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.* See Cahill, A. '400 a year trafficked for sham marriages'. 2013. *Irish Examiner*. February 1<sup>st</sup>. Available at [www.irishexaminer.com](http://www.irishexaminer.com). See also Brady, T. 'Hundreds of Portuguese women fly in for "sham marriages"'. 2014. *Irish Independent*. April 24<sup>th</sup>. Available at [www.irishindependent.ie](http://www.irishindependent.ie).

come in [to the country] and they try to make a business of different things and all this so there is some negativity surrounding those things.<sup>493</sup>

Another 1<sup>st</sup> generation male interviewee – Ubaid – stresses that the reason why multiculturalism is failing is because immigrants to Europe have, up to the present day, not been accorded legal recognition from host states that view immigrants as ‘temporary’ workers,<sup>494</sup> who work for a period of time then return to their homecountry. In other words, nation states did not ‘recognise them as citizens’<sup>495</sup> or even as ‘members of the society’<sup>496</sup> leading to the formation of denizenship – a status that limits social and political rights within democracies. In Ubaid’s opinion, denizens are ‘not recognised as the same citizen as anybody else. They’re in-between’.<sup>497</sup> They’re not asylum seekers, who depend on the state but also they are not full citizens, who are recognised by other citizens as being independent and capable of making political and moral decisions through the use of their own reason.<sup>498</sup> Ubaid stresses the need for the younger generation of Muslims to be conferred with citizenship in order to prevent isolation and to promote a positive feeling of belonging to Ireland. On this point, he states that:

...if these [citizenship] issues are addressed and Muslims are seen as [“who they are”] and they are appreciated as citizens of Ireland, from grassroots level up to the top, then I think there will be some little bit of confusion; but at least, the youth will not feel that they are isolated and not citizens of Ireland, [by addressing such issues] they [the youth] will still feel citizens of Ireland.<sup>499</sup>

The youth also view denizenship as an uncertain legal status. Interviewee Nurdeen states concisely without much elaboration that ‘in terms of legal recognition, if you’re an Irish citizen you can’t be kicked out of the country’.<sup>500</sup> Whilst a denizen, Aziz, gives a critical account of his denizenship experience, particularly in relation to the

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<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>494</sup> Ubaid.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>498</sup> Whilst the common argument against the status of denizenship relates to the unfair asymmetrical distribution of rights to third-country nationals, De Schutter and Ypi convincingly argue for mandatory citizenship in that civic stratification’s asymmetrical distribution of obligations to citizens is also an unequal and unfair burden to carry. See De Schutter, H., and Ypi, L. 2015. Mandatory Citizenship for Immigrants. *British Journal of Political Science*. 45(2), pp. 235-251.

<sup>499</sup> Ubaid.

<sup>500</sup> Nurdeen.

application process that is information deficient and drawn out in terms of time; thus, adding a great deal of uncertainty to everyday life and to the possibility of fulfilling future hopes. His narrative is as follows:

Aziz: In terms of legal recognition, I have been here for ten years and I still have not gotten citizenship. My flatmate [who is also Muslim] and his whole family have been here for eleven years, and they have the same problems as us [with gaining citizenship]. The thing is you can't follow up on the application, which is annoying.

Interviewer: Why do you think you've had to wait this long to receive citizenship?

Aziz: I've no idea; [I] can't follow up on it. I really have no idea.<sup>501</sup>

### 5.3.2 Civic Stratification and Familial Disruptions

A variety of narratives give an insight into how the uncertainty that is inherent in denizenship status has a detrimental impact upon recognitive familial relations. Such a connection is strongly emphasised through narrative small stories. For example, Furat, a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female interviewee, narrates a story about a close female friend, who has been 'living here [in Ireland] all her life'<sup>502</sup> but who applied too late for full citizenship status i.e., her father applied after she turned eighteen years of age. However, by the time her application was submitted, the Irish civil service 'were looking for different criteria',<sup>503</sup> in particular the need for adults to have worked a number of years within the state. Lacking work experience, Furat's friend did not meet the requirements, therefore, she [the friend] had to leave Ireland and move to Libya, her father's homecountry. Furat's small story recounts how legal misrecognition has negatively changed her friend's personal circumstances and relations to her immediate familial members:

It [legal recognition] does, it definitely does affect her [the narrator's friend] because she is studying now in Libya at the moment and because she is studying there, ahm, she can't come [to Ireland] whenever she wants to visit her parents, like her brothers, sisters, mother, father, all have citizenship except her. So, she has to apply for the visa, if it's a visiting visa, a study visa, or whatever it is, she

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<sup>501</sup> Aziz.

<sup>502</sup> Furat.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

has to go through that process just to see her mother, her father, or they [the parents] would have to go down there [to Libya], kind of thing, d'know. It's made it very difficult [for] her, made it very difficult for her.<sup>504</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male discussion group gives an insight into the varying experiences of friends, who are legally stratified and categorised into citizens and denizens. Yusuf states confidently: 'I was born here so it doesn't make a difference'.<sup>505</sup> He clarifies that he and his 'whole family has passports so it wasn't really an issue'.<sup>506</sup> He then compares his positive experience of being a citizen to the negative experience of denizenship. As a citizen, Yusuf states that he didn't have to wait long for a passport, and unlike denizens, have 'his hopes up'<sup>507</sup> in terms of obtaining a passport and being legally recognised by the Irish state. This discussant is critical and cynical about the power the state has over the conferral of citizenship and is glad that he didn't have to 'beg for the red [Irish] passport to come so that I can be free'.<sup>508</sup> He comments that not only does he have one passport, he also has dual citizenship with his homecountry – Libya. Masud identifies with the statement about being a dual citizen and comments correspondingly that 'that's the same here for me'.<sup>509</sup> Yusuf re-enters the conversation and commenting to Aban states: 'but you're different'.<sup>510</sup>

The recognition of a different status by Yusuf marks the point at which Aban enters the conversation to talk about his denizen experience. In his narrative, he elaborates on his parent's experience of coming to Ireland and waiting a long-period of time – ten years – to obtain Irish citizenship. He comments on how, as a child, he was unaware of the difference between himself, as a passport-holding citizen and his parents, who had not obtained legal recognition and had to use visas when travelling. Thus, the family structure was stratified between those members conferred with citizenship and those with the lesser status of denizenship. Reflecting upon the impact of denizen status, Aban clarifies that applying for travel documents was stressful and

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<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>505</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>509</sup> Masud.

<sup>510</sup> Yusuf.

time-consuming. Notably, as Aban states, prayer gave his parents comfort and consolation through the stressful and uncertain period of denizenship:

It took them a while to get it [citizenship], like ten years to get it but as I was growing up, I didn't know what difference it made. Like I had the Irish passport, they just had a few travel documents. Whenever we went away you were going away with something different...like a visa to where you're going. It was stressful and took ages for everything to get done but for the past two years like, you know, they just thank God, ye know, my parents made the prayers and all. The whole family has it, at the moment now, so everything's good.<sup>511</sup>

#### **5.4 Limiting Access to Opportunities**

Certainly whilst the status of denizenship does curtail political participation, particularly voting in national elections, the narrative data gives an insight into how a lesser legal civic status also puts limits on the attainment of basic opportunities that are commonly afforded to people, who have obtained the human right of full citizenship.

##### **5.4.1 Education and Freedom of Movement**

The interview and focused discussion group narratives identify the basic good of education as a major concern for denizens, who have not obtained full citizenship and recognition as having the capacity to make moral decisions that impact upon the political community. This is exemplified by 1<sup>st</sup> generation interviewee Adeeb, who states the following small story that illustrates how an uncertain civic status affects the younger generation in terms of the financial capacity to gain entry to education and how such limitations impede the ability “to be” within society and progress towards new forms of “being”. Adeeb’s critical narrative is as follows:

...he can't get [a student] grant, he stop, he [the person-in-authority] can't allow him to be, "you should pay the full [student tuition] amount [for a third-country national]" and that affect him but mean exactly because he had been here for ages [many years] and he's not recognised even as [a] citizen, [he is recognised] as nothing, like his father and his father is all the time complaining about this country [Ireland], he hate roses. This is such a problem, big problems of conflict for the community.<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> Aban.

<sup>512</sup> Adeeb.

From a youth perspective, Aziz discusses his denizenship experience and strongly criticises how his lesser civic status brings hardship and stress upon his parent's lives and finances in that his university enrolment fees are high due to the fact that he is recognised as a third-country national, despite having lived the majority of his life in Ireland. For Aziz, legal misrecognition has but a significant burden upon his parents, particularly since his brother is coming of age and also aims to obtain a university education. His narrative on this matter is as follows:

Interviewer: Do you feel that you want to have Irish citizenship?

Aziz: Yes, it makes things a lot easier. For example, when going through security at airports and when I travel, I have to sort out a visa, which is a hassle. I also have to pay ten thousand in university fees each year and my brother is coming through to university now and he will have to pay the same, which is a big burden on my parents.<sup>513</sup>

The above narrative highlights the criticism directed towards legal misrecognition by a denizen, who feels burdened by not being recognised as having the same legal rights as the majority. This interviewee states that he has been in Ireland for ten years yet has not received full citizenship status. He knows of other families, who have the same problem and that there is an increase in Muslim denizens attending third-level educational institutions in Ireland. Interestingly, Aziz claims that legal misrecognition has negatively affected his familial sphere in that his parents have had to pay exorbitant college fees towards his education, which is a significant financial burden.<sup>514</sup> This comment emphasises that spheres of cognitive interaction can influence each other in detrimental ways i.e., legal misrecognition not only affects the individual but also other social spheres such as the family.

Within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation discussion group, Hurriyah also mentions how by virtue of their legal status, denizens are limited in the possibility of accessing education. On the topic of denizens paying large university fees due to being categorised as third-country nationals, she comments that she does 'know people',<sup>515</sup> who have experienced

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<sup>513</sup> Aziz.

<sup>514</sup> See Faller, G. 2012. Children of non-EU nationals facing huge college fees. *Irish Times*. August 17<sup>th</sup>. Available at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com).

<sup>515</sup> Hurriyah.

such a situation. She states that these denizens ‘have to wait another couple of years before they can get them[selves] nationality then they can go back to school because of the red tape [bureaucracy]’.<sup>516</sup> Through such a statement, she is making the point that some denizens co-ordinate their educational attainment with the conferral of citizenship. This suggests that such categorisation limits their capability to attend a university. Hurriyah views this status categorisation as ‘absolutely’ a limitation.<sup>517</sup> Furthermore, it is an impediment that has a negative practical impact upon people. She explains that by suffering such a financial block to education, denizens ‘can get frustrated’.<sup>518</sup> She adamantly stresses the point that these people ‘want to exercise their human right’<sup>519</sup> to unfettered access to education.

A similar narrative about educational fees for denizens is discussed within the young male discussion group. The comments are made predominantly by Aswad, who makes the point that denizenship can impact on the ability of a person to attend third-level education due to the fact that, although many denizens have lived many years in the state, their recognised status means that they must pay higher educational fees.<sup>520</sup> For this discussant, the main practical issue surrounding legal misrecognition is ‘college fees’.<sup>521</sup> He comments on his own experience of having to pay a large fee when he first attended college and reflects that he only received citizenship three years later. Like Aban, Aswad thanks God that his financial burden was eased by obtaining ‘a scholarship before that [receiving citizenship] so it covered most of the cost’.<sup>522</sup>

As well as limitations on educational access, impediments to freedom of movement were also mentioned by a selection of interviewees and discussants, who view legal misrecognition as practically impacting on their ability to move freely back to the homecountry or through Europe. Reflecting back on Aziz’s comments above, when asked about his feelings towards obtaining citizenship, he confirms that he would like full citizenship status for practical reasons such as cheaper access to university

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<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>520</sup> Aswad (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG). This rule has recently been rescinded and educational fees reduced for long-term residents within the Irish state.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*

education but also for going through security at airports and for ease of travel out of Ireland without the need to obtain a visa.<sup>523</sup>

The most interesting discussion of this issue comes from Abdul, who took part in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation focused discussion group. His comments focus on his experience of life as a denizen and how his life in Europe changed for the better upon receiving Irish citizenship. To relate his experience, Abdul's narrative is in the form of a small story about his experience of planning to drive through Europe back to his homecountry to see his family in the Russian caucuses. In the past, as a denizen and secular person, he recounts that he had no problem travelling through France, however, upon becoming more visibly religious he perceives a distinct change in how he is treated when applying for a transit visa:

A couple of years ago, I want to travel home by car and in order to do that, I have to go through France and I have to do like a transit visa for French embassy. But eh, I did it second time. First time, I didn't have the beard. I look normal. They give me visa in 2005. But last time, I had a beard, at this time and they refuse me. I think because of that, because I'm Muslim like, you know and I feel very bad because [my] parents were waiting for me. I want to go home and they refuse the visa without any reason. They don't say any reason but I thought that the reason was because I am Muslim.<sup>524</sup>

The above small story illustrates how Abdul perceives that his change from being a non-practicing to a practicing Muslim had ramifications for his plan to drive through France back to his homeland. With his second trip, he has the normative expectation that his travel visa will enable him to drive through France. However this time, he is visibly identified as Muslim. Thus, he perceives that this difference is the reason for being refused a transit visa. He feels 'very bad'<sup>525</sup> that he has been blocked by the French authorities, and thereby, is unable to see his family. Rashid, a quiet discussant, whose contribution to the discussion is minimal, opens up and makes communication on this topic. He states that 'they' – the immigration services or police – 'do that for jilbab [long coat worn by Muslims]'.<sup>526</sup> Essentially, this comment emphasises that immigration services, in France and other countries, visibly identify or carry out

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<sup>523</sup> Aziz.

<sup>524</sup> Abdul (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>526</sup> Rashid (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

religious profiling on pious Muslims by their surface-level traits such as race, clothes or facial hair.

Within the same discussion group, Idris reflects upon the free movement of citizens between various European states, which makes him think about the issues he faces when returning to his homecountry. He sadly states that when he returns to the Middle East, he has to ‘take a visa to go to Algeria, Morocco and Saudi [Arabia] – everywhere’.<sup>527</sup>

This above comment is also reflected in the young male discussion group by Siddiq, who makes an interesting point that positively affirms Ireland’s legal and democratic transparency whilst criticising his homecountry attitude to citizenship, particularly when the diaspora appear at border checkpoints and present European passports. In terms of differentiating legal transparency between Ireland and his homecountry, Siddiq states that:

[In] the Irish system, they abide by the legal system that when you have an Irish passport, they recognise you as an Irish citizen, it's real transparent but you know, if we were to go back to our parent’s countries, and it has Ireland written on the passport, they would be quite suspicious that “are you really, you're not really Irish”, do you know what I mean? They would be suspicious of that and they would actually be the ones who have the problems. Ireland seems to be very transparent, very law-[abiding], respectful in the legal issues.<sup>528</sup>

#### **5.4.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self**

A variety of narratives give an insight into how legal misrecognition affects an individual’s relation-to-self, particularly in terms of self-respect. Labeeb, 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussant, vocalises how he has applied for citizenship three times but failed in all attempts.<sup>529</sup> He also mentions that he has been refused the right to work and that his marriage ended in divorce and leading to being separated from his children. Labeeb blames the – governmental, legal and bureaucratic – system for his misfortune and determines that prejudice against his Muslimness is the prime reason for a plethora of difficulties. In terms of feeling, Labeeb agrees that he felt angry in relation to such

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<sup>527</sup> Idris (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>528</sup> Siddiq.

<sup>529</sup> Labeeb (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Den; FDG).

treatment by the state. When asked if he felt he had lost self-respect by being legally disrespected, the discussant vocalises that he had lost self-respect in terms of how he was treated and how, as he perceives it, his religious difference as a Muslim impeded his ability to acquire legal recognition. On the topic of losing self-respect, he states

Of course [I feel like I lost some self-respect], I [was] treat[ed], I [was] treat[ed] very, very badly. I [was] treat[ed badly but] I have no criminal record. I never been fighting or arguing with anyone here.<sup>530</sup>

In relation to Abdul's small story about being refused a travel visa to travel through France to see his family in the Russian caucus, he recounts how such misrecognition made him feel. He states that: 'after [my visa application was rejected], I feel very like stressed because, you know, I want to go home and I can't'.<sup>531</sup> In contrast to his denizen experience, Abdul recounts his experience upon receiving Irish citizenship, which overall is much more positive. In terms of his travels as an Irish-European citizen, he states:

...since I received Irish citizenship, like you know, I feel free like you know, I don't have to go and ask somebody for visa or something like that, I free to go wherever I want...I think it's a very good right for me, like you know. I feel very happy with that.<sup>532</sup>

When asked if Abdul can link the above experience to a sense of self-respect and of an ability to struggle for one's rights, he responds 'yeah, maybe'.<sup>533</sup> In terms of how legal recognition relates to self-respect, Idris adds to the conversation by returning to his own experience of travelling the world with an Irish company. He describes being a citizen as a positive feeling he associates with pride in representing Ireland as an Irish citizen. Interestingly, this discussant makes a distinction between his sense of being simultaneously an Irish citizen and an Egyptian national:

I felt that not only I'm recognised in this country [Ireland], but you know, *I feel inside me that I am Irish and I feel proud of representing the country*. I mean I'm still maintaining that they know I'm Egyptian origin because of the name

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<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>531</sup> Abdul.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*

and as I said you can never change that, but you know, it is a good feeling to be able to have an adopted country and to be able to say “yeah, I have [citizenship], I’m an Irish citizen but I’m an Egyptian national.”<sup>534</sup>

For this discussant, feelings are connected to the process of obtaining a nation’s citizenship. Idris received an Irish passport in the early 1980s and he states about receiving such recognition that ‘it is great because it allowed me a lot of freedom’<sup>535</sup> as compared to his experience in many Muslim-majority countries. For this discussant, in ‘our [home]countries’,<sup>536</sup> legal recognition ‘as a human’<sup>537</sup> and ‘as an individual’<sup>538</sup> is not forthcoming. He strongly criticises Muslim-majority countries for being ‘about the appearance of the religion’<sup>539</sup> rather than implementing ‘what it says’.<sup>540</sup> Practically, with the Egyptian passport ‘I go nowhere’,<sup>541</sup> which he views as ‘a shame’.<sup>542</sup> For a long time, the Egyptian passport did not represent civicism and human freedom and that is why, in Idris’ opinion, present-day Egypt experienced revolution against the Mubarak regime. On the other hand, when he received the Irish passport, he was ‘delighted’<sup>543</sup> because, as he says, ‘now, I’m human’<sup>544</sup> and can travel freely with dignity. He also states that when he travels, even to his homecountry, ‘I go with the Irish passport’.<sup>545</sup> When asked if receiving an Irish passport affected his sense of self and whether he would define it as self-respect, he responds with confidence – ‘absolutely’.<sup>546</sup> However, alongside such positive feeling is ‘sorrow at the same time for my own background’.<sup>547</sup>

In concurrence with Idris, within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Hurriyah opines that denizens, who have not been recognised as full citizens, have ‘just

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<sup>534</sup> Idris.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*

been isolated in a way, physically, mentally and their affected, yes'.<sup>548</sup> However, not all of the discussants agree that bureaucratic legal recognition *on paper* relates to increases in self-respect but view it more as a practical status utilised to facilitate and maintain transnational identities and “way of life”. Dahlia clarifies her position as follows:

I never think I have my respect from the paper. That's really, *I find it silly* if one of us think that about this red [Irish] passport. No, I'm very proud of my whatever – Egyptian, Sudanese [heritage] and we are very proud of that. Just only the documents make the life easier for travelling [multiple voices in agreement].<sup>549</sup>

The above statement indicates that Dahlia and other discussants do not connect obtaining legal recognition on paper as related to gaining a degree of self-respect. In fact, Dahlia finds the premise that her ‘respect [comes] from the [legal] paper’<sup>550</sup> to be ‘silly’.<sup>551</sup> She then talks of pride and connects it to her particular homecountry heritage. She is ‘very proud’<sup>552</sup> of her homecountry origin and views Irish citizenship as ‘just only documents [that] make life easier for travelling’.<sup>553</sup> Thus, Irish citizenship is viewed as a practicality. Hurriyah agrees with this statement by Dahlia and confirms that Irish citizenship’s practical application is in giving ‘you leeway when you are travelling’.<sup>554</sup> In relation to the above comments, it is important to recognise that both women are stating that through the conferral of citizenship they obtain greater freedom of movement and a wider degree of autonomy in how they conduct their transnational identities. This point is confirmed by Dahlia when she states that when returning to her homecountry, she commonly enters with an Irish passport rather than with her homecountry documentation, which is commonly known to create difficulties:

If I'm going to there [Egypt] with the red [Irish] passport I don't need to have [a] visa. If I have my Egyptian passport, you will pay [money] and you have to [be] investigate[d] before passing. That's international rules, it's out of our hands, political rules.<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>549</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>555</sup> Dahlia.

### 5.4.3 The Need for Civic Participation and Contribution

The discussion group narratives highlight how gaining full legal recognition enables an individual to venture further into society to participate and contribute to the value horizon of their social and political community. For example, Labeeb supports Idris' comment that Irish citizenship (with its corresponding rights and obligations) gives an individual 'freedom and opportunity',<sup>556</sup> which is not readily available in African and Middle Eastern homecountries. This statement is all the more stark in that Labeeb does not have full citizenship himself but is a denizen, whose citizenship application has been turned down numerous times.

Labeeb goes on to state a positive view of universal civiness that transcends religious particularness and also gives an indication of how he lives his everyday life as a denizen. He states that he is unemployed and is 'receiving help from the government',<sup>557</sup> most probably in the form of unemployment benefit. He seems to correlate social welfare payments not to the state, who distribute such payments but to other citizens within Irish society, who pay and contribute via taxation. He vocalises his appreciation to Irish society for coming to his aid in terms of providing him with social welfare whilst being unemployed: 'who paying this tax, who paying this money, [it's] from the Irish society and the majority is Catholic or Christian.'<sup>558</sup> He adds that he reciprocates the aid he receives by civically volunteering 'to work for my community through St. Vincent de Paul',<sup>559</sup> a Catholic charitable organisation. Thus, this interviewee recognises the reciprocal nature of being a citizen that involves moral responsibility involving rights but also obligations. Although he is receiving social welfare payments, his civic identity is active in reciprocating back to his community; thereby, proving that he is not a burden but a contributing member of society. This is reflected in the following statement:

I'm not working now; I volunteer to work for my community through St. Vincent de Paul but some people [within the Muslim community] might have problem with that [working for a Christian charity] but I'm going to volunteer to work for St. Vincent de Paul to prove to my [wider] community, to provide for

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<sup>556</sup> Labeeb.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*

my [wider] community because I don't want to sit back in the room where [I am] watching television, why the government giving me money? and there is some way that I can contribute.<sup>560</sup>

Within this statement, he suggests that some members of the Muslim community may have an issue with his decision to volunteer for a Christian charity. Idris asks a question of Labeeb: 'and do you think there is a problem in doing that?'<sup>561</sup> Labeeb responds 'no'<sup>562</sup> and then reflects that 'some people might have problem with that'.<sup>563</sup> However overall, he is happy to be civically active and participating within the wider community. When asked about making civic contributions to his community, he responds:

I'm three years doing that [volunteering] now. So, I mean, the understanding between the religion and stuff like that [civic participation], I think some people [within the Muslim community] find it difficult. It might be based on their background from back home or whatever – religion – but we live together in our [home]country Christian and Muslim, peacefully, there's no difference.<sup>564</sup>

The most concise statement about the confidence to participate and contribute within wider society emanates from Abdul, who opens up about his feelings in terms of receiving Irish citizenship and how it transformed his levels of participation. As a denizen, he tried to be generally 'good with people';<sup>565</sup> however, he admits that most of his socialising was contained within his Islamic community in that he mostly 'dealt with [the local] mosque'.<sup>566</sup> However, upon receiving Irish citizenship, Abdul remarks that he 'thinks more responsible like other people'.<sup>567</sup> This is an indication that his self-respect has increased and that his confidence to stand up for himself is also buttressed by legal recognition. By being fully recognised legally, he is able to view himself as a responsible citizen, who has rights but also obligations to others within the society that has reciprocally recognised him as a full member. Abdul makes the following remark about this change in identity status:

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<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>561</sup> Idris.

<sup>562</sup> Labeeb.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> Abdul.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*

If somebody say to me [when I was a denizen] “aah, you foreigner like”, I take it like, you know, but now [as a citizen] like, even if they say that, I don’t care about what they say like. I feel like I have some responsibility for this society like, you know. Even people if they don’t like me it’s up to them like. It’s their business like. Anyway, I feel like I have to do something to bring some good stuff to this society. It doesn’t matter like what people think about me, you know. *I feel more responsible when [I] received the [citizenship]*.<sup>568</sup>

The above stance is also confirmed by Sadiyya, who states that legal recognition, in her opinion, implies that ‘you can say what you want to do and go out and start relationship’.<sup>569</sup> Likewise, a young female 2<sup>nd</sup> generation discussant, Saiba views full citizenship as obliging an individual to civically participate and contribute beyond their particular community for the benefit of the wider society.<sup>570</sup> On this point, she retells a conversation she had with her mother that went as follows: ‘I want to do stuff for the Irish community [but] she’d be like “oh, but why?”’<sup>571</sup> This statement implies that Saiba understands the participatory obligations of being a citizen and struggles to justify such action to other familial members, particularly those from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Fusaila adds to Saiba’s conversation by jokingly voicing a hypothetical response from Saiba’s mum: ‘you’re not Irish’!<sup>572</sup>

Saiba keeps the conversation going by explaining what citizenship means to her. She states that she sees herself as a citizen and feels she has to ‘contribute to my community’.<sup>573</sup> It must be questioned which community she is referring to? She clarifies this point by stating that as a citizen she feels the need to contribute to *all* communities i.e., to her Islamic community, to her ethnic community but also to the wider societal community. Thus, she states: ‘not only my Islamic community but also like the Irish community’.<sup>574</sup> Interestingly, she confirms that her mother questions such actions as not specifically aiding either her Muslim or ethnic community. Saiba voices her mother: ‘but why are you doing it?’<sup>575</sup> Once again her mother’s question is not left unanswered.

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<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>569</sup> Sadiyya (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>570</sup> Saiba (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>572</sup> Fusaila (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>573</sup> Saiba.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*

Saiba responds: ‘I’m not only those things’.<sup>576</sup> This statement indicates that she has an Islamic and ethno-cultural identity but also that she acknowledges other identities, one being an abstract civic identity. This is exemplified in the statement: ‘I’m also Irish, in a sense’.<sup>577</sup> Such a narrative gives an indication of how she views “being Irish”. She acknowledges that she is “Irish” but with the caveat – ‘in a sense’.<sup>578</sup> It could be argued here that this discussant is referring to herself as “Irish” in the sense of being *an Irish citizen* and differentiates such “Irishness” from its nationalist and/or ethno-cultural forms.

## 5.5 Perceptions of Identity

The above focus on societal and legal misrecognition inevitably redirects this study to the salient issue of identity. Within this section, narrative data will be utilised to give a vivid perceptual insight into how the recognition of particular “difference” supersedes the recognition of “sameness” i.e., visible “particular” difference takes precedence over being recognised as a “universal” citizen with equal rights and obligations to other human beings. Then the viewpoints of Muslim youth will be explored in relation to how they relate to an “Irish” identity, particularly in terms of “being *different Irish*”. Lastly, the narratives give an insight into how Muslim youth accept, maintain and utilise their multiple transnational identities but problematic issues persist in terms of how other people perceive Muslim youth identity.

### 5.5.1 The Supersession of Sameness by Difference

The narratives give a valuable insight into how Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin perceive “difference” to others, especially in terms of how the recognition of surface-level traits negatively supersedes the “sameness” that legal recognition universally gives to all people equally.

For example, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female interviewee, Furat, makes an interesting statement related to the tension that exists between “sameness” and “difference” in

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<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>577</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*

everyday interaction. Her statement refers to how universal “sameness”, which normatively defines citizenship, has been tied to nationalistic ethno-cultural attributes and comes into conflict with “difference”, which is inherent to an individual’s “particular” traits and abilities related and unique “way of life”. In other words, differences in religious adherence, race or ethno-cultural tradition that deviate from the majoritarian social norms and cultural identity present within society at any given time. She states the following in relation to how a person’s “particularness” is recognised before a “universal” civic status:

Legal recognition...myself, personal opinion, is that you always have to think twice about what you are doing legally because you always feel like as if because I’m a foreigner how will they treat me ye know, for example, I was in a situation where somebody else was in the wrong but I'd feel like I wouldn't be able to bring [it] up because it's not going to be dealt with that way, that person's the Irish person, I'm the Muslim, you know, the foreigner, which side will they take, so you'll always have that fear, the constant background fear of “is there a point or is there not a point [to speaking out]?”<sup>579</sup>

Within this narrative, the interviewee, who is an Irish citizen, states that in everyday interaction she has to ‘think twice’<sup>580</sup> about her legal recognition. She feels that what makes her “different” to other citizens i.e., her foreignness determines how she will be treated by others in the first instance. She gives an example of a situation in which an ethnic Irish person is acting “wrongfully”, however, she feels that she cannot speak out about such action because she feels that her moral claim will not be dealt with appropriately because ‘that person’s the Irish person, I’m the Muslim’.<sup>581</sup> It is this ‘constant background fear’,<sup>582</sup> which prevents her from speaking out against “wrongful” acts committed by others. This statement is interesting as it delineates how citizenship in the Irish nation-state has been attached to ethnic and/or national attributes and conceptions of identity. Even though, the interviewee is an Irish citizen with the same rights and obligations to other citizens, she has a fearful feeling that her ethnic and religious “difference” supersedes the civic “sameness” she obtained through legal recognition. In other words, her abstract “universalism” as a citizen, which is filtered of

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<sup>579</sup> Furat.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

particularisms, cannot compete with the recognition of surface-level “differences” that constitute the individual in terms of race, ethnicity and/or religion. Tensions arise when such particular “differences” diverge from the dominant norm of what is perceived to constitute the identity standard of “Irishness”.

Within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Ghazalah tries to distinguish how abstract citizenship can be applied to everyday life. Her statement gives us a very good insight into the dynamics differentiating recognition as an abstract “universal” form and being recognised for one’s “particular” differences to others in everyday life. She states that legal recognition as ‘just-on-paper’<sup>583</sup> is practically useful when one is ‘in civic places’<sup>584</sup> interacting with state bureaucracies such as immigration services, passport offices, hospitals etc. In this discussant’s viewpoint, legal recognition is symbolised by ‘documents [or] papers’<sup>585</sup> that generally are ‘working fine’.<sup>586</sup> Thus, the state recognises rights and obligations based on the stratified civic status assigned to each individual by the state itself.

Ghazalah then moves the discussion from the legal sphere to the wider sphere of societal recognition. As she states: ‘now, go to the practical life, go to the reality, no difference. I’m still the Egyptian, or the Sudanese, it’s no different.’<sup>587</sup> This statement brings to the conversation the point that abstract “universal” citizenship loses its strength within everyday interaction because within the wider societal sphere, “particularness” or different traits are visible whilst the abstract status of being a citizen is harder to detect and cannot be recognised by others in initial interaction. Her narrative makes a clear distinction between the benefits that “universal” legal recognition has within state institutions, but that such a status is invisibly weak to be practically recognised within wider everyday life. In terms of the supersession of legal “sameness” by the initial prejudice of surface-level “difference”, Hurriyah makes the following statement:

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<sup>583</sup> Ghazalah (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*

...and you always remain like that. America, UK, it's like that. It will always be there. You always be a second-class citizen. You will never be a first-class citizen because of your colour.<sup>588</sup>

Through this statement, Hurriyah as a dark-skinned woman, is confirming that injustice is inextricably linked to the interaction between being a full citizen (with “universal” rights and obligations in relation to others) versus being a person of “difference” through having a particular religious, racial or ethnic identity in contrast to social norms and the majoritarian identity standard. For this discussant, even though she is a citizen of Ireland – a human being – who has “universal” rights similar to others, she understands that some of her “particular” identities devalue her “being” in the eyes of others. In response, Dahlia narrates a small story about her own experience involving how her “sameness” and “difference” is recognised by others within an Irish airport. She states the following:

In the airports, actually the red passport, the Irish passport, working perfectly but recently I saw something, I'm kind of like observ[ing] a little bit around me. I saw, even if I'm holding the Irish passport and I have Irish [citizenship] and you read [it when] you're in front of me, someone told me, “no, no – this is the EU queue” [from background multiple voices “yeah yeah” and laughter]. [The person says] “look it[’s] that way” and I say “thank you and continue [my own way]”.<sup>589</sup>

The above story is interesting as it gives an indication of the divergence between reality and perception within an act of interaction. The discussant queues in the EU line because she has been given legal recognition by a European state. She is a citizen and holds in her hand the ‘red passport’.<sup>590</sup> However, other people in the passport control line view her as not being an Irish or European citizen but a foreigner – a Muslim – who has mistakenly joined the wrong queue and should move to the third-country national designated area, i.e., the denizen line. It can be said that the ‘someone’<sup>591</sup> who conversed with Dahlia does not initially perceive her to be a citizen of Ireland or Europe but recognises her firstly in her particularity and difference – as a Muslim woman wearing the hijab – and negates the possibility that she could be a “universal” citizen.

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<sup>588</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>589</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, Saiba and the sisters have received Irish citizenship. Saiba narrates her own experience of being a citizen in Ireland. She states that she has been a citizen since her family came to Ireland in 1997, as one of the first Somali immigrants. She then tells a small story about attending secondary school. Many people didn't think she spoke English because she was 'very quiet'.<sup>592</sup> She distinctly remembers a teacher asking her if she had a red (Irish) passport to which Saiba affirmatively replies. She then questions how she is recognised within the societal sphere. Despite the fact that she has been an Irish citizen all her life and has the same universal rights and obligations as other citizens, she criticises everyday people who only see her particular "different" traits and treat her like a foreigner. She states concisely about this form of misrecognition:

I've had one [a passport] all my life and people walking around me like "you're a foreigner" and I'm like "but I'm a citizen, I live here all my life, I went to school here, c'mon [said in whisper]". I just take it in my stride and move on but I mean people obviously, of course, automatically they'd be like "you're a foreigner, like your [different]".<sup>593</sup>

Within Saiba's discussion group, multiple discussants feel and vocalise that a "universal" abstract legal identity is superseded by a person's more recognisable "particular" traits, whether to do with religion, skin colour or ethnicity. Isha and Rifa respond with an affirmative 'yeah',<sup>594</sup> whilst Fusaila declares 'ah, totally'.<sup>595</sup> Isha interjects with a balanced view by stating 'up to a point, up to a point but not always'.<sup>596</sup> She continues by stating that 'it won't be forever',<sup>597</sup> indicating that the recognition of "particular" traits over an abstract legal identity will not last indefinitely. However, at this moment in time, the recognitive power lies with 'first impressions most of the time'.<sup>598</sup> In response to her sister's optimistic assessment, Fusaila narrates a criticism against a nationalistic identity and people who hold ethnocentric views. She criticises

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<sup>592</sup> Saiba.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>594</sup> Isha and Rifa (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

<sup>595</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>596</sup> Isha.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

‘some people’<sup>599</sup> who are ‘real patriotic’<sup>600</sup> and who, even if they know you’re a legal citizen, will say ‘this is my country’.<sup>601</sup> Rifa agrees. Fusaila imitates these ultra-nationalist views by voicing such people: ‘you’re taking our jobs, you’re doing this, you’re doing that’.<sup>602</sup>

### 5.5.2 Being “Different Irish”

With the above discussion relating to the supersession of “universal” legal identity by surface-level “particular” traits, the issue of identity comes to the fore. The following section will narratively highlight the important point that the research participants do not negate “being Irish” but alternatively view such an identity in a more civic sense compared to the dominant (ethno-cultural and/or nationalistic) socially-normalised perspective of “Irishness”.

For example, 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussant, Farid, stresses the complementarity between Islam and civicness versus how a national identity interacts with Islam. He uses the example of war. He states that if Ireland was to go to war tomorrow, Muslims ‘don’t go [and] fight for Ireland’.<sup>603</sup> In his opinion, only those who have an “Irish” identity would fight and die for their country. Thus, this discussant states that ‘only Irish people fight for Ireland. You know, so that is a national thing. That’s a national [identity]’.<sup>604</sup> For this discussant, many Muslims ‘don’t believe something like [a] national [identity]’.<sup>605</sup> He also associates cultural behaviour such as drinking alcohol and paying interest (riba) as being closely linked to such an identity. Importantly, Farid stresses the lack of connection between being Muslim and a national whilst strongly connecting the complementary relationship between being Muslim and civic. The clearest sign of this opinion, or ‘feeling’ as Farid calls it, is the following statement:

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<sup>599</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>603</sup> Farid (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

You know, the interest [riba]. It's against our religion. That's why we don't feel like we're national, Irish national. Probably, we feel more civil. Like, vote civil rather than Irish.<sup>606</sup>

The topic of “Irish” identity and how to conceive it pertains most strongly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, who are actively asking such questions of themselves and attempting to resolve such identity dilemmas. Similarly to Saiba's statement above that she is ‘also Irish’<sup>607</sup> with the caveat ‘in a sense’.<sup>608</sup> Female discussant Fusaila defiantly talks about her personal identity struggle and how it is integrally related to how she is perceived by others.

I didn't consider myself Irish for a long time ‘cos people didn't accept it, so I didn't accept it but like, if they don't want me to be Irish, I'm not going to be Irish [general laughter]. So, it's only like about, just last year, I realised that I grew up with these people, you know what I mean? I'm just as Irish as they are!<sup>609</sup>

Isha comments specifically on the relationship between having an Islamic and Irish identity and how she came to understand her difference to other Irish people at an early age. She claims that Muslim identity ‘is installed in you from a really young age’.<sup>610</sup> Such identity configurations – ‘that you are Muslim’<sup>611</sup> – are most likely socialised through parental initiatives, which is facilitated and supported by the wider Islamic community.<sup>612</sup> She then states that when she was young, ‘I knew that I was kinda different to everyone else’.<sup>613</sup> This difference becomes visible when she speaks of being “Irish” yet “different”. She states: ‘I was Irish but I knew that I was different’.<sup>614</sup> The term – *different Irish* – is mentioned. Isha replies ‘yeah’<sup>615</sup> in agreement with the term and then states that being “Irish” yet “different” means that you have to ‘have [a] thick

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<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>607</sup> Saiba.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>609</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>610</sup> Isha.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>612</sup> Socialisation theory, within the remit of the sociology of religion, will be examined in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>613</sup> Isha.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*

skin'<sup>616</sup> because you face discrimination due to your “difference” to others and will inevitably meet ‘people that are prejudice towards you’.<sup>617</sup> Although these negative aspects exist, Isha has a positive optimistic reflection in relation to this identity in that she ‘grew up that way’<sup>618</sup> and has come to be confident in her “difference” to others. As she states about this: ‘I really appreciate that I can go out different. I feel confident to go out in anything’.<sup>619</sup>

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male discussion group, Azaan states that in his personal life he has lived the ‘whole Irish life’<sup>620</sup> because of the influence of his Mum who ‘is Irish’.<sup>621</sup> His mother was born and raised an Irish Catholic but converted to the Islamic religion and married a Muslim man. This discussant lived many years with his grandparents, who’s house was a place where “normal Irish” behaviour was common in that his ‘uncles and aunts came and they drank [alcohol] and they smoked. So I kind of lived through the whole “this is Ireland, this is what Irish people do”’.<sup>622</sup> Importantly, Azaan does not view “Irishness” as related to a “particular” way a person looks i.e., that they should be ‘Caucasian, freckles or ginger hair’.<sup>623</sup> For this discussant, “Irishness” has more to do with ‘the way you act in the country’.<sup>624</sup> He describes how he celebrated family occasions socially in a pub, which is a common norm practiced in Irish cultural life:

...it was a 21<sup>st</sup> and we went to the pub for it – sorry for that [said quietly to the other discussants] – and we went to the pub and we were all partying and music and it's just the Irish life, so we all did that and my grandparent's 60<sup>th</sup> and their anniversaries, we'd go out for parties and all that. So it's the Irish [life], we lived as Irish people; my grandparents were Irish and lived their whole life like that. So you know, I think it's not really how you look but more how you've been living here.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>620</sup> Azaan.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>622</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*

From the above statement, it can be stated that Azaan does perceive himself as Irish through how he acts rather than how he fits the visual stereotype or norm of what an “Irish” person should look like. The above comments spur Siddiq to enter the conversation to clarify his opinion that the ‘perception of “Irish people” is changing’.<sup>626</sup> He mentions the impact of foreigners in Ireland; who are changing the social dynamic of the country. For this discussion, “Irishness” is becoming like “being American” in that different people within a pluralistic society identify with the meritocratic nature and openness of a modern “way of life”. Therefore, being “different” to the majoritarian identity standard is losing its significance. For Siddiq, Ireland is going in a similar direction to America, where merits and abilities are societally esteemed and “particular” traits are not discriminated against but respected.

### **5.5.3 Transnational Identities and the Problematic Perception of Others**

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, narrative evidence comes to light that explicates how Muslim youth have multiple transnational identities, which connects them to Ireland and their parent’s homecountry. However, how one is recognised by others within each domain can be problematic. Saiba states that ‘once you go back home’<sup>627</sup> to the parental homecountry, ‘you’re [seen as] the European, the Irish’.<sup>628</sup> Here in Ireland, however, ‘you’re [seen as] the foreigner’.<sup>629</sup> This situation makes Saiba question: ‘I’m like “where do I go?”’<sup>630</sup> Fusaila enters the conversation and reflects on her feelings of belonging. She states that she feels accepted by Tanzanian and Irish people; however, at the same time, she has come to an understanding that she will ‘never be Irish because we’re not born and raised [here]’.<sup>631</sup> Saiba agrees with this statement. In relation to the dominant stereotype of “Irishness”, Rifa speaks up and states: ‘of what “Irish” is, exactly’.<sup>632</sup> Fusaila stresses that her Islamic identity is the one identity in which she feels accepted by others. She states this by contrasting herself to Muslims, who identify with an ethno-cultural identity:

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<sup>626</sup> Siddiq (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>627</sup> Saiba.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>631</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>632</sup> Rifa.

When you're Muslim, "you're Muslim", that's it, but some people who are culturised would be "oh, she's Arab, she's this" and all that but a person who learns Islam properly *when you're Muslim, you're accepted fully that's where I find my full identity*.<sup>633</sup>

In relation to being recognised as different in the homecountry, Rifa states that the common experience of young European Muslims is that they 'don't feel they're from there [the homecountry] either'.<sup>634</sup> Saiba clarifies that despite the feeling of being connected to the homecountry 'you're still different from them'.<sup>635</sup> Fusaila goes deeper into the matter by referencing how her parents have accepted her sister Isha and herself as being different. She states that she and her sister 'were always different'<sup>636</sup> and their parents knew they 'weren't totally Muslim, we were Irish. So, we were never Tanzanian to them anyway'.<sup>637</sup> Despite being different, she confides that Isha and herself were 'accepted'<sup>638</sup> by their parents 'as different from the start'.<sup>639</sup> In terms of the future, she points out that if her sister and herself 'change now'<sup>640</sup> to another form of "difference", their parents would 'accept us as we are'.<sup>641</sup>

A similar conversation about transnational belonging and the recognition of such multiple identities by others takes place within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male discussion group. Against the theory that European Muslim youth are experiencing an identity crisis, the narratives suggest that the discussants have come to acknowledge, accept, and utilise their multiple identities to maintain connections to both transnational spheres; however, problems arise in relation to how such identity variations are perceived by others within each national context.

For example, Yusuf speaks candidly by stating that the problem resides with other people, who do not see him as he views himself – as a Muslim with a mixture of Irish and Libyan identifications. Yusuf states about being misrecognised by other people as either not Libyan and/or not Irish:

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<sup>633</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>634</sup> Rifa.

<sup>635</sup> Saiba.

<sup>636</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*

It's other people. No. For me it's quite clear. I speak Arabic fluently; *I embrace both cultures, not fully but, to a certain extent*. For me, *I know my identity*, for other people they don't and that's how they treat you *and that's where your experiences come from, how people treat you and how people perceive you*.<sup>642</sup>

Aswad interjects by stating that all the young male discussants taking part in the discussion 'share the same thing',<sup>643</sup> which is that they all have 'double identities'.<sup>644</sup> This discussant confides that, here in Ireland, people know he is not Irish 'because of the way I look';<sup>645</sup> whereas in Egypt, he is not seen as Egyptian due to his Arabic dialect. This is exemplified in the small story he narrates about a taxi ride he took whilst in Egypt:

When I go to Egypt and get a taxi, the minute I speak, the first two words I speak are like, [the taxi-driver says] "you're from here, you're not from here, where are you from? [from background: "yeah, where you from"?]", you're from a different Arab country", [Aswad replies] "No, I'm Egyptian".<sup>646</sup>

Both small stories above are similar in that they both illustrate how the discussants' multiple identities are misrecognised in both Ireland and in their respective homecountries. In similarity to Yusuf, Aswad states that, for him personally, it is not a problem but that the problem emanates from other people's perceptions of him. He strongly advocates that multiple identities can coexist and that this is not a problem for an individual, whose "being" is a mixture of identities. For the male discussants, the problem lies with other people, who do not understand that a person can be constituted by multiple identifications. Aswad remarks:

But everyone here [in the discussion group] is unique, I think everyone here knows how he acts around [others] and *it's their [other peoples'] problem [for] not understanding that I can act both ways, well not really act both ways [simultaneously], I'm actually the same person but they see it in [a] different way*.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>643</sup> Aswad.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*

Aban agrees with Aswad that a person can have multiple identities depending on the context. For this discussant, such a variety of identities can be an advantage and can be utilised for beneficial reasons. He uses the example of vocal accents [or dialects] and how they change depending on context. This discussant states the following about speaking a dialect of Arabic in the Middle East and with a Dublin accent when in Ireland:

It's an advantage for us because like speaking Arabic, there's different types of Arabic. Like [in] Algeria they have different slang Arabic, it's the way we type [from background: "different accents"] so if I go to Algeria, I'll be able to understand a few words and speak back with a few words, that'd be normal. In Libya, same thing. Egypt, same thing. Sudan, same thing and then when I come here [Ireland], same thing. We just put on the [accent], *I'm able to put on a Dublin accent everything so they'll recognise [it] but they'll know you're different, you get me, just by your skin colour*. For example, when I go to Libya, they'd be like "where are you from?;" [Aban's response] "Originally, I live in Ireland"; "so you're basically Irish, do you have a passport?;" [Aban's response] "Yeah"; "you're telling me you're basically Irish"; [Aban's response] I'm like "no, my parents are Libyan. I'm born in Libya, I'm basically Libyan"; and they're like "no, what are you doing here, go back to Ireland!"<sup>648</sup>

At the end of Aban's small story, Yusuf angrily revoices the Libyan character, who questions his friend's identity:

Why did you even come here?, ye dope! [laughter], [go] back, go back to Europe [loud laughter], get out of here [Libya].<sup>649</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 6 – explores the comforting coping mechanism sociologically associated with spiritual recognition.

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<sup>648</sup> Aban (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>649</sup> Yusuf.



## Chapter 6                      Relations to Spiritual Recognition

Classical sociology was highly influenced by the grand theories of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. On one hand, Durkheim viewed religion positively as the site where collective consciousness raised its normative hopes and ideals – or in Durkheim’s terminology, its ‘obscure aspirations towards the good, the beautiful and the ideal’ – above and beyond the reality of everyday life.<sup>650</sup> On the other hand, Weber, despite his orientalist view of Islam as a militaristic warrior religion,<sup>651</sup> made a famous differentiation between the social strata of elite institutional ‘virtuosi’, who generate legitimation for themselves by controlling and conserving religious meaning versus the religion of the suffering and struggling ‘disprivileged’ strata, who need a salvatory religion as a form of justified compensatory esteem that facilitates access to resources, physical well-being and ‘psychic comfort’.<sup>652</sup> Today, whilst the grand theories have slowly receded, contemporary sociology of religion, although highly influenced by classical studies, is primarily guided by the interpretation of empirical data, particularly in relation to everyday experiences of religiosity.

Furseth and Repstad explain that contemporary sociologists of religion answer the question – why do people become religious? – by the utilisation of four theoretical frames.<sup>653</sup> Firstly, in line with Weber’s idea of religion as a coping mechanism and facilitator of comfort from suffering and everyday struggle, *deprivation theory* determines that ‘religious commitment is a result of compensation’ from various forms of disadvantage in everyday life (whether that be economic, social, organismic, ethical, psychic and even existential);<sup>654</sup> secondly, *socialisation theory* determines that we think and act in certain ways due to our upbringing or socialisation into a contextual world.

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<sup>650</sup> Durkheim, E. 1964 [1915]. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

<sup>651</sup> Weber, Max. 2001 [1904-05]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Routledge. Weber viewed Islam as a feudalised patrimonial form of domination that is antithetical to the ascetic Protestant work ethic and capitalism, generally.

<sup>652</sup> Weber, M. 1966. *Sociology of Religion*. London, Methuen. See also Roth, G and Wittich, C. (eds.). 1978. Chapter VI. *Max Weber - Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. US: University of California Press.

<sup>653</sup> Furseth, I., and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 7. *Op. cit.*

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111-114. For an empirical narrative study of Christian youth perspectives emphasising prayer as a coping mechanism and source of comfort, see Collins-Mayo, S. Young People’s Spirituality and the Meaning of Prayer. Chapter 3. *IN: Day, A. (ed.). 2008. Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, Identity*. UK: Ashgate.

This theory has particular relevance for intergenerational relationships and associated struggles;<sup>655</sup> the third is *rational-choice theory* that determines that self-interested individuals make rational and calculated choices in relation to religious commitment and behaviour;<sup>656</sup> and lastly is the *theory of seeking*, which determines that individuals are on a life quest and seek the goal of meaning and belonging.<sup>657</sup>

In terms of this research, the absence of a discussion about spiritual recognition cannot be justified, particularly as this study focuses on individuals, who identify themselves as having a salient spiritual identity and feel that they belong to a religious community.<sup>658</sup> With classical and contemporary sociology of religion briefly outlined above, it must be stated that narratives within this study are firmly connected to deprivation theory, and to a certain extent, with the theory of seeking. In relation to spiritual recognition, a variety of interviewees and discussants confirm the positivity of their religious observance as a form of compensatory esteem that provides protection from the pain of pathological intersubjective interaction within everyday life. In other words, whilst religion provides the individual with tangible benefits and resources, it also acts as a coping mechanism and a comfort from physical and psychical ill-health.

The relationship between religion, disrespect and the reinvigoration of a positive relation-to-self has been studied by Melvin L. Rogers in relation to the African-American experience of slavery.<sup>659</sup> Rogers, who is critical of how predominantly secular critical theorists dismiss religion in solely negative terms as ideological, investigates how individuals rebound from disrespect to ‘generate the motivation necessary to prompt social conflict and transformation’.<sup>660</sup> In his opinion, Honneth overly favours secularised ‘formal’ systems of recognition to develop ‘psychological and moral autonomy’<sup>661</sup> and ‘obscures’ alternative systematic ways in which individuals create integrity and ‘affirm their normative self-understanding’.<sup>662</sup> For Rogers, the over-

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<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-117. See Chapter 7 of this thesis.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-120. See Chapter 8 of this thesis.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-122.

<sup>658</sup> Modood, T. 1998. *Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the ‘Recognition’ of Religious Groups*. 6(4), pp. 378-399. However, in line with sociology’s standards of methodological agnosticism, this study remains silent of the issue of divine existence. For an understanding of this stance, see Furseth, I., and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 12. *Op. cit.*

<sup>659</sup> Rogers, M.L. 2009. Rereading Honneth: Exodus Politics and the Paradox of Recognition. *European Journal of Political Theory*. 8(2), pp. 183-206.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*

reliance on legal recognition ensures that individuals are dependent on modes of recognition that cause suffering in the first instance; thereby, creating a paradox. An alternative view would be to give abstract forms of recognition more sway within the theory of recognition. For example, he views the ability of African-American slaves to hold social death 'at bay' as explained by the use of religion as an alternative form of recognition to the formal structures contextually situated in everyday life. To create a positive self-understanding, slaves 'employed religious imagination'.<sup>663</sup> By being creative with their spirituality, particularly the Story of Exodus, slaves could 'address [the] existential threat of slavery'.<sup>664</sup> This is a strong argument for the fact that spiritual recognition has a positively productive and constitutive impact upon an individual's struggle for recognition and identity formation:

The practical result of the locution [utilising the Story of Exodus] was to remove from view, among other things, the obstacle of racial discrimination that prevented the acknowledgement of one's particularity and its place in the larger well-being of the community. More immediately, however, if the story of Exodus worked as historians and others have described, then the corresponding sense of peoplehood provided precisely the vision of worth that each individual searched for. It indicated their importance by virtue of the similar journey they shared. They were esteemed in light of their struggle and allegiance to God.<sup>665</sup>

The following sections focus on the general themes of religious support, religious solidarity and the identification of a civic component that can be interpreted and extracted from Islamic doctrine.

## 6.1 Religious Support

This section explores the narratives on spiritual recognition, particularly in relation to how such an abstract form of recognition has practical benefits by acting as a *comfort and coping mechanism* against the harsh reality of everyday life, in which intersubjective struggle is inherent. Furthermore, the narratives also briefly explore how spiritual recognition relates to feeling and self-confidence.

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<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*

### 6.1.1 A Comfort and Coping Mechanism

In line with deprivation theory within the sociology of religion, many of the empirical narratives suggest strongly that spiritual recognition supports the individual by acting as a valuable coping mechanism that provides comfort against a range of pathologies that permeate everyday interactive life with others. The majority of such narratives emanate from the focused discussion groups. For example, Idris opines that Islam ‘soothes’ and is for all of ‘humanity’.<sup>666</sup> It is a universal human coping mechanism by the fact that prayer is an attempt to gain recognition despite ‘all the troubles that you have in the worldly day’.<sup>667</sup> This point is expanded further by Dahlia, who expresses her viewpoint that reading the Qur’an collectively with other community members helps psychologically with everyday struggles and ills, such as living within a foreign land and homesickness. She states about the positivity and rewards of religious study:

It’s to help our inside, *to build our inside*. In this country, especially we are living abroad; we are away from home, that’s a really tough position for us. We find here to sit and read Qur’an together that’s a kind of recognition between ourselves and Allah.<sup>668</sup>

Another 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussant – Ayan – strongly emphasises how her spiritual belief and recognition gives her strength and power to tackle everyday struggles – either within the family or wider interactive spheres – with confidence. She states that having ‘belief’<sup>669</sup> in God and following the prescriptions of Islam is positive for the self in that it ‘[makes] us strong’.<sup>670</sup> In other words, recognition to God beneficially aids the person in their struggles through everyday life. As Ayan states in this regard: ‘Our belief on that [Islam] that make me strong; I can fight; I can do anything’.<sup>671</sup> This comment suggests that spiritual belief gives a person internal strength and the self-confidence to partake in life, despite the struggles that may arise. Dahlia translates Ayan’s comments in terms of the attainment of personal power by stating

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<sup>666</sup> Idris.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>668</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>669</sup> Ayan (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*

‘yes, to give us [resistive] power!’<sup>672</sup> Therefore, recognition to God is connected to the attainment of personal power and autonomy. Ayan connects this in relation to the familial sphere, in which she mentioned that she is the power dynamic of the familial sphere. In this section, she emphasises that matriarchal power is created by God and she ‘can be the dynamo of the family’<sup>673</sup> but that such a position ‘comes from our beliefs inside the heart from God’.<sup>674</sup> Dahlia emphasises the practical health benefits that spiritual recognition has for tackling everyday struggles. She agrees with Ayan and adds ‘exactly, you believe we fight depression. We fight feeling homesickness’.<sup>675</sup> For this discussion, spiritual recognition is related to two essential aspects: ‘Power and secondly, prayer’.<sup>676</sup>

Echoing Dahlia’s comments about how spiritual recognition has positive health benefits, Sadiyya returns to how recognition to God through prayer can help with practical struggles in life. What is interesting about her comments is that she specifically mentions psychological struggles related to depressive conditions. She mentions the uplifting aspects of spiritual reflection by stating that ‘sometimes if you feel depressed just read, open [the] Qur’an and after that you really feel [better]’.<sup>677</sup> Dahlia supports this comment by stating in response ‘open the Qur’an, that’s the hope!’<sup>678</sup> Thus, through their comments – Sadiyya and Dahlia – are emphasising the psychological benefits that spiritual recognition gives to people struggling with the realities of everyday life. It can give hope and can also make ‘the depression less’.<sup>679</sup> Once again Ayan returns to the theme that spiritual recognition is a battery – a rechargeable form of empowerment. She states that when you are ‘travelling to God’<sup>680</sup> you specifically make this journey to feel internally empowered and ready to tackle the everyday trials of life. In line with socialisation theory, this is one of the major reasons to ensure that the younger

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<sup>672</sup> Dahlia.

<sup>673</sup> Ayan.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>675</sup> Dahlia.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>677</sup> Sadiyya (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>678</sup> Dahlia

<sup>679</sup> Sadiyya. For a meta-analytic review of how religiousness positively promotes health and deters disease, see McCullough, M.E., and Smith, T.B. Religion and Health: Depressive Symptoms and Mortality as Case Studies. Chapter 15. *IN*: Dillon, M. (ed.). 2003. *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>680</sup> Ayan.

generation recognise God and obtain a way to be internally empowered. On this point, Ayan states:

[When] you travelling to God, you come for more *power inside yourself* that what give our beliefs in God. Give us the power to, in our life, to do with the children, everything. So, we can now convince our children when you have beliefs you can prepare them and let them, give them this way for them, this power.<sup>681</sup>

The above statements are also reflected within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation discussion groups, Azaan states that he went through ‘a phase’<sup>682</sup> at the beginning of his teens that was marked by isolation and depression. He ‘left the mosque’<sup>683</sup> and as he states ‘kept to himself’.<sup>684</sup> He describes this period as a time when he went ‘all hardcore’,<sup>685</sup> which was reflected in the music he listened to – a form of rock music called emotional hardcore (EMO). He openly states that his psychological health was not good; and on reflection, he was ‘real depressed’.<sup>686</sup> Whilst he emphasises that this time was ‘tough’,<sup>687</sup> Azaan also reflects on how the reforming of friendships to other young Muslims brought him back to conducting prayer, which he feels alleviated his depressive symptoms. Notably, he associates prayer as an act of recognition to God with a confessional function that has similar qualities to counselling and forms of talk therapy. To communicate his point, he aligns Islam and Christianity through the idea that prayer is an act of confession, which can relieve the psychological tension associated with ‘bottling up’<sup>688</sup> everyday worries and concerns about particular actions. He acknowledges that people who keep worries and problems to themselves can be deeply disturbed in that their negative thoughts can ‘kinda break them’ and they might ‘crack up eventually and just go crazy like, especially if it was something bad’.<sup>689</sup> Therefore, in his opinion, the confessional in Christianity provides a means for transacting everyday problems to another person without the fear of being judged, just

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<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>682</sup> Azaan.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*

as in the *play* associated with psychoanalytic therapy. After the act of confession, the person will ‘feel somewhat relieved because you’d let it out and told someone’.<sup>690</sup> He then compares this to his own religion, Islam, in which the act of prayer is viewed as a private form of confessional between the individual and God:

When you’re bowing and stuff you can let everything out and ask for forgiveness and tell God everything you've done and whatever and you wouldn't have to have told the priest. No one in the world could know or has to know what you've done and *you can still feel that release* because you've told or you've asked for forgiveness and *you've let it out* like, you know and no one can hear you, no one has to hear you.<sup>691</sup>

After Azaan’s comments about confessional prayer, Yusuf, another 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male discussant, clarifies that the act of prayer as confession is only used when you’re ‘wronging yourself’<sup>692</sup> and does not exempt an individual from wronging or misrecognising another person. As he states, in this situation ‘if you are wronging someone else, you have to go apologise to them, so you can't just go and kill someone and just be like “God forgive me”’.<sup>693</sup> Yusuf continues the narrative into how it can be an aid to the negative aspects of worldly life. He states that for him spiritual recognition as recognition to God is a beneficial aid that enables a person to learn how to cope with the stresses and hardships of everyday life. Thus for this discussant, spiritual recognition is a coping mechanism. He mentions the relief and satisfaction he feels when conducting prayer:

...if I'm going through stress throughout the day, if I'm like sick of studying, if I'm having troubles and I put my forehead to the ground, *I feel such a sense of relief*, you know. Such a sense of satisfaction like, I can make, I can, for me I'm there and I'm facing God, you know, and *I can just say anything I want and that just makes me feel so good*.<sup>694</sup>

Masud identifies with Yusuf’s narrative. He also states that praying to God ‘feels good’<sup>695</sup> and this feeling is especially heightened ‘when you are going through tough

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<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>692</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>695</sup> Masud.

times'.<sup>696</sup> Aban enters the conversation acknowledging that as a believer, he is aware that secular people 'don't believe'<sup>697</sup> because they 'say "God is not there"'.<sup>698</sup> He positions himself in opposition to such an opinion, which views life as solely created so that people can 'have fun, to do whatever you want and then you just die and then you're gone?'.<sup>699</sup> He does not agree with this assessment of what life is about. However, he is open to differentiating between recognising God and the institution of religion. He acknowledges that 'every religion has its own theory'.<sup>700</sup> At this point, just like Azaan and Yusuf, Aban moves to the practical application of his religion as a coping mechanism for everyday life. He narrates a small story about the stress of undertaking examinations and how his mother advised him to say a prayer before the exam in order to calm his nerves and clear his mind. However, he states that sometimes he forgets to pray, which causes him to 'feel like I'm struggling, struggling and everything. When I say it, it comes better, so that's how I know'.<sup>701</sup> For this discussant, spiritual recognition is a mechanism to ease the struggles of everyday life.

Yusuf adds that the perceived existence of God not only eases everyday suffering and struggle but also his existence is aesthetically evident within the beautiful complexity of the world. As he states: 'the skies, the mountains, you look around, you know there's a creator'.<sup>702</sup> Through such evidence, Yusuf believes that this work of creation should be recognised and acknowledged by those who benefit and are conscious of its existence. He states that he recognises God and his work 'by going every single day, putting your forehead to the ground, you speak of him, you know that at the end of the day, death is not the end, you know there's a hereafter and that is what you work towards'.<sup>703</sup> For this discussant, recognition to God goes hand-in-hand with the evidence that there is an afterlife, which is free of suffering and struggle. The afterlife is paradise and it motivates people to behave a certain way in this worldly life. Reaching such paradise becomes a reason to 'work hard'<sup>704</sup> in all spheres of life. For

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<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>697</sup> Aban.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>702</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*

Yusuf, it [spiritual recognition as evidence of an afterlife] acts as ‘a kind of motivator’<sup>705</sup> in that it ‘pushes you’<sup>706</sup> towards the goal of obtaining entry into a sphere of existence that is devoid of hardship, suffering and struggle. At the same time, in his opinion, ‘any problems you have in life, any difficulties, it [spiritual recognition] just eases everything off, you know’.<sup>707</sup> Once again, he returns to the point that recognition to an abstract phenomenon i.e., God acts as a coping mechanism against the difficulties inherent to a socially intersubjective form of existence.<sup>708</sup>

### 6.1.2 Affect on Relation-to-Self

The following section will present narratives that give an indication how spiritual recognition affects an individual’s relation-to-self, particularly in terms of feeling and self-confidence. A revert to Islam, Kaleem has much to say about spiritual recognition, which he refers to as a natural instinct or ‘referential instinct’ i.e., to revere a higher entity.<sup>709</sup> For this interviewee, spiritual recognition aids success and happiness in life by providing comfort and purifying the heart of the individual. Thus for Kaleem, spiritual recognition to God provides a unique ‘inner cleanliness’ of the heart.<sup>710</sup>

Idris, within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation discussion group, echoes Kaleem’s statement above, by internally positioning the affect of spiritual recognition as being located ‘in the heart’.<sup>711</sup> Furthermore, he states that the ‘heart can’t see’<sup>712</sup> but that the ‘heart can feel’.<sup>713</sup> Importantly in Idris’ opinion, spiritual recognition is not devoid of reason. For this discussant, it is cognitively rational in that the heart is connected to mental processes. He uses a common saying to emphasise this point: ‘we say “the heart is the heart of the mind”’.<sup>714</sup> Overall for this discussant, spiritual recognition is fundamentally

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<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>707</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>708</sup> To briefly recap, for Winnicott, transitional phenomena – such as art, religion and science – represent societal culture, by providing *a potential playful space* for adults to obtain comfort through various cultural obsessional practices - or *little madnnesses* – that help negotiate binaries such as dependency/independency; illusion/reality; subject/object. Kuhn, A. (ed.). 2013. *Op. cit.*

<sup>709</sup> Kaleem (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; M; Cit; SSI).

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>712</sup> Idris.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*

about feeling and belief and ‘that’s the recognition to God’.<sup>715</sup> He highlights how prayer is a repetitive *act of recognition* to God that provides comfort and reflection away from ‘all the troubles that you have in the worldly day’.<sup>716</sup> He is thus equating spiritual recognition – through feeling and belief – as a form of human coping mechanism:

Feeling and belief, feeling and belief and that’s the recognition [to God] and every time you watch and stand in front of God, you are standing in front of God, and you try with all the troubles that you have in the worldly day, you know, people can lose their sight of what they are doing but, you know, the repetition maybe one day will get you to recognise and to recognise and to be recognised.<sup>717</sup>

When asked about what specific feelings emanate from recognising God, Idris clarifies that such recognition through various acts gives a feeling of ‘cleansing’, ‘cleaning’ and ‘purity’.<sup>718</sup> He stresses that such recognition is also beneficial for one’s self and well-being in that it creates a system of life that makes you a better person-to-self and to others.

You know, the benefit is also for you. I mean it’s like a system of life. It’s not just a belief; it’s a system of life. You follow this and you are a better person. Not because it organises your day – simple thing [like] prayer organises your day. You take a break at certain times. Everything you do is [is for your well-being], and there is also a hadith – “everything people do, Muslims do, it’s for themselves”...for your own wellbeing except fasting. Fasting is for God because you do it, and you know that he is watching you too...It’s teaching you to stop having what is permitted [halal].<sup>719</sup>

In terms of whether spiritual recognition relates to self-confidence, a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussant, Isha, affirmatively agrees by stating concisely: ‘yeah, it does do that’.<sup>720</sup> In terms of community and self-confidence, Nejeed opines strongly in relation to community relations that ‘you’re not just a[n isolated] person here’.<sup>721</sup> By this he means that people within their Muslim communities are not isolated from each other but

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<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>720</sup> Isha.

<sup>721</sup> Nejeed.

are members of a social community that are all connected and know each other. Therefore, as he states, ‘you’re known by your name, you’re known for “who you are”’.<sup>722</sup> As to whether community support gives self-confidence to an individual, Nejeed responds ‘of course, yeah’.<sup>723</sup>

Saiba makes an extremely important statement that links using one’s autonomous choice to practise a religion to self-confidence. She criticises any form of religiosity that is forced upon people. She directly criticises the patriarchal power dynamics within her community that force (a proportion of) Muslim women to wear body coverings against their will. For this discussion, these people are not autonomous individuals and such actions destroy self-confidence. On the point of connecting autonomous action to self-confidence, she states the following:

Once you’re not doing it because other people expect you to do it, or because it’s the norm and you accept it within yourself, I think you’ll find it much easier to answer questions of like oppression and do you feel oppressed? You just say “no” or other times where I think people that are, have to wear the hijab or have to practise certain ways, they’d be like “I’m not oppressed but like why”? and they wouldn’t have reasons because technically they are, they’re being forced to wear it and if you believe in it [Islam] yourself, I think you’ll feel a lot more confident in yourself.<sup>724</sup>

## **6.2 Religious Solidarity**

This section explores religious solidarity in terms of how a collective religious bond acts as a regulative function for perfecting and maintaining individual religious practice and how friendships amongst Muslim youth are grounded and bound together through the search for an authentic Islamic identity, which acts as a common-ground for an ethnically diverse community.

### **6.2.1 The Regulative Function of the Religious Collective**

Whilst the narratives above stress Islamic spiritual recognition as an individual action and relation-to-self, it also creates a strong collective solidaristic bond that fulfils a

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<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>724</sup> Saiba.

function in relation to regulating an individual's everyday practice. Idris comments on hajj and its relation to the Day of Judgement by emphasising his viewpoint about the collective solidarity and equality that is symbolised and embedded within Islamic theology and practice. For this discussant, the hajj pilgrimage represents the Day of Judgement in which *all* people become one and the same under the umbrella of Islam. He views such symbolism within Islam as a means of making “particular” people ‘the same’<sup>725</sup> or “universal” to each other, similar to the secular concept of citizenship. Idris’ states the following about the hajj pilgrimage:

The Day of Judgement is when you go to hajj and you are doing that walk and people are pushing and shoving and people, some people are annoyed when they see people [being aggressive] and they say “ignorant” and this and that but this is an example of the Day of Judgement where everybody is there. *Where everybody is the same, where there's no difference between a president and a sweeper so that kind of thing. You're all the same.* No matter who you are, or what your background, rich, poor whatever, and that is the way that when all up on the last day. That is, and this is a microcosm of that day. So everything in [Islam], within our religion has a symbolism.<sup>726</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group gives an insight into how collective religious solidarity can also act as a beneficial regulatory mechanism over the struggle individual members have with the norms prescribed by the religion. For example, Meera openly clarifies that she believes ‘God [is] here’<sup>727</sup> but that in terms of her everyday actions in relation to prescribed norms, she confides that: ‘I’m not following everything, you know, no, I try!’<sup>728</sup> A fellow discussant, Sadiyya, consoles Meera by replying to this statement with a reason for her not following Islamic norms to the letter: ‘cause you are human, human being’.<sup>729</sup> Meera agrees. Ayan follows by also emphasising the fallibility of the human condition: ‘because we are [human], we are who [make] mistakes’.<sup>730</sup> Dahlia provides narrative evidence of how a female communal study group provides a regulative mechanism to individually recognise God but in a synchronised manner that is perceived as the “correct” way. As she states about such collective solidarity and how

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<sup>725</sup> Idris.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>727</sup> Meera.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>729</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>730</sup> Ayan.

it regulates “correct” religious adherence and provides a coping mechanism against everyday struggle:

I find our meeting here every Wednesday that’s a kind of very spiritual recognition between this team [the female study group] and God. We came here just sitting, reading Qur’an, that’s the main thing, to learn how we can live Qur’an [in] the correct way and learn some spiritual things. It’s to help our inside, *to build our inside*. In this country, especially we are living abroad; we are away from home, that’s a really tough position for us. We find here to sit and read Qur’an together that’s a kind of recognition between ourself and Allah.<sup>731</sup>

Dahlia’s statement emphasises how the Muslim women’s study group meets regularly to promote and regulate their individual spiritual recognition in a collective manner. They come together one day per week as a supportive ‘team’<sup>732</sup> and read the Qur’an in order to learn collectively how to spiritually act “correctly” in-line with Islamic sources. As Meera’s statements prove, the individual may find it difficult to live correctly as a Muslim within a non-Muslim country; therefore, collective support and communal interaction provides a support system that enables Muslim women to ‘build their inside’<sup>733</sup> in spiritual terms. The group also provides a mechanism to provide support, care and a remedy to isolationism. As Dahlia states – it’s a ‘tough position for us’<sup>734</sup> to be Muslim immigrants within a non-Muslim country. She views reading the Qur’an communally as ‘a kind of recognition between ourself and Allah’.<sup>735</sup>

### 6.2.2 Friendship and the Youth’s Search for Common-Ground

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation discussion groups, collective solidarity in terms of friendship comes to the fore and also how such an ethno-culturally diverse generation have found common-ground through an Islamic identity. For example, Yusuf jokingly defines his Muslim friends as ‘kinda the Muslim brotherhood [general laughter]’.<sup>736</sup> Masud laughingly replies ‘yeah, it really is like [that]’<sup>737</sup> and then returns to the conversation

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<sup>731</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>736</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>737</sup> Masud.

by emphasising that friendship within the small Muslim community in Dublin is not determined by age. For this discussant, ‘the age difference [between Muslim friends] doesn't really matter’.<sup>738</sup> He clarifies that he hangs around with Muslims of varying ages and then compares this as different to his friendships with non-Muslims:

I wouldn't be out on the streets with an Irish guy, who's four or five years older than me. I wouldn't be chillin' or talkin' to them or something whereas here it'd be grand. They're like brothers to me.<sup>739</sup>

Aban differentiates between his Islamic and Irish friends. First of all, he clarifies that in his opinion Islamic identity is ‘powerful’<sup>740</sup> in that it can bond people together. For this discussant, it is what differentiates his two friendship groups. In terms of his Irish friends, the relationship is formed around amusement in that ‘if you’re with your Irish friends, you're going to have to plan the day, plan a time to meet up somewhere and do something’<sup>741</sup> and when you come to meet with your Irish friends, they're like “no, I'm not going to come out unless we are doing something interesting, something fun”.<sup>742</sup> However, in Aban’s opinion, the friendships are different between Islamic friends in that –

Just take a random weekend or maybe a Friday prayer at the mosque, you'll see them all here. Think about it...with your Muslim friends you don't have to [plan]. Where do you want to find them on a Friday morning? You come to the mosque and you find everyone and they're happy...so that's what I find different.<sup>743</sup>

Stressing the importance of friendship to spiritual recognition, Azaan narrates a small story about how he reformed new friendships with other Muslims. For this discussant, making new friends led directly to a reactualisation of his spiritual recognition and Islamic identity. Furthermore, re-enacting his Islamic identity through friendship is associated with a lessening of his depression and the creation of more happiness and

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<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> Aban.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*

contentment in his life. He states the following about how friendship helped shape his spiritual recognition:

I had stopped praying and reading Qur'an and everything to do with Islam back then and then one day they [Muslim youth] came to my house and they started praying and I was like "oh yeah, I forgot you had to pray and stuff", they kind of brought it back to me and then when I had come back to it, I wasn't as down and stuff. So, I was kind of more happy than I was before being back here, being praying, being Muslim and stuff like that so I suppose friendship and he [friend] had brought me back, being friends with him kind of brought me back to Islam and stuff so I kind of have him to thank for it and stuff so. So I suppose in that way, like God sort of like brought me back in that way.<sup>744</sup>

It is interesting that friendship is being perceived as a circular movement back to recognising God. Azaan explains that friendship is different in Islam than the common idea of secular friendship of 'he's just a mate'.<sup>745</sup> Friendship in Islam is 'kind of past that'<sup>746</sup> standard definition adopted by most people. He associates friendship in Islam as closer to the idea of brotherhood or sisterhood in that 'you are always there for each other and stuff so whether someone [is] going through something, you can't just be like "ah, hate that" or like "it's bad". Someone would definitely like be there and trying to help you as much as they can through it'.<sup>747</sup> For this discussant, this kind of friendship is 'one of the greatest things about Islam'<sup>748</sup> in that it involves a 'closeness you have with [other] people'.<sup>749</sup>

Hussein states an important point that young Muslims in Ireland, due to the pluralistic democratic environment and freedom that this entails, have looked beyond their ethno-cultural and/or national differences to become friends through a "universal" Islamic identity. This narrative is extremely important as it provides narrative evidence that today, in cosmopolitan Ireland, Muslim youth have found a common-ground based on the practise of a salient Islamic identity:

I'll tell you something, the reality is if I met him [Masud] maybe in Libya, we wouldn't get to know each other as much, so I think that Ireland brought all the

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<sup>744</sup> Azaan.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslims together. The barrier of culture or different country has been gone, you know because we're in Ireland, we have respect for each other. Like I said if I met him [Masud] in his country [we wouldn't get to know each other]; probably because they have that kind of thing [culture] but Ireland did bring all the Muslims together.<sup>750</sup>

A similar view is held within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group. Rifa clarifies that the small size of the Muslim community in Ireland means that Islamic identity is struggled for, maintained and even strengthened. Fusaila opines that Muslims in Ireland 'hang onto the *real* Islam'<sup>751</sup> because it joins everyone together despite there being 'so many of us, different cultu[res], different cultures [high tone]'.<sup>752</sup> Saiba and Fusaila agree that Islamic identity has become the common ground that binds the diverse young generation together as Muslim. On this point, Saiba states 'exactly'.<sup>753</sup> Fusaila agrees 'definitely'<sup>754</sup> and then explains why mixing with other cultures is positive for Islam and can help ground a person in how they practise their religiosity:

I want to have like different cultures in my life 'cos I feel like my friends keep me grounded. When I'm straying too much in my culture, they're like "you know that's not Islam". *If you hang around with different cultures, you realise that you need to find a common-ground somewhere and Islam is that common-ground.*<sup>755</sup>

The above has implications for the future development of Islam in Ireland as Fusaila makes the statement that young adult Muslims are actively pursuing a strategy to educate younger generations growing up in the Dublin metropolis and in the rest of Ireland. Fusaila states that the present 2<sup>nd</sup> generation are making concerted efforts 'to educate the younger ones'<sup>756</sup> in how to attain a common-ground towards each other by returning to an "authentic" form of Islam, which contains a valued and embedded civic component.

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<sup>750</sup> Hussein.

<sup>751</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>753</sup> Saiba.

<sup>754</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>756</sup> *Ibid.*

### 6.3 Islam's Civic Component

This section will explore the narratives that give an insight into how the research participants view the relationship between Islamic and civic identities. Particular attention will be paid to narratives that emphasise the *civicality of Islam* i.e., narratives indicating the existence of an Islamic-civic component of identity.<sup>757</sup> Secondly, narratives will be used to explore how the life story of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), particularly in terms of his time spent in exile in Medina, constitutes a key example and influence upon the research participants in terms of how Islamic-civic practice can be implemented within a pluralistic environment.

#### 6.3.1 Interpreting Civicness from Islam

Within the narratives, there is ample evidence that a civic identity that is interpreted from Islamic teaching and practice is being emphasised as valuable by the interviewees and discussants. In other words, there is evidence that an Islamic-civic identity is important within the everyday lives of the research participants and is held in higher regard than the salience of an ethno-cultural or an overly nationalistic identity. For example, within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussion group, Farid stresses the lack of connection between being Muslim and a national whilst strongly connecting the complementary relationship between being Muslim and civic. The clearest sign of this opinion, or 'feeling' as Farid calls it, is the following statement:

We don't feel like we're national, Irish national. Probably, we feel more civil. Like, vote civil rather than [vote] Irish.<sup>758</sup>

Idris is of the opinion that there is no conflict whatsoever between Islam, national or civic identities. For this discussant, Islam equals respect and he states the following in this regard:

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<sup>757</sup> For a sociological understanding of how religiosity can benefit society as a macro-level criticiser of the social realm, and at the micro-level, as an encourager of wider social and political participation, see Demerath, N.J. *Civil Society and Civil Religion as Mutually Dependent*. Chapter 24. *IN: Dillon, Michele. (ed.). 2003. Op. cit.*

<sup>758</sup> Farid.

There is no real conflict between being a Muslim first because Muslim, if you are a true Muslim then you will respect everything of the country that you are living in...in Islam, you have to follow the '[laws of the] country you are living in. So, this is a small thing, you have to follow the law of the country. You have to pay your taxes and if you are called to the army, then you have to go to the army.'<sup>759</sup>

Labeeb's comments continue to raise interesting reflections upon civic identity and its practical application. Overall, although this 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussant acknowledges that Muslims can vary in belief, he is certain that 'Muslim is Muslim'<sup>760</sup> and that despite differences in interpretation 'we all believe'.<sup>761</sup> In his opinion, if a person states the shahada (profession of faith), 'he's a Muslim'.<sup>762</sup> Labeeb then goes on to state a positive view of universal and mutual civicness that transcends religious particularness and gives an indication of how he lives his everyday life. He states that he is unemployed and is 'receiving help from the government',<sup>763</sup> most probably in the form of monetary benefit. He seems to be correlating such social welfare payments not to the state, who distribute such payments but to other citizens within Irish society, who pay and contribute through taxation. He states his appreciation to Irish society for coming to his aid in terms of providing him with social welfare benefits: 'who paying this tax, who paying this money, [it's] from the Irish society and the majority is Catholic or Christian.'<sup>764</sup> Labeeb does not stop there but adds an intersubjective dynamic. He states that he reciprocates the aid he receives by civically volunteering 'to work for my community through St. Vincent de Paul',<sup>765</sup> a Catholic charitable organisation. Thus, this denizen recognises the reciprocal nature of civicness that involves moral responsibility. Although he is receiving social welfare payments, his civic identity is active in reciprocating back to his community; thereby, proving that he is not a burden but a contributing member of society. This is reflected in the following statement:

I'm not working now; I volunteer to work for my community through St. Vincent de Paul but some people [within the Muslim community] might have

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<sup>759</sup> Idris.

<sup>760</sup> Labeeb.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*

problem with that [working for a Christian charity] but I'm going to volunteer to work for St. Vincent de Paul to prove to my [wider] community, to provide for my [wider] community because I don't want to sit back in the room where [I am] watching television, why the government giving me money? and there is some way that I can contribute.<sup>766</sup>

Within this statement, he suggests that some within the Muslim community may have an issue with his decision to volunteer for a Christian charity. Idris asks a question of Labeeb: 'and do you think there is a problem in doing that?'<sup>767</sup> Labeeb responds with 'no'<sup>768</sup> but then adds additionally that 'some people might have problem with that'.<sup>769</sup> Overall though, Labeeb is happy to be civically active and participating within his (wider) community. When asked about making a civic contribution, he states the following:

I'm three years doing that [volunteering] now. So, I mean, the understanding between the religion and stuff like that [civic participation], I think some people [within the Muslim community] find it difficult. It might be based on their background from back home or whatever – religion – but we live together in our [home]country Christian and Muslim, peacefully, there's no difference...<sup>770</sup>

Hurriyah states in relation to integration processes in Ireland that 'here [there] are some of us [Muslims] as well that are not ready to integrate and everybody has the right to do what they want'.<sup>771</sup> It could be inferred that this discussant is stating that an awareness of Islamic-civicness is growing but that more needs to be done to expand on how Islamic identity can find the flexibility within its own teachings to relate to the European environment. However, such a process is both internal and external in that Hurriyah stresses that 'we [Muslims] need to find the *inner side of us and educate ourselves* about certain things'.<sup>772</sup> In terms of whether civicness is inside Islam or whether it is an entity in its own right that is distinctly separate from Islam, Hurriyah states the following narrative:

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<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>767</sup> Idris.

<sup>768</sup> Labeeb.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>771</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*

It's separated in the sense that even though you are a citizen there are some laws that still bound you but you can't override that law as a Muslim. Example, *you are a Muslim first before your citizenship*. I am a Muslim first that comes before my citizenship. Then my citizenship comes next [from background: "yeah"]. To follow the rules of that citizenship, not to betray the government and *everything there is already in Islam*. Islam said "follow the rules of the land". The only time you may not follow the rules of the land is when you are under threat to practise your Islam[ic] religion. It'll [Islam will] move elsewhere because Allah said "he has created all the walls here for you to live in different places", so that's the only time you can't follow the rules of that law, but apart from that follow the rules of the law. So in as much as we can do all this. Together, we'll see that we can live together side-by-side without any prejudice, but individually, we have a set mind that we are racist to each other, and then we use, [for] example, politics and religion to get into each other rather than finding the solution within ourselves.<sup>773</sup>

Within the above narrative, Hurriyah claims that civicism is not inside Islam per say but is separate. However, the teachings of Islam insist that Muslims must obey the law of the land. For this discussant, this is vitally important. However, she also clarifies that in her subjective opinion, Islam comes before 'any legal citizenship'.<sup>774</sup> In other words, Islamic identity takes precedence over formal civic identity or citizenship yet Islam implements a degree of reciprocal respect for the laws of the land as long as those laws do not infringe upon the right to practise one's Islamic faith. If Islam is mistreated within a bounded nation-state, Hurriyah claims that Muslims are permitted to move to another area, where the Islamic religion is given a degree of respect and freedom. This discussant would like people to collectively work towards social harmony; however, in her opinion, what prevents such ideals from forming is the racist mindset that forms part of the human condition, which manipulates political and religious ideology to sow disharmony amongst people. As a solution, she restates her conviction that individuals must reflect and conduct a process of self-examination in order to identify pathologies that lead to disrespectful action and the misrecognition of others.

Both female interviewees – Dahlia and Safeerah – are critical of Muslims who assimilate into Irish culture and neglect their Islamic identity. They refer to such people as *Muslims-by-name* but *not-in-practice*.<sup>775</sup> For Dahlia, such neglect of an Islamic identity within Western democracies is unnecessary because, in her opinion, Islam

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<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> Safeerah and Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; SSI).

provides the answer to integration in that civiness is *inside* Islam; and therefore, it enables Muslims to continue to spiritually recognise God and to civically participate as citizens in the public sphere. As she states on this point:

Some Muslim people don't know this [being involved in the wider community, i.e., the civic component of Islam] is from [the] Sunna from the Prophet Muhammad [PBUH], this is the problem...they [some Muslims] didn't know this [civiness] is *inside* Islam.<sup>776</sup>

Both female interviewees elaborate on the difficulties they face in terms of being members of a Muslim women's group, who act civically outside of their Muslim community by organising charitable events in their wider local area. On top of being critical about how Muslims in Ireland interact with the media and of other Muslims, who become assimilated into Irish culture and forsake their Islamic identities, they actively promote Muslims to become active through a civic interpretation of the Islamic sources. For these two interviewees, many Muslims do not know that Islam promotes civiness and participation. As Dahlia states: 'they [individuals within the Muslim community] didn't know this [civic element] is *inside* Islam'.<sup>777</sup> Whilst the female civic group has had to struggle against stereotypes within the wider society, they have also gained little support from their own Muslim community. Dahlia views Muslims in Ireland as 'isolated, they are just sitting in the corner'.<sup>778</sup> However, the interviewees are trying to change perceptions and inform their community and the wider society that Muslims can civically participate and contribute positively to their local community and to Irish society. Safeerah sums up the struggle encountered within Irish society and within their own Muslim community by stating that: 'we are fighting both'.<sup>779</sup> This short statement is valuable. It suggests that their group is struggling against perceptions of the wider Irish society and against perceptions that remain within the Muslim community. For these women, their message is that Islam has a civic component that can be useful to Muslims living in Europe, who wish to integrate and participate civically as Muslims within European societies.

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<sup>776</sup> Dahlia.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>779</sup> Safeerah.

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, Saiba differentiates between her recognition to God as a dependent child and how it progressed to be the foundation of her identity when she matured into an independent adult. Although Islam is her most salient identity, Saiba views civicness as emanating from her core religious identity. In this regard, she states that as a child she ‘didn’t think that she did’,<sup>780</sup> recognise God because her actions were co-ordinated and socialised by her parents. As she states about this constitutive power dynamic: ‘at that time, I was just doing it because my parents told me to’.<sup>781</sup> As a rebellious child, Saiba would give the appearance of acting out her recognition to God, but in reality, she was not following parental religious instruction. She states about the act of fasting: ‘even when I was fasting, I’d like fast because they told me to and then I’d like run away and go into the bathroom and eat food’.<sup>782</sup> Saiba goes on to give a long narrative that examines how as an adult she agentically researched into Islam and began to see an Islamic identity as the ‘foundation’,<sup>783</sup> of her identity. She narrates the following about this gradual self-realisation:

I don’t think out loud but I think subconsciously I said, “I do accept God and I am like, accept religion” and like I mean, I did say like I mean [it] and then from then on like, everything I do even if I wasn’t seen by other people I’d still feel conscious about it and be like you know “God can see me” and I’d still count that as one of my sins to like repent for like you know...it’s really hard to get to that stage where you’re like totally conscious of everything, where everything I do I think emm I do like basically for the sake of Islam. I mean, *I’d always have it as my, my foundation*, even when I’m in studies and when I like, anything I do, I’d always have a foundation of Islam or and then even things I do for the civic, like my community, even if it’s not benefiting Muslims, I’d still feel like it’s benefiting people. Islam is humane so it’d always have an Islamic foundation to it so.<sup>784</sup>

The above narrative indicates that Saiba, as a young adult, rationally chose to use her individual agency to research what Islam was about instead of passively receiving socialising instructions from her parents. This process of acceptance is described as an internal feeling in which she, within herself, acknowledged God’s existence. By accepting Allah, she describes how her actions took on a different meaning in that

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<sup>780</sup> Saiba.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>782</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*

“wrongful” actions against oneself or others can be seen by God, even if acted out privately. Thus, as an adult, Saiba believes that she is responsible for actions she performs in private as well as in public. However, she also stresses that ‘it’s really hard’<sup>785</sup> to be continuously conscious of every action that one initiates and performs in everyday life. With this said, overall for Saiba, Islam is her most salient identity. It is her core identity, the foundation of herself. She correlates her foundational Islamic identity to her civic actions by stating that any civicness she performs can be related back to the teachings of Islam. For this discussant, Islam is a humane religion in which civic identity is embedded and civic action promoted.

### **6.3.2 The Civic Example of Prophet Muhammad**

The narrative data indicates how civicness emanates from an Islamic ethos. Within the focused discussion groups, multiple discussants narrate how their civicness is highly influenced by hadith (or small stories) that elaborate on the religious and civic identity of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) within the multicultural and multireligious environment of Medina. For example, in terms of civicness, Hurriyah states adamantly that the Prophet ‘was civic’.<sup>786</sup> Sadiyya states about the Prophet: ‘he’s good’.<sup>787</sup> For Hurriyah, it is important that all Muslims ‘try to emulate his [the Prophet’s] behaviour’.<sup>788</sup> In her opinion, this implies a constant ‘need to keep on training ourselves’,<sup>789</sup> especially since people within the Muslim community are ‘still not copying him even though we’re following the Sunna, which is his practices’.<sup>790</sup> Overall, she is sure that ‘civic[ness] is there’<sup>791</sup> and is actualised in actions conducted by Muslims.

In terms of how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male discussants relate to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Islamic-civic life he lived in the diverse environment of Medina, Masud is the first to respond to the moderator’s probe: ‘I understand what you

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<sup>785</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>786</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>787</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>788</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

mean'.<sup>792</sup> Hussein then interjects into the conversation to clarify how immigrant Muslims can identify with the Prophet, who was 'from [the] city of Mecca [and] he went [migrated] to Medina'.<sup>793</sup> This discussant speaks about the fact that Muslims in Ireland are from 'Arab countries and African countries'<sup>794</sup> and have 'come to Ireland'<sup>795</sup> just as the Prophet had ventured from Mecca to exile in Medina. Through his narrative, Hussein seems to be making the claim that Islam has a strong civic element in that *it encourages its followers to be social*. In other words, 'mixing with other people is part of Islam'.<sup>796</sup> Furthermore, he also determines that Islam promotes the need to 'respect other people – always'<sup>797</sup> and to 'integrate with them [and] make sure everything's going smooth'.<sup>798</sup> Overall, he stresses that Islamic identity advocates and promotes civicness such as participation, integration as well as having respect for the other. Following on from Hussein's comments, Siddiq enters the discussion to make the claim that the relationship between Islam and civicness is intrinsically related to 'tolerance'.<sup>799</sup> For this discussant, Islam and the Prophet's example illustrates how to interact and integrate within a pluralistic environment. As he states:

It's tolerance and also God says in the Qur'an that "we've made you from different tongues that you may learn from one another" and this is also something that Islam promotes when you go into [a] different culture.<sup>800</sup>

Aswad returns to the theme of Medina and pluralism by stating that he thinks 'it's because of ignorance'<sup>801</sup> that there is a tension and confusion between Muslims and non-Muslims. He concedes that many Muslims themselves are 'ignorant'<sup>802</sup> of the civic message of tolerance and respect that resides within Islam. His criticism specifically targets the culture of Muslim-majority countries that misrecognise people, who differ from dominant social norms. He states that:

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<sup>792</sup> Masud.

<sup>793</sup> Hussein.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>799</sup> Siddiq (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; M; Cit; FDG).

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>801</sup> Aswad.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*

...right now, Muslims, a lot of them are ignorant. If you look at the Arab counties, look at Tunisia and Egypt. Tunisia has Christians living in it and also Jews. OK, they have a tension. [voicing authority] “They are Christians, they're Jews, they're the bad guys, never go near them”.<sup>803</sup>

At this point, Azaan re-emphasises the point that tolerance is a fundamental aspect of living in a pluralistic society in which ‘you’re going to walk into people from every religion and culture’.<sup>804</sup> For this discussant, living a ‘day-to-day life’<sup>805</sup> within a pluralistic democratic European state implies that you should be as ‘tolerant as you can be’<sup>806</sup> as this approach is co-determined by the social context. Importantly, this discussant stresses how intersubjective social relations determine how people act towards one another and that people need to be tolerant and flexible in pluralistic contexts, which are shared by a variety of people of different cultures and beliefs. He succinctly states in relation to the necessity for toleration within a pluralistic society:

If someone was to say something bad about you and you'd get offended by it or hurt by it, or whatever, why would you bother doing the same thing to someone else? I think even if you don't agree with it, it's valid and you may as well turn the cheek or accept it or stay away from the person rather than having to reel up all this confrontation because it is so unnecessary.<sup>807</sup>

The last point about civic identity is made by Siddiq, who states a very important point that emphasises that the younger 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, by growing up in Ireland and being knowledgeable of Irish culture, have a greater capacity to be civic and tolerant within a European environment than the immigrant 1<sup>st</sup> generation.<sup>808</sup> This discussant states that Muslim youth, due to their social and cultural knowledge, have the means to find a way to connect their Islamic identity to life as lived within an Irish democratic society. This knowledge becomes a form of capital that enables youth to be more tolerant of Christian and secular social acts and also to discover new ways of interacting as Muslims within and towards a non-Muslim environment. Siddiq’s enlightening narrative is as follows:

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<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>804</sup> Azaan.

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> Siddiq.

I think our experiences growing up here in Ireland also *allow us be more civic and more tolerant* as well than the [1<sup>st</sup>] generation that came here to live in Ireland, in my opinion anyway, because *we are used to Irish culture*, we are used to some of the things that you guys [the ethno-national Irish] think trivial with one another and that is also something that we pick up [from you] that our fathers and mothers probably won't be able to comprehend. For example, cursing around the house, or something like that. We'd be used to hearing people swear in class or whatever, but our parents they'd be shocked at that. That's where *growing up here has made us more tolerant* [of different "ways of life"].<sup>809</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 7 – explores intergenerational cognitive relations in terms of how the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations' perceive, critique and relate to each other.

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<sup>809</sup> *Ibid.*



This section will explore intergenerational relations from two perspectives. Firstly, narratives will be presented that show a 1<sup>st</sup> generation parental perspective of Muslim youth, particularly in relation to the power to constitute the next generation and efforts to protect the youth from “negative” cultural influence.

Secondly, narratives will be presented to show a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation perspective of their elders, particularly in terms of critiquing rigid inflexibility, patriarchy and the pressure to be a “good Muslim”. This chapter provides an insight into socialisation theory, which determines the process through which youth are socialised or ‘grow into societal roles’ expected and sanctioned formally through the local community and informally within the love sphere of the family.<sup>810</sup>

Whilst such socialisation processes can be positively productive by constitutively shaping and maintaining values, roles and social cohesion; when such norms – internally prescribed within a minority community – become overly penalising and run counter to wider social norms and context, then the legitimacy of such constitutive power may come under challenge through forms of resistance. As Furseth and Repstad have stated, such challenges can take the form of ‘rebellion, defiance, or spitefulness’<sup>811</sup> against the legitimacy of authorities that propagate the recognition and performance of expected social norms.

### 7.1 Parent/Elder Perspective

This section will present narratives that give an insight into the 1<sup>st</sup> generation perspective, particularly in relation to how the parent’s feel they have the positive power to constitute the next generation. However, such action is openly debated by the discussants themselves in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generations’ potential to agentially maintain such an Islamic identity into the future and the 1<sup>st</sup> generations’ protective stance. This leads into narratives into how the parental protective stance aims to counter the negative homogenising influence of Irish culture on Muslim youth identity and practice.

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<sup>810</sup> Furseth, I., and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 7. *Op. cit.*, pp. 114-117.

<sup>811</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115.

### 7.1.1 Constituting the Next Generation

Although many of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation interviewees and discussants critique their own Muslim community – in terms of the existence of patriarchy within sections of the community; a lack of support and leadership; and the existence of ethno-cultural and nationalistic tensions amongst the older generation of immigrants – a prime issue of concern and debate is how to constitute the younger generation in terms of instilling and maintaining an Islamic identity that is constantly influenced by the pervasiveness of Irish culture and its associated dominant identity standard. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Ayan states that self-confidence and the confidence to be strong is disseminated from parents to children and that this is an element of the constitutive power wielded by parents within the home. In Ayan’s opinion, parents’ give children the foundation to go out into the world confident-in-themselves:

[A] strong mother can build strong children and I think I build good foundations for my children and when my daughter have a problem and the teacher talk with me, I said to the teacher in front of the Vice-Principal eh “I’m not going to teach my daughter to be a weak person”. I say that. So, I think it’s really Muslim woman inside the house with the children, really she have respect, she have *a power inside the house. She has real power.* People outside the house may see you, us with the scarf. They think “we are inside the house, under the man”. No. [Multiple voices in agreement].<sup>812</sup>

What is interesting about the above statement is that it directly tackles the stereotype or common public perception that Muslim women have no power or agency within the domestic sphere and are under the control and power of the patriarchal figure, who provides and distributes finances to familial members. Ayan disrupts this perception. Through her narrative, she opines that the Muslim woman, who works within the realm of the private sphere as wife and mother, has respect and power – the “real” power – to productively influence and construct people and events. This discussant rebukes the common perception that perceives the headscarf as a symbol of domination. She counters the perception that Muslim women are ‘inside the house, under the man’.<sup>813</sup> This comment is supported by numerous other discussants. In Ayan’s experience, her domestic life is filled with respect and power to aid and construct the lives of the people

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<sup>812</sup> Ayan.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*

she loves positively for the benefit of herself and the familial structure as a whole. For this discussion, it is imperative that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation ensure that the younger generation recognise God and obtain a way to be internally empowered. On this point, she states:

[When] you travelling to God, *you come for more power inside yourself* that what give our beliefs in God. Give us the power to, in our life, to do with the children, everything. So, we can now convince our children when you have beliefs you can prepare them and let them, give them this way for them, *this power*.<sup>814</sup>

Similarly to Ayan, Meera twice emphasises with confidence that ‘our man treat us in the house like a Queen!’<sup>815</sup> Certainly, such a statement cannot be taken any other way but as confirmation that she feels recognised and respected by her spouse.

However, constituting the next generation is a contentious issue. This is exemplified by the debate Sadiyya and Dahlia have about whether the Muslim youth have the ability to find *an identity balance* between being Muslim and living in a European context. Dahlia is optimistic of youth agency whilst Sadiyya is pessimistically certain that ‘we [the 1<sup>st</sup> generation parents] should be with them [the youth]’<sup>816</sup> but ‘if we left them alone, I don’t think that [the youth can create an identity balance]’.<sup>817</sup> Dahlia confronts Sadiyya by stating that the ability of the youth to create an identity balance can be traced back to ‘the parents’ confidence’.<sup>818</sup> She thus links youth behaviour and ability as being ‘related to the parents’.<sup>819</sup> Sadiyya agrees that the parents ‘have to be, you know, behind them’.<sup>820</sup> Dahlia seems to be giving more agency and responsibility to Muslim youth by suggesting that parental instruction is ‘faint’.<sup>821</sup> On the other hand, Sadiyya is adamant that the older generation must be *behind the youth actively directing them onto the right path*. In other words, it is important for the older

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<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>815</sup> Meera.

<sup>816</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>817</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>818</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>820</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>821</sup> Dahlia.

generation to be there for the youth and ‘call them, to talk’.<sup>822</sup> Dahlia agrees – ‘of course’<sup>823</sup> – in relation to this statement about communication.

Overall, the discussion about the 1<sup>st</sup> generation staying with the youth becomes more complicated when ideas about returning to the homecountry become relevant and realistic. Although Dahlia views Sadiyya as being too over-protective, she agrees with her that parents’ should provide support and communication to the younger generation. In relation to the remark that parents’ have to be with the youth, Dahlia replies to Sadiyya that she herself has ‘thought of that all the time’.<sup>824</sup> She then continues by providing an example of how her advice to her son instilled in him a strong Islamic identity and an ability to work co-operatively with others. However, the following narrative still accentuates her opinion that Muslim youth have the agency to build and maintain their own identities within an Irish-European context:

One of them [her teenage son], he’s doing jummah prayer in the school. Doing the jummah, imagine! And he ask the teacher for the room and the key and he divide between his friends – “the key with you, the prayer on me, the adhan [call to prayer] for you”. Teamwork! To build your[self] and I keep on saying “don’t work yourself, if you have your friends, Muslim friends, you have to work as a teamwork. Enhance each other, don’t work with your own only. You will collapse!”<sup>825</sup>

However, in response to this small story, Sadiyya replies again stressing the need to protect and guide the younger generation. She is very pessimistic about the future, especially in terms of the younger generation keeping hold of their Islamic identity within a European environment. She foresees a future in which young Muslims have grown older and do not have parents to advise them. She imagines this scenario in a negative manner:

...imagine that after twenty years if you don’t have your fr[iends], any other Muslim friends or Sheikh or if he don’t go to mosque – if you [the parent] are not here [in life], I doubt that his [Muslim] community will continue.<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>823</sup> Dahlia.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>826</sup> Sadiyya.

### 7.1.2 Protecting the Youth from “Negative” Cultural Influence

In line with Sadiyya’s protective perspective, Idris, a 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussant, opens up the conversation by indicating that parents’ have the constitutive power of ‘being able to teach them [the youth]’<sup>827</sup> to be critical of culture and how it relates to an Islamic identity. Farid agrees that such teaching is conducted in order to ‘protect them’.<sup>828</sup> For these two discussants, such an issue is exacerbated by the differences that come to the fore when one lives in a Muslim-majority country versus when one immigrates to a European context. Farid clarifies that in the homecountry ‘we don’t think about Islam’<sup>829</sup> because everybody is Muslim but when you come to live in Ireland – to Europe – ‘you try to teach’<sup>830</sup> your children their Islamic identity by getting them to learn the Arabic language and Qur’an. As he states, the teaching of an Islamic identity to his children gives him a sense of happiness: ‘I feel happier that my son or my daughter learns Arabic before they learn English. That’s the [core] identity’.<sup>831</sup> Farid then explains how he is concerned about the influence Irish culture has upon his children, particularly upon their Islamic identity, which he has taken active steps to convey and instill within his children. As a father, he feels that he must protect his children’s Islamic identity from homogenising cultural influences. As he states on this matter:

I try to protect them because the only place we feel safe in Islam is the mosque. Outside the mosque, our children – they get lost. Especially when they go to school, they see the Irish people, they see the French people, the German people, all mix of culture of people, all of them have different culture, background, probably different religion.<sup>832</sup>

When asked about how he feels when his children leave the mosque and are influenced by Irish society, Farid states: ‘you feel bad to be honest; of course, you feel bad’.<sup>833</sup> The reason for such feeling is that he is keenly aware that his children ‘will get influenced

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<sup>827</sup> Idris.

<sup>828</sup> Farid.

<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>831</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*

by Irish society',<sup>834</sup> which may negate the work he and his wife undertook to promote an Islamic identity within the familial sphere. The discussant then emphasises the struggle he undertakes to ensure that his children are protected and that their Islamic identity remains intact and relevant. Such comments suggest that this discussant has become an *overprotective* father and that identity construction and maintenance is a primary concern: 'you try to teach them [their identity], like twenty-four hours you have to watch them'.<sup>835</sup> He is anxious that without practical influence his children will 'get lost',<sup>836</sup> when interacting within Irish society. When asked if he feels that his two young children are maintaining their Islamic identity, he answers 'oh definitely, oh definitely. We're trying hard to give them this [an Islamic identity]'.<sup>837</sup> Through his comments, one gets the sense that he is struggling – as a parent – to protect and ensure his children gain and maintain an Islamic identity within a non-Muslim society that has a particular cultural milieu. Farid reflects on how an immigrant's life is harder when familial support is absent:

Like back in your [home]country, your background, the origin country, at least you have your family, you have your sisters, your cousins...but here [in Ireland], you don't have [familial support]. You have you and your wife you know otherwise, your kids will get lost.<sup>838</sup>

Such identity concerns for the younger generation are also vocalised within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Dahlia states that she and other Muslim parents are cognisant and concerned about how non-Muslim children interact with their children within schooling institutions. She states that non-Muslim children are negatively influencing Muslim children to be like them i.e., 'forcing them [Muslim children] to this kind of initiation, this kind of argument'.<sup>839</sup> She also states that although rare in primary school such interactions become more common in secondary school – a time of adolescence, which represents the 'very critical years'<sup>840</sup> of identity formation. Thus, for

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<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>839</sup> Dahlia (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>840</sup> *Ibid.*

Dahlia and other 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussants ‘[the young] generation is a big issue’.<sup>841</sup>

An example of such concern emanates from Maja, who opens up about her children’s experience. Although she clarifies that she likes to be a ‘very close friend to the Irish people’,<sup>842</sup> she has noticed a “negative” angle to everyday social relations, which constitutes a ‘problem’.<sup>843</sup> She has noticed the powerful extent to which the imitation of Irish culture puts pressure on people of “difference”. For this discussant, social pressure to conform to the dominant culture and identity standard has become the ‘biggest struggle’<sup>844</sup> internally within the familial structure and externally within the wider social sphere.<sup>845</sup> On this point, she states:

They [young non-Muslim] like them [the young Muslim], they are very good, but the problem, “if you want to stay with me as a friend, you have to imitate me. If I drink, you have to drink, if I’m going to the pub, if I’m going to have appointment with whoever, you have to, otherwise if you don’t, we have a problem with our relationship”.<sup>846</sup>

Maja continues her narrative by focusing on the problems that her children encounter in school from other children due to their “difference” from the identity standard of the majority. She talks about children questioning her son as to why he is not allowed to eat ham. She recounts that discussions can turn nasty between non-Muslim children and her sons and mentions that ‘sometimes if they’re [the other boys are] angry’,<sup>847</sup> they say to her son ‘go home. Don’t stay. Go home’.<sup>848</sup> Such comments have forced Maja’s children to defend themselves by replying: ‘No! My dad, he’s a doctor here, he’s paying tax. We are working here. It’s not your right to say to me go home’.<sup>849</sup> Hurriyah echoes Maja’s narrative by restating the words ‘go home to your country’.<sup>850</sup> Elmira clarifies that these words do not suggest going home to your house in Dublin but to return to

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<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>842</sup> Maja.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>844</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>845</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>848</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>850</sup> Hurriyah.

your homecountry, the foreign location where your parents originated from. She states in relation to this clarification: ‘Homeland! Your roots, your roots’.<sup>851</sup>

Sadiyya has a more pessimistic thinking on the future of Muslim youth in Ireland. In her opinion, she feels that life for the youth is ‘not going to be easy’.<sup>852</sup> For this discussant, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation will always be okay because they are independent adults, who can ‘take care of ourself’;<sup>853</sup> however, she feels that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation will encounter ‘a very big problem’<sup>854</sup> by having an Islamic identity and growing up in an Irish-European context. This discussant has the view that some Muslim youth will reject an Islamic identity because of its minority status that is consistently overshadowed by the dominant identity standard of what constitutes “Irishness” and belonging. Sadiyya supports her narrative by telling a small story about her daughter’s friend:

For example, my daughter’s friend, she told her [Mum] “I don’t want to be Muslim, because we are Muslim, I don’t want to be Muslim anymore”. So, she’s six years old. It’s a problem; if she’s in Sudan she would never think about [not wanting to be Muslim].<sup>855</sup>

Sadiyya follows the above narrative with another one that specifically gives a personal account of the troubles she has had with her own daughter, who is influenced by the dominant culture and undergoes *stages of identity rejection*. Importantly, this narrative gives an indication about how she feels as a Muslim mother, who is struggling to raise her child as Muslim yet can recognise how the dominant culture affects and impacts her offspring. Such a narrative certainly stresses the degree of protection that Muslim parents give to their children in order to aid them in acquiring an Islamic identity within a European context. There are indications that this protectiveness is strong by the fact that Sadiyya feels that her daughter might lose her identity if she (as overseeing mother) is not close by:

So I think it’s not very easy, but they try to feel something. We talk about Allah with them all the time and she know [about God], but *I know that if I’m not here it will not be that easy and maybe she will lose her identity*, so this gonna be a very big problem, especially if we are not with them and we can’t be with them

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<sup>851</sup> Elmira.

<sup>852</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*

all the time, so I don't know, maybe sometimes I think that we have to go back [to the homecountry].<sup>856</sup>

Although the dominant culture is problematic for the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, they are also facing difficulties within the familial sphere itself in that their Islamic and ethno-cultural identities and practices – brought with them from the homecountry – are being challenged by their own offspring. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation male discussion group, Idris speaks about his own familial experience. He confirms that religious practitioners – from the same religion – may have different ways of viewing the teachings of the religion and that ‘in every religion’,<sup>857</sup> there are contradictions or ‘things that don't sit well together’.<sup>858</sup> The seemingly contradictory elements of the same religious ideology are why scholars are needed to explain and interpret religion. In Idris' experience as a father, it has been his inability to explain such contradictions that has created ‘a little bit of conflict’<sup>859</sup> with his children. He openly details his struggle to explain key concepts to his children and has often found himself ‘lost to explain something because I actually haven't thought about it, in terms of identity or experience’.<sup>860</sup> For Idris, coming from a Muslim-majority culture has meant that there was no need to critically analyse the cultural and religious practice that he ‘received this way and lived with all my life’.<sup>861</sup> However, in the European context, he has ‘to explain it and that's a little bit difficult’.<sup>862</sup> Idris remarks that his children – as European Muslims – are looking for more cognitive and rational explanations to solve various contradictions within Islamic belief; however, this discussant has the viewpoint that some things cannot be explained by rational cognitive analysis as human spiritual belief lies ‘above the mind’.<sup>863</sup> On this point, he makes the following statement:

They [his children] have [asked for explanations], and when they ask me to explain it [Islam] and I don't know why and I have to go and search and sometimes I can't find an answer because it's not easy to find certain things that are not plain in every religion...simple things like heaven and hell and the last

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<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>857</sup> Idris.

<sup>858</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>860</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>862</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>863</sup> *Ibid.*

day and all this stuff and people that lived in this [European] society, they don't [believe this], it's more of the mind [cognitive/rational] thinking and mind cannot explain everything, because we have limitation [as humans]. So sometimes, that's supernatural or *above our mind*, you know, you're lost to explain.<sup>864</sup>

Similarly within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, Elmira affirms that 'yes'<sup>865</sup> she is recognised by her family but that 'sometimes they don't'.<sup>866</sup> She continues by confirming once again that 'they [her immediate family] respect me';<sup>867</sup> however, she stresses that sometimes she feels misrecognised in her relations as a 1<sup>st</sup> generation Muslim communicating with her younger 2<sup>nd</sup> generation child, particularly when sternly advising him on aspects of Islam. Elmira states that

Sometimes if I talk about my eldest son, it's like he's twenty-five years. Sometimes if I will, because I'll be sometimes I'd be a little bit strict about the Islam and that what they say [to me]. Sometime they will [say to] me "Mum, sometimes you offend me, something like [that]"<sup>868</sup>.

Hurriyah responds stating 'old, yeah'<sup>869</sup> which confirms that Elmira feels that when speaking to her son about Islam she feels 'old true, like you are sixty years old'.<sup>870</sup> Sadiyya rephrases this as a feeling of being 'old-fashioned'.<sup>871</sup> This accentuates the point that the youth feel that they represent the present and the future i.e., modernity and how Islam fits into such space. For Elmira, she feels that she is respected and recognised by her family, however, she also confirms that she feels misrecognised as representing an old-fashioned viewpoint and practise of Islam. She states that 'this is the main problem. It's like that'.<sup>872</sup> Hurriyah interjects that Elmira's son has a new 'elaboration'<sup>873</sup> of Islamic identity. Elmira then speaks up suggesting that he not only

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<sup>864</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>865</sup> Elmira.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>867</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>868</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>869</sup> Hurriyah.

<sup>870</sup> Elmira.

<sup>871</sup> Sadiyya.

<sup>872</sup> Elmira.

<sup>873</sup> Hurriyah.

has a new elaboration of Islamic identity but also a new elaboration in relation to her ‘opinion’<sup>874</sup> and ‘mentality’.<sup>875</sup>

Yeah, he will tell me something like this because if you will tell him not to do something or to do that – he will tell me “mom, you are really like sixty years. You are from that generation before!” This is what, you know, my experience in my family.<sup>876</sup>

## 7.2 Children/Youth Perspective

This section will explore the narratives that give an insight into the youth perspective, particularly how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generations are critical of the elderly propensity to be rigid and inflexible in terms of identity and practice. Secondly, narratives will also be presented that show how the youth (particularly females) critique patriarchy, which continues to exist within familial and community spheres. Lastly, this section explores how youth negotiate social norms they are expected to conform to in order to be perceived by others as “good Muslims”.

### 7.2.1 Critiquing Rigid Inflexibility

Throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation interviews and discussion groups is a consistent critique of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation in terms of being too rigid and inflexible.

For example, Daleela, a young female interviewee, states about intergenerational relations that there ‘is a gap between the first generation and the second generation’.<sup>877</sup> She then specifically links this generational gap to inflexibility in values and beliefs by stating that ‘they [the 1<sup>st</sup> generation] have set values and beliefs and they don’t understand that you’re growing up in a society that you can’t be as rigid as they are’.<sup>878</sup> She is advocating for ‘more communication between the generations and more flexibility’.<sup>879</sup> It is important to note that such steadfastness can result in pressure on the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to negotiate the values and beliefs of their family and the norms of the

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<sup>874</sup> Elmira.

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>876</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>877</sup> Daleela.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>879</sup> *Ibid.*

society they live and interact within. As Daleela states, ‘there is a lot of pressure from inside the community’.<sup>880</sup> This pressure can come in the form of pressure to follow a set life-plan. For Aziz, ‘coming from a Pakistani [origin] you're either an engineer or a doctor’,<sup>881</sup> whilst Daleela views such pressure in terms of its ethno-cultural form and how it interacts with religious belief and identity. In this regard, she states the following:

I'm speaking more about cultural pressure to kinda believe a certain way, to live a certain way...because their identity, they're, I suppose, they are first generation Irish but they identify more with the [their] homecountries. You kinda need to be [flexible], like for me not going to pubs was a big deal and I was like, this is not part of [me], like I was, from an early age, “this is like wrong and I can't do it”. But you can, you can kinda, you need to be able to at least go to a pub, be able to sit and be open-minded and accept that this is the [Irish] cu[lture], [you] need to [be able to do that].<sup>882</sup>

The narrative above gives a clear indication of the recognitive differences that exist between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations in that Daleela is clearly stating that the elders, even though they are resident in Ireland, still are very much connected to their homecountry and socialised by its ethno-cultural and religious norms. Consequently, their values and opinions are fixed and inflexible.

Contrastingly, the younger 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, who were born and/or have lived most of their lives in an Irish-European context, do not have as strong a link to such values and norms. The youth have multiple identifications to transnational and national homecountries, therefore, they are more cognisant of the values and norms that emanate from both locations. As a result, they need a degree of flexibility to accommodate Irish culture into their lived experience as Muslim. Daleela uses the example of the Irish pub, as an example of Irish culture that needs to be viewed by Muslims in a flexible manner. She advocates for the actionable ability to go to a pub, to sit down and be open-minded about the practical social nature of Irish culture.

Another interviewee, Azad, also makes succinct statements about the generational divide. He specifically mentions that his perceptions are different from his

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<sup>880</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>881</sup> Aziz.

<sup>882</sup> Daleela.

parents and members of his extended family. These differences are not physical but are related to ‘when it comes to ideas’.<sup>883</sup> This interviewee feels isolated from 1<sup>st</sup> generation perceptions and viewpoints i.e., how they view the world, the importance of their ethnic traditions and how to act out an Islamic religion. This isolation is exemplified in the phrase: ‘I just find myself, way, a bit out from m[y family], their own way of thinking’.<sup>884</sup> Furthermore, he states in relation to how he feels that ‘I feel like I’m just living my own [way]’ and that ‘I find it very difficult to fit into their group’.<sup>885</sup> Such a divide manifests itself in disagreements about action in that Azad disagrees with ‘what they [his family members] say or what they do’.<sup>886</sup> This divergence may be related to how the 1<sup>st</sup> generation view the relationship between their ethno-cultural traditions and how they act out an Islamic identity.

Azad’s difficulties also envelop wider relations. He comments on a number of difficulties that he feels exist within his Muslim community. These relate to a lack of leadership, a lack of facilities, the Arabic-English language barrier, and the isolation felt by the younger generation. This interviewee claims to be speaking ‘sort of from the young perspective’<sup>887</sup> which is ‘a bit different’<sup>888</sup> from that of the older generation and from non-Muslim young people. One of the main issues for him is the lack of leadership or ‘somebody to look up to, like to follow’.<sup>889</sup> In Azad’s opinion, this issue has created negative feelings of frustration in young Muslims. He remarks that ‘a lot of young people are frustrated’.<sup>890</sup> As well as a lack of facilities, he makes some very important points related to the general feeling that the younger generation are excluded and isolated from their own Muslim community. He gives a linguistic example by stating that the Arabic language is used during the conduction of Friday prayers. For the most part, the majority of young Muslims do not speak Arabic, therefore, many of the youth cannot decipher what is being stated to them during Friday prayers. Azad is also highly critical of various ethno-cultural traditions, which are related to homecountry traditions, which have been brought to the West by Muslim immigrants. On this point, he states

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<sup>883</sup> Azad.

<sup>884</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>885</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>887</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>888</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>890</sup> *Ibid.*

that:

...you'll find most of the time [at the mosque], the old people will be there, and not so much of the young people and part of it is maybe language barriers as well because the old folks they speak maybe Arabic of which the [young] guys here they don't and if they're to have, let's say, lecturers or something like that from there, and all be towards, give towards Arabic kinda thing of *which the young guys kinda feel left out*. So you can't really do much of the things. So in a sense, the issues they face, we face most of the time, it's [pause], it's a lot of issues but the main one, is to be like, *being left out like not being part of the whole*, whole process because of the old guys, *the old guys with their own mentality and then the young guys coming up kinda caught in the mix*.<sup>891</sup>

Within this narrative extract, Azad indicates the language difficulties that are faced by the younger generation within their own community in terms of practising religion. Most mosques still conduct prayer in Arabic, however, many young Muslims do not know how to speak it. The internal language barrier within the community accentuates the feeling of being *left out*, despite the wish to have a deep comprehension of religious doctrine. Overall, towards the end of this narrative, Azad identifies isolation as a major issue that the young generation face 'most of the time'.<sup>892</sup> In other words, the younger generation do not feel 'part of the whole' because the older Muslims are not willing to change or be flexible with their traditions and this leaves the younger generation 'kinda caught in the mix'.<sup>893</sup>

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, Rifa emphasises the difference between the generations in terms of identity and interaction. She makes the following statement about how her family hold tightly to their ethno-cultural habits and do not want it to be tainted by or mixed with other traditions whilst Rifa views Islam as a "universal" common-ground that brings people together and enables the mixing of cultures and races:

It's hard. I find it hard like, anything I learn I try to bring it to my family and if it's Islamic, they accept it but once it get to culture, they're like "no way". Like yesterday, I was having an argument with my Mum and so I was like "I don't want to marry an Algerian or an Arab altogether". So I was like "what do you think?" and she was like, "no way, I'm not accepting it". I'm like "OK but Islam

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<sup>891</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>892</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>893</sup> *Ibid.*

doesn't say anything about that. *It doesn't say anything about the colour, about the race, nothing, it's [Islam is] just in more step [with modern times than ethno-cultural traditions]*.<sup>894</sup>

Isha supports Rifa's last sentence by stating that 'it [Islam] actually encourages you to mix'.<sup>895</sup> Rifa replies in a high tone 'yes'<sup>896</sup> and then puts forward her side of the argument, which is that 'once the person is Muslim, then it's okay [to marry them]'.<sup>897</sup> She negates her mother's perspective, which aims to maintain culturally socialised norms and is overly concerned what others will think and say: 'she [her mother] was like "yes, but if you go back home and they'll be like [negatively] "there's Rifa!"'.<sup>898</sup> Through Rifa's narrative, the discussion moves onto the difference in how the discussants are recognised by their immediate family members as compared to their outer familial circle in Ireland and/or in the homecountry. In terms of having a "new" Islamic identity, Fusaila states that 'you can deal with the [immediate] family'.<sup>899</sup> Isha agrees and confirms that members of her immediate family will 'accept it'.<sup>900</sup> Rifa returns to the conversation with her mother and how her outer family will react after she has convinced her mother that such a mixed marriage (in terms of race and ethno-cultural attributes) is Islamically acceptable. She states in regard to this form of familial politics:

I'll make random calls and I'll try to change her mind and she'll be like "OK, yes. Like OK, fine. OK, I agree" but then going to your grandmother [in the homecountry] and it's different and she's like [negatively], "you'll have mixed kids".<sup>901</sup>

## 7.2.2 Critiquing Patriarchy

Whilst 1<sup>st</sup> generation female Muslims view the domestic sphere as the location where constitutive power reigns, they do acknowledge the existence of limited occurrences of

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<sup>894</sup> Rifa.

<sup>895</sup> Isha.

<sup>896</sup> Rifa.

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>898</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>899</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>900</sup> Isha.

<sup>901</sup> Rifa.

patriarchy performed by individuals within the community. For example, Saadiqa confirms the existence of patriarchal culture but adds the caveat that generally this form of misrecognition is an exception to the rule. She states: ‘some men they treat their wives in bad ways but this is his personality. It’s like an exception, [an] exception’.<sup>902</sup> Likewise Ayan challenges the public perception that Muslim women, who wear the hijab, are oppressed by male patriarchy within the domestic sphere:

People outside the house may see you, us with the scarf. They think “we are inside the house, under the man”. No. [Multiple voices in agreement].<sup>903</sup>

Contra to above, Isra, a young female interviewee, strongly criticises familial and community recognition particularly in terms of the treatment of females. She advocates for flexibility in terms of the remit of actions that young Muslim women can perform within the familial and community spheres. This interviewee recounts a narrative related to the disapproval of young Muslim women, who wish to partake in social and artistic activities such as various sporting activities and acting. She states in relation to this issue:

We did an acting class within groups and there was some young Muslim girls who was taking part and then, you know, they were told that they cannot do it because of the religion and stuff like that...it's a problem, it's really [a] problem. A lot of young Muslim woman [say] they want to take part in football and stuff like that [sport] but *they were rejected* because of the community, because of their family and they were told “you cannot do this because of this way and this way”.<sup>904</sup>

Within this narrative, Isra is expressing her view that women are being misrecognised within the familial and community structures. This misrecognition is not physical but a misrecognition of identity in that the agency of Muslim women to take part in sports or artistic forms of communication and action is being disrespected by familial and community structures, who prohibit Muslim women from performing such actions. The interviewee stresses that young Muslim women are forcefully advocating for the right to play sport and to partake in a variety of social activities. However, this is deemed

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<sup>902</sup> Saadiqa (1<sup>st</sup> Gen; F; Cit; FDG).

<sup>903</sup> Ayan.

<sup>904</sup> Isra.

forbidden (haram) by the patriarchal familial and community structures that dominate the articulation and acting out of permissible (halal) actions and social norms. Isra describes it as a form of rejection.

Furthermore, she also narrates a small story related to her own familial experience. This story is evidence of the *recognitive-power dilemma* she encounters in that she must *find a space* between the need to be recognised by her friends and family yet also negotiate her identity in relation to the expected social norms that inform and constitute both groups:

...look what will happen is, for example, my family see me not wearing scarf and going around and wearing trousers it will cost me problem because I can lose the relation [between] myself and my family because of my dress and all that and again when I see in my friend[s], they all dress and they look nice. I like the fashion, the way they are. I will try to be like the way they are and then again, at the same time, I have to hide it. So, it's really a big problem between the family [and] the new generation [of young Muslims].<sup>905</sup>

Isra adds to the above statements by continuing her criticism of her community by emphasising the plight of Muslim women in relation to communicative participation in the public sphere. She states that ‘there is a lot of young Muslim women, who ca[n]’t be active]...because we believe if your [a] woman and your Muslim, you cannot talk in public’.<sup>906</sup> This view that Muslim women are prohibited from speaking publicly creates a sense of fear in carrying out the act of being active and vocalising one’s opinion publicly. Thus, ‘those women they’re scare[d] if they say “okay, I’m going to stand up today for my religion and my society.”’<sup>907</sup> Isra has no trust that this issue will be remedied by her Muslim community. Therefore, she advocates for the Irish government and a universal legal framework to step-in and defend Muslim womens’ rights to public expression. Of note is that such Muslim women do not want to lose the respect of God or of their loved ones – they do not want to be discriminated by their own kind – and yet they want to obtain external recognition from the wider social sphere.

Isra continues by stressing that the feeling of fear plays a significant factor. She remarks that ‘they [Muslim women are] scared to do it [to speak out publicly]; they

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<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>907</sup> *Ibid.*

don't really feel like standing [up and speaking]'.<sup>908</sup> For this interviewee, what has limited her agency is her lack of legitimised authority as a woman to interpret the Qur'an i.e., power comes from the ability to interpret the religious sources; and therefore, as a Muslim woman, she is powerless to defend her position as she does not have the legitimacy from others to conduct such interpretative actions. Such a gendered legitimacy deficit and corresponding exclusion from interpreting Islamic jurisprudence prevents her from partaking-in-struggle. As she states in this regard: 'the only problem that I cannot do is – I cannot explain the holy Qur'an in and out. If I really know...the religion explanation, I would stand up and fight but I don't know'.<sup>909</sup> She opines that Muslim women will only overcome this fear if they are either protected and supported by the universal application of law or by an advocate within the Muslim community itself, who is 'strong and says "okay, I'm standing in the [Islamic] community and I will do something [about it]"'. However, Isra acknowledges that this strong Muslim woman, who advocates for female rights within the Muslim community, is not her – 'it ain't me'.<sup>910</sup> She then specifically narrates her own experience about being misrecognised within her community by stating that she herself was told 'not to speak out'<sup>911</sup> in public about the issue of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). She was verbally disrespected for using her own agency to speak up about womens' concerns in the community.

They [the Muslim women] don't feel like speaking out, they're scared because they are woman and the religion didn't allow it [speaking out publicly]. I mean like, the man...I was told not to speak out; I was told that I'm a [unknown word] because I'm speaking in public [about FGM]. So, those [Muslim] women they're scared to be discriminated within the [Islamic] community.<sup>912</sup>

Such criticisms were also stated within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group by Saiba. She advocates that religious adherence and practice should be primarily an individual autonomous choice and not forced upon individuals against their will. For this discussant, religiosity as individual freedom is conducive to creating and maintaining self-confidence whilst patriarchal domination by enforcing social norms upon an individual's will, destroys self-confidence and reduces the capacity to internally

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<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>910</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*

accept one's belief and religious practice. Saiba makes an important statement with regard to this point:

...once you're not doing it because other people expect you to do it, or because it's the norm and you accept it within yourself, I think you'll find it much easier to answer questions of like oppression and do you feel oppressed? You just say "no" or other times where I think people that are, have to wear the hijab or have to practise certain ways, they'd be like "I'm not oppressed but like why"? and they wouldn't have reasons because technically they are, they're being forced to wear it and if you believe in it [Islam] yourself, I think you'll feel a lot more confident in yourself.<sup>913</sup>

### 7.2.3 Pressure to be a "good Muslim"

Narratives within the male and female 2<sup>nd</sup> generation discussion groups provide an important insight into the social pressure that young Muslims encounter in relation to conforming to social norms and being perceived by others as practising Islam "correctly", and thereby, being recognised as a "good Muslim".

For example, discussant Isha differentiates between the acceptance of her immediate family versus the non-acceptance she feels from her 'outer family'<sup>914</sup> i.e., the extended family resident in Ireland, throughout Europe and within the homecountry. Bisma tends to agree with this differentiation of the family sphere by stating: 'different, exactly'.<sup>915</sup> Isha expands on her previous statement by stating its cognitive importance in that 'they'<sup>916</sup> – the extended outer family – 'they're different'<sup>917</sup> and 'they see you differently'.<sup>918</sup> Saiba agrees also with this differentiation and reflects that its cause is due to a lack of familiarity and a distorted perceptual picture. She remarks about how her outer family recognise her from a distance:

'Cos they don't see you day-to-day, so they'd just be like, they know they have a picture of you, of what the norm is – like a little innocent Muslim girl there –

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<sup>913</sup> Saiba.

<sup>914</sup> Isha.

<sup>915</sup> Bisma (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

<sup>916</sup> Isha.

<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>918</sup> *Ibid.*

and then when you're like, if you have an opinion [said firmly], they'd be like "but she's just a kid like", ye know.<sup>919</sup>

Fusaila picks up on Saiba's comments about the outer family positioning their own children towards or against a particular behaviour. Laughingly, she states that the outer family members advise their own children 'you be like there...and don't be like that girl'.<sup>920</sup> Fusaila confirms that she is 'just talking about [familial relations] here [in Ireland] like'.<sup>921</sup> Saiba also confirms this: 'Even here [in Ireland] like'.<sup>922</sup> Fusaila then concisely outlines what differentiates the inner immediate family from the more distanced outer family. She states firmly that 'we are accepted by our immediate family but then your outer family, they will use you as an example to their kids'.<sup>923</sup> Interestingly, it is at this point in the conversation that Saiba identifies the behaviour or example the outer family may take as positive or negative. She states that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation youth are 'filtering-out the negative culture'<sup>924</sup> and, in her opinion, it is perceived by the extended family as 'a bad example'.<sup>925</sup> Fusaila then voices what the outer family say to their children about the discussants' actions: 'they'd be like "don't be like them"'.<sup>926</sup> Certainly, the conversation so far tends to position the outer family as viewing actions such as the filtering of "negative" culture as a bad example that they do not want their own children to follow.

Similarly, the sisters also elaborate on the issues they have encountered in terms of how they are recognised by their extended family in the homecountry. Both struggle to be recognised by their outer family due to their identity "difference". For example, Isha states that her '[outer family] think we're not Tanzanian enough. They see us as being Irish, [said firmly], so they'd be like "no"'.<sup>927</sup> Rifa comments on the possible reason for such views being held by the outer family. She remarks: 'that's the culture though'.<sup>928</sup> Fusaila adds that the outer family more often than not see the sisters as 'not

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<sup>919</sup> Saiba.

<sup>920</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>922</sup> Saiba.

<sup>923</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>924</sup> Saiba.

<sup>925</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>926</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>927</sup> Isha.

<sup>928</sup> Rifa.

even Irish'<sup>929</sup> but as 'European like!'<sup>930</sup> This statement infers that the discussant would rather be seen as Irish than as European.

In the male discussion group, Yusuf looks towards his own homecountry familial relations in Libya as an example. First of all, he states that when he goes 'back to Libya',<sup>931</sup> he can see the differences between his father's family, who are 'not too strict'<sup>932</sup> and his mother's family, who are austere in their adherence to an Islamic identity to the point where the father has nicknamed his wife's family – 'the Taliban'<sup>933</sup> – because they 'pray 24/7'.<sup>934</sup> Yusuf positions himself towards his mother's family, who pray and go to the mosque regularly. He describes how members of this section of his family are 'always' shaping his identity by 'giving you advice, you know, anything they see wrong, they just always correcting you'.<sup>935</sup> This aids the development of his Islamic identity. However, his father's side of the family are lax in the practise of their Islamic identity and are 'kind of mesmerised'<sup>936</sup> that Yusuf, on arriving from Europe, will go and pray in the local mosque when visiting. The differences between both sides of the family are narratively explained in the following passage:

Whereas if I go to my dad's [family] side, and em you know I go to pray in the mosque which is only five minutes away eh they wouldn't want to go to the mosque – "ah, it's such a trek and five minutes away". They see it as granted; they take it for granted because it's so close. But for me, I think if Azzam [my brother] and [in Ireland] I have to drive you know fifteen minutes down [the road], it'll be like an hour walk and eh so I go to the mosque [here in the homecountry]. So they're kind of like, they're kind of mesmerised. You know, they don't really [get it that], "this guy he's coming from Europe, he's coming from Ireland but he's going to pray in the mosque, really?" ye know but if I don't go to the mosque with my mum's side [laughter] – ah, I get in deep trouble, yeah.<sup>937</sup>

Returning to the female discussion group, Mahala narrates her experience of being misrecognised by others for not following the social norms expected of a young Sunni

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<sup>929</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>931</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>935</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>937</sup> *Ibid.*

Muslim woman in the community. This is closely related to her being a Turk, who does not wear hijab and who is light-skinned in contrast to her father. She begins by differentiating herself from the other hijabi-wearing discussants: ‘I’m different [from them]’.<sup>938</sup> Such divergence may be most apparent in her opinions about community recognition. Mahala quite openly states her opinion of how she feels and how she is recognised by others. She states: ‘I don’t have a community per se’.<sup>939</sup> The reasons for not feeling a sense of belonging relates to how she is recognised by other Muslims affiliated to one of the larger mosques in Dublin. She details how she gets ‘the reaction from peoples’ face[s]’<sup>940</sup> when they come into contact with her father and herself together. Her father has ‘good ties’<sup>941</sup> within the Muslim community and is respected. However, through facial gestures and communication, Mahala has come to know that she is not respected by certain sections of the Muslim community. She exclaims to the other discussants that ‘I know I’m not acc[epted], not I know but I’ve, some people actually told me [to my face], I know but I am not accepted because I am different’.<sup>942</sup> The difference she talks about is varied. She is a Muslim woman but follows a Sufi interpretation of Islam and does not wear hijab. Furthermore, she has a light skin tone compared to her father. For this discussant, the knowledge that she is not accepted for “who she is” by other Muslims ‘hurts’,<sup>943</sup> especially since such disrespect can easily be compared to how those same people interact with her father. She states the following about this painful situation:

...because I am different and just that kind of hurt when [they say to your] Dad “is this your daughter?” and I’m like “yeah” and you kinda see the disappointment in their face ‘cos, I mean, my Dad is dark as well, ‘cos in Turkey we have different looks, like he’s kinda brownish [in skin tone]. So, I can feel that they’re very surprised to, for him to have me as a daughter but yeah, I’m not accepted. I wouldn’t feel that I’m accepted and I wouldn’t feel comfortable in that [mosque] area as well.<sup>944</sup>

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<sup>938</sup> Mahala (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

<sup>939</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>940</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>942</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>943</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>944</sup> *Ibid.*

Rifa is critical of her Arab Muslim community in that after one “negative” action that disrupts expected social norms, you’re identified as ‘that bad person’.<sup>945</sup> Fusaila acknowledges that a lot of people within the Muslim community are critical of Arabs by ‘saying they “don’t like Arabs”’ because they have too much control over social norms that determines “correct” Islamic practice.<sup>946</sup> Rifa responds strongly to Fusaila by generalising that the Arab community is not accepting of change, particularly in how individuals have the capacity to transform themselves into something better. She states the following narrative in reply to Fusaila:

...even if you change, no matter how much you change, you’re still that bad person from years ago. So, it’s kind of “ok, we’ll talk to you and everything” but in, at the back of my [his or her] head, you’re still that person no matter how much you change, which I really hate that about it [the Arab community].<sup>947</sup>

After the above statement, Saiba makes the point that such dynamics in the community make it hard for people’s transformations to be accepted and ‘that’s why we leave our own communities like’.<sup>948</sup> Moving to another geographical location or to another group enables the finding of acceptance, freedom and a break with the past. Fusaila, who is emigrating from Ireland with her sister and Rifa, agrees by stating ‘yeah’.<sup>949</sup> For Saiba, leaving one’s community means one can ‘be like’<sup>950</sup> oneself. She correlates moving to a new community with gaining freedom from the past and obtaining a ‘clean slate’<sup>951</sup> that is free from the expectations and judgements of others. She states: ‘I wanna, I wanna be new, I wanna have a clean slate within this community over here [in the UK]’.<sup>952</sup> Rifa replies in agreement – ‘exactly’.<sup>953</sup>

The next chapter – Chapter 8 – explores how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation have redirected their legitimising recognition to a plurality of online sources, thereby, challenging the Islam espoused by local authority figures. Through such a contestation, the youth create and negotiate the construction of a new flexible space, which is facilitated by a unique

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<sup>945</sup> Rifa.

<sup>946</sup> Fusaila. .

<sup>947</sup> Rifa.

<sup>948</sup> Saiba.

<sup>949</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>950</sup> Saiba.

<sup>951</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>952</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>953</sup> Rifa.

process involving the filtering of “negative” ethno-cultural traditions and a search for a normative “authentic” form of Islam that is perceived as complimenting the Irish-European democratic environment.



## Chapter 8 The Youth's Search for "Authentic" Islam

Due to increased globalisation, growing individualism and spiritual consumerism, Volpi and Turner have determined that localised traditional Islamic authorities – such as parents, Imams and traditional scholars - are in less demand and challenged by a 'multiplication of authorities' within Islamic jurisprudence and the reactivation of *ijtihad* or critical reasoning, which enables a more precise and flexible contextual interpretation of the Islamic sources, particularly for Muslims in Europe.<sup>954</sup> In sociological terms, Turner states that such spiritual consumerism is fed by online fatwa markets offering a plurality of Islamic rulings that are democratically delivered and individually accessed through new technologies, such as the internet.<sup>955</sup>

The bypassing traditional centers of authority and power coupled with the flexibility offered by online fatwa markets, young 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Western Muslims have been able to use their individual and collective agency to recognise and legitimise alternative sources of authority.<sup>956</sup> Linking this back to the theme of resistance within socialisation theory, whilst parents certainly have significant constitutive power to shape their offspring's actions and identity, Furseth and Repstad emphasise the commonly negated reality that 'children also can socialize their parents'<sup>957</sup> by negotiating and transmitting their 'individual religiosity as a form of adaptation and learning'.<sup>958</sup> Sunni Muslim youth in Dublin (and elsewhere in Europe) are searching for the normativity of Islam i.e., for an authentic interpretation and practise of Islam that challenges the ethno-cultural version traditionally and habitually followed and brought to Europe within the cultural baggage of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Such challenges to traditional authority have been spurred on by feminist critiques of social norms. Such criticisms have centered on an attempt to –

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<sup>954</sup> Volpi, F., and Turner, B. S. 2007. Introduction: Making Islamic Authority Matter. *Theory, Culture & Society*. 24(2), pp. 1-19.

<sup>955</sup> Turner, B. S. Introduction: Mapping the Sociology of Religion. *IN: Turner, B. S. 2010. The Sociology of Religion*. UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. p. 534.

<sup>956</sup> The choice involved in choosing fatwa or Islamic rulings from online markets can be linked to rational choice theory, which determines that individuals rationally assess situations based on self-interest in terms of potential rewards or risks. Notably in recent years, rational choice theory has gained prominence within the sociology of religion literature. See Furseth, I., and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 7. *Op. cit.*

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>958</sup> *Ibid.*

discriminate between the central and unchanging aspects of religious teachings and what has been incorporated as a result of cultural impact. In other words, *there is a search for an authentic form of religion, where the cultural aspects are sifted away*. For a sociological perspective, one may say that the attempt is being made to reinterpret the religious tradition in a new cultural context.<sup>959</sup>

This chapter aims to explore the above by presenting narratives that show how 2<sup>nd</sup> generation youth are actively differentiating between what is perceived as Islam and what is perceived as cultural. Secondly, two everyday dilemmas – handshaking and travelling with a mahram – will be explored through the narrative exchange between two young female discussants. This debate illustrates how everyday issues are alleviated by gaining flexibility by searching for, rationally selecting, and utilising online Islamic rulings (fatwa) that emanate from alternative Islamic sources. Lastly, this chapter will explore how Sunni Muslim youth in Dublin are agentically filtering out perceived forms of “negative” Irish or homecountry culture in order to attain a “purer”, more authentic, interpretation and practise of Islam. It is perceived that such a process brings one closer to being a “good Muslim”.

### **8.1 Differentiating Between Islam and Culture**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male and female discussion groups give a narrative insight into how Muslim youth, in contrast to the immigrant 1<sup>st</sup> generation, view and differentiate the relationship between Islam and culture. For example, for Azaan, Islam provides the common-ground for Muslims of diverse ethnic and national backgrounds to associate with each other on the same level. This discussant stresses the potential of spiritual recognition to traverse “particularity” by directing attention to the “universal” message of an abstract transitional phenomena i.e., the word of God. To support this statement, he specifically refers to the example of the pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca, where large numbers of Muslims from different ethnic and racial backgrounds come together under the banner of Islam to worship God and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH).<sup>960</sup>

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<sup>959</sup> Furseth, I., and Repstad, P. (eds.). 2006. Chapter 11. *Op. cit.*, p. 195. See also the work of Marranci, who verifies the critique of local cultural traditions by Islamic feminists, who ‘exalt real Islam as the solution’. Marranci, G. *Sociology and Anthropology of Islam: A Critical Debate*. Chapter 16. *IN: Turner, B. S.* 2010. *Op. cit.*

<sup>960</sup> Azaan.

Aswad joins the discussion to add some complexity to the above point by stating his opinion about how ethnic and national groups mix within the Muslim community. He gives a much more realistic picture as compared to Azaan's ideal by differentiating between the experiences of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation as compared to that of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Aswad opines that it is 'an advantage being youth'<sup>961</sup> because as he states 'you have no problems'<sup>962</sup> with particular ethnic and/or national differences. For this discussant, the youth look beyond particular differences when living in the European context, which is exemplified by 'kids out playing with each other there'.<sup>963</sup> Although positive about 2<sup>nd</sup> generation interaction, he is critical of the older generation, who have problems with ethnic and/or national differences that exist between them. As he states on this matter: 'but actually the older generation have this problem. It's a big thing in the old generation and you can see parents not talking [to each other]'.<sup>964</sup> In contrast to Aswad, Aban explains that ethno-cultural similarities can also provide positive grounds on which a relationship can be built and maintained. He states the following about his everyday experience in Dublin city centre:

Say like I'm in the middle of the city and I see a group of Arabic speaking people, they're speaking Arabic like, I'll probably walk up. Like they see me, if I'm talking on the phone in Arabic, they'll all approach me and say "oh, you speak Arabic" and I'll be "yeah" and they'll ask what country you are from and introduce ourselves to each other, and we'll just talk for a little bit, you get me? Most of these Arabic lads I know like, I didn't even know them and all of a sudden I'm like [their friend].<sup>965</sup>

In relation to the tension that exists between Islamic and ethno-cultural identities and how some of the younger generation are actively avoiding certain forms of ethno-cultural practice, which are perceived as having a "negative" impact on Islamic identity, Azaan clarifies that 'a lot of it [Islam and culture] intertwines at some stage'.<sup>966</sup> For this discussant, Islamic identity is specifically related to living by 'the rules of the Qur'an and the Sunna'<sup>967</sup> whilst culture is 'a completely different thing'.<sup>968</sup> He then asserts that

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<sup>961</sup> Aswad.

<sup>962</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>965</sup> Aban.

<sup>966</sup> Azaan.

<sup>967</sup> *Ibid.*

‘every country’<sup>969</sup> has its ‘own set of culture and living’<sup>970</sup> and that the children of immigrants are ‘going to sort of have that culture, whether you like it or not’.<sup>971</sup>

In relation to being influenced by parental *cultural baggage*, Hussein states that ‘you just kinda grow up with it’.<sup>972</sup> Azaan agrees that immigrants usually do have cultural baggage because they are themselves socialised by the fact of once ‘living in an Arab country’.<sup>973</sup> However, not all culture is seen by the discussants in a negative way. Yusuf opens up about his experience of ‘speaking Arabic like just from the second you’re born like’<sup>974</sup> whilst Masud refers to the fact that culture ‘starts off at home’<sup>975</sup> through certain actions e.g., ‘eating your home food, you do this and you do that’.<sup>976</sup> Yusuf agrees with Masud and also views food as a positive item to be taken from the *cultural bag* brought from the homecountry: ‘yeah, home food exactly!’<sup>977</sup> Masud reflects on how culture is passed from one generation to the next in the following narrative. He does not equate power and domination with the passing of cultural traditions from one generation to the next but as – socialised habits – formed through the contextual environment in which one lives:

Our parents were raised in Libya or their homecountries and they obviously have that culture and it's only natural for us to develop that from them. It's not like they force feed that into us, it's just [how] they were grown. They pass it on, it's something that continues.<sup>978</sup>

In terms of the differentiation between Islam and culture within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, Fusaila exclaims that ‘it’s really hard to see the difference’<sup>979</sup> between an Islamic and an ethno-cultural identity. Saiba continues the discussion by giving her personal opinion, which is that she would ‘see Islam [as taking] precedence

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<sup>968</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>969</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>971</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>972</sup> Hussein.

<sup>973</sup> Azaan.

<sup>974</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>975</sup> Masud.

<sup>976</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>977</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>978</sup> Masud.

<sup>979</sup> Fusaila.

over culture'.<sup>980</sup> She also explains her familial situation that although her parents would also agree that Islamic identity takes precedence, in practical reality, 'they don't practise it'.<sup>981</sup> As to whether their parents still have cultural traits, she agrees that her parents are 'really cultural' [laughing],<sup>982</sup> and then gives an interesting narrative that offers an insight into how ethno-cultural and Islamic identity are both used to enforce parental control within the familial sphere. This narrative gives a good differentiation of how the Muslim youth view the relationship to their parents' power and how they view the relationship between Islam and culture. Saiba states the following:

Islam is kind of like the culture so *they wouldn't really understand the pure like, the actual ["authentic"] Islam*, so when they've lost all the [argumentative] resources in cultural reasons, they'd be like "oh, but Islamically as well" because my parents would know that I'd listen to anything they'd say because I wasn't allowed to do it Islamically. Culturally, I'd just be like "that makes no sense, I don't care" [laughs] but then they'd be like "Islamically" and then I'm like "you can't just pick and choose" like when you want to use Islam or culture.<sup>983</sup>

This narrative illustrates how parents' use their constitutive power with reference to ethno-cultural traditions and then move onto a more Islamic ethos to support their argument. This confirms the notion that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation link culture and Islam together. Saiba is keen to differentiate between culturalised Islam, which has grown within the homecountry, from the "pure" and "authentic" form of Islam, which she practises. She clearly states that the 1<sup>st</sup> generation 'wouldn't really understand the pure like, the actual Islam'.<sup>984</sup> For this discussion, her parent's cultural argument does not hold much weight but any form of Islamic argumentation is acknowledged by her as important. However, she criticises her parents for deploying cultural and/or Islamic arguments selectively: '...then I'm like "you can't just pick and choose" like when you want to use Islam or culture'.<sup>985</sup> In relation to young Muslim adults conducting their own research about Islam in order to justify and legitimate their actions that they have been socialised into since childhood, Saiba explains that as a child, she never

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<sup>980</sup> Saiba.

<sup>981</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>982</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>983</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>985</sup> *Ibid.*

differentiated or ‘saw the difference between the two’<sup>986</sup> i.e., between Islam and culture. However, when growing up she states that she would see ‘different contradictions’<sup>987</sup> between what ‘culture would do and then things Islam says’.<sup>988</sup> She then gives an example of such contradictions with reference to the ‘big wedding’:<sup>989</sup>

My parents would always be a fan of the big wedding, the big white wedding and everything and then researching it Islamically in Islam that’s a contradiction to Islam and it’s like you don’t know which one to believe in like.<sup>990</sup>

The sisters then enter the conversation to discuss their familial situation in relation to Islam and culture. Unlike Saiba, Isha’s parents are presented as Muslims, who differentiate between Islam and culture. She states that her father used his own agency and ‘tried his best not to get us into the [homecountry] culture’.<sup>991</sup> Thus, the sisters grew up not speaking their homecountry language – ‘our own language’<sup>992</sup> – but an Irish dialect of English. She also recounts that the communication between herself and her parents was good in that ‘my Dad, he always ta[lked], sat us down and explained everything to us’.<sup>993</sup> Isha’s sister, Fusaila, interjects by explaining that her father had a cultural Islam because ‘he learnt it in Africa so they learned the culture version of Islam’.<sup>994</sup>

At this point on her own initiative, Fusaila brings up the issue of filtering-out “negative” cultural traditions, which are perceived as inhibiting the “proper” practise of Islam. In terms of this filtration, she states directly that ‘I find that most of my friends do that [filter-out “negative” culture].’<sup>995</sup> She continues her narrative by explaining how these actions involve a *learning process* in which young Muslims intersubjectively interact with each other and identify which ethno-cultural traditions compliment or go against the teachings of Islam. In this regard, she states the importance of social

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<sup>986</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>988</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>991</sup> Isha.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>993</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>994</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*

interaction and how Islam has become the common-ground for Sunni Muslim youth in Dublin, who emanate from diverse ethno-cultural traditions:

We mix, the cultures like, we don't hang around with our own [homecountry] people so *we really notice our cultures and Islam when we're together* [with other young Muslims] – “oh, we don't do that, this is Islamic” so we notice that. So I find that *Muslim is our overall identity and that's where we find ourselves most accepted.*<sup>996</sup>

## 8.2 Debating Everyday Dilemmas

As has been stated above, globalisation and the evolution of modern-day technology has enabled Muslim youth in Europe to challenge social norms and local authority figures (parents, Imams and traditional Islamic scholars). However, there are a number of everyday practical issues that remain unresolved, particularly in relation to how Muslim women interact within a liberal Irish-European context. The narrative exchange – between Saiba and Fusaila – within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group highlights two salient issues: handshaking and travelling with a mahram. Such narrative interaction illustrates that such everyday dilemmas are being actively debated by young Muslim females, particularly in relation to whether Islamic jurisprudence – its interpretation and associated practices – progress through time to match changing contexts (Saiba's argument) or whether they remain immutable and fixed-in-time (Fusaila's argument).

### 8.2.1 Handshaking

Sumayya starts the debate by opining that wearing the hijab and socialising with others is not a problem; however, she then identifies *handshaking* as a persistent problem in her everyday life.<sup>997</sup> This cultural practice, which in the West denotes respect and friendship, creates problems for Muslim women, who are prescribed by their religion to avoid close physical contact with non-familial adult males. Sumayya feels that the act of

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<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>997</sup> Sumayya (2<sup>nd</sup> Gen; F; Den; FDG).

handshaking is a ‘big challenge’<sup>998</sup> that she consistently encounters within her everyday life in Dublin. She outlines this struggle as follows:

It’s really hard to be in Dublin to do this [handshaking]. Once I feel that I’m really good and [I say] “I don’t, sorry, I can’t shake hand” and do like this, respectful[ly]. Most of them they accept that but other[s] don’t. Like my doctor, he took my hand, shaking [my] hand. I couldn’t talk that time, I don’t want to talk too much but some they don’t accept that at all, yeah but I still am trying to do [that] just because I am Muslim.<sup>999</sup>

Sumayya directly states that she doesn’t ‘care about culture’.<sup>1000</sup> She describes a funny story of how Arabs will see her on the street and say to her ‘so you are modern Muslim’<sup>1001</sup> because she does not cover all of her body even though she comes from Saudi Arabia. Rifa concurs ‘yeah [modern Muslims], that’s what they call us’.<sup>1002</sup> Saiba speaks up about the dilemma of handshaking. She states that such situations are awkward and commonly she finds herself in the position where she doesn’t ‘know what to say, you just freeze’.<sup>1003</sup> Riba acknowledges the dilemma in that many Muslim women do ‘not want to be disrespectful’ to the person offering their hand but also that they don’t want to disrespect their Islamic social norms linked to recognising God. Saiba then mentions a very practical problem associated with handshaking and job interviews. She states the following small story that highlights how the social norms inherent within a job interview can create a *recognitive dilemma* for young Muslim women:

Even in job interviews, the shaking-the-hand is a really big thing in the interview. It can either make you or break you and then you get to [the end], and then somebody puts out [their hand], and it’s like they’re inviting you and you’re just “no”, and you don’t know what to say and you just like “how do I even explain this” because I know the hadith, the actual principle behind it but, trying to app[ly it], make it make sense to me because I believe it but trying [to] make sense of it [to] somebody else that doesn’t have the faith and then you just be like “so, I just can’t” and it’s so hard to explain and it’s just awful.<sup>1004</sup>

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<sup>998</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>999</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1000</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1001</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1002</sup> Rifa.

<sup>1003</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*

Isha adds to Saiba's small story by clarifying that people, who offer their hand as a sign of respect get annoyed and even angry when 'something gets taken away'.<sup>1005</sup> She voices that many Muslim women will say 'sorry, I can't shake your hand',<sup>1006</sup> however, this apology is not understood and people still feel 'what's wrong with me. I just wanted to shake your hand [out of respect]'.<sup>1007</sup> Saiba concurs and also agrees that handshaking is a symbol of when two people meet and show a sign of respect and friendliness towards each other. She humorously states that the only option in such dilemmatic situations is to 'pray that you get a girl'.<sup>1008</sup> Isha adds that 'it depends on the person',<sup>1009</sup> in that some people will be understanding but others may be 'real aggressive and you're kind of like "sorry"'.<sup>1010</sup> The handshaking dilemma can create awkward moments as Saiba emphasises when she recounts her experience at a Womens' Rights breakfast in Dublin:

There was a lot of officials there and one man was right in front of me and this was when the press, where everybody was there, and he put his hand out to shake me, shake myself and Sara's hand and Sara shook his hand and I didn't, and then, it just made the whole area awkward, like everybody. The cameras stopped flashing and I just kind of walked away because I didn't know what to say and then after, I was like "Sara, what happened?" and she was like "it was the pressure" and it was like too many people were looking at me.<sup>1011</sup>

To avoid such situations again, Saiba explains that she searched Islamic jurisprudence to find 'my way around it'.<sup>1012</sup> She researched 'different scholars of Islam',<sup>1013</sup> through the online fatwa markets to see if there were Islamic rulings that permitted the shaking of male hands 'for professional uses'.<sup>1014</sup> However, such a search did not provide avenues of flexibility. Sumayya interjects and states to Saiba that 'there are Muslim girls, they shake hands'.<sup>1015</sup> Saiba responds to Sumayya that such young women have

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<sup>1005</sup> Isha.

<sup>1006</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1007</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1008</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1009</sup> Isha.

<sup>1010</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1011</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1012</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1013</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1014</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1015</sup> Sumayya.

made a ‘personal choice’<sup>1016</sup> to shake hands whereas all the traditional Islamic schools of jurisprudence prohibit it. Sumayya then makes a comment on how the interaction between Islam and culture can create confusion in social relationships. Although she herself does not care for cultural acts, her sister shakes hands with people. Saiba agrees that differing actions carried out by Muslim women confuse people and leads to social misunderstandings.

The discussion about the difficulties related to handshaking and Saiba’s point about searching online for an Islamic ruling to remedy such problems brings into focus an important debate between the young females about how Islamic jurisprudence – conducted by trained scholars – regulates everyday practical life and whether such rulings change overtime or whether they remain constant through time. Saiba opens up about how she has conducted online research into other schools of Islamic thought ‘because everything that we practise is obviously being said by one of these [schools]’.<sup>1017</sup> During her internet search, she compares and contrasts different rulings from various Islamic schools on the same subject to assess whether the ruling is ‘authentic’.<sup>1018</sup> This discussant is not interested in individual rulings, which are just ‘somebody else’s opinion’ but in a plurality of verified, contextual and reasonable rulings.<sup>1019</sup> The reason for her online research is *to find flexibility between her Islamic identity and her practical everyday life* as lived in the Irish-European context. This is exemplified when she narratively returns to the problem of handshaking within job interviews. Her statement clarifies that sometimes to make life easier, a person might decide to act against Islamic prescriptions. Out of respect for discussants in the room, Saiba apologises, to the other focus group participants, for indicating that she has gone against Islamic principles out of everyday practical necessity:

It’s really hard especially in professions when you’re going for an interview and you don’t know what to say, you don’t even know how to explain it to them and at times you kinda just be like “let this be my one sin” and just do it [shake hands with males].<sup>1020</sup>

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<sup>1016</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1018</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1019</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1020</sup> *Ibid.*

In terms of the need for contextual rulings to live life as Muslim in Europe, Saiba states her belief that the rulings of past scholars and Islamic schools are relative to the time in which they were produced and that new rulings should fit the present context. Essentially, this discussant is stating that Islamic jurisprudence is not fixed but evolves through time and should be context-dependent. As she states:

...like the four scholars [schools], they were in a specific time so obviously as time progresses there'll be another couple of scholars depending on the generation and stuff and the century. So I think it'll be different from like looking now and a thousand years from now.<sup>1021</sup>

However, Saiba's comments about a flexible and transformative form of Islamic jurisprudence are strongly opposed by the sisters – Fusaila and Isha – who both adamantly disagree. Fusaila views Islam as fixed and she doesn't think 'Islam in generations [to come] is going to change – 'how many generations have we gone through now?''<sup>1022</sup> For this discussant, Islam is perfect and not in need of change because it 'was made for everything. It's not like they left something out'.<sup>1023</sup> Saiba attempts to defend her opinion by arguing that what is halal (permissible) and what is haram (forbidden) can change-through-time based on different contexts. Fusaila questions Saiba about the handshaking problem. Saiba responds that she did mention it but she also researched Islamic jurisprudence online and found it to be 'authentic'.<sup>1024</sup> Fusaila states her opinion in relation to the handshaking dilemma: 'I don't think it's going to change in the years [to come]. I don't think it's going to suddenly be accepted'.<sup>1025</sup> Saiba clarifies that she is not stating that change will happen soon but that it will occur over a long period of time. Fusaila replies: 'Even in a million [years], I don't think so'.<sup>1026</sup>

In relation to the concept of *ijtihad* (critical reasoning) in Islamic jurisprudence, which is a concept in line with Saiba's argument that Islam can change through time, Mahala enters the discussion by suggesting that 'it [ijtihad] should be open again'.<sup>1027</sup>

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<sup>1021</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1022</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1023</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1024</sup> Saiba

<sup>1025</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1027</sup> Mahala.

This statement refers to the *gates of ijtiḥad* and suggests that the gates of reasoned interpretation remains closed. Mahala argues for opening the gates because ‘things have changed’.<sup>1028</sup> Saiba reclarifies her position. She states that in her opinion ‘different things apply to different times’<sup>1029</sup> and she is certainly not ‘changing the whole’<sup>1030</sup> of Islam. Notably, Mahala and Saiba agree with each other that the ‘fundamentals’<sup>1031</sup> of Islam ‘will always be the same’.<sup>1032</sup> Fusaila once again defends her position by stating that ‘if something changes, it matters’,<sup>1033</sup> which indicates that change is not something that should be entered into lightly.

### 8.2.2 Travelling with a Mahram

The second debate relates to travelling with a mahram; in other words, the ruling that single Muslim women, who are travelling long-distances, be chaperoned by a male family member to provide protection against danger. Saiba states that this issue is important as some families today still actively encourage the use of a mahram and negatively view ‘travelling without [a] mahram’.<sup>1034</sup> Fusaila believes women should travel with a mahram. In Rifa’s opinion, ‘Islam does not say you have to take this [ruling]’.<sup>1035</sup> Saiba clarifies the important paradox of the mahram debate in that ‘we [Muslim females] all travel without mahrams; even though we all know we are not allowed to travel without a mahram’.<sup>1036</sup> She explains this point further by stating:

In Islam, you’re [a Muslim woman is] not allowed to travel alone. You’re not, you have to travel with your brother or your father...back in that time [of the Prophet], everybody obeyed it because travelling back then you’re travelling through a desert and it’s dangerous, where travelling now is like you go to the

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<sup>1028</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1029</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1030</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1031</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1032</sup> Mahala. Saiba and Mahala’s argument reflects the argument reflected in Tariq Ramadan’s academic work, which has been highly critical of Islamic jurisprudence for not being practical to life as lived by Muslims within the European context. He also advocates for the re-application of *ijtiḥad* within Islamic jurisprudence and for young Muslims to accentuate an Islamic-civic conception of Muslim identity in the European context. See Ramadan, T. 1999. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1033</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1034</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1035</sup> Rifa.

<sup>1036</sup> Saiba.

airport, you board one plane and then you get off there [at your destination] and then your family can be waiting for you at that other airport so it's not as dangerous as back then [in the past].<sup>1037</sup>

Fusaila states that she still thinks it applies today. However, Saiba views the mahram issue as 'a good example'<sup>1038</sup> supporting her main argument that what is halal and haram changes through time. However, other discussants are still willing to challenge Saiba's argument. Sumayya makes the comment that rulings must be logical. She states that if she finds a ruling that is 'not logic'<sup>1039</sup> then she will not follow it. This implies that the concept of mahram is illogical for the present day, therefore, she will not follow it. Rifa agrees. Sumayya is certain that rules have to correlate to practical reality but that with clear fixed rulings that are in the Qur'an and come directly from God 'you do it and that's it'<sup>1040</sup> and this sometimes means that as an individual 'your mind has to make it operate with what you have'.<sup>1041</sup> Saiba takes Sumayya to be advocating that rulings have to 'make common sense';<sup>1042</sup> however, her argument is that rulings from clerics must be logical, but, if a ruling comes directly from God through the sources then it must be obeyed. In other words, no matter how impractical, the individual must try to make such rulings work cognitively so that it can be translated into practical action. Fusaila restates her position that the concept of mahram 'applies in this time'.<sup>1043</sup> Saiba replies: 'well that's your opinion'.<sup>1044</sup> At this point, Sumayya reflects that Fusaila has a right to a subjective opinion; however, she must also 'think about other persons'.<sup>1045</sup>

Continuing the debate, Fusaila claims that the concept of mahram comes 'down to culture'<sup>1046</sup> and, in her opinion, she believes all women 'should be travelling with a mahram'.<sup>1047</sup> Saiba disagrees. Fusaila explains that if you grew up in a culture that promotes such a practice then 'that's your only choice'.<sup>1048</sup> Saiba correctly identifies that Fusaila seems to be promoting an ethno-cultural tradition to validate her argument

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<sup>1037</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1038</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1039</sup> Sumayya.

<sup>1040</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1041</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1042</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1043</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1044</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1045</sup> Sumayya.

<sup>1046</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1047</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*

and she questions Fusaila by stating: ‘but in Islam, we’re talking about what’s there in Islam, that whole mahram thing is not in Islam. It’s not, [it’s] our cultures’.<sup>1049</sup> Fusaila reclarifies her position that ‘now’,<sup>1050</sup> in the present, ‘we don’t do it’.<sup>1051</sup> Bisma states her opinion that *mahram is a present-day cultural practice and is not Islamic*: ‘We do it but, Islamically, it’s not allowed’.<sup>1052</sup> She mentions another clash in relation to weddings in which Muslim women can – in ethno-cultural traditions – show their hair to non-familial males yet Islam directly prohibits such action. She states: ‘For example, for us when we go to a wedding, though there is a man there, we still show our hair’.<sup>1053</sup> Saiba agrees and acknowledges that such practices are similar in Sudan.<sup>1054</sup> Fusaila argues that such actions are ‘personal’<sup>1055</sup> decisions but this argument is rejected by Bisma, who highlights that Islam is against showing ‘hair around but to your husband’.<sup>1056</sup> Saiba agrees and stresses that such actions are cultural to which Bisma replies: ‘culturally, we still do that’.<sup>1057</sup>

### 8.3 Filtering “Negative” Culture and Searching for “Authentic” Islam

The following section will present narratives that highlight the process by which 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sunni Muslim youth in Dublin are filtering “negative” ethno-cultural traditions and searching for an “authentic” Islam. Such a process challenges and influences traditional authorities and is perceived as providing the solution as to how one can live an Islamic life within an Irish-European environment.

Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation male focused discussion group, Yusuf discusses the mix of cultures that the youth are exposed to from their familial and community environments and from the wider context. He gives his personal experience about how he negotiates his homecountry culture and the culture he is exposed to within his everyday life in Ireland. Such a cultural negotiation is regulated through the remit of an

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<sup>1049</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1050</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1051</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1052</sup> Bisma.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1054</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1055</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1056</sup> Bisma.

<sup>1057</sup> *Ibid.*

Islamic identity. He clarifies that Muslim youth have a ‘cultural mixture’<sup>1058</sup> between ‘this [Irish culture] and whatever you had at home’.<sup>1059</sup> His practical way of negotiating both cultures is to ‘just kind of take the best of everything’.<sup>1060</sup> This is an important statement because by stating that he takes what he perceives to be “good” or “positive” within both cultures, it implies that there must be forms of ethnic-culture that are perceived as “negative” and this also implies that this discussant has some means by which to assess the character of actions associated with cultural practice. Yusuf further explains what he does with the perceived-to-be “negative” parts of Irish and homecountry culture. He confidently states: ‘I just neglect it. You just leave it’.<sup>1061</sup> Masud supports this comment by narrating his personal experience: ‘I avoid it [negative culture]’.<sup>1062</sup> Yusuf concurs and uses Masud’s terminology to restate his point in relation to socialised alcohol consumption within Irish culture: ‘[you] avoid it exactly. Just like drinking [alcohol], you just avoid it’.<sup>1063</sup>

The above comments about avoiding the Irish culture of drinking alcohol refocuses the discussion towards forms of ethno-cultural tradition that are identified and bypassed by young Muslims. In terms of Irish culture, Hussein clarifies that ‘[drinking is] not in our [Islamic] culture’<sup>1064</sup> whilst Siddiq refers to the Arab cultural practice of smoking ‘shisha’<sup>1065</sup> as an action also to be avoided. On hearing the two examples, Yusuf clarifies that ethno-cultural actions to be avoided relate to both ‘Irish culture or Arabic culture’.<sup>1066</sup> In terms of the latter, he describes whether a family avoids or acts out the “negative” aspects of culture in relation to a high or low degree of religiosity. On this point, he states that:

My parents didn’t really teach me anything that’s bad in my [Arab] culture because they are very religious, but ye know, with other parents because they neglect that [religion] as well. They [my parents] don’t look to it [“negative” culture] because they think it’s very ignorant but, with other people that their

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<sup>1058</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>1059</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1060</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1061</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1062</sup> Masud.

<sup>1063</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>1064</sup> Hussein.

<sup>1065</sup> Siddiq.

<sup>1066</sup> Yusuf.

parents are not really religious they would have that [“negative” Arab culture] at home.<sup>1067</sup>

Siddiq clarifies his position against the “negative” Arab cultural trait of smoking shisha. This discussant clarifies that, as a Muslim, he views shisha as haram (forbidden) for the reason that it ‘harms you’<sup>1068</sup> by damaging bodily health. He then narrates how the ideology of Islam views this “negative” act as associated with the ideology of culture: ‘so when it comes to a cultural thing like smoking shisha, Islam would say “no” to that. So that's where you'd see this conflict between the two ideologies’.<sup>1069</sup>

Aswad swings the discussion over to identifying the “positive” aspects of Irish culture. In this discussant’s opinion, there is an element of culture that differentiates Ireland from Arab countries and that is the *act of trust*. For this discussant, Irish people ‘have a really great trust’<sup>1070</sup> in others that comes easily and is ‘something great in the culture’.<sup>1071</sup> However, in the Arab world, ‘sometimes that trust is not there’.<sup>1072</sup> Nejeed enters the conversation and swings the conversation back to a discussion of “positive” Arab culture in relation to the transitional phenomenon of sport, particularly soccer. He points out that Algerians ‘love soccer’.<sup>1073</sup> Yusuf, a Libyan, speaks loudly about this love in that ‘they [Algerians] would not shut up about soccer’.<sup>1074</sup> Aban, differentiating himself as an Algerian, states in reply that ‘that's the difference, like Libyans they don't really think about what it [soccer] is’.<sup>1075</sup> He mentions ‘the shock’<sup>1076</sup> when his homecountry – Algeria – won a soccer match against Germany during the 1982 World Cup in Spain. Although he brought up the narrative about the Algerian obsessive love of soccer, he adds that such an intense passion for the game creates arguments and divisions between Algerians and other groups, which for Aban implies that soccer may sometimes supersede a “universal” Islamic identity that views all Muslims, despite ethnic and national affiliation, as the “same” in their recognition to God.

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<sup>1067</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1068</sup> Siddiq.

<sup>1069</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1070</sup> Aswad.

<sup>1071</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1072</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1073</sup> Nejeed.

<sup>1074</sup> Yusuf.

<sup>1075</sup> Aban.

<sup>1076</sup> *Ibid.*

They [other Arabs] they don't really go more to soccer than us [Algerians]. We like [soccer], like we think it's a part of us. We love playing soccer. So then when we talk about it we get into like arguments and then that starts, we start hating each other and start not talking to each other because of our soccer, some stupid things. *We keep forget[ing] that we're Muslim and start going to what [i.e., the culture] we were born and raised looking at.*<sup>1077</sup>

Similarly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussants narrate their experiences of actively filtering-out what they perceive to be “negative” culture in order to obtain a “purer” and more “authentic” form of Islam. For example, Saiba states that ‘there’s a lot of “negative” culture’.<sup>1078</sup> She and multiple other discussants agree that young Muslims are purposively recognising that some ethno-cultural traditions are not Islamic, therefore, such actions should be *avoided through in-action*. Isha enters the discussion and links her Islamic identity to this act of filtering-out “negative” culture and how this differentiates herself from others. She states in this regard: ‘That’s why we, in our cultures; in our own separate cultures, we would be seen as different’.<sup>1079</sup> Saiba agrees that such a relationship to ethno-cultural traditions does define and distinguish the new generation of Muslims. However, Isha clarifies that such an identity is not always favourably looked upon by other members of the community. In terms of how the youth are recognised, she claims that ethno-cultural Muslims ‘think we’re better than them’<sup>1080</sup> but in actuality, as Isha states, the Muslim youth are performing such actions in order to ‘follow the real Islam’.<sup>1081</sup> She continues by stating that such action by Muslim youth ‘leads to many arguments with our parents, our uncles or aunties and all that because they don’t agree and they laugh at us’.<sup>1082</sup> Fusaila adds a point that ‘you also get called “extreme”’.<sup>1083</sup> Saiba and Fusaila are in complete agreement. Saiba responds to Fusaila: ‘Exactly, exactly. My parents think I’m like a fundamentalist’.<sup>1084</sup>

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<sup>1077</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1078</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1079</sup> Isha.

<sup>1080</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1081</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1082</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1083</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1084</sup> Saiba. It must be stated that a return to religious fundamentals must not be automatically associated with terrorism. For as Antoun has correctly stated ‘the great majority of fundamentalists are law-abiding people, like the general population of all nations’. See Antoun, R. T. *Fundamentalism*. IN: Turner, B. S. 2010. *Op. cit.*, p. 534.

In terms of whether the above filtering creates a perceived better recognition to God, Saiba says ‘yeah definitely’,<sup>1085</sup> Fusaila replies ‘yes’;<sup>1086</sup> whilst Isha responds clarifying that the youth are trying to act in ‘the right way’<sup>1087</sup> and attain the identity of a “good Muslim”. In terms of whether such filtering actions and the movement toward a “purer” form of Islam creates a common-ground in which young Muslims of all ethnic-traditions can come together in a unified way, Saiba responds affirmatively: ‘Everybody did definitely, I agree, get along’.<sup>1088</sup> Isha states positively: ‘I definitely agree with that’.<sup>1089</sup> She explains her agreement by comparing her experience of living in the UK and Ireland and states that unlike Dublin; in London, Muslims mix in relation to their ethno-cultural traits to the point where whole areas of the city are split up into cultural neighbourhoods that represent a mixture of ethnic and/or national affiliations. The discussants then talk about how London is ethnically differentiated, unlike Ireland. Saiba states that when in London ‘we wouldn’t hang with the other community’.<sup>1090</sup> Fusaila agrees that in London there are ‘whole areas full of my people’<sup>1091</sup> – Tanzanians – and whole areas [to Arabs]’.<sup>1092</sup> Isha gives an example of when she and her sister went to London with Rifa, who is Algerian. It ended up that ‘she’d go to the south, we’d go to the east [of London]’<sup>1093</sup> because that’s how the city is divided. Saiba agrees with the above statements and, with Mahala, she adds that segregated districts lead to mosques catering to a specific ethnic group that follow a particular sect of Islam.

Fusaila contrasts the London experience to Dublin and positively states that ‘in Ireland’,<sup>1094</sup> she realised that people in the community ‘hang onto’<sup>1095</sup> their Islamic identity because there is ‘so few of us’.<sup>1096</sup> Rifa agrees that the small size of the Muslim community in Ireland means that Islamic identity is struggled for and maintained.

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<sup>1085</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1086</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1087</sup> Isha.

<sup>1088</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1089</sup> Isha.

<sup>1090</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1091</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1092</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1093</sup> Isha.

<sup>1094</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1095</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1096</sup> *Ibid.*

Fusaila returns to her opinion that Muslims in Ireland ‘hang onto the real Islam’<sup>1097</sup> because it joins everyone together despite there being ‘so many of us, different cultu[re]s, different cultures [high tone]’.<sup>1098</sup> Saiba agrees that Islam has become a common-ground for the heterogeneous youth to come together.<sup>1099</sup> Fusaila agrees ‘definitely’,<sup>1100</sup> she then explains why mixing with other cultures is positive for Islam and can intersubjectively help ground a person in how they subjectively practise their religiosity:

I want to have like different cultures in my life ‘cos I feel like my friends keep me grounded. *When I’m straying too much in my culture, they’re like “you know that’s not Islam”*. If you hang around with different cultures, you realise that you need to find a common-ground somewhere and *Islam is that common-ground*.<sup>1101</sup>

Returning to the filtering of ethnic-culture and whether all young Muslims are filtering-out what is perceived to be “negative” ethnic culture or whether some young Muslims aim to keep and maintain such traditions, Saiba reflects on a group in school, who were ‘very cultural’.<sup>1102</sup> Both Rifa and Fusaila confirm that ‘they were cultural’.<sup>1103</sup> Rifa then adds that this group were not only cultural but that they were also ‘fresh’<sup>1104</sup> arrivals from their homecountry. Saiba agrees that this group hadn’t ‘been here [in Ireland] that long’.<sup>1105</sup> Fusaila calmly states: ‘give them time’.<sup>1106</sup> Saiba confirms that this group ‘held onto their culture’.<sup>1107</sup> She then goes on to state one of the most important narratives during the discussion that gives an insight into how time and interaction constructs identity and how she herself filtered-out “negative” ethnic culture, rebelled against tribal culture and forged a new “purer” form of “authentic” Islamic identity:

I’ve been here [in Ireland] longer than she [Bisma] has but we’re from the same place [in Somalia] but today, people would see her more as Somali than me

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<sup>1097</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1098</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1099</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1100</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1102</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1103</sup> Fusaila and Rifa.

<sup>1104</sup> Rifa.

<sup>1105</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1106</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1107</sup> Saiba.

because she practises more Somali traditions than I do but basically, it's just *because I'm here longer and I kind of like dropped a lot* and I was raised like in Ireland and where she was like, she was new to it and maybe in about ten years she'd be different to the person that was just new to her like. We grew up all our lives and we were told like "tribe is like a big thing" *and then researching it Islamically and it's like one of the worse things to do ever and now we try to filter that out.*<sup>1108</sup>

On reflection, Saiba clarifies that such an identity transformation has been 'so hard'<sup>1109</sup> because 'in our families'<sup>1110</sup> ethno-cultural identity is still given a prominent and important role. Isha agrees and adds that it is even harder 'especially when you are the first generation to do that'.<sup>1111</sup> This statement is claiming that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation is the first generation to actively resist and filter-out "negative" culture in an attempt to construct a "pure" and "authentic" form of Islamic identity in Ireland. Saiba agrees with Isha's statement and supports it by stating the following:

Exactly, [we are] *the first generation to kind of like rebel out from the whole traditions and cultures* and they'd [the 1<sup>st</sup> generation] be like "but what's wrong with you?" and their [the 1<sup>st</sup> generation are] like "I know Islam doesn't teach it but still it's culture".<sup>1112</sup>

Fusaila opines that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation are questioning and challenging the mix of ethno-cultural and Islamic traditions espoused and practised by the older immigrant generation. She states that the young generation are asking the question – 'why'?<sup>1113</sup> Rifa, provides the answer to Fusaila's question: 'yeah, it's culture'.<sup>1114</sup> In terms of whether the discussants feel Muslim youth are changing and socialising the opinions and practices of their parents and the older generation, Fusaila replies: 'yeah, some do'.<sup>1115</sup> She then makes an important statement about how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation can productively influence and constitute their parents' behaviour and identity:

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<sup>1108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1111</sup> Isha.

<sup>1112</sup> Saiba.

<sup>1113</sup> Fusaila.

<sup>1114</sup> Rifa.

<sup>1115</sup> Fusaila.

My Dad says that “me and Isha changed our whole family” because we used to practise like them and then it came a time when we started hanging out with all my friends, me and Isha [were] like “we’re all doing something different here”. So, then when *me and Isha changed ourselves, it changed the whole family* and then it kinda created a domino effect, kind of changing the community little-by-little.<sup>1116</sup>

Fusaila credits her sister and herself for changing familial action and identity. Through social interaction with ethnically diverse friends, they identified differences in how various friends (with different ethno-cultural traditions) practise Islam. This made the sisters change how they practised their traditions and identities, which then influenced members of their family and, according to Fusaila, slowly changed and resocialised practices in her Muslim community. Isha confirms that such a transformation is a slow process.<sup>1117</sup>

The above narrative also resembles the opinion of young male interviewee Nurdeen, who comments upon how he and his siblings, as Western Muslims, have been able to influence and socialise his wife and immigrant mother, who have both retained traces of “negative” homecountry culture within their identity make-up and everyday practices. On this point Nurdeen states the following:

My mum has changed quite a lot [of cultural baggage]. She came here [to Ireland] when she was quite young and *she had some cultural baggage – she is slowly losing it*. I would not want my son to grow up in Pakistan because there's a lot of cultural baggage there. My wife comes from Pakistan and she had a lot of cultural baggage. *She has seen [how to find a “pure” authentic Islam] through me, my sisters and friends in the mosque. She is now losing some of the [cultural] baggage.*<sup>1118</sup>

For Nurdeen, it is also important for the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, who are agentially locating a space for a revitalised Islamic identity within the Irish context, to pass such practical knowledge to future generations. In this regard, he is adamant that ‘the third generation will follow the second generation’.<sup>1119</sup> Similarly to Nurdeen, Fusaila also emphasises that the more senior Muslim youth are ‘always trying to educate the

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<sup>1116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1117</sup> Isha.

<sup>1118</sup> Nurdeen

<sup>1119</sup> *Ibid.*

younger'<sup>1120</sup> Muslims in terms of being able to differentiate and filter-out “negative” culture; thus, enabling such youth to gain a closer proximity to a more “real”, “purer” and “authentic” Islamic practice and identity. Such identity positioning acts as a common-ground for a diverse range of Muslim youth living together within an Irish-European context and it also enables a strong perception that *one has attained a better form of recognition* from God, from the familial and community spheres in terms of religious adherence and practice, and from the wider societal sphere in terms of promoting Islamic-civicsness as positive participation and contribution.

The next chapter – Chapter 9 – is a discussion chapter that will use narrative examples to illustrate and synthesise how recognitive relations are embedded and acted out within a complex range of power relations. In this regard, three dynamics of power and their associated positive and negative actions will be examined i.e., power over the actions of others in terms of domineering and constitutive power as well as bottom-up resistive power that works from within forms of top-down power and is inextricably connected to how the research participants recognise varying authorities or counter-authorities, who give legitimacy to competing social norms and identities.

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<sup>1120</sup> Fusaila.



This chapter will discuss, in a concise manner, the main points that have emanated from the research, which utilised Axel Honneth's typological framework of recognition to explore the everyday experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin. The prime aim of this chapter is to synthesise the preceding chapters to demonstrate the complexity of recognition relations, which intertwine with various forms of power. The discussion will be conducted in three sections. The first section will show how the information within this thesis challenges *socially-weightless* communitarian and security paradigms, which determine how we generalise Muslim populations in Europe.

Secondly, the complex intertwinement between recognition and power will be explored, particularly with an eye on the varied and complex relations of power that envelop recognition. Within this section, social theoretical work – from Petit; Schuppert; Foucault; Petherbridge, McBride; Ramadan; Pędziwiatr; and Honneth – will be synthesised with contextualised narratives.

The last section summarises and concisely evaluates the overarching insight of the research, which is that young Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin are in the midst of resolving a variety of recognitive-power dilemmas within their everyday lives.

### **9.1 Challenging Communitarian and Security Paradigms**

By reflecting upon the preceding chapters, it can be determined that the Sunni Muslim individual experience of recognitive relations in Dublin is highly complex. The utilisation of a Honnethian typological framework of recognition alongside narratives of everyday experience provides a vivid insight into such lived complexity and by doing so, challenges academia's communitarian and security paradigms that influence how Muslims are generalised within the European context. The following sections discuss such challenges and how narratives of everyday experience; multidimensionally framed within distinct spheres of recognition, provide a more complex and nuanced understanding of minority experience within the Irish context.

In terms of challenging the communitarian paradigm, the narrative evidence recounted does not substantiate the standard multicultural recognitive view, espoused by

Taylor,<sup>1121</sup> that minority groups simply seek to have their “particular” culture and beliefs endorsed by the majority. Contra to this viewpoint, the research participants i.e., interviewees and discussants provide a complex narrative account of how individuals belonging to the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin are actively striving to be recognised within different spheres of everyday life as both the “same” and as “different” to others in Irish society.

The importance of being recognised as the “same” as others is reflected in narratives that criticise the civic stratification of citizenship and advocate for the need to be seen and treated equally in similarity to other citizens that are recognised as morally responsible human beings, who can participate fully by utilising “universal” rights and obligations that have been reciprocally conferred. Such narratives, which advocate for equality, participation and contribution within and towards wider society, rail against the communitarian premise that minority groups are concerned primarily with the recognition of their “particular” culture and belief system that stands out as “different” to dominant societal norms. Such a view diminishes the role played by legal recognition and civic identity. Being legally the “same” as others in terms of being treated equally and conferred with the “same” rights and obligations to others is an extremely important form of recognition narratively advocated for by the research participants. Its everyday importance is identified in criticisms of how perceived “difference” supersedes equal recognition or “sameness” to others in the legal and wider societal spheres. This is exemplified in pathological interactions in terms of legal exclusion as civic stratification and societal discrimination as *the prejudice of first impressions*.

The weightlessness of the multicultural communitarian position is most apparent in discussions about what types of “difference” deserve ethical recognition from others in wider societal relations. Communitarians view minority culture, belief and identity as the “difference” that requires recognition from a society’s majority. On the one hand, whilst the research participants want their cultures and beliefs to be respected within Irish society, such “ways of life” are internally contested within minority communities themselves. On the other hand, the empirical narratives convey the complexity of recognising “difference”, which is more commonly related to how individuals and

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<sup>1121</sup> Taylor, C. 1992. *The Politics of Recognition*. IN: Gutmann, A. (ed.). 1994. *Multiculturalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

groups differentiate between surface-level traits as well as underlying individual meritocratic abilities and associated achievements. In line with Honneth's typology and in contrast to the communitarian position, such narratives support that Muslim individuals and groups expect their "particular" culture, beliefs and identity i.e., "way of life" to be respected by others; however overall, more emphasis is placed on objectively recognising individual abilities and associated achievements, which may be indirectly influenced by particular "ways of life", but far more importantly, align with the continuing rise of a meritocratic society in which individuals (and groups) are recognised and esteemed for their contribution to the value horizon of society. Of note is that such meritocratic recognition is promoted within cultural transitional phenomena. This point is exemplified though the small stories narrated by Masud and the sisters, who both detail how their underlying individual abilities and associated achievements are socially recognised in the sporting and art worlds while their surface-level "particular" racial and religious traits are discriminated against due to being "different" to the dominant identity standard that culturally resides within Irish society.<sup>1122</sup> The above is a serious challenge to the communitarian position in that, as the empirical narratives illustrate, it is the recognition of individual abilities and associated contributory achievements that individuals normatively strive for in relation to the ethical and objective recognition of their "difference" to others within the wider societal sphere of interaction.

In terms of the second paradigmatic challenge, the multidimensional frame and everyday narrativity of this study provides a unique emancipatory perspective that runs counter to the dominant security paradigm residing within the European literature that is too narrowly concerned with viewing Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism. Whilst the securitisation perspective tackles important and sensitive issues such as Islamic fundamentalism and youth radicalisation, it provides little reflection on the everyday experiences of Muslim individuals. In fact, such fundamentalist views are held and propagated by only a small minority of Muslims and have little application to the everyday lives of the majority of Muslim citizens living peacefully and productively within the European democratic environment. In the influential and interconnected fields of academia and media, political extremism is a "sexy" topic that provides a

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<sup>1122</sup> See section 5.2.2 Transitional Phenomena as Common-Ground.

lucrative form of distanced investigative work that has significant potential for exploitation. As the narratives illustrate, there is a perception that such “expert” fields create media stereotyping and academic over-generalisations, which have a propensity to link the Islamic religion and its followers to terrorism. Like the Irish in the UK throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim people throughout Europe have now become *suspect communities*.<sup>1123</sup>

This study counteracts the security paradigm by deploying an emancipatory and participatory counter-perspective to give a more nuanced understanding of the everyday experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin. It is a more rounded holistic approach, inspired by a Honnethian multidimensional typology and utilising everyday narrative, which gives the subjects under study a *voice* to describe the complexity of their recognitive relationships and to critique forms of misrecognition that are continuously fueled by securitisation concerns. The aim of providing a more nuanced view of everyday Sunni Muslim life in Dublin constitutes a significant challenge to the security paradigm that generalises and reifies Islam as terroristic and views Muslims as suspect. It can be argued that such a holistic sociological approach, particularly the multidimensional view of positive and negative recognition and power relations, also permits security “experts” to gain an alternative comprehension of the complex dynamics that influence the spread of Islamic fundamentalist ideologies and the growth of radicalisation amongst Muslim youth within various European nation-states. By obtaining a more refined understanding of experience within multiple recognition spheres and the dilemmas that manifest within such arenas, a valuable insight is gained into how identity is influenced, constructed and maintained intersubjectively by a religious minority in their everyday lives within the Irish context.

## 9.2 Recognition and Power

As Honneth’s theory and the empirical narratives illustrate, recognition is a subjectively innate “natural” need and an intersubjectively constructed dynamic of social interaction,

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<sup>1123</sup> Hickman M.J *et al.* 2011. ‘*Suspect Communities*’? *Counter-Terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain*. London: London Metropolitan University.

which is a fundamental and necessary aspect of the human condition.<sup>1124</sup> It is generally verified within the empirical narratives that positive recognition and negative misrecognition do affect an individual's relation-to-self and overall sense of self-worth. Of note however is that recognition does not occur in isolation but is continuously acted out within and enveloped by complex dynamics of power i.e., there is no outside to relations of power. The following aim is to explore the relationship between recognition and power by examining how everyday experiences within recognitive spheres are affected by three formations of power. In terms of top-down relations, power over others is the most prevalent and is composed of two diverging components – *domineering* and *constitutive power* – whilst the third formation is a form of bottom-up power enacted by individual and collective agency, which manifests within and resists forms of top-down arbitrary interference. Such a bottom-up agentic form of power is referred to within this study as *resistive power*.

### **9.2.1 Domineering Power**

As stated above, recognitive relations across social spheres are always enveloped by dynamics of power and the narratives within this research project give a valuable insight into how recognition and power relate to one another. This section will examine domineering power, acted out through pathological behaviour, within three spheres of recognitive interaction i.e., within the wider societal sphere in terms of discrimination; within the family and community love sphere in terms of patriarchy; and lastly, within the legal sphere in terms of exclusion through the stratification of citizenship.

#### *Public Discrimination*

It has been identified that domineering power exists to a large extent within the wider societal sphere in the form of public discrimination. Using Petit's definition, it is possible to state that it is common knowledge that such discrimination is domineering because it arbitrarily interferes with a person's capacity "to be" within the wider social

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<sup>1124</sup> Honneth, A. 1995 [1992]. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. UK: Polity Press.

sphere, thereby restricting an individual's freedom and choices within that sphere of interaction.<sup>1125</sup> Such domination by private actors in the public sphere connects to Schuppert's understanding of domineering power as dominium.<sup>1126</sup>

Furthermore, discrimination as domineering power fails the eyeball test i.e., to be able to 'look another in the eye' without reason for fear or deference by the fact that it is an attempt to publicly shame individuals, who are "different" from prevailing social norms.<sup>1127</sup> The empirical narratives reference how everyday discrimination in the form of public discrimination is a common experience and how surface-level traits are shamed because they are "different" to the dominant identity standard that has become the culturally socialised norm within Irish society. The fact that an individual may be a citizen – and thus be the "same" as others in society – is negated by the supercession of what makes people "different" to each other. Such public discrimination can be acted out as physical attacks or non-physical verbal and gestural denigration. Furat's small story about her friend having her hijab ripped off her head in public is a good case-in-point about public shaming.<sup>1128</sup>

Importantly, the narratives indicate that it is Muslim females, who bear the brunt of such domineering power and are positioned on the front lines when it comes to acts of discrimination, whether related to Islamophobia, race or ethno-cultural prejudice. Certainly, Muslim womens' surface level traits, particularly wearing the hijab and racial features, make them clear targets for public discrimination in the form of *prejudice of first impressions*, which negatively affects an individual's confidence "to be" oneself within society. Various small stories illustrate this situation such as Dahlia and Safeerah's story about a Filipino friend, who took off her hijab because she lacked the confidence to be visibly differentiated from others<sup>1129</sup> plus Maja's small story about perceiving disrespect from the hotel receptionist.<sup>1130</sup> Azaan and Hurriyah also indicate how such experiences of everyday domination negatively affect an individual's relation-to-self and sense of worth, with the likelihood of leading to self-isolation and

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<sup>1125</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>1126</sup> Schuppert, F. 2014. *Freedom, Recognition and Non-Domination*. Netherlands: Springer.

<sup>1127</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1128</sup> See footnote (fn). 404.

<sup>1129</sup> See fn., 444.

<sup>1130</sup> See fn., 482.

depression.<sup>1131</sup> Of note is narrative evidence from the Muslim women’s civic group that women are struggling against domination by proving to others they – as female Muslim citizens – can civically participate and contribute to their wider community and society. Whilst such women would like respect for their “particular” surface-level traits, they advocate strongly that what should be normatively judged by wider society *ought* to be their “particular” meritocratic abilities and associated achievements that productively contribute to society.<sup>1132</sup>

An interesting aspect of this form of societal domination is that the narratives from the research participants continuously connect everyday public discrimination as being fueled by media misrecognition. In other words, media in general is perceived as having a negative impact upon the Muslim population in Ireland by subjecting them to forms of misrecognition in terms of sensationalist stereotyping, categorisation and reification, which thereby creates misunderstandings about Muslims and Islam. Predominantly, Islamophobia and racism are perceived to exist in Irish society because the media has influenced and pressurised everyday people to have a negative attitude towards Muslims. An example of this is Furat’s small story of being shamed in her own house whilst watching television with her friends. The narratives suggest that an unhealthy relationship, devoid of trust, exists between the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin and Irish and international mass media outlets. Masud has the view that he lives within a suspect community, whose lived experience is tarnished by sensationalist media.<sup>1133</sup> Of note is that Muslim youth are quite vocal about this stale relationship and are actively questioning the media’s representation of their lived reality. Representation is also a problematic aspect of the relationship in that there is, in the Irish context at least, a definite non-representation of people of “difference” within mainstream Irish media formats such as television and radio. Although in recent times, Ireland has become a plural heterogeneous society with all residents contributing taxes towards the production costs of state television and radio, many “different” groups lack visible representation, which predominantly promotes the socialised dominant identity standard of “Irishness”.

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<sup>1131</sup> See fns., 481 and 686.

<sup>1132</sup> See fn., 779.

<sup>1133</sup> See fn., 297.

## *Patriarchy*

It has also been identified that pathological domineering power exists – to a minimum extent – within the private love sphere in the form of patriarchy. Using Petit’s definition of domination,<sup>1134</sup> it is possible to state that it is common knowledge that patriarchy arbitrarily utilises a mixture of Islamic prescriptions and ethno-cultural traditions to interfere with the female capacity to participate and contribute to everyday life, thereby, restricting a woman’s individual freedom and range of choices with multiple social spheres. Such “invisible” abuse (physical and non-physical) fails Petit’s eyeball test because it is carried out by male familial and community actors in the private sphere and is creates shame by detrimentally affecting a person’s positive relation-to-self and sense of worth; thereby, reducing self-confidence and exasperating psychological difficulties and social death.<sup>1135</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> generation female narratives confirm that such patriarchal domination exists within the community; but maintain that it is not systematic but minimally and arbitrarily conducted in rare and exceptional circumstances.<sup>1136</sup> However, young female participants are more vocal about how such domination over-regulates social action within the familial and community spheres and is primarily acted out through pathological interaction such as FGM, forced marriages and “honour” killings.

Such forms of negative domineering power, conducted and legitimised by males against females within the love sphere, inextricably relates to the interaction between Islamic identity and traditional ethno-cultural social norms. There is evidence that many uneducated 1<sup>st</sup> generation Muslims, who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, retain a diluted Islamic identity that is heavily socialised by homecountry ethno-cultural traditions and practices. Such *cultural baggage* has the capacity to contain domineering forms of patriarchal traditional culture that commonly escapes critical assessment. Domineering power in the form of patriarchal pathologies are clearly equated, throughout the narratives, with ethno-cultural traditions; and noticeably, distanced from a “pure” form of normative Islamic identity that promotes closer attention to the prescriptions of the Islamic sources. Whilst the passing of such a homecountry identity

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<sup>1134</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1136</sup> See fn., 902.

to future European generations may seem, in parental minds, as a vital form of constitutive power, it can conversely be perceived by educated Muslim youth in Europe as a form of domineering power that limits flexibility and constrains Islam from being applied contextually in a productive manner by maintaining recognitive relationships to multidimensional spheres of interaction. Such a narrative is voiced by Saiba, who advocates that confidence in religious belief resides in its autonomous and rational practice free from domination.<sup>1137</sup> Such concern is prominently reflected in the young female narratives. This is exemplified in Isra's small story that recounts how she must hide her identity to resolve a dilemma between how she recognises her socialised familial norms and the interaction she conducts with her friends in the wider public sphere.<sup>1138</sup> This interviewee also points to how young Muslim women feel excluded socially from participating in sport and acting classes due to the "particular" way in which leading family members interpret the relationship between Islam and culture.<sup>1139</sup>

Importantly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female narratives give a vivid insight into how domination is maintained via a power/knowledge linkage i.e., how patriarchy is maintained by the male control of Islamic jurisprudential knowledge. Such an intermeshing of power and knowledge excludes female agency and limits womens' capacity to resist being negatively affected by a socialised mixture of Islamic and ethno-cultural norms legitimised by males for the sake of control and privilege. The above is exemplified, from a young female perspective by Isra, who is critical of the patriarchal domineering power that controls and determines a "particular" interpretation of Islam; and thereby, prevents young Muslim women from participating and contributing to a range of social activities i.e., cultural transitional phenomena like acting and sporting activities and in vocalising their opinion in the public sphere against "negative" ethno-cultural actions such as FGM. Isra stresses that she has a strong Islamic identity but that her struggle is essentially over the legitimate interpretation of Islam, which is controlled overwhelmingly by males within the familial and community spheres. Her point is that *knowledge is power* and she has come in contact with many young Muslim women, who are scared of the patriarchal domination over them, which is exacerbated by the lack of female input into the interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. In others words, Muslim

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<sup>1137</sup> See fn., 724.

<sup>1138</sup> See fn., 905.

<sup>1139</sup> See fn., 904.

women lack control over the interpretation of Islamic knowledge, which would enable the formation of resistive power to counter-act forms of domineering patriarchal culture and to develop mechanisms to productively struggle against demeaning male pathologies and constitute themselves as productively autonomous Muslim citizens living within the Irish-European sphere.<sup>1140</sup>

Furthermore, a number of young female discussants criticise the Muslim community for its overly critical, judgemental and regulatory view of female behaviour, which restricts transformational change and growth. There is plethora of narrative evidence that gender issues form an important and continuing concern for young female participants, particularly in relation to patriarchal power and the social pressure to conform to socialised norms. For example, Mahala narrates that she feels she is not accepted by elements within the Sunni Muslim community. She vocalises her painful experiences of verbal and gestural abuse due to her “different” Islamic practices and also for not wearing hijab.<sup>1141</sup> Interviewee Daleela and young female discussants speak of the social pressure they have experienced within their Muslim community, where young Muslim women lack the flexibility “to be” within the Irish-European sphere due to the pressure to conform to a “particular” interpretation of Islam as well as the over-regulation of everyday behaviours.<sup>1142</sup>

### *Exclusionary Civic Stratification*

The third form of domineering power identified relates to the creation of unequal civic stratification and exclusion within the legal sphere of interaction. In other words, it is the state that regulates citizenship status on behalf of all citizens and, in this regard, the state wields domineering power over the governability of others in relation to their “universal” legal status. This power is negative as it has led to the stratification of people into different civic status groups e.g., denizens are in a less secure position than recognised full citizens, who have full rights and obligations within society. Using Petit’s definition of domination, it is possible to state that it is common knowledge that exclusion through the stratification of citizenship is anti-democratic in that it runs

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<sup>1140</sup> See fn., 909.

<sup>1141</sup> See fn., 939.

<sup>1142</sup> See fn., 882.

counter to the *all-affected principle* of fairness and equal treatment.<sup>1143</sup> Although citizenship is a necessary institution that has power-over others in terms of being productively constitutive, the application procedures for obtaining citizenship have become arbitrary – especially in terms of the lengthy time-scales to process received applications, the informational deficit experienced by applicants, and that applications are solely judged at the discretion of the presiding Minister of Justice and Equality. Such arbitrary procedures interfere with an individual’s capacity to live a stable democratic life marked by full participation within and contribution to the public sphere. Certainly, civic stratification creates undemocratic social and political exclusion and limits the range of choices an individual should democratically be in a position to make as a legally recognised human being. The domination of civic status by institutions and agents of the state connects to Schuppert’s understanding of domineering power as *imperium*.<sup>1144</sup> Such non-physical stratification and exclusion fails Petit’s eyeball test because such actions are commonly known to shame people by excluding them from full democratic participation. Such an uncertain status like denizenship detrimentally affects a person’s positive relation-to-self and sense of worth, thereby, reducing self-respect to see oneself as a morally responsible person capable of participating fully (civically, socially and politically) within the democratic public sphere.<sup>1145</sup>

The above is supported by participant narratives, indicating that legal recognition has an unequal dimension in that the nation-state has used its domineering power over others to stratify individuals living in Ireland into a variety of civic status types. Such stratification can be viewed in terms of how the research participants narrate their experiences of long-term residency or denizenship in Ireland. The empirical evidence substantiates that the uncertain denizen experience differs significantly from the more secure citizen experience. Whilst the status of full citizenship is equated with mostly positive internal feelings and external reciprocity leading to confidence in participation and new opportunities, denizenship is viewed negatively as an insecure temporary residential status with limited social and political rights and obligations to

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<sup>1143</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1144</sup> Schuppert, F. 2014. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1145</sup> Petit, P. 1997. *Op. cit.*

others and, most disturbingly, as a status that can be rescinded through the arbitrary discretion of the Minister-in-charge.

Saad and Hurriyah provide narratives indicating the negativity of an uncertain civic status, which isolates one's public *voice* and is given less credence than the recognition of full citizenship.<sup>1146</sup> Hurriyah links such negative experiences to a sense of frustration in not being recognised as a human with accompanying rights and obligations.<sup>1147</sup> Of note is that this research had difficulties convincing denizens to participate in the project because of the fear that any negative public statements made against their status position may jeopardise pending applications for full citizenship. As Aziz's narrative indicates, applying for citizenship can be a long drawn-out process taking ten or more years, leaving individuals and family units under an insecure status for extremely long periods of time.<sup>1148</sup> With this in mind, it is possible to determine that legal misrecognition does have the power to disrupt familial recognition.

A very good example of this is Furat's small story about how, due to a technical irregularity on her citizenship application, a close friend was forced to move to her father's homecountry and leave the certainty of her homelife in Ireland.<sup>1149</sup> Furthermore, in practical terms, denizenship status also financially impedes the opportunity to educate oneself as university fees are high for third-country nationals. Adeb's small story illustrates how an uncertain legal status restricts sub-citizens from the human right to attain an education.<sup>1150</sup> Freedom of travel is also restricted. Notably in recent times, the Irish government has recognised the plight of such individuals and families by bringing in amendments to speed up the citizenship application process and to reduce university fees for denizens, who have lived the majority of their years in Ireland. Overall, the narratives vividly illustrate how denizens have less freedom and opportunity "to be" in Irish society due to their limited rights and obligations to others – a responsibility unfairly and unequally carried by fully recognised citizens. Paradoxically, such civic stratification has been created by the domineering power of a "democratic" nation-state that views "universal" legal citizenship as applicable to select individuals and disregards the democratic all-affected principle, which expresses the

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<sup>1146</sup> See fns., 492 and 516.

<sup>1147</sup> See fn., 518.

<sup>1148</sup> See fn., 501.

<sup>1149</sup> See fn., 504.

<sup>1150</sup> See fn., 512.

normative viewpoint that *all* humans within a bounded state – who fulfil the minimum level of transparent criteria – should be recognised equally as having reciprocal rights and obligations to each other.

Interestingly, just as denizenship status came under sustained narrative criticism, the status of full citizenship itself was also heavily reprimanded by Muslim individuals, who have managed to obtain such a status. Despite the positive comments about reciprocal legal recognition, the narratives suggest that such a status is commonly viewed as too *abstract*, therefore, inherently weak when applied to the practicalities of interaction in everyday life. In other words, although it is important to be recognised “universally” as a human being with the same rights and obligations to others, such a status remains imperceptible when interacting with everyday people in society. For minority groups, this is acutely problematic in that full legal recognition is deemed to have more value as a procedural formality to be utilised when communicating with state services than as an everyday practical status in which people can be acknowledged for their “universal” human value.

A variety of narratives, particularly from female participants, emphasise how “particular” traits take precedence over the “universal” value of being a human citizen in everyday interaction with others. Such narratives highlight the dialectical tension that exists between abstract “universal” legal recognition and the societal recognition of traits-abilities-achievements. Without doubt, the nation-state’s power over the institution of citizenship has warped its fundamental essence by connecting it to “particular” ethno-cultural and nationalistic conceptions of identity. By submerging human “universalism” beneath more visible “particular” traits, a dominant identity standard is forged that defines and legitimises the socialised norms of what constitutes “Irishness”. The result of this is that instead of an individual being recognised as an equal citizen “universally” to others in practical everyday life, minority groups suffer prejudice as *second-class citizens* because their “particular” traits differ from the dominant “Irish” identity standard. This is exemplified in the narratives around *the prejudice of first impressions*, which exemplifies how Muslims, particularly females, consistently feel that their “particular” traits are judged negatively before any acknowledgement and acceptance of their status as full citizens. In power terms, it can be stated that legal recognition is too abstract to wield effective use within everyday

realms of interaction that is continuously eclipsed by the recognition of what makes people “particular” to each other. To put this complex notion another way, one can say that a dominant identity – formed by immersing universal “sameness” under a range of “particular” traits – has oppressive tyranny over minorities, who despite being conferred as citizens differ from the “particular” traits deemed to form the essential components of “Irishness”. Narrative evidence substantiates this viewpoint. A clear example is Furat’s small story about her workplace, particularly the experience of having a ‘constant background fear’ that her “particular” foreignness is a deprivation in relation to interacting with co-workers, who hold dominant traits deemed to be closer to the identity standard of what legitimately constitutes “being Irish”.<sup>1151</sup> Even though she is an Irish citizen, in such occupational situations, Furat feels that she does not have the power to openly criticise the “wrongful” actions of others because ‘that person is the Irish person, I’m the Muslim, you know, the foreigner’.<sup>1152</sup>

### 9.2.2 Constitutive Power

Whilst power over others can be domineering, as Foucault famously realised and expounded,<sup>1153</sup> such power can also be constitutive i.e., it can shape, maintain and be productive for action and identity. This section will use narrative evidence to concisely explore two forms of constitutive power relating firstly to the state’s regulative power over citizenship; and secondly, in relation to intergenerational productive power wielded within the family and community spheres that is closely associated with spiritual recognition.

#### *Shaping the “good citizen”*

As stated above, whilst the state’s regulatory control over citizenship can be domineering, its overall power in this arena is predominantly constitutive by being productive of identity in that state bureaucratic administration moves and transforms

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<sup>1151</sup> See fn., 579.

<sup>1152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1153</sup> McNay, L. 1994. *Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. UK: Polity Press.

sub-citizens into fully recognised citizens with equal rights and obligations to others. In other words, the state has the constitutive and productive capacity to transfer and shape people from one civic status to another - from asylum seeker to denizen then to a “good citizen”. Such transformations are facilitated overtime by the regulation of action and identity whilst the eligibility to move from one status to another is commonly verified by citizenship tests and ceremonies, which determine whether an individual has reached the official standard of the “good citizen”. Of note is that uncivil actions by sub-citizens, even small missteps such as accumulating driver penalty points, can detrimentally affect whether one is recognised by the state as a morally responsible person. On a more positive note, such status movements constitutively shape and mould an individual’s identity in that it confers stronger recognition and enables socialised people to practise stronger forms of individualised and/or collective productive action within society.

A good example of this within the narratives emanates from Abdul, who as a denizen, confined his social interaction to the bounded space of his local Muslim community and associated mosque in Dublin. However, on being conferred by the state with full citizen rights and obligations to others, he felt more confident to interact within the wider social sphere.<sup>1154</sup> This example is pivotal to understanding how the regulation and conferral of citizenship status by the state can be both negatively domineering yet also positively constitutive and productive of action and identity.

### *Shaping the “good Muslim”*

Another form of constitutive power identified by the narratives relates to intergenerational interaction within the familial sphere, particularly in relation to promoting spiritual recognition and shaping the “good Muslim”. This form of power is closely linked to the socialisation literature within the sociology of religion, which examines how people are raised with the expectation of continuing various actions and identities that have become legitimised within the familial and communal spheres. Although such norms can be domineering, they can also be a positive aspect of identity formation. For example, within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, the discussants view their role within the family as positively productive in that they feel

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<sup>1154</sup> See fn., 568.

that they have the constitutive power to construct the private familial environment and also to manage how the next generation interpret and practise Islam within the Irish-European environment. Of note are narratives of older female research participants, who in their dual roles as wives and mothers continuously stress that they wield productive and constitutive power within the familial structure. This power comes in the form of communicative action to construct and maintain the identities of other familial members and is perceived to be the “real” constitutive power to construct and regulate how familial members relate to their multiple identities. For example, Ayan views herself as the ‘dynamo of the family’.<sup>1155</sup> In another example, discussant Dahlia narrates how she gives advice to her children and can see how the youth are working together to carve out an Islamic identity, which is specific to the Irish context. She describes her power as positively influencing her son to unlock a new European Islamic identity.<sup>1156</sup>

In terms of who wields constitutive power, it is commonly thought that parental influence holds sway over the actions and identities of upcoming generations. In other words, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation – as parental authorities – hold sway over the reins of socialising power that can be domineering and/or productively constitutive. However, there is ample narrative evidence that as dependency ebbs and the youth evolve, through time into independent beings, they develop the capacity to intersubjectively influence the identities of their elders and parental figures, particularly in relation to the development of a new interpretation and practise of Islam within the Irish and broader European context. In other words, both generations – in certain contexts – influence each other in terms of identity construction and behavioural expectations. From a youth perspective, the sisters – Isha and Fusaila – see their agentic constitutive power as having a very strong influence on their parents and even on the broader Muslim community. They perceive that they have been able to change how their parents interpret and act out an Islamic identity in an Irish environment.<sup>1157</sup> Similarly, Nurdeen also relates how he and his siblings have influenced their mother and his wife to filter-out homecountry cultural baggage and return to a “purer” form of Islam.<sup>1158</sup> Such narratives convey the crucial point that although the 1<sup>st</sup> generation generally retains the

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<sup>1155</sup> See fn., 673.

<sup>1156</sup> See fn., 825.

<sup>1157</sup> See fn., 1116.

<sup>1158</sup> See fn., 1118.

reins of socialising power – in contexts of greater independence – it is confirmed that both generations mutually influence each other in terms of identity construction and maintenance.

Noticeably, much of the constitutive power exchanged between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generations relates to spiritual recognition and how to shape the other and oneself into the “good Muslim”. Although such a transcendental form of recognition can be an institutionally domineering form of power over individuals, within this research study, the research participants overwhelmingly view their individual expression of spirituality as positively constitutive in that it acts as a coping mechanism to deal with the complexity and hurt of everyday intersubjective interaction. From a secular viewpoint, the narrative evidence suggests that such esoteric recognition – referred to as a ‘referential instinct’ – can be associated with the Winnicottian concept of transitional phenomena.<sup>1159</sup> It constitutes a potential space that is creative and playful in that it has an illusionary aspect that enables people to suspend their belief.

Furthermore, such an abstract sphere can also be seen in a Blochian sense as an act of recognition, which enables individuals to transcend the uncertainty and *darkness of the lived moment* inherent within intersubjective relations and look towards the hope of a utopian “Not-Yet”.<sup>1160</sup> Such an intermediate arena creates a bridge between an individual’s inner and outer existence and links a range of binaries such as inner/outer, internal/external and subject/object.

Vitality, individual and collective recognition to God must be separated from recognition to man-made religious institutions. Over the centuries, a variety of secular academics have viewed religion as an ideological concept that enables religious institutions to dominate and sustain power over a populace by controlling theological interpretation. Contra to the above and in line with the sociology of religion literature, the narratives within this study confirm that spirituality – in its individualised form – has a beneficial constitutive affect on a person’s relation-to-self and acts as a comfort against the misrecognition suffered through the darkness of everyday life. Just as a child

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<sup>1159</sup> See fn., 709. Winnicott, D.W. 2005 [1971]. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1160</sup> Ernst Bloch viewed religious expression not as a delusional act of recognition but as containing a revolutionary impulse in the human desire to transcend what is immanent; thereby, forming a beacon of hope in a “Not-Yet” utopia. See Bloch, E. 1964. *The Spirit of Utopia*. US: Stanford University Press. See also Bloch, E. 1986 [1959]. *The Principle of Hope*. Volumes 1-3. US: The MIT Press.

receives comfort from a variety of transitional objects such as a blanket or teddy bear, adults also receive comfort within the expanse of various cultural obsessional practices – or *little madnesses* – such as religion, art, sport and science.<sup>1161</sup> The participant narratives illustrate cogently that such an intermediate potential space enables individuals to have positive feelings and emotions such as comfort, happiness, relief, and satisfaction. In other words, it is the antithesis of everyday life in that it is a sphere devoid of struggle, hurt and hardship.

The connection between spiritual recognition to God and Winnicottian transitional phenomena is supported by a plethora of narratives that refer to how recognition to an abstract object can bring relief from everyday struggles and pressures in which humans misrecognise and judge each other. In other words, internalised struggles related to the complex external arena of everyday life can be reflected upon and released by individuals when recognising an abstract spiritual entity. Similar mediations occur also through meditative practices such as mindfulness and counselling like psychoanalytic talk therapy. In terms of narrative examples, Yusuf refers to how recognition to God through prayer can act as a human coping mechanism in which physical and psychological tension can be released towards a deity, who is perceived as the all-powerful creator of everything and the ultimate controller of judgement.<sup>1162</sup> Although everyday problems can be ‘let go’ through the recognitive act of prayer, the narrative evidence also indicates that individuals obtain strength and power from their spiritual acts of recognition that can then be redirected back into aiding one’s interaction to everyday spheres of life – whether that be in the love, legal or wider societal arenas. Such a form of empowerment can be equated to *recharging a battery*. Not only does spiritual recognition give a purpose-in-life but it can act as an empowering mechanism against forms of misrecognition within everyday life. For example, Ayan states that her individual recognition to God makes her ‘strong’ so that she feels that she can ‘fight’ and ‘do anything’.<sup>1163</sup> Interestingly, she views her matriarchal power as created by and sourced from God. In similarity to each other, Dahlia, Sadiyya and Azaan, all view their spiritual recognition to God as tempering various negative psychological feelings and

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<sup>1161</sup> Kuhn, A. (ed.). 2013. *Op. cit.*

<sup>1162</sup> See fn., 694.

<sup>1163</sup> See fn., 671.

emotions such as depression and homesickness.<sup>1164</sup> In this regard, their acts of recognition give them a positive mental attitude, which can then be utilised to cope with complex spheres of interaction in which forms of misrecognition persist to varying degrees. Generally stated, when upset by oneself or others within a particular sphere of interaction, adherents can enter the solitude of the spiritual to reflect upon their lives, recharge their spirit and then confidently return to the complexity of intersubjective everyday interaction.

### 9.2.3 Resistive Power

As stated above, power-over others can take a domineering or a constitutive form and deeply influence an individual's actions and identity, which need recognition but remain firmly positioned within varying and competing power relations. This section explores how agentic resistance manifests itself, particularly in relation to the recognition of authority. Such individual and collective bottom-up power can be termed *resistive power*.<sup>1165</sup> This form of power is linked to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation integration processes in which, to avoid total assimilation (involving the loss of one's prime identity) and isolation (which involves the over-protection on one's prime identity), young Sunni Muslim individuals have developed an alternative way "to be" within Irish society, commonly referred to as *integration without dilution*. Such a balanced integration strategy maintains an Islamic identity as well as positive recognitive relations to a variety of social spheres. However, it also implies that distinct social norms that emanate from the private and public arenas must be resisted by returning to the "correct" teachings of the Islamic sources, and at the same time, filtrate "negative" forms of Irish and homecountry ethno-cultural norms that go against the normative tenets of Islam.

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<sup>1164</sup> See fns., 675, 679 and 691.

<sup>1165</sup> Critical theorist and feminist Amy Allen has also outlined a Foucauldian understanding of power as *power-over* others in terms of being domineering and/or constitutive plus bottom-up individual *power-to* and collective *power-with* others to agentially resist from within relations of power. See Allen, A. 1999. *The Power of Feminist Theory: Domination, Resistance, Solidarity*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. It must also be noted that Honneth has actively engaged with Allen's views of on the complexity of power relations. See Honneth, A., Allen, A., and Cooke, M. 2010. A Conversation between Axel Honneth, Amy Allen and Maeve Cooke, Frankfurt-am-Main, 12 April 2010. *Journal of Power*. 3(2), pp. 153-170.

### *Resisting familial and community norms*

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation youth to find a space as Muslims within the Irish-European sphere, they must strategically resist particular social norms that emanate from the private sphere of the family and the Muslim community. The empirical narratives verify that the young research participants view their Islamic identity as the most salient identity, however, complications arise by the fact that there are many divergent forms of Islam that are practised by a plethora of ethno-national groups within the boundary of the Irish state. Such diversity creates complexity but it also, through intersubjective interaction, enables educated Muslim youth to identify everyday practices that are a mix of ethno-cultural and Islamic culture.

Furthermore, unlike the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, who in the past held tightly to forms of “ethno-cultural” Islam leading to tense power struggles within the community, the youth view such variations as an impediment to internal and external cohesion. They wish to find an Islam that will provide a common-ground in which *all* Muslim youth, irrespective of ethnic or national background, can actively participate. In reaction to the 1<sup>st</sup> generations’ “traditional” Islam, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation have begun to search for the normative ideal of Islam i.e., to practise Islam as it *ought* to be practised with specific reference to the Islamic sources – the Qur’an and the Sunna. This “universalised” Islam is constantly referred to within the narratives as the “pure” or “real” form of Islam – that is filtered of all “negative” ethno-cultural and nationalistic elements. In this regard, the youth narratives illustrate the “negative” affect of culture and the growing trend amongst young Muslims to filter-out what is perceived to be in opposition to normative Islam in order to reach a (perceived to be) “purer” form of Islamic identity that facilitates and enables recognition to and from multiple spheres of interaction.

Such an *identity movement* is an alternative way of integrating into wider arenas of Irish society whilst still maintaining and strengthening one’s connections to faith, family and religious community. In other words, it enables integration without total assimilation or isolation. This strategy is referred to by the research participants as ‘integration without dilution’. Such a return to a “purer” form of Islam enables Muslim youth to integrate into Irish society as Muslim citizens, who are struggling to be recognised as contributors to the value-horizon of society yet also maintain and strengthen the Islamic bond between familial and community members. Such a process

involves identifying familial and community social norms, which go against what is perceived to be the normative tenets of Islam and which create impediments to interacting with the wider legal and social spheres. This study has identified that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Sunni Muslim individuals are promoting such an identity movement and are actively passing this new identity to the next generation. Of note is that this intragenerational influence is particularly related to the deconstruction of socialised identities alongside the formation and maintenance of what is deemed to be a revitalised Islamic identity that places greater emphasis on the Islamic sources and on the deep civic and democratic examples within Islamic teachings, particularly in relation to the Sunna, which is comprised of numerous stories (hadith) of how the Prophet Muhammad (PHUH) lived his life within the multicultural and multireligious context of Medina.

The processes outlined above are deeply fastened to the need for recognition, which resides under the umbrella of complex power relations. It is argued that such an identity movement is a form of resistive power against pathological social norms within the family and Muslim community, which impede holistic social interaction. Such social pathologies include the practise of FGM, marital abuse, forced marriages, “honour” killings, or the compulsory wearing of a specifically coloured headscarf or garment. Corresponding to McBride’s work,<sup>1166</sup> such agentic resistance against domineering and constitutive top-down power – detrimentally governed by everyday pathological social norms – can be connected to the recognitive struggle over authority that legitimises what is deemed to be “normal” conduct for everyday people. This is very much visible through the narratives of female research participants, who vocalise how they slowly yet actively resist powers over them within the private love sphere and within their Muslim communities. More specifically, there is evidence that Muslim youth, particularly well-educated Muslim women, are beginning to redirect their recognition away from local authority figures (family members, Imams and traditional scholars) and are actively using a “new” interpretation of Islam to counteract male patriarchal domination and parental constitutive power. This involves redirecting one’s recognition to authorities and publics that utilise a counter-interpretation of the Islamic sources that advocate against forms of domineering and constitutive power, which impede holistic social interaction to various spheres of life. However, the male

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<sup>1166</sup> McBride, C. 2013. *Recognition*. UK: Polity Press.

interpretative control over Islamic jurisprudence makes such struggles a slow and difficult process for women, especially for those less-educated and who remain socially isolated.

The narrative evidence shows how such transformations, facilitated by the rise of online fatwa markets, are being actively discussed and debated by Muslim youth. As exemplified by the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation female discussion group, such youth are debating between themselves whether Islamic jurisprudence and interpretation remains statically fixed-in-time or whether it progresses-through-time in a manner that is cognisant of context.<sup>1167</sup> It is at this point that Tariq Ramadan's work in relation to the reformation of Islamic jurisprudence comes to the fore, particularly in relation to the concept of *ijtihad* (critical reasoning), which enables trained (male) scholars to produce *fatawa* (Islamic rulings) that are more cognisant of context, thereby, facilitating a greater degree of flexibility in how Islam is interpreted and acted out in a post-traditional modern society.<sup>1168</sup> Essentially, the slow reinstatement of this contested concept enables young Muslims to feel that their Islam is not a controlled ideology that has domineering power-over them, but instead is positively constitutive, in terms of being respectful of individual and collective autonomy, which empowers the youth to enter fatwa markets and use their free rational choice to select verified rulings that suit their specific lives as contextually lived. Thus, the digital age of the internet has ushered in a new era in which young Muslims are less dependent on family figures and local religious authorities (imams and scholars) to direct them onto the "right" path to practicing Islam. Today, Islamic websites collate indexes of rulings from all over the world on specific topics, which can then be adopted by Muslim youth depending on whether such rulings suit their contextualised cognitive needs. To a certain extent, young Muslims in Europe are searching the surface and deep levels of the internet for *fatawa* that will provide flexibility. However, such research can end in disappointment as Saiba's search illustrates when she tried to resolve the issue of handshaking.<sup>1169</sup> Of note is that although such reforms are slow-in-coming, they show how change, however incremental, to the interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence facilitates how Muslim individuals act out their Islamic identities within the European context. Be that as it

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<sup>1167</sup> See section 8.2 Debating Everyday Dilemmas.

<sup>1168</sup> Ramadan, T. 1999. *To be a European Muslim*. UK: The Islamic Foundation.

<sup>1169</sup> See fn., 1014.

may, as Tariq Ramadan has critically acknowledged about Islamic jurisprudence today, the majority of Muslim scholars, based predominantly in the Muslim world, cannot adequately facilitate the lives of an ever-expanding population of European Muslim youth because they lack comprehensive knowledge of their contextual environment.<sup>1170</sup> With the above in mind, the continuation of such reforms must be struggled for by the Muslim grassroots in Europe in parallel to nation-states doing more to promote the education of Islamic scholars, who are open to the concept of *ijtihad* and can provide flexibility to the growing population of Muslim youth throughout Europe

To concisely summarise the above, it is argued that the identity transformation, identified within this research project, is an agentic form of resistance to familial and community norms in that the move to a “real” Islam is beneficial for young 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Muslims as it enables them to achieve a perceived “higher” recognition to God, better recognition and power within the familial sphere, the retaining of community recognition by creating a common-ground between Muslim youth, who come from a variety of ethno-cultural and nationalistic traditions, and lastly, it also enables the youth to identify the civically constitutive elements embedded within Islam that facilitates participation within the European democratic sphere.

Overall, such resistive power conducted through an identity movement enables Muslim youth to use the Islamic sources to produce and constitute an Islamic identity that correlates positively to the everyday Irish-European context. Furthermore, by returning to what is perceived to be the normative condition of their religion i.e., Islam as it should be interpreted and practised Muslim youth have gained an interpretative resistive power to counteract and struggle against the historical intertwining of “negative” ethno-cultural traditions and Islamic values – a conflation that matured within the homecountry environment and arrived in Europe through the mental and physical cultural baggage of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation. Such a deformed interaction between culture and Islam established domineering power over others, which thereby legitimised and enforced patriarchal acts within spheres of everyday life such as FGM, marital abuse, forced marriages, “honour” killings, or the compulsory wearing of a specifically coloured headscarf or garment. By disrupting this fusion, Muslim youth are using their individual interpretive and collective resistive power to productively resolve a variety of

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<sup>1170</sup> Ramadan, T. 1999. *Op. cit.*

social dilemmas by constituting a “universalised” form of Islamic identity that aligns agreeably with civically-attuned normative behaviour.

### *Resisting societal norms*

As represented above, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation are resisting a variety of familial and Islamic community social norms that do not co-ordinate with a “pure” form of Islamic identity nor enable flexibility “to be” oneself in the wider public sphere. Aligned to this is resistance to societal norms, particularly the dominant identity standard of what constitutes “Irishness”, which inhibits the recognition and performance of a positively contributive Islamic identity. Throughout the empirical chapters, there is narrative evidence to suggest that resistive agency emanates from within top-down domineering and constitutive power relations.

For example, the narratives indicate that research participants, particularly young females, have gained resistive power by reasoning, reinterpreting and reflecting upon the relationship that exists between norms transacted between their Islamic and ethno-cultural cultural identities within the European context. Of note is that such individual forms of resistance do not occur in isolation, but manifest in solidarity with others. In this regard, it can be stated that Sunni Muslim youth in Dublin have agentially used their Islamic solidarity to each other to find a position for themselves within wider society as *Irish Muslims*. By interacting with others, educated Muslim youth have come to acknowledge the difference between homecountry ethno-cultural traditions (commonly viewed as Islamic by the immigrant 1<sup>st</sup> generation) and the normative practise of a “pure” Islam that is filtered of “negative” socially traditional norms that originate from either Ireland or the homecountry culture. In turn, Muslim youth are emphasising an Islamic identity that is civic and enables Muslims to participate and contribute to the value-horizon of society. This defiance leads to a de-emphasising of ethno-cultural and nationalistic aspects of identity whilst stressing the link and interaction between Islamic and civic components. In other words, young Muslims are not trying to assimilate to the dominant conception of “Irishness” but are

making concerted efforts to develop – as Pędziwiatr calls it – a *Muslim civicness*<sup>1171</sup> i.e., an identity that is based around the normativity of Islamic identity and participatory citizenship that challenges securitised notions of Islam as terroristic and suspect.

Within the narratives, there is evidence that young Muslims do view Ireland positively and have developed a unique “Irish” identity. In contrast to the dominant identity standard of “Irishness”, which is overly nationalistic and rooted in ethno-cultural traditions, young Muslims have *constructed a new form of “Irishness”* that relies on the civic component of citizenship. In other words, many of these youth lack the possibility of being “Irish” in its prevailing form, which is related to being Christian, Caucasian, and ethnically “Irish”; so alternatively, such “different Irish” are actively promoting a new conception of “Irishness” that falls back on the civic component of citizenship i.e., they see themselves firstly as Muslims, who are citizens of Ireland. This is where the promotion of an *Islamic-civic identity* becomes fruitful in gaining recognition from the wider societal sphere.

With regard to the development of an Islamic-civic identity, the narrative data has shown that Islamic identity is the most salient identification amongst the research participants. It is the core foundational identity, which acts like a prism through which the research participants view and enact other identities. It can be argued therefore that all other identities revolve around and are regulated by this prime religio-moral identity. An example of this relates to civic identity, which is perceived as an element inside or as emanating from Islamic teaching and practice. This new elaboration – an Islamic-civic identity – is agentially operationalised by educated Muslim youth to resist and counteract forms of identity that do not create a *facilitating environment* to resolve dilemmas between the recognition and power of social norms and the ability “to be oneself” in everyday life and interaction. Once again, in line with McBride’s focus on the recognition of authority,<sup>1172</sup> such resistance is closely related to cognitively redirecting legitimacy from traditional authorities to a plurality of decentered counter-authorities that stress how Islam has a civic component that can be utilised within a European democratic sphere. This is conducted by the process of filtering “negative”

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<sup>1171</sup> Pędziwiatr, K. 2010. *The New Muslim Elites in European Cities: Religion and Active Social Citizenship amongst Young Organized Muslims in Brussels and London*. Germany: VDM Verlag.

<sup>1172</sup> McBride, C. 2013. *Op. cit.*

cultural baggage and searching for a “pure” form of Islam that heeds to the Islamic sources and has the capacity to extract civic principles from an interpretation of such primary sources.

The most illuminating examples of an Islamic-civic identity emanate from female research participants, particularly the Muslim civic group within the 1<sup>st</sup> generation female discussion group, who place a strong emphasis on their Islamic-civic identity to convey to others in their local Dublin district that Muslim women can use their individual and collective agency to contribute positively to their locality.<sup>1173</sup> This is narrative evidence to show that Muslim women are using positive power, which emanates from their legal recognition as full citizens, to individually empower, resist and change socialised norms and skewed perceptions of female Muslims.

Of note is that such struggles outlined above are inextricably linked to the need to be positively recognised as an individual – who whilst the “same” yet “different” to others – can positively participate and contribute to the value-horizon of society. However, to do this, one must resist the dominance of socialised norms and associated pathologies that go against meritocratic democracy that recognises people as equal citizens and gives an equal opportunity for “particular” traits-abilities-achievements to be meritocratically esteemed. For example, research participants – particularly females – recount their various experiences of the prejudice of first impressions,<sup>1174</sup> which relates to the pathological action of misrecognising visible surface-level traits before any acknowledgment of a person’s unique abilities, which lie under-the-surface. Although the narratives provide a spectrum of socially denigrating experiences, it must be acknowledged that the research participants do not passively accept such disrespect and forms of domineering power. The narrative evidence shows that individuals use their resistive power to counteract discrimination and regain recognition and a positive relation-to-self. Small stories by Aamil and Isra highlight how Muslims have taken agentic action to counteract discrimination (whether that is related to Islamophobia, racism or sexism), thereby, reclaiming recognition and boosting their sense of self-worth.<sup>1175</sup>

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<sup>1173</sup> See fn., 776.

<sup>1174</sup> See section 5.2 Discrimination.

<sup>1175</sup> See fns., 372 and 459.

Continuing on a positive tone, there is a general perception amongst the research participants that Irish society is progressing towards a more meritocratic society in which traits are respected, yet overall, abilities and associated achievements are the merits that should be normatively recognised and valued as contributing to the value-horizon of society. Such a view outlines an understanding of social justice as related to the equal chance to be recognised for one's abilities and achievements ahead of how one's surface-level traits differ from legitimised societal norms and dominant identity standards. Whilst past cultural configurations of Irish society placed a high value on the recognition of "particular" traits that conformed to the socialised norms and identity standards prevailing in society, today, a more modern pluralistic Ireland is progressing towards a more democratic and meritocratic assessment of people's "difference", in which abilities and achievements are gaining more traction in terms of what should be ethically recognised in terms of how we judge the "particularity" of other citizens in a post-traditional society.

The empirical narratives identify *cultural transitional phenomena* as the *interactive microspheres* in which meritocratic ability and achievement gain cognitive primacy over the pathological misrecognition of surface-level traits, which differ from the dominant social norms and identity standard of society. Worth mentioning are two narrative examples related to art and sport, respectively.<sup>1176</sup>

First is Isha and Fusaila's small story about attending an art exhibition. The sisters recount how upon entering an exhibition at an art gallery, they felt the prejudice of first impressions as their headscarves identified them as Muslim.<sup>1177</sup> This created an initial awkwardness. However through basic communication, the sisters gained mutual recognition as artists from other like-minded people. In the past, although both sisters have suffered various forms of pathological misrecognition within Irish society due to their "differing" skin colour, religion and/or ethnicity,<sup>1178</sup> both verify that they feel recognised by others through artistic transitional phenomena, which provide an interactive common-ground. Within such a playful potential space, an interest and ability in art is recognised by the artistic community as beneficial and contributory.

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<sup>1176</sup> See section 5.2.2 Transitional Phenomena as Common-Ground.

<sup>1177</sup> See fn., 472.

<sup>1178</sup> See fn., 474.

The second example relates to the narratives of Masud, who is a highly-skilled soccer player. He narrates that, although his identity “differs” from those he plays with, it is his ability that is recognised and respected on the pitch.<sup>1179</sup> The playful space of soccer enables Masud’s ability to supersede his “particular” traits that diverge from the dominant identity standard of what constitutes “Irishness”. For this discussant, his traits always have relevance in such situations, but in a positive way, in that spectators of the soccer game get the opportunity to see a Muslim man, who has specialised athletic abilities that contribute positively to both local and national communities.<sup>1180</sup>

Furthermore, he contrasts the recognition of his abilities on-the-pitch to the everyday discrimination he has experienced against his visible traits within socio-economically deprived areas of Dublin. In these situations, his visible traits are misrecognised whilst his unique abilities remain obscured and go unacknowledged.<sup>1181</sup> Within these two examples, the transitional phenomena of art and sport<sup>1182</sup> have been identified as the common cultural arenas in which individuals, who are the “same” legally yet “different” in terms of surface-level traits, can mutually play together within a meritocratic microsphere with the equal chance of having their underlying skills and associated achievements recognised as valuable.

### **9.3 Resolving Recognitive-Power Dilemmas**

This section will concisely summarise the pinnacle point that can be taken from what has preceded. Recognition is an intrinsic part of the human condition that can be defined as a basic need, which implies that individuals and collectives struggle to be recognised by others within multiple spheres of everyday life. However as the narrative evidence illustrates, recognitive relations always take place within a complex array of power dynamics that can be domineering and/or constitutive. In this regard, the interaction between recognition and power has a deep affect on individuals and the possibility of attaining recognition and a positive relation-to-self. To attain such ethical acknowledgement, individuals must negotiate the complex powers that reside within

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<sup>1179</sup> See fn., 475.

<sup>1180</sup> See fn., 480.

<sup>1181</sup> See fn., 479.

<sup>1182</sup> The sphere work or labour is a similar microsphere.

each sphere of everyday life that have the authority to legitimate social norms determining standards of “normal” action and identity. Such a complex interaction leads to social dilemmas in how one can be recognised as “true-to-oneself” within multiple spheres of life that are controlled and regulated by a variety of powers propagating differential norms, actions and identities.

Such everyday complexity is the pinnacle sociological finding made visible by this study and the term *recognitive-power dilemmas* is a terminological product of the research that has been coined to describe the interweaving of recognition and power dynamics, which generate everyday dilemmatic situations between varying (sometimes competing) norms, actions and identities. In terms of “being oneself” and living an autonomous free life as human, the narrative evidence suggests that Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin are striving *to resolve recognitive-power dilemmas* in order to find a positive recognition balance between familial, communal, legal and wider social spheres of interaction. To do this, agentic forms of bottom-up resistive power must be utilised to struggle – individually and collectively – against domineering and constitutive powers that legitimise a network of social norms, actions and identities that are perceived as either pathological or as impediments to the goal of attaining holistic social interaction, involving the recognition of one’s “being-in-context”.

The next chapter – Chapter 10 – concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings, assessing how this study contributes to the existing literature, determining the research project’s influence on local policy, and recommending avenues for future research to pursue.



To conclude, this section will firstly summarise the main findings, then it will determine how this research project contributes to the existing academic literature in relation to the experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin. This will lead to an outline of how the research may prove to have influence and impact upon local policy-makers; lastly, recommendations for future research will be concisely listed.

### 10.1 The Research Findings

In terms of the main findings, this qualitative study utilising grassroots narratives and framed by Axel Honneth's multi-dimensional modes of recognition (love, legal respect and social esteem) demonstrates the complexity of recognition relations by making visible a deeper understanding of the experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals in Dublin, who utilise the language of recognition to convey their everyday struggles within various social spheres.

The use of everyday narratives within this study actively challenges specific academic accounts of Muslim existence within the Irish-European context. Firstly, the empirical narratives within this study challenge the standard Taylorian communitarian view that assumes religious minority groups simply seek to have their culture and associated beliefs positively endorsed by the majority. In contrast to such a position, the everyday narratives convey how intersubjectivity is pivotal for *all* human beings, who strive to be recognised as the "same" – in terms of being fully recognised as legal citizens endowed with "universal" rights and obligations to others – yet also as "different" to others – in terms of having one's meritocratic underlying abilities and associated achievements recognised as contributing positively to the generalised value-horizon of society. In other words, there is a need to be seen "universally" as human and to be recognised for one's meritocratic "particularity".

Secondly, the everyday narratives also challenge the security paradigm espoused within academia and by media institutions, which too narrowly view Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism. Unlike other studies that rely on "expert" or elite opinion, this study's focus on grassroots multidimensional narratives provides a

voice and holistic understanding of Sunni Muslim experiences as lived within the Irish-European context. Such an approach is broader yet it gives a more nuanced perspective of recognitive experiences within the multiple social spheres that rail against and disrupt securitised notions of Islam and Muslims as terroristic and suspect. The narrow securitised perspective, which associates Islamic terrorism and youth radicalisation to generally cover whole Islamic communities, is an injustice to the positively productive and contributory lived reality voiced by the research participants within this grounded study.

This study's a multidimensional perspective – focusing on interactions within the love, legal and wider societal spheres – enables a deeper understanding of the complexity of everyday life. In this regard, it provides a space for research participants to vocalise their perceptions of misrecognition and thus identify social pathologies that run counter to being positively recognised as a participatory citizen and contributory individual. It can be stated that forms of disrespect and misrecognition permeate multiple social spheres to varying degrees. The research participants, particularly through the use of small stories, verify that misrecognition does negatively affect an individual's relation-to-self leading to a struggle to regain recognition and a positive relation-to-self. Such a process can vary and involve violent or non-violent action. Such insights make visible the linkage between misrecognition and power. This study has identified three forms of power:

- *domineering power* in terms of public discrimination in the wider societal sphere; patriarchy in the familial and community sphere; and exclusionary civic stratification within the legal sphere.
- *constitutive power* in terms of the regulatory process of productively shaping the 'good citizen' within the legal sphere by undemocratically institutionalising civic stratification. As well as the intergenerational dynamic of shaping the 'good Muslim' within the familial and community spheres by regulating the "correct" way to conduct one's spiritual recognition to an abstract transitional phenomena.
- Lastly, *resistive power* against specific socialised norms and identities developed by legitimised traditional authorities within the family, community and wider social spheres. Of note is that such bottom-up power emanates from within domineering or constitutive forms of top-down power.

With the above in mind, it becomes apparent that recognition and power intertwine in a complex fashion. The research shows conclusively that individuals (and groups) need and strive for positive recognition from others in everyday life yet they must also negotiate the powers that reside within each sphere of interaction. Complicating things further is that diverse forms of powers – alongside their legitimised social norms and identities – may also compete with similar dynamics within a sphere or externally in other spheres of interaction. Such complexity creates dilemmas for individuals, who interactively strive to gain positive recognition from various everyday spheres of life. This is particularly true for individuals, who “differ” from what is deemed to be “normal” within a particular sphere of interaction.

The most compelling sociological finding emanating from this study relates to resistive power, particularly in relation to how the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, who utilise individual and collective agency to resist domineering social pathologies and forms of constitutive power; thereby creating space to enact a new Muslim identity that corresponds positively to various intersubjective social spheres within the Irish-European context. It was identified that there is an on-going identity transformation taking place within the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin. This identity movement relates to research participants – predominantly 2<sup>nd</sup> generation – who are actively attempting to return to a “purer” form of Islamic identity by filtering-out perceived “negative” forms of ethno-cultural tradition that are viewed as distorting the “correct” practise of Islam and spiritual recognition to God. Such an identity transition relates to recognition in that this process is a way to resolve recognition dilemmas that manifest in a variety of social spheres. In line with McBride’s linking of recognition and authority, it is a form of resistive power in that young Muslims must agentially resist and struggle against inflexible social norms and static identities within the home and wider societal spheres by bypassing traditional authority figures and redirect their legitimating recognition to a plurality of decentered alternative authorities. Advanced media technology facilitates such resistance and enables young Muslims to contest the inflexible social norms and rigid socialised traditional identities that formulate what it is to be a ‘good citizen’ or a ‘good Muslim’.

By returning to the “real” Islam, such individuals are strengthening their recognition to God; enhancing and creating a common-ground to their Islamic family,

friends and community but also using a deep civic meaning interpreted from Islam to gain recognition as active Muslim citizens, who can positively contribute to Irish society. This identity transformation helps such individuals avoid total assimilation and isolation by enabling the creation of a balanced integration strategy – referred to as *integration without dilution*. This alternative form of integration strategy helps Muslims interact within the Irish-European context but with the benefit of maintaining and strengthening their core foundational Islamic identity. It does so by placing more emphasis on an *Islamic-civic identity* rather than a religious identity that accentuates a strong link to ethno-cultural or nationalist identifications. This is a substantial finding as it illustrates how recognition, power and identity intersect within everyday life and verifies that humans are not static entities but remain dynamic – fluid beings – in constant forms of transformation due to the intersubjective interaction they conduct with others in the context of their everyday lives. Such findings are pivotal in proving that although this identity shift may be perceived as “natural” – when viewed through a recognitive narrative lens – it becomes apparent that such transformations are an identity construction, which aim to resolve everyday social dilemmas in context.

The identification that the subjects under study are attempting to resolve social dilemmas proves to be the finding that buttresses the above into a unified argument. Following Petherbridge’s constructive criticism about the relationship between recognition and power, the empirical narratives illustrate that Honneth’s ethical recognition struggles can and should be connected to Foucauldian power struggles, which in turn highlight a complex dialectic of struggle, which this study identifies as *resolving recognitive-power dilemmas*. This new terminology emphasises how individuals strive for positive recognition; yet simultaneously, they must negotiate the authoritative domineering and constitutive powers (plus forms of misrecognition and associated social pathologies) residing within interactive arenas that socially regulate norms and identities to formulate what is considered “normal” and worthy of value and replication. It is important to stress that such a process as described above does not pertain to Muslim individuals alone, but has significance for *all* humans. In other words, this thesis has attempted to explain a natural and constructed aspect of the human intersubjective condition.

## **10.2 Contribution to the Literature**

A key strength of this study is its insightful contribution to the existing academic literature. The research into Islamic communities residing in core European countries is extensive. However, it predominantly tends to be framed by the communitarian and security paradigms. In contra to these views and in line with critical social theory, this study utilises an emancipatory intent – supported by narratives of everyday recognitive experiences within multiple social spheres – to challenge the standard communitarian view that assumes minority groups simply seek to have their culture and associated beliefs endorsed by the majority community and the security paradigm that narrowly views Muslims in Europe through the lens of political extremism.

In terms of the existing Irish academic contribution, there is a dearth of literature on the experiences of Islamic communities in peripheral European countries, such as Ireland. This study fills this gap by productively adding to the scant and limited Irish literature. In contra to past research, this project provides an extensive qualitative analysis – that discovers thematic narratives from a variety of semi-structured interviews and focused discussion groups – to provide a deep and penetrating insight into the everyday experiences of Sunni Muslim individuals within multiple spheres of interaction. Through participant narratives, this study obtains a multi-dimensional perspective on a variety of struggles that Muslim individuals encounter within private and public spheres.

Therefore with the above in mind, it can be stated that the uniqueness of this qualitative study is what gives it its important contributory characteristic. Unlike the existing reified European literature or Irish research that lacks substantial theoretical framing and relies heavily on top-down opinion, this study uniquely introduces the recognition paradigm to the field and supports such a multi-dimensional frame with bottom-up grassroot narratives that bring a deeper and more insightful understanding of everyday life as experienced by an understudied religious minority community within the Irish-European context.

### **10.3 Policy Implications**

Although this study is primarily focused on a specific minority community, it would be a mistake to view this study solely as a narrowly focused exploration of individual Muslim life in Dublin. By focusing on multiple spheres of everyday life, this research project also explores how Muslims live and interact within the Irish context. Thus, whilst the thesis provides an individualistic primary insight into Sunni Muslim life, it also provides a broader secondary insight into Irish life. By combining a multi-dimensional recognition frame with grassroots narratives, this study has taken a snapshot of perceptions, which expand the knowledge base and understanding of a religious minority community in time and space, particularly in relation to important everyday factors such as relations of recognition and power; identity formation as well as integration processes. Stated simply, this study humanises the research participants and Muslims generally by providing a space in which their voices can be heard and reflected upon. It is this making visible of dormant knowledge and the creation of better understanding, which has the potential to affect the attitudes of local policy-makers and the initiatives they construct and promote within the Irish public sphere.

Importantly, this study is local, with a national remit acting as a secondary consideration. The sole focus on Dublin implies that policy influence will be localised to this area. For the most part therefore, the information within this study will be of significant benefit to the four local administrative councils and their respective integration departments – Dublin City Council, South Dublin Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council, and Fingal Council – that govern various localities within the Dublin region. It is important to note that there is narrative evidence to suggest that such local civic institutions are keen to expand their knowledge and understanding of the growing Muslim communities within their respective areas of influence. This aim is clearly narrated by a high-ranking civil servant attached to the Office of Integration at Dublin City Council (DCC). The following statement, related to a wider study on Muslim populations in a variety of European cities, acknowledges how the council's Integration Office seeks to gain better knowledge of local Muslim communities by trying to understand how individuals within such communities perceive the city they reside and live within. The following narrative is worth presenting-in-full as it

highlights how local authorities are cognisant of the importance of gaining a more nuanced intersubjective understanding of the Muslim perspective:

What we [DCC Integration Office] want to do is to develop, what I called “*A Muslim Eye on the City*”; in other words, to bring the Muslim community perspective out of the mosque or out of their community, to get an appreciation of how they see the city [of Dublin] now, in terms of its multiple identities, the values, or the norms, or the experience. How do they [Muslims] see it and at the same time, allow the Muslim community to bring their perspective into the open. It’s a kind of two-way process. Let the city see you and let you see the city and let you express your perspective...We [DCC] just had this concept that we needed the Muslim community to portray itself as part of the city and equally to reflect on what their experience of the city is and how they can contribute as part of the one identity or multiple identities of the city.<sup>1183</sup>

#### **10.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

This study retrieved a deeper knowledge and understanding by examining how the research participants perceive recognition relations within everyday social spheres. By doing so, new understandings were opened up in terms of how recognition and power relate to social struggle and how multiple identities interact to resolve recognitive-power dilemmas. Importantly from an academic perspective, this study also stimulates a variety of potential avenues of further exploration. The following are four recommendations for future research – in no particular order or hierarchy of importance – that progress towards new critical directions by venturing beyond this preliminary study:

- In terms of empirical expansion, can the qualitative findings be explored quantitatively to enable generalisations to cover the whole Sunni Muslim population in Dublin or throughout Ireland?
- Utilising a cross-comparative frame, are similar recognitive, power and identity dynamics occurring within other peripheral and/or core cities throughout Europe.
- Whilst this study focused entirely on the “external” Muslim Other, it may be worth sociologically expanding the use of a recognitive frame by studying an “internal” Other. For example, future research could explore the recognitive

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<sup>1183</sup> Interview with civil servant. Office of Integration. *Dublin City Council* (DCC). 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2011.

experiences of the Travelling community in Dublin or throughout the wider Irish context.

- Lastly, this study may also make fruitful connections to the international relations (IR) field. With the advent of civil strife in Syria and Iraq and the rise of Islamic radicalisation amongst a small proportion of Muslim youth across Europe, future research avenues could determine how the sociological findings from this study provide relevant insights towards deepening the knowledge and understanding of youth radicalisation processes currently taking place within the European sphere. In other words, such research may investigate how European Muslim youth are influenced and led towards divergent avenues of action and identity formation with one path leading to a contributive *Islamic-civic identity* and the other path leading to a radicalised, potentially terroristic, *Islamic fundamentalist identity*.

The study will now end as it started by returning to Axel Honneth's seminal work *SfR* in order to retrieve a quote that reflectively encapsulates how cultural change is an important aspect to consider in relation to struggles for recognition that take place within a post-traditional society:

Social-structural upheavals in developed societies have so greatly expanded the possibilities for self-realization that the experience of individual or collective difference has become the impetus for a whole new series of political movements. In the long run, their demands can only be satisfied once culture has been transformed so as to radically expand relations of solidarity.<sup>1184</sup>

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<sup>1184</sup> Honneth, A. 1995 [1992]. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. UK: Polity Press. p. 179.





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