

# Muslims' Experience of Islamophobia in Major Scottish Cities: Different Experiences and Diverse Perceptions

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## Abstract

According to some researchers (Hopkins, 2004a; Hopkins & Smith, 2008), there is a perception among certain Muslims that anti-Muslim racism is higher in areas where there is a high density of Muslim residents, such as Glasgow. In contrast, other Muslims may feel that Islamophobia is higher in places with fewer numbers of Muslim residents. Through an investigation of Muslims' experiences of Islamophobia in major Scottish cities, this paper discusses the influence of the size of Muslim communities in experiencing Islamophobia<sup>1</sup>. It also examines the importance of other possible factors, such as socio-economic status and deprivation on Islamophobia. To this end, the experience and accounts of 33 Muslim participants in major Scottish cities (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee) were documented and analyzed through qualitative methods. The findings of this paper suggest that Muslims' individual and social aspects of life play a more important role on Islamophobia, as opposed to the size of their population in a certain area. More precisely, the analysis of Muslims who experienced Islamophobia suggests that Muslims' identity and visibility, especially racial and religious signifiers such as skin color, beard or hijab, were crucial to their experiences of Islamophobia.

**Keywords:** cities, Islamophobia, Muslims, racism, Scotland.

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1. This is compared, in another research (Bagheri, 2015), to the experiences of 10 Muslim participants in small Scottish cities and towns (Falkirk, Dunfermline, East Kilbride and Stirling) where that the number of Muslims living in those areas is less than one percent of the local population (National Records of Scotland, 2013).

### **Introduction: Islamophobia and Cultural Racism**

The most publicized definition of Islamophobia is provided by the Runnymede Trust's Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (CBMI), which describes Islamophobia as "an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims, and further elaborated the proposal of eight possible Islamophobic mindsets" (Runnymede Trust, 1997).

Despite the positive description of Islamophobia presented in this definition, it has faced substantial criticism. For example, the term Islamophobia in this definition seems to "reinforce a monolithic concept of the complex of Islam, Islamic cultures, Muslims and Islamism, involving ethnic, cultural, linguistic, historical and doctrinal differences" (Ozanne, 2006: 283; Halliday, 1999). Furthermore, was according to Halliday (1999: 898), Islamophobia attacks Muslims as people; it does not attack the religion of Islam as a culture and faith. Therefore, the more accurate term is not Islamophobia but '*anti-Muslimism*'. He pointed out that the term Islamophobia "misses the point about what it is that is being attacked; *Islam* as a religion *was* the enemy in the past in the crusades or the *reconquista*. It is not the enemy now ... The attack now is not against *Islam* as a faith but against *Muslims* as a people, the latter grouping together all, especially immigrants, who might be covered by the term" (Halliday, 1999: 898).

In response, Meer and Modood (2009: 341-2) argue that Halliday's criticism ignores the fact that "the majority of Muslims who report experiencing street-level discrimination recount ... that they do so when they appear conspicuously Muslim more than when they do not". Meer and Modood (2009: 342) highlight the overlapping and interacting nature of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic prejudice, by writing that since

hostility can result from wearing Islamic dress, it “becomes irrelevant- if it is even possible- to separate the impact of appearing Muslim from the impact of appearing to follow Islam.”

The argument proposed by Meer and Modood (2009) was supported by empirical findings (Allen, 2010; Lambert & Githens, 2010; Meer, 2010; Moosavi, 2015), suggesting a significant relationship between being visible as a Muslim and experiences of Islamophobia. More specifically, the study by Lambert and Githens (2010: 35), which examines anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK, suggests that such crimes “often take place in the vicinity of a mosque or against Muslims wearing Islamic clothes and, in the case of men, Islamic beards or, in the case of women, hijabs, niqabs or burkas”. Taking the importance of interlink between the anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic prejudice into consideration, Moosavi (2015: 41) rightly defines Islamophobia as “stereotypical generalizations about Islam and/or Muslims that can result in Muslims being discriminated against or harassed”.

For many writers, Islamophobia is a form of racism, and more specifically a result of racialization of Muslims that contains cultural/ religious hatred (CBMI, 2004; Modood, 2005; Meer & Noorani, 2008; Meer & Modood, 2009; Meer, 2013; Taras, 2013). Cultural prejudice against Muslims and/or Islam mainly revolves around the issue of the so-called West-Islam dichotomy. As Kundnani (2007: 100) notes, the public aspect of ‘anti-Muslim’ racism is embedded within the state response to the so-called ‘war on terror.’ In this sense, *cultural* racism or Islamophobia is mainly based on the association of Muslims with terrorism and on the perception of detrimental and alien properties in Muslim culture and religion.

For writers such as Bulmer and Solomos (2004), the *new* racism has focused on the rise of identity politics in which

racialized subjects are effectively *othered* due to social or cultural characteristics assigned to them. Identity politics is central here, thus racialized subjects- such as Muslims- are viewed as ‘belonging’ or ‘not belonging’ to a particular society based on a certain characteristics, such as skin color or the assumed detrimental alien properties of items of traditional dress such as the Hijab or the Jilbab (Bulmer & Solomos, 2004). Other researchers, such as Chakraborti and Garland (2009: 45) similarly found that religiously motivated hate crimes in the UK are often based on the “alien characteristics of the Islamic faith and its perceived threat to secular, and often mono-culturalist images of national identity.”

What links Islamophobia to racism is seeing all Muslims as a racial group and assigning stereotypical religious/cultural characteristics to all, regardless of their real racial/ethnic and religious background. Modood (2005: 11), by providing some examples of anti-Semitism, argues that “religion can be the basis of racialization as long as the religion of a group can be linked to physical ancestry and descent.” One illustration of racialization of Muslims was through the reconstruction of the ‘Asian’.

Brah (1996: 169) notes how the discourse of ‘the Asian’ was reconstituted through the foregrounding of ‘the Muslim’. More recently, the racialization of Muslims has occurred through the construction of discourses based around the ‘Paki’ (Modood, 2005: 35) or being ‘Pakistanized’ (Kose, 1996: 135), in which the Pakistani background is ascribed to all Muslims. Even the white British/Scottish converts are sometimes called *Paki* (Kose, 1996; Franks, 2000; Moosavi, 2015) because they have Muslim identity markers such as hijab [headscarves], in the case of women, and beard, in the case of men. Since the majority of British Muslims in general, and two-thirds (67%) of Muslims (Office of the Chief Statistician, 2005) in Scotland are Pakistani, and because South Asian culture has had a large impact on the development of Islam

in Britain (Meer, 2010), Muslims in Britain are often racialized as 'Asian' or 'Pakistani,' and in a more offensive way, '*Paki*'. For Brah (1996: 9), the discourse of '*Paki*' is a post-colonial discourse, which "signified the inferiorised *other* right here at the core of the fountain head of Britishness".

Moosavi (2015: 44) argues that calling all Muslims- even the white British converts- regardless of their real ethnic or racial background, *Paki* or Pakistani, is to a stereotypical extent "where Islam is thought of as a 'Pakistani religion' or part of South Asian culture." The racialization of Muslims was more explicit in the case of the white British/ Scottish converts who 'lose their *whiteness*' once they convert to Islam (Moosavi, 2015: 45).

For Franks (2000: 922-3), name calling and racial abuse against white Muslims is a "kind of racism by proxy, but further [developed], because of the identification of Islam with South Asian or Arab ethnicity, the white Muslims are perceived to be *race*-traitors by white supremacists." Franks (2000: 926). considers such abuse as a "re-manifestation of an already existent kind of racism." Racialization is a central element in facilitating the emergence and appearance of Islamophobia because as Moosavi (2015: 43) argues, "without this process of (re)racialization, Islamophobia would not have any basis to develop since 'white' converts, like Muslims in general, would not be marked out as having an inherent difference that leaves them vulnerable to being targeted with a specific prejudice, which we term Islamophobia." Thus, this paper, by analyzing fully practicing and less-practicing<sup>1</sup> Muslims' experiences of Islamophobia and racism, highlights the importance of Muslims'

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1. In this research, *Practicing* Muslims are those who make a full commitment to the religion and observe Islamic law. *Non-practicing Muslims* are those who identify themselves as Muslim in terms of culture, ethnicity or birth but do not practice any religious observances such as the 5 pillars of Islam. The *less-practicing* Muslims are those who do not practice all Islamic rules - for example, they do not say their daily prayer, but do still practice certain other rules such as avoiding alcohol consumption and consuming *Halal* meat.

religious identity (and practice) and racial attributions (such as skin color) on Islamophobia.

The main objective of this paper is to explore Muslims' experiences of Islamophobia and discusses the importance of different factors influencing their experiences. Therefore, the main questions addressed in this research are as follow: What are Muslims' experiences of Islamophobia? and What factors have played a role in the emergence of such experiences? To this end, this paper firstly details and discusses different experiences of Islamophobia among Muslims in major Scottish cities. These experiences were placed on a spectrum of daily, sometimes, rarely, and no experience of Islamophobia. The importance of different socio-economic factors in each of these experiences is discussed and compared with those in other categories. A conclusion is finally made that socio-economic factors are more important than the density of the Muslim population.

### **Research Methodology**

The findings of this paper draw on research carried out in from July to December of 2011, covering the experiences of 33 Muslim participants across Scotland's major cities (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee). As this research's questions and objectives require a more in-depth understanding of Muslims' experiences and accounts rather than merely providing quantities, this research took a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. A qualitative approach enabled us to understand the social interaction of research subjects in context, as well as the significance of Muslims' perceptions of *majority* attitudes and behaviors, in order to understand how these perceptions influence their sense of inclusion and equality. Explanation of Muslims' experiences and perceptions of Islamophobia within a multilevel social interaction (*majority*

group members, institutional practices and minorities themselves) can be best achieved through detailed, complex and rounded data, rather than broad surveys and standardized questionnaires. As Punch (1998: 192) states, by looking at social realities holistically- comprehensively and regarding their complexity- qualitative research can grasp social issues in their context.

Such qualitative data will be derived from qualitative, semi-structured, interviews in which individual participants' experiences and perceptions will be the main source of data gathered (Blaikie, 2000: 191). Qualitative interviewing usually involves in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing, and is one of the most commonly recognized forms of qualitative research methods (Mason, 1996: 38).

To study Muslims' perceptions and lived experiences, qualitative interviewing is a well-attended method used by many researchers in the field (Jacobson, 1997a, 1997b; Hopkins 2004b; Hopkins et al., 2007; Kidd & Jamieson, 2011). In this regard, Muslims in this research were requested to report their views, perceptions and attitudes concerning their experience of Islamophobia, racism and discrimination.

As Rubin and Rubin (1995: 1) point out, qualitative interviewing is a way of discovering others' feelings, views, experiences and reconstructions of events in which the researcher did not participate. This method was chosen because it enabled us, through interactive interviewing and probing, to discover more in-depth views and attitudes. It is important to note that due to the small sample size and non-representative sampling, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to a larger population. The qualitative and in-depth data offers an insight (Ritchie et al., 2003: 251) into the range of experiences of Islamophobia in major Scottish cities.

Commenting on the issues of reliability and validity, it is important to note that due to the different epistemological basis and different forms of qualitative research (compared with quantitative research in positivist tradition), there are real concerns about the meaning and application of these issues in qualitative researches (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270; Leung 2015: 325). Because of these concerns, there is not an agreed set of ground rules for assessing qualitative data; different scholars try to find alternative ways to assess the quality of qualitative research, which have greater resonance with (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270). For example, Spencer et al. (2003) propose a 'guiding principle' and a 'quality framework'; Glaser and Strauss (1967) mention 'trustworthiness'; Hammersley (1992) and Robson (2002) mention 'consistency', and Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the 'dependability' of the evidence and 'authenticity criteria'. In such a way, according to Seale's (1999) suggestion about the necessity of 'reflexivity' for achieving some extent of reliability and validity, in this section we have discussed the different steps and process upon which this research has been carried on. This would help the readers replicate the study and see how claims are supported by adequate evidence (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 271); it will also enable them to assess the appropriateness and accuracy of research instruments and measures.

The significance of the cities under study (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee) is the fact that the number of Muslims living in these areas is at least more than one percent of the local population (National Records of Scotland, 2013). This is in contrast to Scottish towns where the number of Muslims is less than one percent of the local population. Our qualitative and semi-structured interviews were held based on respondents' preferences, which included places such as respondents' house, Islamic centers and mosques, university meeting rooms and cafés. As the category 'Muslim' is ethnically, socially, and



denominationally a diverse category, different participants from different ethnic, social and denominational backgrounds were recruited to reflect such diversity. As Muslims' identity and visibility (racial and religious signifiers) is key to their victimization (Hopkins et al., 2007; Allen, 2010; Lambert & Githens, 2010; Meer, 2010; Moosavi, 2015), all participants in this research were either racially or/and religiously visible/identifiable. As there is not an official sample of Muslims, the most convenient way to access Muslims was through university Islamic Societies, mosques, Islamic centers, Muslim organizations, and social groups.

The first site in the category of Scottish major cities, where 17 interviews were conducted, was Edinburgh. Edinburgh is a multi-ethnic city and is the capital of Scotland. The 2011 Scottish Census (National Records of Scotland, 2013) reported the number of Muslims living in Edinburgh City to be 12,434 people, which constitutes 2.6% of the local population. The second site was Glasgow, which, like Edinburgh, is a multi-ethnic city. Ten interviews were carried out in Glasgow. The number of Muslims in the city of Glasgow was far higher than any other place in Scotland; 32,117 people, which constitutes 5.4% of the local population (National Records of Scotland, 2013). It is important to note that taking advantage of the multi-ethnic make-up of these cities, Muslims in Edinburgh and Glasgow have constructed several mosques, Islamic centers, and other social centers that provide different cultural, social, and religious services to Muslims, and which can thus affect their integration.

The next city was Dundee, where the number of Muslims was reported to be 3,875, which constitutes 2.6% of the local population (National Records of Scotland, 2013). Despite not being as high in number as the above cities, Muslims in Dundee have constructed a few mosques and Islamic centers. The final

site in the Scottish major cities category was Aberdeen, where Muslims constitute 1.9% of the local population with 4,293 people (National Records of Scotland, 2013). Four interviews were conducted in Dundee and two in Aberdeen. Even though this made for a small number of participants in Dundee and Aberdeen, they did provide insights into the Muslim experience of living in those cities and their experiences are put into contrast with the experience of Muslims in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The fewer number of interviews in the last two cities was mainly due to access difficulties and shortage of resources as the researcher was living in Edinburgh and had to travel to these cities for conducting interviews. The significance of these cities is the fact that the larger numbers of Muslims that reside in these areas can result in strong Muslim communities, which better provide social, cultural, and religious services for Muslims. The multi-ethnic nature of these cities can also influence the acceptance and social inclusion of Muslims. This may differ in Scottish towns and small cities.

The collected data in these areas were analyzed using the Grounded Theory analysis method. All interviews were first completely transcribed and then coded through initial and axial coding process based upon Grounded Theory's analytical guidelines. More specifically, the coding process started with *open/ initial coding*, which offered initial categories and concepts such as racial abuse, religious discrimination and Islamophobia. This stage was rather descriptive and substantial, in which experiences, perceptions and meanings for specific concepts were identified, labeled, categorized and to some extent interpreted. Working with open coding on 10 interviews allowed many concepts and categories to be identified. Many of these concepts and categories were linked and related to one another in a hierarchical order, for example, experience of racial and religious discrimination could be associated with the importance of Muslim visibility and the existence of cultural racism.

In the second stage of our analysis, we moved to the *axial coding* stage in order to identify the potential relationship between different concepts and categories and develop them into conceptual families (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In so doing, caution was taken not to impose any relationships into the data from our own prior knowledge or existing theories. The identified codes were also kept active by using constant comparison among the codes and seeking to keep a record (annotating in Nvivo) of the context in which the properties/indicators had been constructed by the respondents (Glaser, 1978). Meanwhile, the initial analysis occurred through memo writing in order to keep a record of potential hypotheses and ideas, which were generated during coding and initial analysis. Finally, through selective coding the relationship between different issues of social identity, Islamophobia and integration were developed. The selective and theoretical analysis suggested that Islam could play an important part in Muslims'-especially practicing Muslims'- identity formation and integration. Such distinctive identity and practice can also affect their experience of exclusion and Islamophobia.

### **Different Experiences of Islamophobia**

The most dominant form of experiencing individual Islamophobia was verbal abuse and mostly being called *Paki*. Hate speech and verbal abuse were experienced by interviewees in different social places such as on the street, business premises, and schools. Considering other forms of individual Islamophobia, none of the participants had any self-experience of violent attack and only a couple of respondents had friends who had experienced violent attacks<sup>1</sup>. There were, however, diverse *experiences* and complex *feelings* of Islamophobia

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1. This was in contrary to those in Scottish small cities and towns where the experience of physical and violent attack was also reported by several participants (Bagheri, 2015: 192).

among participants. For example, around two-thirds of participants [20 out of 33] had self-experience of Islamophobia - of whom more than one-third [14 participants] experienced Islamophobia rarely/occasionally - and almost one-fifth [6 respondents] expressed that they struggled with Islamophobia almost every day. The rest of the participants, more than one-third of them [13 out of 33], never had any experience of Islamophobia or any other type of racism. These numbers seem to suggest that the majority of respondents (more than two-thirds or 27 out of 33) had no *or* very rare experiences of Islamophobia, which might imply less experience of Islamophobia in Scottish major cities.

However, dealing with Muslims' *feelings* and *perceptions* of individual Islamophobia, the data was more complex and diverse. For example, some participants had feelings of Islamophobia in Scotland even though they never experienced it. Others had daily experiences of Islamophobia and thus had strong feelings about it. Another group had very rare experiences of Islamophobia and thus felt that *Scotland is free from Islamophobia*, and others who also had some experience in the past felt that there is Islamophobia, but its form had changed. To unpack this complexity of experiences *and* perceptions of Islamophobia, and to assess the relationship between them, we divided experiences *and* perceptions of Islamophobia into four categories. The first category was daily experiences *and* pervasive feeling of Islamophobia; the second category was some previous experiences *and* feeling of a new *everyday* or *subtle* Islamophobia. The third category reflected rare experiences *and* feeling of *Scotland being free from Islamophobia*, and the fourth category consisted of those who had no experience but feeling of Islamophobia.

### Daily Experiences and Pervasive Feelings of Islamophobia

In the most intense category, those (6 out of 33) with daily experience and pervasive feelings of Islamophobia, asserted their prevailing experience of Islamophobia by using terms such as 'all the time', 'always' and 'everyday.' We begin with the example of Kathryn, who was a second-generation Muslim woman and has lived in Glasgow and Edinburgh for 15 years. In terms of visibility, she was from a Pakistani background, had a brown skin color, and used to wear South Asian traditional dress (Shalwar Kamees)<sup>1</sup>. Kathryn was a less-practicing Muslim and had no visible Muslim identity markers such as wearing hijab or going to mosque for daily prayers. However, she had certain visible cultural and racial markers. In terms of socio-economic status, she had a standard grade, was part time employed, and was living in a council housing flat with her husband and four children. Commenting on her experiences of racism and discrimination, she stated that there is always a possibility of being verbally victimized. She highlighted that when she used to wear a hijab<sup>2</sup> she experienced significant verbal abuse by being called '*Jami the Paki*' (her previous name was Jamilah, an Arabic name that she later changed to Kathryn to reduce such incidents).

Kathryn felt that her racial (brown skin color) and ex-religious visibility (wearing hijab) was the main reason to be targeted for verbal abuse. Kathryn's former position implies the importance of religious visibility in the experience of Islamophobia. This supports previous research (Allen, 2010; Lambert & Githens, 2010; Meer, 2010; Moosavi, 2015) that suggested a significant relationship between being visible as a Muslim and experiences of Islamophobia. Kathryn's later

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1. It is a traditional dress of South and Central Asia, especially of Pakistan, which is worn by both men and women which 'includes a long loose-fitting tunic paired with long loose-fitting pants' (Dunkel et al., 2010: 57).  
2. A visible marker of a Muslim woman identity

position as a less practicing Muslim, or in other words an invisible Muslim, however, can imply the importance of racial difference and racism. Due to daily experience of Islamophobia, she changed her name to 'a more British style' (Kathryn) and changed her way of dress (not wearing hijab anymore) to reduce the number of Islamophobic incidents that she used to experience. She highlighted that even taking such assimilatory steps did not stop her receiving verbal abuse. Considering all the changes she has implemented, she indicated that she has still encountered Islamophobia on the basis of racial difference, namely skin color.

This example supports previous research by El-Nakla et al. (2007) that suggested that Scottish Muslim women experience both racism and Islamophobia on the grounds of their skin color or headscarf (hijab). This implies that Muslims can suffer both *color* and *cultural* racism due to their cultural *and* racial differences (Modood, 2005).

Kathryn's socio-economic status also points towards the importance of another factor. Kathryn's low socio-economic status is demonstrated by her residential place; council housing areas. She is living in a council housing flat, in a council housing neighborhood, which is a very deprived area. Her daily experiences of Islamophobia can be associated with this fact. This echoes the results of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (2010), which indicated that "those with lower levels of educational attainment, ... and those living in more deprived areas of Scotland were all relatively more likely" to have discriminatory attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Ormston et al., 2011: 37-38). Another participant, Hamid, was also living in council housing. Hamid was a first generation Muslim man and has lived in Glasgow and Edinburgh for 8 years. He was originally from Pakistan but he had no visible religious markers such as having a beard or going to the mosque every day, and he

was a less-practicing Muslim. In terms of employment status, he was a self-employed taxi driver. He explained that he received verbal abuse 'almost all the time,' mostly by being called a *Paki*.

The example of Hamid, like many other examples in this paper, highlights the importance of the discourse, the *Paki*, in the marginalization and stigmatization of Muslims. In this discourse of prejudice, all Muslims, regardless of their real ethnic or racial backgrounds, are assigned the term *Paki*, (Brah, 1996; Kose, 1996; Franks, 2000; Modood, 2005; Moosavi, 2015) which refers to a 'inferiorized *other*' (Brah, 1996: 9). According to Runnymede Trust's definition, seeing Muslims as *others* and *inferior* within the discourse of the *Paki*, is a form of Islamophobia. Therefore, calling Muslims *Paki* in this study will be regarded as a form of *cultural* racism in general, and of Islamophobia in particular.

Hamid himself particularly highlighted his job, 'being a taxi driver,' as both an important factor in his experience of Islamophobia *and* in having a better understanding of people's attitudes because they tended to speak about many things in a taxi and perhaps consider it as a private space. This example, thus, can imply the importance of another factor - specific jobs - in the daily experience of Islamophobia. Commenting on Hamid's job, it is important to note that it was a form of self-employment that required *daily contact and interaction with many people* and was considered to be a *low-level occupation*. Other participants in this category also had jobs with similar characteristics; Ali, Sajjad, and Ghader. Ali was a second-generation Muslim man and was born and brought up in Edinburgh. In terms of racial and religious visibility, he was from a Pakistani background and was a practicing Muslim with a beard. In terms of employment status, he was employed in a governmental institution but as his father had a shop, he also used to help him in the shop in his free time. Ali stated that his

experiences of Islamophobia- mainly being called *Paki*- were divided into two stages, the first type of experience was related to his childhood and happened occasionally, but the second type of his experience was in relation to the time when he worked in his father's shop where he experienced frequent racial abuse.

Ali's example, in parallel to Hamid's case, also highlights the importance of specific jobs and workplaces - in this case a shop - where he experienced many Islamophobic incidents. This particular job also shared the same features of self-employment, *daily contact and interaction with many people, and a low-level occupation*. Similar to Hamid's experience, Ali particularly highlights the importance of interacting with many people in experiencing Islamophobic abuses. The next example in this category is Sajjad, who was a first generation Muslim man and has lived in Edinburgh for 25 years. In terms of visibility, he was from Pakistan, but he had no visible markers, such as a beard, even though he was a practicing Muslim and went to mosque every day. In terms of employment status, similar to Hamid and Ali, he was self-employed and had a shop. He too mentioned that he has been called *Paki*, and highlighted the importance of workplace and the issue of economic concerns. The next example is Ghader, who was a first generation Muslim man and has lived in Glasgow for 49 years. In terms of visibility, like all participants in this category, he was from a Pakistani background with a visible cultural identity, wearing Shalwar Kamees. He was also a practicing Muslim with religious identity markers; having a long beard and going to the mosque every day. In terms of socio-economic status, he was a retired self-employed shop owner (the same features present in previous examples). He said that he experienced Islamophobia 'everyday'.

These examples particularly highlighted the importance of visibility (racial, cultural and/or religious), self-employment



(featured as *low-level occupation and in daily contact with many people*) and deprived residential areas in the daily experience of Islamophobia in major Scottish cities. Reflecting on the first factor, as there were many other participants with racial and/religious visibility while having no or rare experience of Islamophobia, it can be argued that although visibility can be considered to be a prerequisite for Islamophobic harassment, it was more likely to be accompanied by the other factors pointed to above. In other words, these examples imply that visible Muslims who also work in self-employed jobs with daily contact with many people, or visible Muslims who live in more deprived areas could be more likely to experience high rates of Islamophobia.

### **Subtle and Everyday Islamophobia**

The second category refers to participants who had some experiences of Islamophobia and had a perception that Islamophobia does exist in Scotland, but it is now more *subtle* and implicit. Some participants particularly mentioned that their experience of Islamophobia dated back to their childhood or came from children, which was more verbal and explicit, but now, as adults and in interaction with other adults, they still feel that Islamophobia exists but is now more implicit and people are not so vocal. For example, Hakim who was a second generation Muslim and was born and brought up in Edinburgh, stated that 'it dies down, however, you can sometimes see that in people's eyes'. He was from a Pakistani background and was a practicing Muslim with visible Muslim identity markers, having a beard and going to the mosque every day. In terms of socio-economic status, he had no occupation because he was a full time student. Hakim explained that he had some experiences of Islamophobia when he was younger, mainly from other children in his primary school. However, although the frequency of verbal abuse later decreased at high school, he could still feel an implicit prejudice.

The next example is Zahir, who was also a second-generation Muslim man and has lived in Glasgow for 21 years. Like many other participants, he was from a Pakistani background and was a practicing Muslim with a beard. His main experiences of Islamophobia have been traced back either to his childhood, or to that which he has received even now from children, but he generally asserted that Islamophobia has declined. Zahir also felt that Islamophobia could have become a 'more settled' form of prejudice amongst adults that is not as visible and vocal as it is amongst children. Zahir pointed to a new form of prejudice against Muslims by highlighting his feeling of a more *settled* form of Islamophobia. In using the term 'settled,' he meant that the new form of Islamophobia is not as open and visible as it was in the past, but is instead embedded in people's attitudes and prejudices. This can be demonstrated by examples that highlight people's looks and stares (such as what was highlighted in the case of Hakim) as indications of new Islamophobia. The next example is Nader, who was a second-generation Muslim man, born and brought up in Glasgow. In terms of visibility, he was from a Pakistani background with a beard and went to the mosque every day. He stated that his experience of Islamophobia dated back to his younger age, but has decreased in recent years. Nader, however, felt that Islamophobia could have turned into a more implicit form of prejudice.

These examples suggest a shift in the appearance of Islamophobia. This lends support to the previous research by Moosavi (2015: 48) on 'subtle Islamophobia' whereby 'Muslims are confronted by latent hostility and exclusion in their day-to-day lives without it being obvious.' This new form of Islamophobia can also be explained by Essed's (1991; 2002) conception of *everyday racism* in which "socialized racist notions are integrated into everyday practices and thereby actualize and reinforce underlying *racial* and *ethnic* relations ...

and become familiar, repetitive and part of the normal routine in everyday life" (1991: 145). As Essed (2002: 187) puts it, these 'racial practices and meanings belong to our familiar world [everyday life] and usually involve routine or repetitive practices. Therefore they can be expected and generalized for specific relations and situations.' Adopting Essed's (2002: 187) conception of *everyday racism* and Moosavi's (2015) *subtle Islamophobia* to explain the above examples (Nader, Hakim, Zahir), it can be concluded that these participants drew upon their previous experiences and their general knowledge of Islamophobia to see it as a '*continuum*' (Essed, 2002: 188) that is integrated into everyday practices, such as day-to-day interaction, and continues to discriminate and prejudice against Muslims. They particularly generalized their previous experiences of verbal and open Islamophobia to more implicit behaviors, such as different 'looks' or 'stares' they encounter every day, and thus perceived them as covert Islamophobia. Such feeling of *subtle Islamophobia* (Moosavi, 2015) was evident in the above cases in this category, particularly when they were talking about a new form of Islamophobia which, for example, was not as 'vocal or upfront as in the past' (in the case of Nader). In the case of Hakim, he pointed to Islamophobic attitudes which 'you can sometimes see in people's eyes' or which are 'more settled now,' meaning that it is embedded in people's everyday practices (in the case of Zahir).

Another important factor in this category was being from the second generation of Muslims living in Scotland. All participants in this category (Nader, Hakim, and Zahir) were second-generation Muslims. Considering the importance of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1969; Essed, 1991; 2002: 176) in the understanding of 'racist ideas and interpretations of reality' in *everyday racism* and Islamophobia, it can be asserted that being integrated into Scottish society economically, educationally, and socially could offer a better understanding of

people's attitudes and behavior to second-generation Muslims. Another important and peculiar theme in the experience of Islamophobia in this category was receiving Islamophobic abuse from normal/typical white Scottish people, rather than only from drunks. Therefore, our participants tended to generalize the issue of Islamophobia as a typical problem that can be associated with all white Scots, while this was vice versa in the next category. In contrast to the first and second category in which the prevailing experience and perception of Islamophobia was reported, the other two categories point to very rare or no experience of Islamophobia.

### **Rare Experience of Islamophobia**

The third category describes those who 'rarely' experienced Islamophobia and felt that Islamophobia is not a serious issue in Scotland. These participants' experiences of Islamophobia were mainly limited to two or three instances of verbal abuse. These participants also had a perception that Islamophobia is not an issue in Scotland and that what they have experienced is in exception to the whole country. We called this perception; *Scotland free from Islamophobia*. The first example in this category is Emran who was a first generation Muslim man and has lived in Glasgow for 11 years. He was originally from Kenya and he was a practicing Muslim with a beard. In terms of socio-economic status, he was a self-employed car dealer. He highlighted that during his 11 years of living in Glasgow, he has had just a couple of experiences of Islamophobia, which were caused by a 'drunk' person. He also highlighted that when the incident happened, another Scottish woman came and supported him and apologized for the incident. Emran highlighted his perception that the majority of Scottish people are 'friendly' and *only* certain 'drunks and junkies' might be Islamophobic. Another interesting point in his example is that he generalizes his experience and concludes that 'generally,' Scottish people

are 'good' (meaning here tolerant and respectful) and 'supportive' (meaning here anti-Islamophobia and anti-racist).

The process of distinguishing and associating was also evident in other examples in this category. The next example is Shadi, who was a first-generation Muslim woman and has lived in Aberdeen for 4 years. In terms of visibility, she was from Kenya and had a visible Muslim identity marker, wearing hijab. She was a full time student in the University of Aberdeen. She stated that she only experienced one incident in 4 years and that was by a person who was drunk. Shadi expressed her perception of there being less Islamophobia in Scotland even though she was living outside the central area where most Muslims live. However, it can be claimed that as she was a full time student, she mainly interacted with educated people in an academic environment. Analysis from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (2010) indicated that educated people were less likely to have discriminatory attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Ormston et al., 2011). Previous research by Hussain and Miller (2006: 56) also found that to a significant degree (34%), "those without qualifications are more Islamophobic than graduates".

The possibility of having unusual or special experiences resulting from being in the university all of the time or interacting with educated people was also highlighted by Khabir. He was a second-generation Muslim man and has lived in Dundee for 5 years and in Aberdeen for 2 years. Khabir, who was a full time student in both cities, stated that his experience of no Islamophobia in Aberdeen might relate to his neighborhood, which is near the university and has more educated people. Khabir highlights that there is more discrimination and Islamophobia in deprived places (such as where he used to live in Dundee), while there is less discrimination and Islamophobia in affluent places with more educated dwellers (such as the neighborhood he is living in now

in Aberdeen). Therefore, the example of Shadi and Khabir, in parallel to the example of Kathryn (see above), implies the importance of education and neighborhood/living place in the type and amount of Islamophobia.

The theme of 'Islamophobic drunks' is also evident in the next example. Sanaz was a second-generation Muslim woman and has lived in Edinburgh for 20 years. She was from a Pakistani background and she wore the hijab. Sanaz was a housewife, but she was engaged in voluntary work. Commenting on her experience of Islamophobia in Edinburgh, Sanaz stated that she had only a few experiences, which were caused by drunk people. In this example, similar to the example of Emran, the processes of distinguishing between the majority of Scots and a few minorities (drunk), and associating Islamophobia with the latter is again evident. Sanaz highlights that in normal situations, there is no Islamophobia in Edinburgh, except for the festival time when many different people come to Edinburgh from different countries. This implies more abuse during the festival time. Another interesting point in her example, which was absent in other examples in this category, is generalizing her perception of no Islamophobia to Edinburgh, not to Scotland. This limited generalization relates to her previous daily experiences of Islamophobia in Wishaw, which was a small town near Glasgow. The last example in the third category is Azim, who was a second-generation Muslim man and has lived in Dundee for 20 years. He was originally from Malawi and he was a practicing Muslim with visible identity markers, having a beard and going to the mosque every day. He had a college degree and was employed. Azim stated that he experienced some incidents in Dundee but generally, there was not that much discrimination in Scotland. Azim generalizes his experiences and concludes that there is less discrimination in Scotland.

Discussing the recurring themes in this category, the data suggests that all participants' experiences were caused by abnormal or exceptional people, mainly drunks. This supports previous research by Hussain and Miller (2006), which indicated that there is less Islamophobia in Scotland than in England. These examples also suggested that the participants themselves, through a process of distinguishing, were able to make a distinction between the majority of Scots and the very small racist minority. Through another process of ascription, Islamophobia was ascribed to abnormal people, thus they felt there was no or less Islamophobia in Scotland (except for the example of Sanaz who only generalized less Islamophobia to Edinburgh). Therefore, the generalization process in the third category, based on rare and exceptional experiences, led to the perception that the majority of Scots are respectful or anti-Islamophobic. In contrast, this process in the second category, based upon participants' prior experiences caused by normal Scots and general knowledge of Islamophobia, led to the perception that there can be a *subtle* and *everyday* form of Islamophobia in Scotland.

Another factor in highlighting these processes of distinction and ascription was experiencing supportive attitudes from other Scottish people, which influenced the association of the majority of Scots as respectful or even anti-racism/ anti-Islamophobia. Such views were reinforced when, as in the case of Emran, a Scottish woman supported him against someone with verbal Islamophobic abuse. Receiving supportive behavior from other Scottish people was also evident in the case of Ali (who was presented in the first category), who noted that several students once supported him when an Islamophobic incident happened during his school time. Ali, however, did not have the perception that normal Scots tend to be anti-Islamophobic because he had many experiences of Islamophobia in his father's shop. Thus, the experience of supportive attitudes by

other Scottish people only made a difference when such experiences were not countered by negative ones.

Reflecting on the importance of socio-economic factors that influenced these participants' rare experience of Islamophobia, in contrast to the first category, no specific pattern or factor was identified. Despite the issue of racial or/and religious visibility that is common amongst all participants in this study, each of the participants in this category were from different social and economic background. However, it is important to note that those participants who were living in or near to universities suggested that living in such areas could have affected their rare experiences of Islamophobia. Additionally, the absence of the factors identified in the first category, namely living in a deprived area or being self-employed in a low-level occupation in daily contact with many people, verifies the importance of these factors in one's daily experience of Islamophobia. The importance of these factors and any other possible socio-economic factors will also be examined in the last category.

### **No Experience of Islamophobia**

The last category concerns those participants who had feelings of Islamophobia to a certain extent, while having no actual experience of it. All thirteen participants who had no personal experience of Islamophobia mentioned that they knew that Islamophobia exists and that Muslims can easily be targeted for such incidents. One explanation for such feelings was in relation to their general knowledge and their awareness of experiences of Islamophobia by relatives and/or friends. To illustrate this category, we start with the example of Zahra, a second-generation Muslim woman who has lived in Edinburgh for 5 years. She was from a Pakistani background and was a practicing Muslim who wore a hijab. She was a housewife but she was also active in a few voluntary groups involving Scottish



Muslims and non-Muslims. She stated that despite having no experience of Islamophobia, she is aware of its existence in the society and she wants to make sure that her children and other Muslims do not experience it. Zahra particularly highlights the importance of mixing and integration in the experience of Islamophobia. She highlights that some of her friends and family members have faced Islamophobia due to their different way of life, but she felt that as she is integrated into society and is active in many voluntary groups involving Muslims and non-Muslims, she has not encountered any Islamophobia or any other form of discrimination. To this extent, she perceived her example to be an exception to the majority of Muslims who might be targeted for Islamophobia on the basis of their cultural or religious differences.

The perception of being an exception to other Muslims who may experience Islamophobia was also evident in a few other examples in this category. For example, Khairallah, a second-generation Muslim man who has lived in Aberdeen and Dundee for 7 years, said that he is different from other Muslims. In terms of visibility, he was from an Iraqi (his father was an Iraqi) and a Scottish (his mother was a Scottish white woman) background and he perceived his skin color to be white rather than brown like other Iraqis. In terms of religious visibility, he did not have any specific markers such as a long beard or going to the mosque everyday despite being a practicing Muslim. In terms of socio-economic status, he was a full time student. In parallel to the example of Zahra, Khairallah also perceived himself to be an exception to the majority of Muslims because he looked like a white Scottish person; as a result, he did not experience Islamophobia or any other form of discrimination. Khairallah highlights the importance of racial visibility in the experience of Islamophobia as he implicitly associates the experience of Islamophobia with visible Pakistani or Iraqi Muslims. He felt that as he resembled Scottish white people, he did not experience any incidents.

The next example is Akram, who was a second-generation Muslim woman and was born and brought up in Dundee. In terms of visibility, she was from a Pakistani background and had brown skin color; however, in terms of religious visibility, she did not have any specific marker such as wearing a hijab. In terms of socio-economic status, she was a self-employed advisor. Commenting on her experience of Islamophobia, Akram pointed out that she does not wear a hijab and probably this is why she was not targeted by any Islamophobic incidents. Akram associated religious invisibility and integration with the absence of Islamophobic experience.

Discussing the importance of socio-economic factors in the experience of Islamophobia in this category, the data suggests that these examples (Zahra, Khairallah and Akram) highlighted the importance of racial and religious visibility and segregation in the experience of Islamophobia. The importance of visibility was also highlighted in other categories. However, examples in other categories suggested that socio-economic factors were more significant to the experience of Islamophobia than visibility alone. Pointing to the importance of segregation and separation in the experience of Islamophobia was new in comparison to the issues raised in other categories. The actual socio-economic status of these participants also suggests that they were integrated into the society; they were all second-generation Muslims and linguistically, educationally and socially integrated to Scottish society. The easy association between separation and discrimination, however, is problematized by the second category since all participants in this category were second-generation and integrated to the economic, educational and social aspect of Scottish society; however, they experienced some Islamophobic incidents and had the perception that there is a new form of *subtle* Islamophobia in Scotland. Similarly, there were some well-integrated second-generation Muslims in the first category such

as Ali, Kasim and Kathryn but had many or daily experience of Islamophobia. The association between integration and absence of Islamophobic experience is particularly challenged by the example of Kathryn, Hamid and Sanaz who stated that their assimilatory attempts (such as changing their names and way of clothing) did not stop them from experiencing Islamophobia. This may imply that there should be another factor/ other factors in addition to integration that influenced the absence of Islamophobic experience in the fourth category.

To discuss any possible relationship between experience and perception of Islamophobia in this category, these examples highlight the importance of the perception and feeling of Islamophobia. These participants, based on their perception (general knowledge) of Islamophobia, highlighted different issues (such as racial or religious visibility and integration) that influenced their experience of Islamophobia, even though they themselves did not have these social characteristics. Consequently, they perceived themselves to be exceptions. This may imply the importance of *perceptions* of Islamophobia in shaping attitudes and behaviors as well as experience itself. As illustrated, these participants tended to discount their own (absence of) experiences of Islamophobia from the perception and general knowledge that they had about Islamophobia. In this sense, they differed significantly from other categories. In the first category, for instance, the perception of daily Islamophobia was based on participants' frequent experiences of Islamophobia. In the third category, the perception of Scotland free from Islamophobia or less Islamophobia in Scotland was based on rare and exceptional experiences of Islamophobia. Even though the perception of Islamophobia (the persistence of a *subtle* and *everyday* Islamophobia) in the second category was also influenced by general knowledge of Islamophobia, actual prior experience was essential to the creation of the perception of *everyday* Islamophobia in Scotland. This is not to discredit or

downplay the feelings of those in this category, but to highlight the importance of perceptions in feelings of belonging and inclusion.

### Conclusion

Despite the fact that our participants documented little experiences of Islamophobia in major Scottish cities, the experience of verbal abuse was more prevalent and serious, especially amongst Muslims with lower socio-economic status and/or residing in deprived areas. This can imply the importance of individual and social aspects in the role and impact of Islamophobia. The analysis of those with experience of Islamophobia suggests that Muslims' identity and visibility, especially racial and religious signifiers such as skin color, beard or hijab, were crucial to the experience of Islamophobia. Some social and economic factors were also particularly important in the daily experience of Islamophobia. These factors included living in deprived areas and self-employment in low-level occupations that involve daily contact with many people. In addition to the daily experience of Islamophobia that was more open and influenced by socio-economic factors, there were some experiences and perceptions of *subtle* Islamophobia that referred to more covert prejudice, and were mainly influenced by media and international events revolving around Muslims and Islamophobia.

The findings of this paper also suggest that deprived areas and Muslims' socio-economic status are more important factors than the density of Muslim population per se. Furthermore, less or no experience of Islamophobia in cities such as Dundee and Aberdeen with a smaller Muslim population - the former with 3,875 and the latter with 4,293 people (National Records of Scotland, 2013) as compared to cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow- can challenge the importance of the low density of

Muslim populations in increasing Islamophobia. The final point that needs to be made is that, *perceptions* of Islamophobia are also important in shaping attitudes and behaviors as well as experiences. Perceptions, which can be constructed through media and others' experiences and accounts can overshadow one's own experiences and affect his or her feelings of inclusion or exclusion in the society.

### **Appendix: Summary of 33 Interviewees**

1. Ali: Edinburgh; Male, Second Generation, Scottish Born (Edinburgh), Pakistani Origin, 38 Year-old, Shia, Employed, Interviewed on 27/08/2011
2. Akbar: Edinburgh; Male, First Generation, Kenyan Born, 28 Year-old, Shia, Self-employed, College, Interviewed on 28/08/2011
3. Akram: Dundee; Female, Second Generation, Born in Dundee, Pakistani origin, 43year-old, Self-employed, College, Sunni, Interviewed on 04/12/2011
4. Amir: Dundee; Male, Second Generation, Scottish Born (Dundee), Pakistani origin, 21 Year-old, Sunni, Student, Undergraduate, Interviewed on 10/11/2011
5. Arezo: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, Kenyan Born (Living in Scotland for 30y), 50 Year-old, Sunni, Self-employed, College, Interviewed on 03/08/2011
6. Asghar: Edinburgh; Male, First Generation, Kenyan Born, 56 Year-old, Shia, Self-employed, Interviewed on 29/08/2011
7. Azadeh: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, British Born, Pakistani Origin, 42 Year-old, Sunni, Housewife, Doing Voluntary Activities, British General Certificate of Secondary Education, Interviewed on 20/09/2011
8. Azim: Dundee; Male, Second Generation, English Born (Living in Dundee for 20y), Malawi origin (Africa), 24 Year-old, Sunni, Employed, College, Interviewed on 10/11/2011
9. Batool: Glasgow; Female, Second Generation, Brought up in Glasgow, Iraqi Origin, 28 Year-old, Shia, Employed, Undergraduate, Interviewed

on 09/10/2011

10. Bohlol: Edinburgh; Male, Second Generation, Scottish Born, Pakistani Origin, 20 Year-old, Sunni, Standard Grade, Interviewed on 04/07/2011
11. Emran: Glasgow; Male, First Generation, Kenyan Born, 39 Year-old, Sunni, Self-employed, Diploma on Computing, Interviewed on 14/09/2011
12. Fatima: Glasgow; Female, Second Generation, Brought up in Glasgow, Iraqi Origin, 32 Year-old, Shia, Employed, Master Degree, Interviewed on 09/10/2011
13. Fazel: Glasgow; Male, Second Generation, Lebanon Origin, 23 year-old, Shia, Self-employed, Undergraduate, Interviewed on 11/09/2011
14. Ghader: Glasgow; Male, First Generation, Pakistani born, 63 Year-old, Sunni, Secondary Education, Retired (ex self-employed), Interviewed on 10/09/2011
15. Jafar: Glasgow; Male, Second Generation, Scottish born, Iraqi Origin, 20 Year-old, Shia, Undergraduate Student, Interviewed on 11/09/2011
16. Hakim: Edinburgh; Male, Second Generation, Scottish Born, Pakistani Origin, 20 Year-old, Sunni, Bachelor, Interviewed on 27/07/2011
17. Hamid: Edinburgh; Male, First Generation, Pakistani Born, 28 Year-old, Sunni, Self-employed, Bachelor, Interviewed on 25/07/2011
18. Hassan: Dundee; Male, First Generation, Born in Malawi, Living in Dundee 28y, 37 year-old, Self-employed, Secondary School, Sunni, Interviewed on 10/11/2011
19. Khabir: Aberdeen; Male, Second Generation, Iraqi Origin, Scottish Mother, 23 Year-old, Shia, Student, postgraduate, Interviewed on 12/11/2011
20. Kasim: Edinburgh; Male, Second Generation, Brought up in Scotland, 41 Year-old, Shia, Employed, Interviewed on 02/11/2010
21. Kathryn: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, Birmingham Born, Pakistani Origin, 27 Year-old, Sunni, Standard Grade, Interviewed on 25/07/2011
22. Nader: Glasgow; Male, Second Generation, Scottish born, Pakistani origin, Sunni, 38 Year-old, PhD, Employed, Interviewed on 21/09/2011

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23. Rafiqah: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, British Born, Pakistani Origin, 36 Year-old, Sunni, Housewife, Doing Voluntary Activities, British General Certificate of Secondary Education, Interviewed on 17/09/2011
24. Sadiq: Glasgow; Male, Second Generation, Brought up in Edinburgh, Iraqi Origin, 25 year-old, Shia, Undergraduate Student, Interviewed on 11/09/2011
25. Sajjad: Edinburgh; Male, First Generation, Pakistani Born, 49 Year-old, Sunni, Self-employed, Interviewed on 08/07/2011
26. Sanaz: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, Scottish Born, Pakistani Origin, 41 Year-old, Sunni, Housewife, Doing Voluntary Activities, Interviewed on 10/08/2011
27. Saed: Edinburgh; Male, First Generation, Pakistani Born, 31 Year-old, Shia, Employed, Postgraduate, Interviewed on 21/08/2011
28. Shadi: Aberdeen; Female, First Generation, Kenyan Born, Brought up in UK, Living in Scotland for 4 Years, Marring a white Scottish Muslim), 25 Year-old, Under graduate, Sunni, Interviewed on 23/11/2011
29. Shakila: Glasgow; Female, Second Generation, Scottish Mother and Iranian Father, Scottish Born, 30 year-old, Sunni, Standard Grade, Employed, Interviewed on 26/07/2011
30. Wahed: Edinburgh; Male, Second generation, Scottish born, Pakistani origin, 20 year-old, Sunni, Bachelor, [doing voluntary activities], Interviewed on 27/07/2011
31. Zahra: Edinburgh; Female, Second Generation, British Born, Pakistani Origin, 45 Year-old, Sunni, Housewife, Doing Voluntary Activities, College, Interviewed on 22/09/2011
32. Zainab: Edinburgh, Female, Second Generation, Scottish Born, Pakistani Origin, 44 Year-old, Housewife, Doing Voluntary Activities, Sunni, Interviewed on 08/08/2011
33. Zahir: Glasgow; Male, Second Generation, Scottish born, Pakistani parents, Brought up in Dundee (lived there for 18yrs), 39 Year-old, Sunni, Employed, Undergraduate, Interviewed on 08/10/2011

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