

Geographies of Youth, Volunteering and Religion: Narratives of Young Muslim Volunteers in Birmingham, UK

by
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Abstract

This thesis sits at the interface of three cross-cutting areas of research: youth, volunteering and religion. Geography has made notable contributions to the study of youth in recent years, through a focus on spatialities of the lives of young people. There remains, however, a bias towards research on young people in higher education. Research by geographers on volunteering has been vibrant and diverse, yet understandings of what and who ‘a volunteer’ is remain hazy and problematic. Islam has received considerable attention within geography. The relationship between Islam and the West is continually shifting and geographical research needs to keep up with this everchanging landscape. This thesis examines the narratives of young Muslim volunteers in Birmingham, UK, exploring four research questions: (1) ‘What is the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham?’; (2) ‘What pathways do young Muslims take to become volunteers?’; (3) ‘What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?’; and (4) ‘How does volunteering shape the identities of young Muslims?’. To address these research questions, a mixed methods approach was utilised, comprising of a questionnaire survey of 382 respondents and a series of 45 interviews amongst Muslims between the ages of 18 to 25. The motivations for volunteering amongst the respondents were primarily altruistic, challenging the depiction of youth volunteering as a route to corporate work. Muslim women were more exposed to discrimination within their own communities through cultural and religious expectations, particularly within more religiously ‘conservative’ communities. Women were also more exposed to abuse from outside of their communities through Islamophobia. Volunteering amongst young Muslims provided a sense of belonging, eroded stereotypes and broke down barriers within society. The findings of this thesis provide empirical and conceptual contributions to literature on youth, volunteering and religion. The research expands the literature on young people beyond a focus on higher education, as well as providing analytical purchase to the understanding of ‘vital conjunctures’ in relation to youth transitions. This thesis provides several conceptual contributions to research on volunteering, developing definitions of volunteering to reflect the diversity of formal, informal and embodied micro practices uncovered within this research project. This thesis offers new perspectives on the everyday lives of young Muslims in Britain through their engagement with volunteering.

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Glossary of Terms

Dua: The act of supplication to Allah. It is, simply put, a prayer of request.

Fam: A British slang term meaning 'friend' or 'mate'; derived from the word 'family'.

Fiqh: The Arabic term for 'profound understanding' within the context of Islamic jurisprudence.

Halal: Anything that is permissible within Islamic law

Haram: Anything that is prohibited within Islamic law.

Ibaadah: A collective term for everything which Allah loves and is pleased with from among the words and actions such as supplication, prayer, and patience.

Jannah: An Arabic term, literally translating as 'garden'. It is the Islamic notion of heaven or eternal paradise.

Keynesianism: The economic philosophies of John Maynard Keynes, characterised by high levels of state welfare provision and state run business.

Madhhabs: The Arabic term for 'school of law', used to refer to the denomination of Islam.

Sahih: Describes a hadith that is widely accepted as authentic and accurate in its recording.

Schumpeterianism: A set of socio-economic policies based on the ideas of Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeterian workfare is characterised by lower levels of state provision and an increased focus on innovation led competition.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is pertinent and timely. As terrorist atrocities have become an increasingly pervasive concern within British society, scrutiny upon Muslim communities has intensified (Mandaville, 2009). An attention to how young Muslims 'fit in' and engage within British society has been dissected within politics, media and academic discourse; however, very few of these discussions have got to grips with the realities of the everyday lives of young British Muslims. Gale's (2007) call for a diversification in the study of Islam within geographical research is one that will therefore be addressed within this thesis. An exploration of the relationships between Islamic youth and volunteering offers a potentially unique insight into the interactions of identity, space and scale. The lens of volunteering within this thesis offers a unique perspective into the everyday lives of young Muslims in Birmingham. This introductory chapter will offer a brief rationale for the research, providing a justification for the purpose and relevance of this research.

1.1 - Faith Based Volunteering

This research project explores the interface between three intersecting areas of interest within human geography: youth, volunteering and religion. Whilst each of these themes has gained particular attention within social and cultural geography over recent years, only recently has a small body of research begun to bring these subject areas together. This body of work has focused upon young Christian volunteers, and the impacts of international volunteering upon their negotiations of citizenship and their transitions to religious adulthood (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Hopkins et al., 2015). The notion of transitions, in conjunction with the associated negotiations of identity and religiosity within this body of literature strongly influenced the direction research within this thesis. The research aims of this project (Section 1.6) attempt to delve into the personal and subjective narratives of individual young Muslims, exploring how intersections of faith, youth and volunteering shape their transitions to (religious) adulthood.

A parallel body of literature on faith-based volunteering has explored the ethics of religious volunteering for homeless people in England (Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Cloke, 2012; Williams et al., 2012). The postsecular approach utilised by these authors allows the interaction between religious and non-religious volunteers, who

come together to offer care and welfare to socially excluded people within increasingly secularised urban spaces, to be explored. Cloke et al. (2005) suggest that it is not through the overarching ethos of a specific charitable organisation, but through the everyday practices of staff and volunteers that the genuine expressions of volunteering are revealed. This focus upon the individual volunteer, as opposed to the collective charities, is a central tenet within this this thesis. Whilst the overarching landscape of volunteering within Muslim communities is mapped out within this research project, the focus on narratives of individual Muslims enables an in-depth examination of the practices and experiences young Muslim volunteers.

Research into the impacts of faith-based volunteering upon young people is relatively unsaturated, offering the opportunity for research to develop this field in vibrant and original ways. The predominant focus on Christian volunteers has provided a strong platform for this thesis, allowing comparisons between different religions and cultures to be developed. This thesis offers a different perspective on faith-based volunteering in order to drive this emerging body of work forward in new directions. The following sections outline the importance of the three central themes within this thesis, highlighting the contribution that this project makes to the geographical literature.

1.2 – Geographies of Youth and young people: The importance of youth beyond higher education

In 2003, Valentine lamented a dearth of research within geography concerning youth and particularly those aged 16-25; however, since this call for a focus upon young people, the Geographies of Children, Youth and Families has blossomed, providing a vibrant research culture and wide-reaching research outlook. As this burgeoning area of research began to expand its horizons beyond a specific focus upon children, the necessity of understanding the transitions of young people became increasingly apparent. With a few notable exceptions, however, this focus upon youth has tended to explore young people within higher education. This research project is therefore suitably situated to push the boundaries of the geography's attention on youth beyond the bias towards young people in higher education.

There is a longstanding recognition that young people are at a turbulent and significant period of their lives (Worth, 2009). As young people attempt to navigate a series of transitions towards adulthood, they are continually (re)defining their sense of personal identity, negotiating greater independence and autonomy, and seeking to carve an individual path through life. This dynamic time in their lives is therefore of particular interest within this thesis due to its importance within the shaping of young adults. With questions surrounding the identities of British Muslims within media, politics and academia in the context of contemporary Western society, and with young people often being defined as 'citizens in the making' (Mill, 2013: 120), this thesis is well positioned to shed light on the complex social, cultural and religious dynamics which help define how young Muslims perceive themselves as they grow up in Britain.

The relationship between Islam and charity is strong (Kochuyt, 2009; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003); however, equally central to this interface is youth. Many preliminary discussions with young Muslim volunteers within this research project outline how 'older people have more money and less time, whereas young people have more time and less money'. The resultant uneven landscape of volunteering amongst Muslims of different ages highlights the importance of a specific focus on youth. Overall, this section has briefly underscored the pertinence of exploring the landscape of volunteering amongst *young* Muslims.

1.3 – Geographies of Volunteering: Expanding Definitions of Volunteering

Reflective of research with 'youth geographies' more broadly, the body of research which has engaged with youth volunteering has largely concentrated on student volunteers and international volunteering. Outside of these specific foci, there remains a paucity of research into other, less structured experiences of young volunteers. By moving away from a focus upon higher education, this thesis will to engage with the motivations and experiences of Muslim youth volunteering in (and beyond) their local communities, without a disposition towards issues of employability and corporate agenda that have been prevalent within much of the existing discussion.

Alongside the body of literature on student volunteers, much of the research into volunteering from a geographical perspective focuses upon older people,

examining in particular the benefits that volunteering can have upon the social and mental wellbeing of elderly volunteers (Hogg, 2016; Hardill and Baines, 2009). These concentrations upon older volunteers and student volunteers are perhaps reflective of popular Western imaginations of 'what a volunteer looks like'. It is potentially noteworthy to highlight that the images from a google search on 'volunteers' reproduces these Western depictions. Most of the pictures show older, white, often female volunteers, or younger, also white, international volunteers. Of the few Muslims shown within these images, the majority were passive recipients of volunteering, rather than the actively engaged young Muslim volunteers that this thesis centres around. This thesis showcases the existing diversity of volunteering which has been largely ignored within social, political and academic discourse.

This thesis contributes to gaps in volunteering research by examining Islamic faith-based volunteering within a UK context, providing an opportunity to examine academic debates on faith, citizenship and identity.

1.4 – Geographies of Religion: A renewed focus on Islam in Britain

Since Kong's (2001) "'new' Geographies of Religion", there has been an emergent area of research on the 'everyday' within geographies of religion; nevertheless, this research agenda remains relatively suppressed within the discipline compared with geography's focus upon the 'officially sacred' (Kong, 2010; 2005). However, given the importance that religion plays in the everyday voluntary practices and performances of individuals (Dwyer, 2016; 2015; Ammerman, 2007; Smith and Denton, 2005), this thesis will explore the interaction between religion and the everyday volunteering practices of young British Muslims, examining the extent to which this interface impacts upon negotiations of identity.

Conceptualisations of the 'model' British citizen are deeply entrenched within a Christian ideology (Meer and Modood, 2014). These ideas are becoming increasingly contested by the processes of social syncretism and cultural hybridisation that have accompanied a progressively multicultural society in Britain (Phillips, 2015; Dwyer, 1999a; Joppke, 1999). However, these developments of cohesion have been undermined in recent years through the perceived mutual exclusivity between Islam and British culture, stemming from the Salman Rushdie affair in the late 1980s (Dwyer, 1999b; Poynting and Mason, 2007) and the rise of

Islamic terrorism at the turn of the century (Mandaville, 2009). Resultantly, the position of British Muslims has become increasingly precarious. Young British Muslims are therefore continually negotiating their own identities in relation to conflicting notions of faith, culture and society. By examining the practices and experiences of young Muslim volunteers, this thesis can offer potential insights into wider debates on identity construction, citizenship and religion.

Whilst academia has perhaps tended to fetishize the impacts of extremist and fundamentalist religion due to its high profile within western politics and mainstream media (Mandaville, 2009), this thesis will remain cautious of overindulging in this aspect of religion in society. To completely neglect the role that extremism has upon perceptions of Islam would, however, be naïve. An awareness of how Islam is recognised and represented within society will be imperative for understanding the complex lives of young British Muslims. Consequently, this thesis will help to ‘consolidate the contributions’ that geography has added to current interdisciplinary discussions on Islam and society (Gale, 2007: 1035; 2013).

1.5 – Key Intersections and Contributions to Knowledge

Definitions of volunteering are problematic (Jones and Heley, 2013). Academic definitions are rooted within formal traditional Western depictions of volunteering. This thesis not only redresses the balance of formal and informal volunteering, but also expands definitions of what volunteering actually is. This thesis introduces the concept of ‘embodied micro-volunteering’ in order to make sense of the myriad of small-scale, embodied actions of the volunteers within this research project and develop understandings of faith-based volunteering within the context of Islam.

This thesis also contributes to academic understandings of the intersections between religion and volunteering, offering the concept of a ‘religious CV’ in order to encapsulate the resonances between accumulating ‘religious capital’ and ‘corporate capital’ through volunteering. The notion of accruing ‘religious capital’ through positive actions has been utilised within research on Christian volunteering (Park and Smith, 2000; Caputo, 2009). This thesis develops the idea of ‘religious capital’ further, introducing the concept of a ‘religious CV’ as a

framework for interpreting the range religious motivations which shape the participatory practices of many young Muslims.

Additionally, this thesis provides insights into the informal and unofficial intersections of youth, volunteering and citizenship. Although the notion of youth citizenship has become increasingly synonymous with volunteering in recent years, particularly with regards to the government's latest iteration of the idealised youth citizen (Baillie Smith et al., 2016; Mills and Waite, 2017; Jupp, 2008), for the young Muslims in this research project, the relationship between volunteering and citizenship is far less distinct.

1.6 – Aims and Objectives

Aim:

The aim of this thesis is to examine youth volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham¹ through the following research questions:

Research Questions:

RQ1. What is the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham?

RQ2. What pathways do young Muslims take to become volunteers?

RQ3. What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?

RQ4. How does volunteering shape the identities of young Muslims?

The first of these research questions is designed to map the overarching landscape of the volunteering practices of young Muslims in Birmingham, drawing primarily upon quantitative data from a questionnaire survey in order to understand the scale and dynamics of volunteering in Muslim communities. Differences in facets of gender, ethnicity, class, religious denomination, marital status and age will all be drawn upon to interrogate this research question. These data will then provide a grounded backdrop for the more individualised and experiential stories

¹ The rationale for using Birmingham as a case study site is touched upon within section 3 of this chapter, and fully discussed within the methodology chapter (4).

to be examined in qualitative research to address the subsequent research questions.

The second research question seeks to examine the pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers. Whilst some research on faith-based volunteering has tended to presume the motivations of the volunteers are purely religious, this question will attempt to challenge this assumption by drawing out a range of factors that have encouraged young Muslims to engage with volunteering in their communities. The third research question will examine the experiences of the volunteers, analysing how their expectations of volunteering compared to the everyday realities. The experiences of the Muslim volunteers will be teased out in order to reveal the lived realities of volunteering. The final research question examines the role that volunteering can play in the way young people shape their own identities: through the people with whom they interact, the priorities they enact, and the social, cultural, religious and moral decisions they take.

1.7 – Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of nine chapters:

Chapter 1: This introductory chapter outlines the rationale for this thesis, highlighting the importance that this research can have in expanding the discussion on young Muslims in Britain through the lens of volunteering. The background of this study is also described within this chapter.

Chapter 2: A comprehensive literature review will follow on from this introductory chapter, contextualising this thesis within contemporary geographical discussions. The literature review examines the topics of ‘youth’, ‘volunteering’ and ‘religion’, before drawing together these themes in relation to the aims of this thesis.

Chapter 3: This chapter outlines a detailed methodology for this research project. A rationale for the choice of Birmingham as a case study site is discussed, before processes of data collection are outlined from the preparation and planning stages through to the data analysis. This chapter also offers a critical reflection upon the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher.

Chapter 4: The first of the empirical chapters presents data to address the first research question, examining the landscape of youth volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham. This chapter provides the majority of the quantitative data analysis, highlighting trends and significant differences within the broader landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims.

Chapter 5: This chapter relates to the second research question, examining the pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers.

Chapter 6: Sequentially, this chapter explores the third research question, presenting the experiences of young Muslim volunteers.

Chapter 7: The final empirical chapter within this thesis focuses on the identities of young Muslims, highlighting how volunteering shapes their transitions towards adulthood, as well as impacting upon their feelings of Britishness and comfort within British society.

Chapter 8: This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the contributions to knowledge of this thesis and situates them in relation to current social, political and academic debates.

Chapter 9: The final chapter of this thesis draws the research to conclusion, offering a summary of the key findings and potential avenues for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter evaluates literature within three core sections: youth (2.1), volunteering (2.2) and religion (2.3). These bodies of literature are far from distinct. They have many overlaps and cross-cutting themes which are pertinent within this research project; however, the separation of each of these sections within this chapter allows a more coherent and focused structure.

2.1 – Youth

Disentangling the diverse conceptualisations of youth is often problematic with the recent burgeoning literature that has evolved within (and between) a range of disciplines, each with their own distinctive epistemological frameworks (Wood, 2017; Ansell, 2016; Wyn, 2011; Maira and Soep, 2004). However, extracting the key theoretical threads is invaluable in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how youth has been studied (Cohen and Ainley, 2000). Sociology, anthropology, geography, psychology, biology, as well as politics and media have all grappled with the definitions of youth and the role young people play in society (Ansell, 2016; Rudd, 1997; Furstenberg, 2000).

Youth is a core theme within this thesis and as such it is necessary to discuss what is meant by the term. This review of the literature on youth will therefore begin by critically examining a range of definitions of the term ‘youth’ that have emerged within a variety of spheres (section 2.1.1). The development of academic discourse within youth studies will then be discussed (section 2.1.2), before geography’s contribution to the study of youth is assessed (section 2.1.3). Whilst an awareness of the interdisciplinary contributions to the research landscape will remain present within the subsequent discussions of this literature review, a geographical lens will be applied in order to focus the analysis of academic literature. Once the key contributions of geographers have been examined, the intersecting notions of identity and citizenship will be investigated (section 2.1.4), followed by an exploration of the literature on youth transitions and youth culture studies (section 2.1.5). Finally, youth will be contextualised in relation to this thesis as a whole. This section will outline the contributions that this research project will make to the literature on youth and highlight the lacunae of youth geographies that will aim to be filled by this research (section 2.1.6).

2.1.1 – Definitions

Definitions of youth are complex and fluid, smoothing the blurred boundaries between childhood and adulthood. In order to fully comprehend the notion of youth, it is therefore imperative to understand how the relationship between childhood and adulthood have been conceptualised within society. This section will begin by addressing historical understandings of the perceived 'child – adult dichotomy', before specifically exploring how youth has been defined within social, political and academic spheres.

Historical understandings of childhood have varied significantly, constantly shifting in accordance with the social and political milieu of a spatially and temporally specific environment. Ariès (1962, cited Skelton and Valentine, 1998) observes how young people were viewed as fundamentally the same as adults during the Middle Ages, reflective of their role within individual households and wider society. Children and young people were expected to contribute to the collective identity of their families from the moment they were able, reflecting their status as fundamentally the same as adults. An erosion of this notion of children as 'miniature adults' began to occur during the Enlightenment of the 18th century, particularly through the writings of the philosopher Rousseau (Gagen, 2004). The removal of children from adult spaces and the increase of controlled environments for children, largely through the emergence of formal schooling, began to cement societal understandings of childhood as distinct from adulthood (Prout and James, 1997). This notion of childhood as a discrete phase of the lifecourse can be seen as a distinctly class oriented conceptualisation, as initially only the upper classes whose children could afford not to work or contribute to the household were viewed as different from adults (Skelton and Valentine, 1998). The notion of youth emerged as a bridge in the lifecourse between childhood and adulthood (ibid).

From an academic perspective, Jenks (1996) recognizes two juxtaposing and essentialist notions of childhood that arose within the historical and cross-cultural literature. First, Dionysian understandings of childhood emerged from the 'puritanist' assumptions of children as 'little devils', inherently evil and in need of discipline in order to save them. Second, the later emergence of Apollonian understandings of childhood contrasted with the Dionysian, as children were seen

as inherently good and requiring of adults' protection and nurture in order to uphold these angelic qualities amidst the corruption of the world (James et al, 1998; Murphy, 2007). These two conflicting notions of childhood have underpinned much of the social, cultural and political representations of childhood, and how young people are positioned within society (Murphy, 2007). Sennet (1993), builds upon the theorisations of Ariès (1962), suggesting that the notion of childhood is therefore a purely modern phenomenon used to distinguish young people from adults. However, society's understandings of children have not merely emerged through modern intellectualisation, but have also evolved temporally within their dynamic socio-spatial backdrops and a cognisance of the fluidity and dynamism of historical understandings of childhood is therefore imperative (James et al., 1998).

The inconsistency of how childhood has been imagined within different spheres at different times makes defining youth understandably problematic. Valentine (2003) reveals a generic, commonly cited definition of youth within academia as people aged 16-25 years old. However, this explicitly modern and western-centric definition is regarded as crude and simplistic, not factoring the heterogeneity and fluidity of youth within different spatial and temporal contexts (ibid). This definition, though perhaps relevant as a rough approximation of those who might be categorised as youth, is nonetheless conceptually inapt as it does not engage with any aspects of youth beyond age. Valentine (2003) consequently suggests that youth cannot be comprehensively understood as a distinct liminal time period, but instead as part of a processual evolution of identity influenced by specific socio-spatial practices and infrastructures.

Policy within the UK does use fixed age boundaries as determinants for culpability of social responsibility. However, these parameters are not universal: the age of criminal responsibility is 10 (apart from Scotland where it is 12) (Criminal Justice and Licencing Act, 2010); the age of sexual consent is 16, whilst to be married without parental consent the legal age is 18 (UNSD, 2014); and though you can work full-time from the age of 16 (Citizens Advice, 2014), it is not possible to vote or stand for candidacy until aged 18 (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2014). Legal definitions of childhood are often therefore understandably seen as contradictory, confused and lacking a clear direction (Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Weller, 2006).

The Oxford English Dictionary (2017) defines youth in an equally vague and fuzzy way: (1) the period between childhood and adult age; (2) the qualities of vigour, freshness, immaturity, etc. associated with being young; (3) treated as singular, or plural young people; (4) a young man. These four definitions each undeniably represent ways in which youth is portrayed within society to some degree; however, they fail to delve into the heterogeneity and fluidity of the term. These definitions reflect the socially entrenched connotations in which conceptualisations of youth are immersed. The fourth definition, for example, shows an overtly gendered depiction of youth. This gender bias within the dictionary definition reveals how notions of social difference in society can impact upon ideas of youth. Although the second definition of this set does attempt to engage with more than the superficial components of youth that the other tautological definitions are limited to, it is nonetheless impractical for academic purposes.

A more workable definition that has emerged from a sociological and psychological perspective is of youth as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Evans, 2008; Worth, 2009). This approach dates back to the seminal works of Erikson (1950), whose Freudian narrative of youth as a period of linear, cumulative progression through a series of stages within a culturally specific lifecourse has resonated widely within youth studies (Worth, 2009). However, there have been many significant critiques of Erikson's work, most notably perhaps his reductive simplification of the complex heterogeneity of youth transitions to a series of discrete phases (Ibid). In light of this criticism, Valentine (2003) highlights a shift of emphasis towards performative identity, whereby themes of independence, competence, responsibility and maturity all play a role in shaping society's understanding of what constitutes youth. The assumption that young people are deficient of these competencies, whilst adults are conversely perceived as 'complete', reveals a binary division between young people and adults. If youth is seen as 'not yet adult' within transition theory, then a pejorative connotation can eclipse its conceptual usefulness, as well as neglecting the agency that youth displays (Jeffrey, 2010). A recent effort has therefore been made to retreat from the use of language that promotes adulthood as a fixed, ultimate stage for human development within discussions of youth transitions, and instead focus on the youth strategies and adultist barriers and impetuses that are

negotiated within young people's continually evolving sense of self during their unique life transitions (see Wood, 2017; Jeffrey, 2012; Valentine, 2000; Brannen and Nilsen, 2002; Bynner, 2005; Evans, 2008; Worth, 2009). The concept of youth transitions, and its critiques, is explored further within section 2.1.3.

Similar to the notion of transitions, the concept of youth citizenship has often been employed to try to make sense of the everyday lives of young people. Whilst Thomson et al. (2004: 218) state that "traditionally adulthood and citizenship have been synonymous", the notion of young people as 'citizens in the making' has been an influential framework for understanding the position of young people within society. Mills (2013) describes how young people have often been viewed as 'outside of citizenship' and the resultant rights and privileges that citizenship presupposes. The concept of 'youth citizenship' can therefore be seen to (re)capture the rights and responsibilities of citizenship for young people. The concept of youth citizenship is examined more comprehensively within section 2.1.5.

Wood (2017) brings together notions of youth transitions and youth citizenship in order to destabilise the linear and normative conceptualisations of youth within both transitions and citizenship frameworks. Instead of defining youth as a smooth and narrow pathway towards a single, idealised adulthood, Wood (2017; See also Ingold, 2007) highlights how notions of 'genealogy', 'wayfaring' and 'thread' can more accurately define the fluid and messy nature of youth. Transitions and citizenship frameworks tend to categorise youth in terms of stages and steps, whilst ignoring the processes in between these distinct phases. Wood (2017:8) describes how "a genealogical understanding of time requires a much closer engagement with historical and contemporary factors which young people encounter during the life course". The metaphor of 'wayfaring' depicts the meandering and disjointed pathways that young people take in life. 'Wayfaring' therefore allows youth to be understood without a specific 'destination' in mind, instead highlighting the 'ordinariness and everydayness' of change within the lives of young people. Ingold (2007) and Wood (2017) utilise the idea of 'wayfaring' and 'threads' to describe how the pathways of young people are often entangled and interwoven with others, whilst recognising the importance of spatial and temporal changes upon the relational interactions of young people.

These attempts to define the term 'youth' have been numerous, divergent and successful to varying degrees; however, they each serve to highlight the capricious nature of the term 'youth'. A unifying definition of youth is neither possible, nor relevant when considering the fluidity and plurality of youth. Its continually evolving meaning is socially, spatially and temporally specific, thus nullifying any static overarching definition (Jeffrey, 2010; Collins et al., 2013). A more nuanced, malleable conceptualisation of youth is therefore required to parallel the dynamism of youth itself (Wood, 2017). A more extensive examination of the study of youth will therefore be critically analysed within the subsequent sections (2.1.2; 2.1.3; 2.1.4 and 2.1.5).

To gain a broad-ranging understanding of youth, it is also imperative to remain cognisant of the intersectionality of youth with other dimensions of social difference (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). Gender, sexuality, race, class and (dis)ability all tangibly influence representations of young people within society, shaping and (re)producing identity constructions (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017; France and Roberts, 2017; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Valentine, 2003). This multidimensional study of youth allows discussion to advance beyond depictions of youth in isolation from external social influences.

2.1.2 – From Biological Phenomenon, to Social Construction, to Bio-Social Beings

As alluded to in the aforementioned definitions, traditional understandings of youth have often centred on a person's corporeal development across a linear timescale (Prout, 2005). This essentialist notion derives from the tangible, physical differences that distinguish young people from adults. Young people have also therefore been assumed to be less developed socially, emotionally and intellectually (Holloway and Valentine, 2003).

Age has often been used, and continues to be used, in the categorisation of human beings into particular groupings. Classifying young people has been seen as a necessity, particularly within political spheres; however, the reliance upon age as the gauge for human development can be seen to be tenuous and simplistic (Valentine, 2003). Although a correlation between age and maturity can inevitably be drawn, a deeper analysis of the development of young people has shown a much more complex relationship than the one-dimensional connection that has

presided over the majority of representations of youth, especially within a global north context. Wyn and White (1997:10) reveal how this supposition that age can entail a deeper social meaning regarding an individual's identity is flawed:

“Age is a concept which is assumed to refer to a biological reality. However, the meaning and experience of age, and of the process of ageing, is subject to historical and cultural processes”

However, this crude, archaic ‘truism’ that childhood can be defined purely in terms of age is perhaps undermined by recent theoretical inroads into the complex nexus of social facets that contribute to current understandings of youth. Understanding the differential rates that young people are seen to mature and develop physically, cognitively and socially, in conjunction with entrenched historical and cultural specificities, exposes the issues that can result from using a linear understanding of youth. Solberg (1990) therefore suggests that notions of performativity can be more useful than age in understanding the ‘boundaries’ of youth.

The emergence of the New Social Studies of Childhood during the late 1980s pioneered a shift away from biological definitions of childhood. This new paradigm within youth studies conceptualised youth in two intersecting notions: youth as a social construct and young people as active agents within society. This rapid revolution in the way youth has been understood within academia arose from the realisation that society's understanding of youth has varied over time in relation to the social, cultural and political structures which govern the representations of youth. This relatively recent recognition has become the hegemonic framework for the study of youth across a range of disciplines, and has stimulated the cross-fertilisation of ideas within this nexus of research areas (Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

Another consequence of conceptualising youth as a social construction and as agentic individuals has been a blurring of the boundaries between the child-adult binary (Sibley, 1995). The dichotomous images of youth and adulthood have been eroded by the breakdown of notions of the ‘traditional’ lifecourse. However, the severe crimes of Sibley stress the importance of boundaries in the protection of children and young people in society (Willis et al., 2015).

In recent years, more research has begun to conceptualise young people as 'biosocial' (Ryan, 2012; Kraftl, 2013; Lee and Motzkau, 2011) or 'biopolitical' (Kraftl, 2015) beings. In this way, young people are understood in relation to an amalgamation of their biological, social and political contexts. This hybrid understanding of young people reconciles, to a certain extent, the debate between social constructivist approaches against the physiological and psychological understandings of childhood. Kraftl (2013) expresses the need to go beyond these biosocial dualisms, developing what he terms 'more-than-social' understandings of young people's emotions and experiences. Whilst this terminology of young people as 'biosocial beings' is rare within studies of youth, the notions of hybridity and plurality are increasingly central to conceptualising youth.

2.1.3 – Geography's Contribution to Youth Studies

Geography has made a significant contribution to the study of youth over recent decades. Whilst geographical research continues to utilise and develop progressions from a multidisciplinary backdrop, the contributions that geographers have made within this research landscape have been notable and influential. The epistemological pluralism and broad interdisciplinary scope of human geography has provided an expansive foundation from which the study of youth and young people has flourished (Matthews, 2003; Horton and Kraftl, 2006). Valentine (2003: 39) emphasises the deeply geographical nature of research within geographies of children and youth, stating:

“Implicit in this too is the need to recognise that children's geographies are not just woven into the temporal fabric of our lives but are also bound up with much wider geographies and structures.”

Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011) note how geography's contribution to the study of young people has been multi-stranded, diverse and divergent, gaining inspiration from a multitude of intellectual sources, and this is revealed in the increasing number of books on children and young people's geographies (For example, Aitken, 2001; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Holloway and Valentine 2000; Katz 2004; Kraftl et al., 2012) and the expansion of the academic journal *Children's Geographies* since its creation in 2003 (Evans 2008).

A distinction must be made here between 'children's geographies' and 'geographies of young people'. Valentine (2008) highlights that, although these two strands of research are often seen as synonymous, and though it is also true to say they have cross-fertilised one another via the diffusion of theory through their porous boundaries, they are nonetheless discrete research areas with different foci and fundamentally distinctive theoretical epistemologies. The primary developments within children's geographies have emerged from James et al. (1998) and Holloway and Valentine's (2000) notion that young people are socially constructed. Geographies of youth on the other hand, focuses much more attention to the concept of youth transitions, cultures and identities, in conjunction with the recognition of structure and agency (Cieslik and Pollock, 2002; Furlong et al., 2011; 2007; Worth, 2009).

Holloway (2014: 377) argues that "a well-informed appreciation of sub-disciplinary history provides a strong vantage point from which to engage with new ways of thinking" about children, youth and families. Valentine (2008) traces Geography's attention to the study of children and youth back to the disparate works of Blaut and Stea (1971), Bunge (1973) and Hart (1978), observing, however, that it was not until the late 1990s did this area of study mature into an autonomous sub-discipline. Bunge's (1973) commitment to give 'othered' young people a voice within the adultist society forms the philosophical foundation of geography's involvement within youth studies. The proliferation of children's geographies since then has expanded the research landscape, focusing on the importance of spatiality in order to understand youth identity and culture (Evans, 2008; Kraftl et al., 2012). This interest in people and place has ensured that geographies of children and youth remains grounded in the everyday realities that are continually negotiated by young people, and therefore becomes increasingly relevant to designing policy due to the social, political and cultural meanings that different spaces can have inscribed upon them (Hopkins, 2006). Another significant contribution that geography has made to the research of young people is the awareness of the importance of scalar processes (Katz, 2004; Katz and Skelton, 1998).

Geography's engagement with spatial aspects of youth is unsurprising given the importance of everyday spaces, places and adultist environments. These sites of

negotiation are seen as the 'contact zones' between youth and adults (Askins and Pain, 2011) in which the messiness of interaction (re)produces notions of identity and individuality (Law, 2004). Research on spaces of the home (McNamee, 1998; Christensen et al., 2000); the school (Blackman, 1998; Fielding, 2000; Holt, 2004; 2010;); the workplace (Bowlby et al., 1998; McDowell, 2002; McMorran, 2012); the street (Watt and Stenson, 1998; Skelton; 2000; Lucas, 1998; Young and Barrett, 2001; Karsten and Van Vliet, 2006; Matthews et al., 2000); and the club (Malbon, 1998; Richard and Kruger, 1998) have all been studied by geographers in order to tease out the complex nexus of spatially specific negotiations that are seen to (re)produce the identities of young people. These sites are messy spaces of acceptance, socialisation, negotiation, resistance and conflict, governed by the agency and heterogeneity of young people situated within the confines of adultist structures (Law, 2004).

Through the realisation of the importance of place, geographers have pioneered research away from a purely western centric focus, expanding the research field to include youth in the global South (Jeffrey, 2012). Issues which had otherwise been neglected within youth studies have been brought to the forefront of the agenda: issues of AIDS and HIV (Ansell and Van Blerk, 2004; Van Blerk and Ansell, 2007; Ansell et al., 2012); youth (un)employment (Gough and Langevang, 2013); and youth livelihood strategies (Rigg, 2007; Porter et al., 2007). This expansion of the research landscape by geographers has broadened the perspectives of youth studies more generally, contributing to the wider academic debate.

The importance of scale within understandings of youth has also been a major contribution of geography (Skelton and Valentine, 2005; Massey, 1998). Youth are often viewed at the forefront of globalisation through their inextricable link to communications and technologies, through aspects of social media, international migration and travel, and exposure to global (primarily Western) culture (Massey, 1998). Katz (2001; 2004) highlights how the everyday facets of globalisation have influenced the production and consumption of culture across increasingly porous national boundaries. She notes how western ideologies have impacted upon the livelihoods of young people in the global South. A focus on educational programmes established by western NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) has detracted from the traditional local land-uses towards integration into the

global capitalist economy, transforming the identities of Sudanese youth. This transformation from the individual to the global scale exemplifies youth's position at the vanguard of globalisation's power to (re)construct culture and identity. Massey (1998) uses the notion of 'culture hybridisation' to highlight how the transfer of culture across time and space can be facilitated through the agency of young people. The resultant glocal culture is constantly evolving in relation to the complex myriad of multi-scalar social and cultural processes (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). Deforges (2000) examines how the physical travel of young people has paradoxically simultaneously eroded nationalistic identities and lubricated the imagination of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, whilst reproducing ideas of Otherness. The diffusion of culture through travel has been seen to undermine social differences; however, the predominantly white, middle class travel undertaken by young people also tends to 'fix' the Other as a consumable entity.

The majority of scholarship on geographies of children and youth has, in the past, focused upon young people between the ages of 7-14 and has consequentially neglected adolescents between ages 16-25 (Valentine, 2003). In 2007, Hopkins and Pain discussed how geography tended to fetishize those on the social periphery (in this case the young, and to a lesser extent the old), thus leading to a paucity of research on youth and adolescents. Their plea for a more relational geography of age combats this bias of research foci and (re)engages with the dynamic and complex negotiations between people of different ages and within different socio-cultural settings. This lacuna within the study of youth has been remedied somewhat by the recent academic attention to the conceptualisation of youth as a transition towards adulthood: education to employment; childhood to parenthood; dependence to independence (Evans, 2008; Worth, 2009). A decade on, a distinct body of research has emerged on youth within geography. A focus on students and young people within higher education has formed the bulk of geography's engagement with youth. Holton (2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2017a; 2017b) and Riley (Holton and Riley, 2013; 2014; 2016) have explored the experiences and identities of university students in the UK, examining their performances, practices and experiences. The work of Smith (2008; 2009) and Hubbard (2008; 2009; Smith and Hubbard, 2014; Sage et al., 2012) have studied the role of

students in the restructuring of housing and services within university town and cities. Research into student mobility and migration (Prazares and Findlay, 2017; King and Raghuram, 2013; Deakin, 2014); student volunteering (Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014; Brewis, 2014); and student employability (Reid, 2016; Andrewartha and Harvey, 2017; Brown, 2007), have all contributed to this burgeoning body of literature.

Beyond this focus on students and higher education, there have been intermittent contributions to youth studies from within geography. Although transition theory will be outlined from an interdisciplinary perspective in the following sections (2.1.5), the concept of youth as a 'transition', or 'series of transitions' will be examined here from a geographical stance. Simply put, this concept understands youth as a period of transitions within the lifecourse: childhood to adulthood; dependence to independence; school to work; and passive recipients to active contributors to society.

Beck's (1992) theory of individualisation responds to an assumption of young people as passive recipients of social capital, positing that changes in the labour market towards modernity has liberated young people to negotiate their own unique identities, based not upon social and institutional barriers, but on their own unique characteristics and affinities. Beck highlights the erosion of traditional agencies such as school, the church and nuclear families, and a destructuring of young people's transitions as a form of social emancipation. Evans and Furlong (1997) highlight how individualisation has transformed the discussion from youth predetermined 'trajectories' to concepts of active 'navigation'. The notion of 'trajectory' tends to neglect the dynamism of youth transitions, and implies a smoother, more fixed process of transition (Rudd, 1997). Therefore, the adoption of the term 'navigation' as a metaphor for the narrative of young peoples' transitions most appropriately emphasises the continual negotiation between structure and agency that are embedded within the everyday subjective decision making of young people, whether consciously or otherwise (ibid). The reality of youth transition is much messier; a myriad of social, political and economic structures inevitably necessitates a heterogeneous envisioning of transition outcomes. The complexity of factors influencing a young person's autonomous identity occurs at the interface between structure and agency, where the process

of individualisation is negotiated. Although Beck's (1992) theory has since gained much gravity within the social sciences, Tolonen (2008) argues that it dismisses the role of existing social and cultural structures upon young people's transitions to adulthood.

Valentine and Skelton (2003; 2007), in their study of the transitions of young gay and lesbian individuals, critique Beck's (2002) theory of individualisation, maintaining that the idea of youth as a series of transitions cannot be understood independently from the intersecting social aspects of youth: issues of race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, as well spatial and temporal proximity all contribute to the life choices made within the transitions of young people (Valentine, 2003; Evans, 2008). Arguably every transition is influenced on some level by social constructions that dictate the plural paths that young people embark upon to becoming an adult (Jones and Wallace, 1992). This holistic understanding does not ignore the importance of young people as autonomous, active agents within society, instead it suggests that the individualised decision making of young people (and indeed adults as well) cannot occur in isolation from the surrounding social structures (Raffo and Reeves, 2000).

Evans (2008) and Skelton (2002) also highlight that, whilst the theory of individualisation has contributed significantly to understandings of the complexity and heterogeneity of youth transitions, it can nevertheless place an emphasis of culpability on individuals for failing to achieve socially expected transitions. A balance then must be taken between young people as individual active agents, able to carve out their own unique identities within their specific socio-spatial environment, against the extent to which the adultist societal backdrop can restrict and (re)form the ability of young people to negotiate an original sense of self.

Perhaps the most obvious and widely discussed example of institutionalised socialisation is the school to work transition, where young people are taught the social expectations of them within an adult controlled environment (Aitken, 2001; Rudd, 1997; Fielding, 2000; Raffo and Reeves, 2000). Whether young people fulfil these expectations or rebel away from them, the omnipresent social infrastructure will inevitably impact youth transitions to a certain degree (Skelton, 2002).

Another potential shortcoming of the conceptualisation of youth as a transition, however, is that it has often tended to idealise adulthood as a fixed, finished entity (Erikson, 1950; Inhelder and Piaget, 1958 cited Worth, 2009). In reality however, the identities of adults are constantly negotiated within the everyday realities that impact people across all ages (Worth, 2009). The language used by Pollock (2002) to describe the aim of youth transition as ‘the achievement of adulthood’ implies that the identities and physiognomies of adults do not evolve or shift, and that adulthood is somehow more desirable than childhood (Wood, 2017). Worth (2009: 1058) is therefore clear to disassociate her theory from a “binary of youth as becoming and adults as being”, understanding instead the continual evolution of identity throughout the entirety of the lifecourse (see also Uprichard, 2008). It can therefore be seen how Worth’s (2009) conceptualisation has developed from Allport’s (1955) psychoanalytical insight that youth is not a discrete time period, but a dynamic evolution of self-identification towards adulthood.

Although it could be argued that understanding youth as a series of transitions lends itself neatly with regards to the deviating policy for young people in relation to age (see section 2.1.1), it could, in the same vein, be used as a convenient method of facilitating and justifying the fuzzy and indistinct legislation that has been born out of a correspondingly vague understanding of youth (Weller, 2006). A balance then must be found between understanding the complexity and heterogeneity of young people and youth transitions, against the vagueness and ambiguity that can often creep into discussions of youth (Wood, 2017).

Jeffrey (2010; Johnson-Hanks, 2002) uses the notion of ‘vital conjunctures’ in order to conceptualise the spatially and temporally specific events that impact unevenly upon the lives of young people. The use of the concept of vital conjunctures allows researchers to move beyond the fuzzy notion of ‘context’, providing the basis for our understanding of similarities and differences in the experiences of young people to transverse geographical boundaries. Jeffrey (2010) argues that these crucial events within the lives of young people, within the context of embedded social structures, are significant in shaping their development and transitions. The notion of vital conjunctures therefore provides a useful framework for examining the experiences and identities of young people.

Geography has made many notable theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of children, youth and families (Holloway, 2014); however, within the specific study of youth, geographers' contributions have been largely concentrated upon a limited sphere of research, most notably, students and young people in higher education. This thesis offers an alternative empirical perspective to these student geographies, engaging much more with notions of youth citizenship and youth transitions. As has been highlighted within this section, geographers have made some contributions to these theoretical frameworks; however, they remain highly interdisciplinary fields of research. The following sections (2.1.4 and 2.1.5) therefore explore these interdisciplinary bodies of literature through a geographical lens.

2.1.4 - Youth, Citizenship and Identity

One of the primary issues that has concerned policy and academia from a national scale has been the role that young people play in society (Putnam, 1995; Hall et al., 1998). The contested and entangled notions of citizenship and identity have come to the forefront of the political agenda within the West, catalysed at least in part by the neoliberal (re)structuring of the socio-economic environment (Hart, 2009) and the increased concern over post 9/11 national securitisation (Maira, 2004). These two discrete facets have tangibly amplified the discussion regarding the role of young people and their national identities. The notion of citizenship education has exploded in the past decade, both in formal channels of citizenship education (Jefferies, 2005; Pykett, 2009; Mills and Duckett, 2016) and more informal movements and organisations. Institutional spaces such as schools have long been recognised as arenas in which children and youth receive citizenship education (Collins and Coleman, 2008). However, on top of formal, state-level schooling, Mills (2013) highlights voluntary youth organisations as another key institution over the past century that has mobilised and educated young people to become the 'active citizens' of the future. In the UK, the 'National Citizen Service' has reinvigorated the discussion of nationalism since its proposal in 2010 (Mills and Waite, 2017).

The idea of young people as 'citizens in the making' was established within Marshall's (1950: 25) influential work on citizenship. This concept depicted young

people as malleable, passive individuals who require education and training in order to become fully functioning members of society. This can be seen as a reference to a form of pedagogical, nationalistic socialisation, whereby adultist frameworks are imposed upon young people in order to mould them into the idealised citizen (Mills, 2013). Through the example of the Scouts, Mills (2011) reveals how young people have been socialised into becoming model citizens through a moral education. This process of pedagogical socialisation has been rearticulated in various guises to parallel temporally specific cultural and political constructions of an ideal citizenship. Furthermore, volunteering has become a central tenant of being a 'good' citizen (Mills and Waite, 2017).

A potential pitfall of the recent UK government's rhetoric on youth citizenship is its neglect of both youth agency and heterogeneity. By conceptualising young people as 'citizens in the making', connotations of young people as passive recipients of social and moral education can be inferred, whilst their agency and dynamism tend to be overlooked. The complex individual identities of young people are also often ignored within constructions of the 'perfect' citizen: the implications of race, gender, sexuality and religion are disregarded too readily within discussions of citizenship. As such, the conceptualisation of youth as 'citizens in the making' provides a useful framework to interrogate empirical research into the role of society and government on the identities and transitions of young people.

The aforementioned neoliberal restructuring of society of the 1970s and 1980s has impacted on the role of youth citizenship, shifting away from the rights, entitlements and freedoms associated with a 'British identity', towards a question of what are the duties, responsibilities and obligations of a British citizen (Lawson, 2001). This shift reflects the decline of the welfare state and the rise of the subsequent capitalist workfare society that has emerged (Jessop, 2002). Policy designed to promote 'active citizenship' has been a priority in recent years with the dual aims of creating a sense of social cohesion, collective identity and unity, whilst simultaneously streamlining the third sector economy (Davies et al., 2002).

When discussing notions of citizenship, Kennedy (2007) highlights how the term is spatially and temporally specific, with its definition altering with regards to the unique socio-political climate. Chisholm (1997) argues that there are no timeless

realisations of citizenship due to the fact that constructions of the 'ideal citizen' will inevitably evolve to reflect the cultural and political milieu of the time. This dynamism and fluidity of the term citizenship makes it problematic to define; however, there are overarching themes of nationalism; collective identity; unity and belonging; and selflessness to achieve a common goal (Hall et al., 1999; Yarwood, 2013). These themes, though wrought with positive connotations, can nonetheless exclude and 'other' those who do not conform to a specific set of characteristics. Using citizenship as a tool for social inclusion cannot therefore be assumed to be a given, but must ensure a degree of openness to reduce the potential for social exclusion. Mills (2009) highlights a commonly cited rhetoric levelled at Muslim migrants in Western society concerning their lack of engagement with established institutions and organisations. However, through her investigation of the Scouts, Mills (2009) highlights how young Muslims are not only seen to be integrating into society through their active participation within such institutions, but can also be seen to actively challenge social forms of stereotyping through their own individual and collective agency.

Mills and Waite (2017: 74) provide insights into the latest 'brand' of government sponsored youth citizenship: 'National Citizen Service' (NCS) (see also section 2.1.4). They note how governments attempt to "create, shape and govern citizens of the future through a scalar political imagination" and reveal how 'NCS' has created "uneven geographies of learning to be a citizen" for young people in the UK. These processes of redefining and (re)teaching young people what constitutes a 'model' citizenship have volunteering at their core.

The changing scale of citizenship is acknowledged by Yarwood (2013) in his comprehensive overview of the key discussions regarding citizenship. The erosion of the nation-state and the emergence of supra-national identity have opened the door for a 'global citizenship' (Lister, 2003). Facilitated by the digital economy and the development of accessible communications technologies, notions of global citizenship have become a more spatially fluid concept, paralleling the time-space compression associated with globalisation (Harvey, 1985). Overall, young people are embedded within debates on the role of citizens in society (Mills and Waite, 2017).

2.1.5 - Youth Culture Studies and Youth Transitions

Youth culture studies and youth transitions have both been core research arenas which have driven understandings of youth beyond an in-betweenness, to become a distinct period in the lifecourse that is worthy of academic attention. Both areas of research demonstrate how young people are able to carve out their own niches and pathways within society; however, Furlong et al. (2011: 355) reveal an epistemological split within youth studies that has led to limited dialogue between the two research frameworks:

“There has been a long-standing separation (and on occasion a tension) between ‘cultural’ and ‘transition’ perspectives in youth studies which has had a negative impact on our understanding of experiences of youth.”

This section will therefore initially examine youth culture studies and youth transitions individually, highlighting their contributions to how youth is understood within society. These two bodies of literature will then be brought back together, discussing how a diffusion of ideas between these research areas can reinvigorate the study of youth (Wood, 2017).

The popularity of youth culture studies during the 1980s, particularly within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, derived from a combination of two intertwining conceptual paradigms. The first of these was the realisation that youth agency was important in the production of culture. The second was a recognition that the autonomy of individuals was able to erode and transform historically entrenched cultures, stemming from the works of Boas (1940 cited Maira and Soep, 2004). The cultural turn, and the associated rise of youth culture studies that emerged from the Birmingham School, most notably perhaps the works of Stuart Hall (1986; 1988; 1991), formed the epistemological framework from which youth culture studies could develop. Youth cultures of music (Bennett, 2000; 2002; Laughey, 2006); fashion (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; Brake, 2013); technology (Sefton-Green, 1998; Hull, 2003; Shilling, 2004); and consumption (Maira, 2004; Stratton, 1992) have all been studied, creating a diverse landscape of research.

One of the fundamental conceptualisations that has shaped the way in which young people have been studied within youth culture studies is the notion of young people as active consumers within a capitalist society (Maira, 2004). Since the end of World War II the unprecedented volume of young people with disposable incomes transformed the perception of young people as delinquent, into autonomous individuals with the capacity to consume, (re)shape and transform culture (Maira and Soep, 2004; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). This distinctly modern understanding of youth as active consumers in society has formed the basis of youth culture studies.

An alternative theoretical strand of youth studies that has paralleled, and to a certain extent surpassed the youth culture studies paradigm, was the conceptualisation of youth as a transition (Cuervo and Wyn, 2014). As was highlighted within the definitions of youth (section 2.1.1), transition theory was pioneered by the psychological analysis of Erik Erikson (1950) initially in relation to the nexus of social changes that surround a school-to-work transition.

Since the hegemonic understanding of youth as a social construction proliferated across a range of disciplines, the notion of socialisation arose in a largely uncritical academic environment. The process of socialisation was accepted as a truism, whereby young people were seen as malleable, passive recipients of social preparation through schools, families and institutions in order to mould them into fully functional citizens (Jones and Wallace, 1992; Rudd, 1997). Not until an area of research focusing on the active resistance of young people did the erosion of socialisation theory begin to occur. The unilateral display of power and agency imagined within socialisation theory has retrospectively been perceived as an over-simplification. The influential research of Willis (1977) adopted the case of working class 'lads' to demonstrate the agency of young people in a school-to-work transition. The resistance to authority demonstrated by these young males revealed an attempt to maintain a degree of autonomy throughout the structured 'socialisation' of the schooling process. A comparative empirical investigation by Griffin (1985), though initially seen as a critique of gendered limitations of Willis' research, it actually cemented notions of resistance within the research landscape. Griffin's investigation into the resistive technique of young women in schools revealed a more subtle and complex relationship between authority and resistance.

Griffin argued that, rather than a simplistic 'anti-school culture', as suggested by Willis (1977), a deeper psychological analysis was required to fully comprehend the nuance and subjectivity of decision making by young people. Subsequently, Beck's (1992) theory of individualisation began to emerge as the agency and individualism of young people became increasingly central to understandings of youth transitions. Jones and Wallace (1992) argue that a conflict between structuralism and individualism (or structure and agency) will ultimately determine the paths of youth transition.

Raffo and Reeves (2000) argues that Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' can be utilised in order to resolve the dualism between structure and agency. Habitus is seen to give 'sufficient representation to the dynamic structure in social reality' whilst remaining cognisant of the autonomy of young individuals (Grenfell et al., 1998). The application of Bourdieu's theory offers a compromise between the juxtaposing notions of socialisation and individualisation. Socialisation theory would suggest that those who are surrounded by similar exogenous environments and who have similar social stimuli would negotiate a largely homogenous transition; however, the empirical research of Raffo and Reeves (2000) suggests that a heterogeneity and diversity will regularly manifest within youth transitions, whether via the subjective decision making of an individual or through the constellation of immeasurable stimuli that surmount to a substantially divergent accumulation of social capital.

Despite the apparent separation between youth culture studies and youth transition studies, Furlong (et al., 2011) labels this divergence a 'false binary', and suggests that a greater degree of dialogue is required in order to reconcile these two sub-disciplines (Furlong and Woodman, 2015; Cohen and Ainley, 2000). As was discussed within section 2.1.1, Wood (2017) argues for a holistic approach to youth studies and calls for a reconciliation between youth culture studies and youth transitions. Although a 'middle ground' solution appears to be problematic, a greater diffusion of concepts and discussions is a necessity to fully erode this false binary (Cuervo and Wyn, 2014).

2.1.6 - Youth within this Thesis

This first core section of the literature review outlined the mercurial and shifting conceptualisations of youth stemming from their unique socio-spatial and historical situations. Therefore, whilst this thesis engages extensively with current research, an awareness of how youth has been theorised within different times and spaces provides a useful wider context for this research project.

Although the recent study of children and youth has proliferated rapidly and extensively (Holloway, 2014; Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; 2000b; Jeffreys, 2012; Holland et al., 2007; Evans, 2008), there remains a series of lacunas within the theorisation of young people. Perhaps most noticeable is the heavy focus upon young people in higher education and the proliferation of student geographies. This hesitance to engage with those in their late-teens and early 20s outside of formal education is addressed within this research. Whilst this thesis does not exclusively focus upon young people outside of higher education, it does challenge the exclusivity of 'student oriented' research. Youth identity constructions, transitions and citizenship have also been shown to be of particular significance during this phase of the lifecourse, making young people of specific interest within this thesis. The dearth of research into the role of social difference within citizenship formation is also surprising given the prominence that citizenship has played within social, political and academic spheres. This thesis will attempt to apply a more intersectional lens, by empirically investigating the role that volunteering and religious identity can play within discussions of youth citizenship.

The 'false binary' between youth culture studies and youth transitions will also be acknowledged within this thesis, with theoretical strands being extracted from both sub-disciplines. The conceptualisation of youth as a transition will be engaged with in order to most effectively understand the myriad of processes that influence the continually evolving identities of young people. An understanding of the active agency of youth, and the heterogeneity of young individuals will also be prevalent within this research, whilst the adultist structures and politicised spaces will not be ignored. This thesis will seek to engage critically with a range of conceptualisations of youth, focusing the agenda through a geographical lens.

2.2 - Volunteering

2.2.1 - Introduction

Volunteering is not a new phenomenon. However, the contemporary structures of voluntarism in the UK are specific to the unique political, economic and social facets of modern British society (Hilton and McKay, 2011). Therefore, understanding the spatial (re)organisation of political and economic structures is vital for the contextualisation of volunteering and the third sector economy. Three cross-cutting sections will be discussed within this literature review, focusing on the rise of neoliberal policy and the complimentary emergence of the third sector economy (section 2.2.3); the geographies of voluntarism and volunteering practices (section 2.2.4); and the changing role of citizenship and its relation to ideas of national and global identities (section 2.2.5). These themes will then be brought together in relation to this thesis, tying in ideas of youth and religion (section 2.2.6). Before delving into the literature on volunteering however, the next section will first provide some definitions of the key terms that shape many of the key discussions surrounding volunteering within a UK context (section 2.2.2).

2.2.2 – Definitions of Key Terms

As Jones and Heley (2015: 7) write, “defining volunteering and its associated activities is not an easy task” due to its fluid definitions across numerous (non)academic disciplines and its varied meanings within different socio-spatial contexts. The complexity and variation within different notions of volunteering means that overarching definitions are neither appropriate, nor possible. However this glossary will attempt to provide some flexible definitions and meanings for some key terms that are often used within research on volunteering.

Volunteering: Formal volunteering can be described as an activity which takes place through the auspices of non-profit organisations or projects and is undertaken: to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer; for no financial payment; of the volunteer’s own free will and without coercion; and in designated volunteer positions only (Carson, 1999; Woolvin and Hardill, 2013). This definition has many parallels with a definition from the Scottish Executive Volunteering Strategy (2004), which describes formal volunteering as “the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment and

society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary".

Definitions of informal volunteering commonly incorporate ideas of "helping a friend or a neighbour in a self-managed way" (Woolvin, 2004: 1), and this can be seen in Jones and Heley's (2015) more complex description of informal volunteering as an engagement in "activities without the umbrella of a prescribed organisation, and includes undertakings that benefit family and friends or support a communal structure" (Jones and Heley, 2015: 8). In contrast to formal volunteering, motivations for informal volunteering are often seen to be driven by a sense of obligation rather than choice, and have therefore been excluded from some definitions of volunteering on this basis (Ibid).

In reality, the boundaries between formal and informal volunteering are porous (Smith et al., 2010), with many acts of volunteering slipping between these two seemingly dichotomous notions of formality. We can therefore conceptualise this overlapping of formal and informal volunteering in a similar way to Woolvin and Hardill's (2013) conceptualisation of volunteering as a 'spectrum of participation'.

Voluntary Action: Voluntary action refers to an active and collective process that is employed for the purposes of social advancement, championing causes that have often been unduly neglected (Hilton and Mckay, 2011). Using Beveridge's expansive definition (cited Hilton and Mckay, 2011: 13), voluntary action can be seen to encompass all associational life from 'Sunday league football' to 'political party membership and international lobbying organisations'. Smith et al., (2010: 258) address the more affective and emotional aspects of voluntary action describing it as "a set of situated, emotional and embodied practices through which enlivened geographies of volunteering are constituted."

Voluntarism: A wider context through which to understand volunteering and voluntary action is 'voluntarism'. According to Fyfe and Milligan (2003), voluntarism is increasingly presented in political and academic discourses as a 'panacea' to social and political problems facing liberal democracies, and having a pivotal role in rekindling a sense of civic responsibility and enhancing social cohesion. Voluntarism is defined in the Oxford English dictionary as "the principle of relying on voluntary action (used especially with reference to the involvement of

voluntary organizations in social welfare)” (OED, 2017). Fyfe and Milligan (2003) highlight how voluntarism embraces a wide variety of organizational forms, governance structures and activities. The combination of government and non-government organisations are seen to be able to reach parts of society that others cannot reach. Milligan (2007: 184) writes that “although voluntarism covers a wide breadth of activity that ranges from social, political and cultural to environmental issues, by far the largest sector of activity is that which focuses on health and welfare.” These ideas are linked to the emergence and notion of the ‘voluntary sector’.

Voluntary sector: Kendall and Knapp (1995) described the voluntary sector as resembling ‘a loose baggy monster’ due to its diversity and multifarious nature. The voluntary sector fills the gap of social welfare provision that has been left by the public sector and the private sector, causing it to be referred to as the ‘third sector’. Taylor's (1992: 171) definition of the voluntary sector views it as comprising:

“Self-governing associations of people who have joined together to take action for public benefit. They are not created by statute, or established for financial gain. They are founded on voluntary effort, but may employ paid staff and may have income from statutory sources. Some, by no means all, are charities. They address a wide range of issues through direct service, advocacy, self-help and mutual aid and campaigning.”

The openness of this definition is also reflected in a more recent conceptualisation of the voluntary sector from the Cabinet Office (2011) as a body of organisations whose

“activities are carried out not for profit and which are not public authorities or local authorities. Under the Regulations, they become relevant voluntary organisations if they carry on any activities for the purpose of preventing emergencies, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies, or taking other action in connection with emergencies.”

This definition will incorporate both charities and non-charity status voluntary organisations. From these definitions we can also see that the voluntary sector is almost exclusively formal in its nature.

Shadow State: Geiger and Wolch (1986) pioneered the term 'shadow state' in order to articulate the effects of the increasing importance of the voluntary sector to the operation of the welfare state in both the UK and US during the 1980s. The shadow state refers to "voluntary organisations that have collective service responsibilities that have previously been borne by the public sector, but which are now provided and administered outside of traditional democratic politics. Such organisations are seen to be controlled in both formal and informal ways by the state" (Milligan, 2007: 188).

Charity (as an organisation): For an organisation to be an official charity, it must meet the strict government imposed conditions required for charity registration. Therefore, not all voluntary organisations are charities (Milligan and Fyfe, 2004). Charities are distinctly non-profit organisations that aim to promote welfare within spheres of need.

Charity (as a practice): Charitable giving is the act of giving money, goods or time to the unfortunate, either directly or by means of a charitable trust or other worthy cause. Bryson et al., (2002) argue that charity has always played a key role in the provision of welfare services in Britain.

Philanthropy: The etymology of the term 'philanthropy' comes from a "love of humanity". In essence, it is the developing and enhancing of 'what it means to be human'. Hassan (2014: 1) describes how "philanthropy impacts both benefactors by identifying and exercising their values in giving and volunteering as well as beneficiaries through tangible benefits." A modern, simple definition of philanthropy from American historian Oliver Zunz (2014: 4) is "private initiatives, for public good, focusing on quality of life."

Welfare: Welfare, in this context, refers to the provision of basic social needs for all citizens. It was initially adopted in post-World War II Britain with the aim of reducing five 'evils' highlighted within the 1942 Beveridge Report (Painter, 2002): **want**, through sick pay and pensions; **disease**, through the creation of the NHS

and free health care; **ignorance**, through state education and state funded university tuition; **squalor**, through council housing and homeless shelters; and **idleness**, through job centres, back to work schemes and apprenticeships (Hamnett, 2014).

Workfare: The workfare state emerged in response to the global economic recession and the associated high costs of social welfare provision during the late 1970s (Jessop, 1995). Workfare essentially looks for a net contribution from its citizens, with the provision of social needs now addressing how to maximise the output of the population (Peck, 1998), rather than social welfare. This state restructuring represented a change from the Keynesian theory of economics to that of Schumpeter, who argued that an efficient economy should be ready to cut back in times of depression and, through the process of privatisation, make the economy more internationally competitive in the new neoliberal climate (Jessop, 1995).

Active citizenship: According to Kennedy (2007: 304), despite the high levels of engagement and interest within academia, policy and media, “there is no agreement about the meaning of ‘active citizenship’.” What is agreed upon however is the political driving force behind the notion of active citizenship (Kearns, 1995; Yarwood, 2005; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). ‘Active citizenship’ policies, which began to emerge under the 1980s Thatcher government, encouraged individuals to proactively volunteer in their local communities (Yarwood, 2005). This notion of proactivity is central to ‘active citizenship’, transforming citizenship from a series of entitlements and personal rights, towards an idea of individual and collective duty, responsibility and obligation towards the community (Lawson, 2001; Yarwood, 2005).

Faith-based volunteering: On the surface, a definition of faith-based volunteering seems fairly self-explanatory: it is volunteering that is rooted within a religious context. However, neither the volunteering, nor the religious context is a fixed entity. The messy, subjective intersections between religion, secularism, volunteers and those volunteered upon, creates a complex entanglement of what faith-based volunteering actually comprises (Baillie-Smith et al., 2013). A report from Volunteering England by Boeck et al. (2009: 6) which looked at ‘Volunteering

and Faith Communities' suggested that faith-based volunteers are involved with volunteering in "their place of worship with their faith community only, through their faith group in the wider community and within secular groups". However, the boundaries between these forms of volunteering are blurred, with many forms of faith-based volunteering cross-cutting these three categories as demonstrated in geographical literature on this topic (see section 2.2.4.4).

Each of these definitions sit within wider social, political and economic shifts, as detailed in section 2.2.3.

2.2.3 - The Rise of the Third Sector Economy

The rise of neoliberalism and decline of the welfare state within western society has led to a structural reorganisation of socio-economic policy (Fyfe, 2005). Prominent amongst this social restructuring was state-initiated policy of neo-communitarianism and the emergence of the third sector (Jessop, 2002; Fyfe, 2005).

During the 1970s and 1980s a major economic reorganisation occurred in relation to what became known as 'Raeganism' in the US and 'Thatcherism' in UK (Jessop, 2013). This strategic reformulation emerged in response to a series of temporally specific global events: the collapse of the Soviet Union, rising oil price and the collapse of the post-World War economic boom and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods Agreement; the failure of the Keynesian welfare state and Atlantic Fordism to adapt to fluctuations in the global economy; increasing competition from the South Asian economies; the accelerated role of globalisation and global economic interconnectedness (Jessop, 1993; 1995; 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Painter and Jeffry, 2009). A resultant focus upon unrestricted global markets and the deregulation of economic policy saw a freedom and openness within the globalising capitalist economy. Although this globalising process has been regarded as a totalising and homogenising force, the impacts of globalisation have varied significantly across local and national scales.

In order to remain competitive in such a deregulated neoliberal market, the downscaling of the public-sector economy was seen as a necessary restructuring policy (Mohan et al., 2006). The shift from a Keynesian welfare state to a

Schumpeterian workfare state² streamlined the provision of public services in Britain, and alleviated much of the fiscal pressures upon the already overstretched national budget (Jessop, 2014; Milligan and Conradson, 2006). Although this shift within the public sector was depicted as imperative for the successful economic performance of the country as a whole, a gap in social living standards began to appear (Milligan, 2007). The uneven spatial patterns of development began to manifest in response to the combination of the economic instability associated with deregulated market policy and the decline in the provision of welfare (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). These variations in levels of social need and economic deprivation were initially hoped to be resolved through the encouragement of private sector investment (Milligan and Conradson, 2006), however this corporate led welfare failed to materialise, leading to the development of a 'third way' (Giddens, 1998; Milligan and Conradson, 2006).

Concerns (from some areas of society) for the provision of adequate social welfare following the dissolution of the welfare state were acknowledged politically during the successive Conservative governments of the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, and this saw a gradual devolution of welfare services from the state to the voluntary sector (Wolch, 1990 cited in Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). During the late 1990s the impetus of welfare reform was continued through Blair's 'Third Way' (Clarke et al., 2000). This welfare reform under New Labour saw a transition from state responsibility to societal responsibility, spearheaded by voluntary organisations (Giddens, 1998; Salomon et al., 1999; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). A state encouragement for active and responsible citizenship highlighted a collective moral obligation upon individuals and communities within society (Milligan and Conradson, 2006).

Though the third sector did not originate with New Labour, the scale of its implementation and the overt branding of the term 'Third Way', meant that an intimate association between third sector voluntarism and New Labour policy was inevitable (Haugh and Kitson, 2007; Wrigglesworth and Kendall, 2000; Woolvin et

² The term 'Keynesian' refers to the economic philosophies of John Maynard Keynes and was characterised by high levels of state welfare provision. The term 'Schumpeterian' refers to a set of socio-economic policies based on the ideas of Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeterian workfare is characterised by lower levels of state provision and an increased focus on innovation led competition (Jessop, 1993; see section 2.2.2.9).

al., 2014). During this wave of optimism, the third sector was seen as a 'panacea' for alleviating a range of issues within British society (Brown et al., 2000; Fyfe, 2005). Being separated from political bureaucracy and free from corporate agenda positions, the third sector between state and market interests (Jessop, 2002; Morrison, 2000) was expected to act as a vessel of service provision in the voids left by the depleted welfare state (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003).

One side effect of the expansion of neo-communitarianism is the strengthening of social cohesion and the promotion of active civil society. This fostering of social capital has been another central theme of New Labour's Third Way which attempts to create a streamlined, cost-effective welfare structure by relying on the voluntary action of British citizens (Fyfe, 2005).

The introduction of the coalition government in 2010 saw an evolution of Blair's 'Third Way' in Cameron's 'Big Society' (Mohan, 2011). Although the basis of these policies both stemmed from a commitment to the third sector (Fyfe, 2005; North, 2011; Hilton and McKay, 2011), the Conservative/Liberal Democrat strategy was more than just a superficial rebranding (Hardill and Baines, 2011; North, 2011; Woolvin et al., 2014). Many critiques have labelled the 'Big Society' as the latest articulation of state streamlining and cuts to public services (Lister, 2014; Defty, 2014), however North (2011) argues that Cameron's 'Big Society' goes beyond the neoliberalisation of welfare provision, through its innovative attempt to tackle social inequality through local community empowerment. More recently still, Theresa May's notion of the 'Shared Society' has, again, divided critics (McKee, 2017; Williams, 2017). The extent to which May's 'Shared Society' is merely a continuation of Cameron's 'Big Society' remains to be seen (Williams, 2017).

Whilst political and economic motivations behind the rise of the 'Third Way' are contested, its manifestations within society are evident. Geography's engagement with the third sector economy has been apparent in a recent body of work focusing on the interactions of people, place, and voluntarism (Milligan, 2007). Since Fyfe and Milligan's (2003) call for an engagement with 'a wider range of geographical environments and scales' within research on voluntarism, there has been an expansion in both the empirical and theoretical research landscape from social, political and cultural geography.

2.2.4 - Volunteering and the Geographies of Voluntarism

Lorimer (2010: 311) writes that “volunteering is very much in vogue”. This statement can be applied to its position within contemporary political discourse (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; North, 2011), within the imaginations of the British populace (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011) and within its emergence in the geographical research landscape (Milligan, 2007). The study of voluntarism within geography has become a diverse terrain (Milligan, 2007) with research including: serious leisure and embodied volunteering (Stebbins, 2001; Jupp, 2008); volunteering in higher education (Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014; Holdsworth, 2010); unpaid work (Baines et al., 2011); volunteering amongst older people (Hogg, 2016; Wiles and Jayasinha, 2013); health and care (Conradson, 2003; Milligan and Conradson, 2006); international volunteering and the gap year (Baillie Smith et al., 2016; Lorimer, 2010); faith based volunteering (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015); and volunteering in rural communities (Hardill and Dwyer, 2011; Yarwood and Edwards, 1995). This section will offer a critical thematic analysis of these key overlapping strands of research within this area, highlighting some of the primary authors and discussions, as well as addressing some of the criticisms and lacunae within the literature.

2.2.4.1 – Serious Leisure and ‘Doing’ Volunteering

The notion of volunteering as ‘serious leisure’ was developed by Stebbins (1982; 2001). The idea that volunteering can be simultaneously a relaxing, sociable leisure activity, whilst also producing influential and consequential outcomes, is a frequently used research framework within the study of volunteering (Misener et al., 2010). This framework for understanding the two sides of the volunteering coin is utilised within this thesis, particularly for understanding the motivations for young Muslims who engage in volunteering (see chapter 5).

A recent body of work has focused upon feelings of ‘doing’ in relation to volunteering and participation (Crouch, 2001; Conradson, 2003; Jupp, 2008). This strand of research stems from Thrift’s (1996) concept of ‘non-representational theory’, emphasising the dynamic and affective interactions between bodily performance and the ‘continually emergent nature of spaces’ (Jupp, 2008: 334). This theoretical approach to the study of volunteering erodes traditional dualisms

between mind and body; theory and practice; emotion and reason, instead engaging with the entwined affective, micro-level interactions between corporeal experiences and spaces of participation (Jupp, 2008; Conradson, 2003).

Responding to Jupp's (2008) call for a focus upon the 'doings' of volunteering, Smith et al. (2010) provide an alternative research framework for geography's interest in voluntarism and social action. Without negating the importance of policy analysis and the evaluation of service provision, Smith et al.'s (2010) 'enlivened' geographies of volunteering focus upon the everyday practices, emotions and interactions, and the embodied performativity involved in voluntary action. This micro-scale approach to the study of voluntarism offers a "sense of how the spaces of volunteering function in and through myriad prosaic, complex, tangible and intangible practices, feelings and encounters" (Smith et al., 2010: 270). This multiscalar approach, unlike previous engagements with emotion and affect, recognises the need to bridge the gap between the embodied, emotional aspects of volunteering and the overarching socio-political structures of the third sector. Understanding how the personal experiences, practices and motivations of volunteers correspond to the wider networks of research, policy and praxis, therefore enables the 'doings' of volunteering to be situated within both individual and collective spaces of society (Ibid).

This thesis utilises the notion of 'doing' volunteering in order to understand the ways in which young Muslims engage with volunteering 'beyond' the formal, tangible practices. This research project therefore explores "what (else) matters' in the doing of volunteering" (Smith et al. 2010: 270; see also Horton and Kraftl, 2008), examining the emotional and embodied experiences of young volunteers, within the contexts of Islamic culture(s) and the spaces of volunteering in Birmingham.

2.2.4.2 - Higher Education Volunteering

Recent attention to the benefits of volunteering for students amongst policy makers and higher education institutions has catalysed a body of research within geography over the past decade (Yarwood, 2005; Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010; Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014). Student volunteering has been increasingly viewed as a panacea for a number of issues, including: the reputation of a university; the

relationship between students and local communities; the employability of individuals; creating a social bond between students and enhancing notions of citizenship within students (Holdsworth, 2010; Spalding, 2013; Mohan, 1995). Although the contribution of student volunteering to the voluntary sector as a whole is relatively small (Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010), concerns over the decline in the volunteering practices of young people has spilt over from social spheres into wider academic discourse (Gaskin, 2004).

Yarwood's (2005) case study of volunteering within the UK curriculum of higher education geography offers an insight both into the motivations of volunteering amongst students and the benefits they can provide to local communities. It was found that the majority of students participated in local volunteering schemes as a form of work experience in the hope of advancing their career prospects, as opposed to for purely altruistic reasons (Yarwood, 2005). These motivations of self-interest are corroborated by the findings of Holdsworth (2010), who reveals employability as the most important motivation for student volunteers. These motivations however were complex, with students also highlighting the importance of the work in developing social cohesion and contributing to local society. A mixture of egotistic and altruistic motivations highlights the subjectivity of individual decision making amongst the students within the case studies of both Yarwood (2005) and Holdsworth (2010). Despite the complexity of incentives for student participation, the benefits to local communities were clear. To maximise the potential for students to integrate and contribute to local society, a reinvigoration of student volunteering is required, with a mutually beneficial depiction of volunteering being portrayed, as opposed to relying on outdated notions of selfless philanthropy (Yarwood, 2005).

In more recent studies, Holdsworth and Quinn (2010) analyse the policy initiatives designed to increase student volunteering in the UK. Whilst they note that the practices of student volunteering are fundamentally 'good', and the policies focusing on maximising this potential are welcomed, they also offer several critiques to the socio-political landscape of student voluntarism. These critiques are developed within Holdsworth and Quinn's (2013) paper, which interrogates many of the unchallenged assumptions within the study of student volunteering. One of the key issues that Holdsworth and Quinn (2013) highlight within their

research is the varied interpretations that students impress upon the social inequalities they encounter, suggesting that universities fail to provide an intellectual dimension to the practical performances of volunteering. Holdsworth and Quinn (2013) therefore propose that for students to most effectively address the social problems they come across within their volunteering practices, universities should provide the intellectual tools to analyse the wider perspectives of social inequality.

Bednarz et al. (2008) focus upon community engagement, highlighting its importance and its value for the learning outcomes of geography students. In this symposium article, the authors outline how participating in social action can challenge students' preconceived ideas about society; enhance their social capital and ability to form social networks; develop the students' preparedness for the corporate environment; help them develop as active citizens and provide services to the local community (see also, Spalding, 2013). This discussion on the community action of geographers, though largely from an Anglo-American perspective, has called for a more global outlook on voluntarism within higher education. However, as yet, geographies of volunteering have largely failed to incorporate a body of research outside of the Euro-American hegemony.

Despite the increasing attention that student volunteering has received from policy makers, academics and universities themselves, Holdsworth and Brewis (2014) warn against incorporating volunteering as a more integral part of higher education curricula. They argue that the formalisation and institutionalisation of volunteering within higher education may be resented by students already participating in social action, as well as those who feel forced into a 'voluntary' activity. Several contradictions are also highlighted by Holdsworth and Brewis (2014). As social action becomes saturated with student 'volunteers', the significance of this volunteering becomes reduced, both in terms of its value within local society and its worth for future employability. They also note that the concept of neoliberalism within higher education is portrayed as an expression of freedom of choice; however, any decision not to participate within voluntary activities is seen to limit and restrict the prospects of students. A reframing of Beck's (1992) concept of individualisation within the transitions of young people into adulthood emerges from Holdsworth and Brewis' (2014: 216) statement that students are increasingly

encouraged with the responsibility of “navigating their own pathways, but without any certainty of the outcomes of their individual ‘choices’”. The freedom of choice for young people within higher education is therefore argued not to provide any real scope for individualisation. In their concluding comments, Holdsworth and Brewis (2014) call for “volunteering to be recognised and endorsed as a rewarding activity, but in a way that [student] agency is privileged and their capacity to make a difference is upheld.”

Geographical research on volunteering in higher education is vibrant and diverse; however, there are still several notable gaps within this terrain. A distinct focus upon students has neglected the study of youth who have left formal education. An emphasis upon volunteering amongst more affluent young people and their transitions into the neoliberal corporate economy has to some extent mirrored the neoliberalisation of economic policy within Western capitalist society. There consequently remains a dearth of research examining the role of volunteerism amongst more working-class youth; although, for an important exception, see Judge’s (2016; 2017a; 2017b) research into young, British, working-class, international volunteers.

This thesis offers a new direction for researching volunteering amongst young people through a move away from the specific focus on student volunteering provides a more holistic view of youth volunteering. It also explores student volunteering as part of a wider community, not merely volunteering within a ‘student bubble’ (Brewis et al., 2010).

2.2.4.2 - International and Gap Year Volunteering

In parallel to the literature on student volunteering, the other core body of research into volunteering amongst young people has focused upon international volunteering and ‘gap year’ volunteering. International volunteering is an increasingly popular practice within a diverse array of social groups in the UK and this has been reflected in geography’s recent interest in issues of global citizenship, cosmopolitanism and international volunteering (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Lorimer, 2010; Simpson, 2004; Jones, 2008). Gap year students, religious groups, corporate staff, retirees and diasporic

communities are all seen to engage heavily in global social action (Baillie Smith et al., 2013).

In her examination of international gap year volunteers, Simpson (2004) reveals how binaries of 'us' and 'them' are often (re)produced through overly-simplistic notions of development and the essentialist stereotypes that are rooted in the imaginations of volunteers. Simpson (2004) also highlights how steep power gradients are continually reinforced through young, Western, often white volunteers with the financial resources to fund these projects juxtaposed with the communities of the 'third world' which are portrayed within the gap year industry as 'in need of help' (see also Ansell, 2008). Simpson (2004) therefore suggests that a much deeper consideration of social justice is required in order to combat the gap year industry remaining a vehicle of 'othering'. Lyons et al. (2012) similarly critique the expansion of volunteer tourism amongst gap year students, arguing that despite claiming to produce cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and altruism within both volunteers and host communities (McGehee and Santos, 2005), these are by no means guaranteed outcomes (Raymond and Hall, 2008; Judge, 2017).

Similarly, Baillie Smith and Laurie (2011) explore the relationship between development and international voluntarism through voluntarism in the corporate sector. Although NGOs (non-government organisations) are viewed as more primary facilitators of international voluntarism, corporate organisations are becoming increasingly engaged in international volunteering in recent years. An increasing array of partnerships between NGOs, states and corporation are beginning to emerge through the spread of ideas of development and neoliberalism from the global North to the global South. This form of 'global work' (Jones, 2008) amongst NGO-state-corporate partnerships is designed to promote development in the global South by enabling them to access the crucial business skills that can "act as an engine for sustainable growth" (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011: 552). This international volunteering is also beneficial for the corporations themselves as it is used as an incentive for attracting new staff, as well as developing the skills of their workforce. The notion of 'global citizenship development' for the staff who participate within international volunteering schemes is therefore seen as attractive for both employer and employee alike.

Diprose (2012) builds upon this idea of 'global citizenship development', analysing many of the corporate assumptions regarding international volunteering. Baillie Smith and Laurie's (2011) acknowledgement that unskilled volunteers are seen as less significant for producing development in the global South, immediately highlights an exclusionary aspect of corporate international volunteering. The post-colonial legacy is another aspect of international volunteering that Diprose (2012) problematizes, describing how the perpetuation of stereotypes can spread through volunteers being viewed in a binary opposite to 'others' in the global South. However, Diprose (2012) provides an optimistic framework for 'development education', where international volunteers, through their 'encounters' (Valentine, 2008) with other cultures, increase their awareness of social and environmental injustices, and develop skills for positive intervention through experiential learning.

Jones (2011) similarly theorises international youth volunteering as a form of training for global corporate work. This form of informal voluntary work is becoming increasingly entangled with formalised corporate work in the global economy. This blurred boundary between unpaid volunteering and the private sector is argued by Jones (2011) as being an exclusionary process, where only those with the resources to partake in such international volunteering are able to gain the transnational skills that are coveted within global corporations. Therefore, with large transnational corporations becoming increasingly influential within a globalised neoliberal economy, the exclusionary process of international volunteering can be seen to translate directly into the corporate world.

2.2.4.4 - Faith Based Volunteering

Smith and Denton (2005 cited Hopkins et al., 2015) note that individuals affiliated to religious organisations are more inclined to participate in voluntary work. These relatively high levels of faith based volunteering have stimulated a body of research within geography, examining the relationship between religion, spirituality and volunteering. This study of religious volunteering within geography has largely been split into two distinct foci. The first of these reflects, and builds upon, the collection of research examining international volunteering and global citizenship (see Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., forthcoming) and the second strand of research adopts a post-secular approach to

the examination of charitable organisations in urban settings in the UK (see Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Beaumont, 2008; Middleton and Yarwood, 2015; Bondi, 2013).

Baillie Smith et al. (2013: 126) “explore the relationships between international volunteering, faith and subjectivity” through an analysis of the experiences of young Christian volunteers in Latin America. The idea that international volunteering can influence preconceived imaginations of development is in reality complex and subjective. The processes of negotiating imaginations of global cosmopolitan citizenship are seen to emerge through a myriad of wider social contexts and experiences, varying spatially and temporally. This instability of cosmopolitanism causes Baillie Smith et al (2013) to criticise ‘bland celebrations’ of global citizenship with contemporary academic discourse. In another paper by this project team, Hopkins et al.’s (2015) discussion of the relational geographies of youth, religion and international volunteering offers an intersectional approach to the study of youth transitions. The negotiation of the lifecourse and the idea of personal development is a theme that has been relatively limited within the geographies of volunteering (excluding the body of research regarding corporate development), however this dearth of research has been addressed to a certain extent through the research on the voluntarism of gap year students and, more recently, through the examination young religious volunteers (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015). Paralleling the notion of international volunteering as a form of preparation for corporate work (Jones, 2011), Hopkins et al. (2015) describe how faith-based volunteering can shape the religiosity of young volunteers. The young Christians saw volunteering as a stage of their spiritual journey, or, as Baillie Smith et al. (2013: 128) describe, faith based volunteering is about developing “a relationship with... God, being open to learning, becoming spiritually mature and encouraging and supporting these processes with others.”

Although the majority of research into faith based volunteering explore the roles of Christian organisations, there are a few notable exceptions. For example, Montagne-Villette et al. (2011) explore faith based volunteering through the case study of an Islamic French charity. Due to the strong separation between religion and the state in France, this charity receives very little government support, relying on donations and volunteers from the local area. Despite the lack of financial or

political state support of this charity, the organisation works closely with government agencies to provide social welfare for homeless people in Paris.

This section has so far examined faith-based volunteering through the perspective of international youth volunteering; however, another body of literature on faith-based volunteering utilises the concept of postsecularism in order to understand the intersections between religion and social action within the context of an increasingly secular society (Williams, 2015). This area of research focuses largely on volunteering through religious organisations, within local urban communities.

Cloke et al.'s (2005) research into the charity provision for homeless people in urban Britain produced a pioneering geographical paper for its adoption of Cole's (1997) concept of 'postsecular charity'. Cloke et al.'s (2005) research focused upon the moral landscapes of charity provision, empirically investigating the motivations and outcomes of charity provision. The notion that the performances of the volunteers and homeless individuals point towards a 'postsecular charity' can be seen through the complex intersections and entanglements between Christian evangelism, secular humanism, (non-)religious philanthropy, social responsibility and ethical impulse (Williams et al., 2012). Cloke et al., (2005: 399) note that it is not through the overarching ethos of a charitable organisation, but through the everyday practices of staff and volunteers that 'the fine line between care and oppression' is revealed. They conclude that those charities which provide care regardless of a conditional outcome, such as religious conversion or a lifestyle change, are best placed to provide for the needs of homeless individuals.

Following this example of postsecular research, a focus upon public service provision has developed within postsecular theory (Beaumont, 2008; Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Middleton and Yarnwood, 2013). The crossover between religious and secular within the voluntary practices of organisations and individuals has been coined as 'postsecular rapprochement' (Cloke, 2010; Cloke and Beaumont, 2013). The holistic research agenda set out within this aspect of postsecular theory necessitates an erosion of binary between sacred and non-sacred spaces called for by Gokariksel (2009).

Caution is however implored by critics of postsecular theory. Kong (2010), for example writes that postsecularisation is a discourse that cannot be applied

universally: the importance of spirituality that has persisted despite the development of modernity can be seen to challenge the applicability of postsecular theory in a totalising way. Postsecularism represents a 're-emergence' and 're-engagement' with spirituality and religiosity within urban spaces (see Graham, 2008); however, if the secular was never fully realised (Berger, 1999; Tse, 2013) then the notion of a 're'-engagement becomes less applicable.

As this summary of the literature on faith based volunteering suggests, the vast majority of research has focused on Christian voluntary organisations. This thesis expands the body of research on religion and volunteering by exploring the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham. This research offers new perspectives on volunteering within this traditionally Christian-centric field. Whilst the geographical research by postsecular theorists has expanded literature on faith based volunteering, this thesis remains cautious of adopting postsecular frameworks due to some of the criticism highlighted within this section (see also section 2.3.2.5).

2.2.4.5 - Health and Care Volunteering

Issues of health and care have been inextricably interlinked with the provision of welfare and with voluntary action (Kearns and Moon, 2002; Parr 2000; 2002; 2003). Conradson (2003), in his examination of the provision of healthcare through drop-in centres in the community, found that such spaces of care provided more than just a medical role through the social support they offer. The psychotherapeutic role of these spaces was seen to be reliant on practical and supportive qualities of the volunteers and staff. Although the drop-in centre, Bexton House, Bristol, was officially a Christian-run organisation, the expression of faith within the centre was not overt. The faith-based voluntarism was however significant to the motivations of the volunteers themselves. A compulsion to 'do good' within the community amongst the volunteers produced an empathic relationship with the users of Bexton House. Though the services provided by this drop-in centre were numerically small, the space it provided within the community was significant.

In light of the withdrawal of state provided welfare, recognition of the importance of 'lay' volunteers for the provision of care has become increasingly apparent.

Research into the experiences of unpaid care workers has challenged many of the established definitions of volunteering, through discussions of financial payment and compensation, and through the (lack of) choice for non-professional carers (South et al., 2014; Van der Horst et al., 2016). The previously clear-cut boundaries between volunteering and low paid work are becoming increasingly hazy as (Baines and Hardill, 2008; South et al., 2014) as 'lay health workers' are increasingly under pressure to devote their time to care, through feelings of responsibility, or issues of personal debt or (un)employment (South et al., 2014). With the most deprived areas in the UK being the most likely to rely on healthcare 'volunteers', debates surrounding the fair compensation lay health workers for their time have intensified in recent years (Van der Horst et al., 2016; South et al., 2014).

With an aging population in Britain (Lowe and Speakman, 2006), concerns over how to cater for older people with an already overstretched welfare system have amplified. Hardill and Baines (2009) challenge the assumption that older people in society, particularly women are economic and social burdens upon society. The social panic is misplaced according to Hardill and Baines (2009), who highlight the increasing number of older adults engaged in voluntary work (Lowe and Speakman, 2006) as an indicator of their value to society. The commitment of older people to their local community, providing networks of care to one another is seen as increasingly significant in light of the cut backs to the state provision of services (Hardill and Baines, 2011). This area of research speaks to relational geographies of volunteering and a focus upon volunteering amongst older people in society.

2.2.4.6 - Rural Volunteering

Although the majority of research on volunteering within the UK has centred on urban environments, Edwards and Woods (2006) highlight the enduring importance of voluntarism in rural communities. This long history of voluntarism and community action within rural societies has, however, only recently been recognised within government policy.

Yarwood and Edwards (1995) examine the effectiveness of volunteering as a solution to crime and other social problems in rural communities. In their

investigation of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Hereford, Yarwood and Edwards (1995) reveal several paradoxes within rural voluntarism, as whilst a sense of community cohesion and security was intensified, this representation did not translate into any tangible reductions in crime. Also, whilst social cohesion and interaction was central to the intended outcomes of the Neighbourhood Watch schemes, in reality a sense of territorialisation began to materialise, excluding those deemed outside of the community (Ibid).

Heley and Jones (2013) also draw a focus upon rural communities, whilst offering an alternative perspective on volunteering within these spaces. With rural communities being seen to be increasingly comprised of ageing populations (in the Global North at least), there has been a heightened political anxiety regarding strains upon the provision of welfare (Jones and Heley, 2016). Heley and Jones (2013) point out, however, that older citizens are remaining active for longer and, combined with informal structures of care within many rural communities, has maintained social sustainability through intense localised hubs of social capital (Le Mesurier, 2006; Heley and Jones, 2013). Concerns over the declining levels of social participation within advanced capitalist societies (Putnam, 2000) have therefore often been misplaced within rural communities in Britain (Jones and Heley, 2016).

'Serious leisure theory' is a framework that is employed by Heley and Jones (2013) in order to examine the blurred boundaries between work and leisure in the experiences and practices of those who volunteer in the local community. The motivations of individuals to participate in community action were seen to be complex and messy, straddling the divide between sociability, recreation and personal enjoyment, and moral obligation and civic duty. Utilising serious leisure theory within their research allowed Heley and Jones (2013) to encapsulate the highly personalised subjectivities of volunteering and voluntarism. The informal structuring of participation within rural communities was therefore seen as threatened by the institutionalisation of voluntarism under the mantra of the 'Big Society', where the perception of voluntary action as 'leisure' deteriorates, potentially causing participation to fall.

This body of research into rural community participation reveals the delicate nuances and subjectivities involved in volunteering. Policies that have been implemented successfully within urban environments are also not necessarily applicable to rural settings due to the unique social structures and territoriality of rural communities (Yarwood and Edwards, 1995). Accordingly, even though this thesis is situated within an urban environment, a cognisance of the importance that space and place play in shaping the landscape of volunteering is ubiquitous within this research project.

2.2.5 - Geographies of Volunteering within this Thesis

This thesis will seek to contribute to the discussions of youth citizenship and faith based volunteering and feed into the wider academic field on the geographies of volunteering. As was discussed within the introductory chapter (section 1.3), this research is timely, not purely in terms of the socio-political tensions surrounding Islam within Western society, but also through the instability of the third sector economy in the UK. Theresa May's 'Shared Society' could spell yet another overhaul in the political structuring of voluntarism and the 'shadow state', with the effectiveness of Cameron's 'Big Society' being questioned from inside and outside of the Conservative Party. Even faith based organisations with no tangible affiliations with the government can be seen to be intimately tied into the overarching political landscape of the third sector.

Outside of the vibrant bodies of work concerning student volunteering and international volunteering, there remains a dearth of research into youth volunteering. By moving away from a focus upon higher education, this thesis will engage with the motivations and experiences of young people volunteering in their local communities, without a bias towards issues of employability and corporate agenda. By examining Islamic faith-based volunteering within a UK context, this thesis contributes to gaps in youth voluntarism research.

The complexities and subjectivities of individual motivations for volunteering lends itself to the incorporation of 'serious leisure theory' (Stebbins, 2001). This framework provides an opportunity to tease out the intricacies of faith based volunteering by understanding the experiences and practices of individuals, not in isolation, but in their own unique, dynamic socio-spatial milieu.

2.3 – Religion

This section will present an overview of the geographies of religion. Using Kong's (1990; 2001; 2010) decadal reviews as a starting point, this section will explain how religion gained its own discrete attention within geographical research (section 2.3.1), before outlining the key theoretical and empirical contributions of geographers to the study of religion (section 2.3.2). A specific focus upon Islam is then presented (section 2.3.3), before the relationship between this research project and the study of religion is highlighted (section 2.3.4).

2.3.1 - Disentangling Race and Religion

Kong (2001: 212) highlights how religion has often been either 'conflated with race', or else neglected altogether within geographical research. Therefore, whilst the emergence of religion as a discrete area of study within geography cannot be seen before the 1990s, features of religion have often been investigated through discussions of race and racism (Dwyer and Bressey, 2008). Hopkins (2007) identifies three primary areas of geographical research focusing on race and religion. The first of these areas of literature is concerned with the process of segregation and the implications of social (dis)unity (see Peach, 1996; 2002; 2009; Phillips, 1998; 2007; Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest, 2003). The second is an investigation into the process of racism, othering, and social exclusion (see Said, 1978; Jackson and Penrose, 1994; Bonnett, 2000; Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Dunn, 2003). The third research area focuses on the process of negotiation, contestation and construction of identity amongst minority groups (Dwyer, 1998; 1999a; 1999b; 2000).

Each of these three strands of literature relating to the broader topic of race can be seen to contain discussions that are deeply entangled with notions of religion and religious identity. Examples of how race and religion have become entwined within academic research can be seen in the interpretations of the 2001 British census, where the 'question of religion' became an issue that tied these three strands together. The spatial segregation of ethnic communities revealed within the 2001 Census data (Peach, 2002; Cattle, 2001) was found to be inextricably interlinked with religious affiliation and the associated constructions of identity and syncretism of 'core' British values (Howard and Hopkins, 2005; Philips, 2006; Gale, 2007).

Peach (1990) recognises the correlation between Islamic affiliation and ethnic background, noting how the rise of these “new” religions has occurred in relation to high levels of migration from South Asian countries (Peach and Gale, 2003).

Yuan et al.’s (2014) notion of an ‘ethnoreligious hybrid identity’ within China’s Miao population offers an example of the blurred boundary between ethnicity and religion from a non-western perspective. Yuan et al (2014) describe how the translocal identities of the Miao community in Shimenkan are negotiated from a syncretism between the local socio-political discourses and the religious beliefs and practices introduced to them through European Christian missionaries. The composite of ethnicity and Christian belief is seen to be intrinsically important to their cultural identity, whilst simultaneously creating issues of segregation and social exclusion for the Miao people in China.

The intersection and interaction between religion and race is complex, and the two are deeply entangled; however, a distinct focus upon religion is vital in order to counteract the camouflage that has suppressed religion within geographical research. This realisation of religion as more than just an epiphenomenon of race and ethnicity allows a focused research agenda, capable of teasing out the intricacies and nuances of religion in society (Gale, 2007). That is not to say religion must be examined in isolation from aspects of race and ethnicity; on the contrary, religion must be understood in relation to all aspects of social difference, but the significance that religion has within society must be highlighted within a discrete ‘geography of religion’ (Ivakhiv, 2006; Proctor, 2006; Gale, 2007).

2.3.2 - Religion as a Discrete Area of Geographical Research

Religion can be seen to underpin many aspects of society, influencing the lives and identities of many individuals and communities, either directly or indirectly (Tse, 2013). The recognition of religion’s significance within society has not however been universal within geographic research (Proctor, 2006), nor has there always been a coherent research agenda for the study of religion (Stump 1986; Livingstone, 1994; Raivo, 1997).

An initial focus on spatiality and the built environment has been of primary interest within geographies of religion (Hopkins, 2007). Prominent amongst this paradigm

of research is an attention to the physical religious landscape, the architectural design and the spatial distribution of religious assemblage (see, for example, Zelinsky, 2001; Kong, 2002; 2005; Dunn, 2005; Sunier, 2005; Peach and Gale, 2003; Warf and Winsberg, 2008; 2010). However, this narrow emphasis upon the spatial aspects of religious landscapes within geographical discussion has barely scratched the surface of potential research on religion. As Hopkins (2007) points out, the authors who have attempted to investigate the wealth of social and cultural significance that religion can play in society have been few and far between. Lily Kong, as one of the few scholars to have delved into research of religion and geography (1990; 2001a; 2001b; 2005; 2006; 2010), called for a more comprehensive research agenda for the study of religion within geography, and challenged cultural geography to accord a prosperous place for religion (2001a).

This plea has stimulated recent geographical research on religion, which has begun to expand beyond purely the 'officially sacred' (Kong, 2005; Gökariksel, 2009), and has incorporated a wide ranging agenda within its ambit, from its impact on the built environment and the transforming political landscape (Zelinsky, 2001; Dunn, 2005), to its role in the shaping of migration and mobility (Olson and Silvey 2006); and its influence upon social interaction and cohesion within society (Park, 2002). These issues are inescapable due to the influence that religion holds within societies worldwide (Kong, 2001), from the everyday practices of individuals (Holloway and Valins, 2002) to the overarching socio-political landscape (Agnew, 2006). This revitalisation and emphasis on the study of religion over the past decade has addressed Kong's (1990; 2001) notion that the study of religion had been sparse and confined to the periphery of research within geography, causing Kong (2010: 756) to posit the question: "Has the geographical study of religion finally arrived?"

The development of the theoretical and empirical research landscape within geography prompted Yorgason and della Dora (2009) to question the metaphor of religion as geography's final *terra incognita*. This metaphor of an 'unknown land' represents religion as a blank canvas suitable for geographic research to 'colonise'; however, Yorgason and della Dora (2009) recognise that the relationship between religion and society is dynamic, fluid and inscribed with meaning, offering far more

than a one-way process of colonisation. Yorgason and della Dora (2009: 630) therefore rightfully suggest that religion is not an empty domain to be brought to life through geographical investigation, but is an area that can interact with geography through its unique influence upon social, political and cultural spheres, creating new understandings of people and place. This can be seen within a recent engagement with aspects of embodiment, affect, and spirituality (Game, 2001; Holloway, 2006) which has opened a doorway for geographers to gain a fresh insight into the 'more-than-rational', 'more-than-representational' aspects of life (Yorgason and della Dora, 2009: 629-630).

Consequently, Dwyer (2016) suggests that recent advances in the empirical and theoretical research has shifted the study of religion from being a peripheral, stagnant area of research to become a more creative and dynamic sub-discipline within human geography (see also Kong, 2010).

This review of the geographies of religion examines the shifting research landscape. A thematic approach will be taken, analysing religion in relation to: (1) global geopolitics and religious institutions; (2) migration and mobility; (3) spiritualism and everyday practices; (4) gender, youth and social difference; (5) secularism and postsecularism; (6) fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism. Each of these themes is inevitably and inextricably interrelated, however, in order to offer a coherent structure to this review of the literature the categorisation of distinct bodies of research has been necessary. Following the analysis of religion within geographical research, a specific attention will be paid to the expanding body of research on Islam and Islamic identity.

2.3.2.1 - Geopolitics and Institutionalised Religion

The role that religion has played in shaping global geopolitics and international relations has been pervasive (Agnew, 2006; Megoran, 2006; Dijkink, 2006). The political practices of religious institutions and organisations have structured and, to some extent, controlled both historical and contemporary international relations through the authority they hold both as an ideological governance and political power within society (Agnew, 2006).

Although fertility of academic discussion has been largely limited to the hegemonic geopolitical power of western Christianity and counter-hegemonic influences of Islam (Sidaway, 1994; Agnew, 2006), the complex intertwining of religion and (geo)politics is prevalent within geography's interest in the influence of Judaism in Israel (Razin and Hasan, 2004; Valins, 2000); the global outreach of Catholicism (Agnew, 2010); the role of Buddhism in Tibetan politics (McConnell, 2013).

2.3.2.2 - Religion, Migration and Mobility

Another discrete, but interrelated issue that has been woven into the research landscape of religion is the role of migration and the associated complexity, variegation and hybridisation of the 'traditional' religious milieu (Peach, 2002; Freeman, 2005; Mohamed, 2005). According to Peach (2002), the tangible impacts of religion upon socially and politically charged processes of assimilation, interaction and integration have transformed the cultural landscapes of Western society. Kong (2010) uses the example of the growth of Islam in Western Europe due to high levels of immigration from war-torn nations, such as Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan (see Knippenberg, 2006), to demonstrate the emergence of religious pluralism in historically 'mono-religious' nations.

The complex relationship between mobility, migration and religion are of particular interest within the discipline of geography due to its inherently spatial and scalar nature (Kong, 2006). Kong (2010) recognises several strands of geographical research that have straddled the interface between mobility and religion. The first of these is a historical perspective, focusing on the complex nexus of religious processes involved in the colonization of diverse lands, and the associated transformations of their respective religious landscapes. Such work has included research on Britain's missionary work in Colonial North America and South Africa (Endfield and Nash, 2002; 2005); persistent religious tensions in Jewish colonization of Palestine (Clout, 2002); the religious syncretism and hybridisation facilitated by the slave trade in Jamaica (Clarke and Howard, 2005).

The second strand of research identified by Kong (2010) is how the religious landscapes of 'host countries have been (re)shaped through the establishment of immigrant communities. Transformations in the physical environment through the construction of new places of worship and religion-specific architecture, as well as

effects on the cultural and transient milieu can be seen to alter spaces of religious expression. Kong (2010: 761) highlights the importance of spatial structures as “symbols of permanence” for immigrant communities, creating a sense of stability and belonging. The role of these structures therefore goes beyond the religious, directly influencing the social, economic and political spheres of a community (see MacDonald, 2002; Ley, 2008; Paerregaard, 2008).

The third strand of geographical research identified by Kong (2010) that links religion and migration is the impact of migration on the religious landscape of a sending nation. Large scale (often forced) migration from particular religious populations can dramatically alter the religious makeup of a country. Bilska-Wodecka (2006), for example, examines the state enforced repatriation of Jewish and Greek-Catholic peoples in order to homogenise and stabilise the ideologies of post-independence Poland.

The fourth strand of research is concerned with the construction of the identity of individual migrants. A focus on the relationship between religious identity and diaspora, hybridisation and cultural syncretism has revealed a complex process of interaction and negotiation that shape the identities of individuals within a diasporic community (Dwyer, 2000; Vertovec, 1997; 2004; Werbner, 2002; 2005; Hopkins, 2007; Mavroudi, 2007).

The fifth strand of research highlighted by Kong (2010) has examined the influence that transnational networks can play upon the decision-making, practices and ideologies of migrants. Transnational ties to a physical or ideological homeland are seen to tangibly affect the negotiations of identity (Bowen, 2004). The burgeoning of literature surrounding the notion of diaspora that has emerged within geography can be seen to have echoed the focus on transnational linkages within religious studies (Vertovec, 1997; 2004). The Jewish diaspora is a notable example of how attachment to a physical, ideological and religious homeland can influence the constructions of identity within individuals and communities across various nations. The current theoretical debates within the study of diaspora are of particular relevance to this specific strand of research into the interaction between transnational networks and religion, as they focus upon the degree to which

hybridisation and cultural syncretism are viable life strategies for those in religious diaspora.

The sixth and final strand of research considers the political aspects of transnational religious institutions. Kong's (2010) admission that the majority of this research has been undertaken outside of the discipline of geography does not however undermine its distinctly geographical roots. The Roman Catholic Church is perhaps the most prevalent religious institution globally, with its sphere of influence permeating a myriad of political facets from an individual level to a supra-national level (Park, 2002). The Jewish Zionist movement and the global Islamic movement also both interact with issues of political and social justice across a global scale (Kong, 2010). The associated identity conflict that emerges within individuals, driven by the perceived (in)compatibility of national and religious identities, is often negotiated and (re)produced through issues of belonging, acceptance and justice (ibid).

This list compiled by Kong (2010), though extensive, is not exhaustive. Space for further research into the relationship between mobility and religion is continually emerging through the evolving nexus of social, political and economic interactions involved with religious mobilities. The diverse strands of research proposed by Kong (2010) succeed in highlighting the richness and fertility of discussion within geography regarding religion and mobility. However Kong (2010: 765) is also keen to highlight that global trends are not static, but dynamic and volatile, and therefore identifies four shifts that are most often stressed as key issues for the global community: "rapid urbanization and social inequality; a deteriorating environment; an ageing population; and increasing human mobilities." These four issues will individually and collectively impact upon the role and influence of religion globally and locally. The volatility of how religion is experienced and perceived spatially and temporally therefore requires an equally dynamic and vibrant research landscape.

2.3.2.3 - Religion, Spiritualism and the Everyday

An alternative theme within geographies of religion that has evolved in contrast to the macro-scale processes of geopolitics, migration and mobility has arisen from an attention to the embodied and everyday facets of religion (Dwyer, 2015). This

approach, by focusing on micro-scales of religion, has offered a counterbalance to the body of research that has focused on overarching trends, by instead exploring the plurality and complexity of religion within the everyday practices and emotional responses of individuals (Holloway, 2006; Finlayson, 2012; Dwyer, 2016).

When introducing the theme of religion within their editorial piece, Holloway and Valins (2002: 5), draw upon the work of Foucault, suggesting that:

“[A] culture cannot understand itself without first understanding its implicit connection and development within the constructs of religious belief and practice.”

This statement reveals not just the historical, ethical and methodological importance that religion has played in shaping social and political structure, but also the centrality that spirituality and religion have in the everyday lives of a vast number of individuals (Holloway and Valins, 2002). Figures from Warf and Vincent's (2007) exploration of global religious diversity show that an estimated 85% of the population are affiliated to a specific religion, reiterating the significance that religion has within society. Even within secular societies, where the proportion of the population engaged in traditional religious practice has declined, a rise in the number of individuals engaged in alternative spiritual pursuits has maintained the relevance of researching the role of the religious (Warf and Vincent, 2007; Holloway and Valins, 2002). The habitual practices and embodied performances of individuals are ultimately determined by their belief structure, from their choice of food and clothing to their volunteering and worshipping practices (Holloway and Valins, 2002). To understand the extent of the authority that religion has within society, it is necessary to look not just in terms of the economic and political power of major religious institutions (Zelinsky, 2001), but of its impact upon the seemingly banal and mundane decision-making processes and negotiation of identity of individuals (Proctor, 2006).

An area of religion that has been under-theorised within geography, and social science more generally, is the highly personal, affectual and emotive responses to spirituality (Holloway, 2011; 2006). These spiritual encounters are distinctly geographical due to their powerfully spatial relationship with both personal and sacred spaces (Finlayson, 2012). The capacity of these affectual forces to elicit an

embodied response can also be seen in the performativity and practices of religious participants, and although the postmodernist approach to investigating religion neglects the transcendent and the ineffable (della Dora, 2011), studies of emotion and affect have begun to gain a prominence within geographical research (Bondi, 2005; Pile, 2010). Finlayson (2012: 1775), writes that whilst distinctly personal and emotional spiritual experiences have been conceived as nonrepresentational, and thus 'beyond the realm of exploration', in depth enquiry can expose the emotional potency of sacred and personal spaces.

Tse's (2013) notion of 'grounded theologies' allows a dualistic understanding of religion. The term 'theology' refers to a transcendence that cannot be understood through empirical research; whilst conversely the term 'grounded' expresses the everyday negotiations of social identity and the (re)production of cultural practices. The entanglement of these seemingly binary fundamentals of religion can form a viable and applicable research framework, capable of incorporating the spectrum of spaces in which religion presides, integrating aspects of the affectual and emotional, the personal and everyday, and the institutional and geopolitical. Whilst this thesis does not utilise the framework of 'grounded theologies' explicitly, the interrelations between the intangible aspects of spirituality and faith, and the 'grounded' volunteering practices of young Muslims is carefully considered throughout the empirical chapters (4, 5, 6 and 7).

2.3.2.4 - The Postsecular City

Proctor (2006) notes how the concept of secularisation, though present within academic debate since the 1960s, has witnessed a renaissance during the 21st Century. The notion of secularism and the secular city has emerged through an apparent binary between modernity and religiosity, where the development of modern political structure, contemporary civil society and the expanding boundaries of science will supersede the role of religious moral frameworks and religious institutions within society (Wilford, 2010; Yorgason and della Dora, 2009). Bruce (2002) outlines three cross-cutting areas which signify the process of secularisation: firstly, the deteriorating economic and political influence of religious institutions; secondly, the declining social significance of religious institutions; and

thirdly, the diminishing importance that religion has for the practices and performances of individuals in society.

This transfer of authority and sovereignty from the religious to the secular, and the withdrawal of spirituality from public to private spheres has been well-documented within academia, from the early works of sociologist Bryan Wilson (1966, cited Proctor, 2006) to the recent philosophical insights of Taylor (2007). However, the paradigm of 'secularisation theory' (Proctor, 2006) is not without contestation. Berger (1999), although by no means unique in his critique of secularisation theory, is one of the most resolute and outspoken in his criticism. Berger's (1999: 2) assessment that secularisation is 'essentially mistaken' is supported by the importance that religion maintains on both a global and individual scale: his illustration of non-western society in which the prominence of religious is as significant as it has ever been. Tse's (2013) also critiques secularisation theory, stating that even within modern political and economic infrastructures of western society, to neglect the importance of religion is dangerous. Schmitt's (1985 cited Tse, 2013) points out how the secularisation process is entrenched in religious ideologies, highlighting how Christian theology has shaped, and continues to shape the current political framework of western society. Therefore, whilst secular society can be seen to visibly reject many aspects of religion, it nonetheless adopts and maintains other regulations and practices that are rooted in the religious (Henkel, 2005). Tse (2013) goes so far as to suggest that secularisation is a form of theology in itself, whereby the state takes the place of a religious institution in becoming the architect of social morality. Tse (2013: 4) summarises that:

“despite attempts to construct the present as a secular age, the modern world remains theologically constituted, albeit through a proliferation of new religious subjectivities, including atheistic ones.”

Gokariksel (2009) explains how the perceived binary between the secular and the sacred within secularisation theory can be seen as false. Instead, Gokariksel perceives the secular and the religious as mutually and contextually constituted, “intersecting in complex and sometimes contradictory ways” (2009: 658).

Notwithstanding the substantial criticism that has been touched upon here, secularisation theory remains prominent within academic debate, and continues to stimulate both a strong empirical research agenda, as well as a healthy theoretical/theological debate (Proctor, 2006; Tse, 2013; Wilford, 2010).

The concept of 'postsecularism' emerged in response to the limitations of secularisation theory and has attempted to readdress the interface between religion and secularism, giving recognition to the diversity and pluralism of societies (Beaumont, 2008; Kong, 2010). This paradigm shift has occurred most prominently in relation to discourse focused on the urban environment (Cloke et al., 2005; Beaumont, 2008; McLennan, 2011) leading to the rise of 'the postsecular city' (Beaumont and Baker, 2011; see section 2.2.4.4). McLennan (2010; 2011) highlights that postsecularism is not 'anti-secularist', but is an extension of secularist thinking, producing a framework for dialogue between secularism and religion. Williams (2015: 192) develops this framework further, utilising the concept of rapprochement in his investigation into the interconnections between "emergent postsecularity and neoliberal forms of governance". This resumption of relations between 'religious' and 'secular' societal structures provides Williams with a suitable framework for exploring how faith-based and non-faith based organisations can set aside ideological divisions in order to achieve a common ethical objective.

Olson et al. (2013) also examine postsecular theory's potential to provide an alternative to the traditional frameworks within geography, exploring its ability to facilitate effective analysis of the spatiality of religion and religious expression. Their investigation into the embodiment and embodied religiosity within young Scottish Christians reaffirms the importance of religious understanding within geography, and therefore conclude that postsecularism is not necessarily an effective or suitable research agenda within geographical understandings of religion.

This thesis maintains a mindfulness of the literature on postsecularism and acknowledges the empirical research which has provided a significant contribution to the work on urban faith-based social action, charity and volunteering. However, this research project remains cautious of embracing postsecularism as a research

framework due to the inconsistency within the term's use (Taylor, 2007). Even within Williams' (2015: 193) postsecular approach to understand theo-ethics of a faith-based drug programme, he notes that:

“Geographers have taken issue with grand suggestions of an epochal shift from a secular to postsecular age, or that the postsecular indeed denotes a wholesale resurgence of religiosity or religious influence in the public realm.”

The perceived dichotomy between notions of 'secular' and 'religious', which underpins the concept of postsecularism, can become problematic within discussions of religion within the context of modern British society. The plurality, fluidity and overlap of religion and secular facets of society erode the analytical potency of postsecularism.

2.3.2.5 – Muslim Geographies, Muslim Identities

Hopkins and Pain (2007) explain how understanding intersections of social difference can enable a deeper understanding of the everyday experiences of young people within society. Whilst there has been a burgeoning literature concerned with children, youth and intergenerationality within geography (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Kraftl et al., 2012; Hopkins and Pain, 2007), the idea that age has a significant influence on a person's engagement with and understanding of religion has only been touched upon within geographical research. Dwyer (1998; 1999a; 1999b) and Hopkins (2004; 2006; 2007; 2009) are two of the few geographers to investigate with relationship between religion and young people, specifically examining the identities of young British Muslim men and women. Their research has offered unique insights into the role that religion plays in the way young Muslims construct and contest their own identities.

The relationship between gender and religion has been investigated more widely, particularly in reference to Islamic identity (see, for example, Dwyer, 1999a; 1999b; 2000; Dwyer et al., 2008; Hopkins, 2004; 2006; Falah and Nagel, 2005). Much of this interest in the gendered aspects of religion has examined the discrimination that is (re)produced through religious and cultural practices. An influential example of geography's focus upon gender and religion is Claire Dwyer's (1999a) research into how embodied differences are negotiated by young British Muslim women

through their construction and contestation of identity. Dwyer (1999a) notes that the articulation of personal and religious identity for Muslim women goes beyond the role of clothing, spilling into a nexus of strategies employed to negotiate and subvert dominant discourses within their everyday lives. Building on the intersectional work of Dwyer, Hopkins (2004; 2006) explores youthful Muslim masculinities.

Hopkins et al. (2011) expand the research on the intersections of youth and religiosity through their exploration of intergenerationality and the spatialities of the lifecourse for young Christians in Scotland. Hopkins' (2007) work reveals the impact that religiosity and spirituality has upon decision making processes of young people, from their everyday performativity to their navigation of transitions to adulthood. Hopkins et al. (2011) highlight the distinct spatiality of intergenerational religiosity, through the spaces of worship exploited by young people, often shifting from the 'officially sacred' (Kong, 2005), to the more personal spaces. The need for geography to engage with the interaction between youth and religion is identified by the concluding statement of Hopkins et al (2011: 326), calling for a focus upon "diverse spatialities and articulations of youthful religiosities and the social interactions inherent within these". The complex interface between gender and Islam is an area of research that stimulates a vibrant discussion within geography, epitomised within Falah and Nagel's (2005) edited book entitled 'Geographies of Muslim Women'.

Less research has explored the intersections of religion with class (excluding, for example, Judge, 2016) and disability (excluding, for example, Banza and Hatab, 2005). Therefore, the study of young Muslim volunteers within this thesis provides a diverse and dynamic platform from which to examine intersections of social differences. The work of Dwyer and Hopkins reveal the importance of an intersectional approach in order to understand the complex and multifarious negotiations of social difference that shape the identities of young British Muslims. This thesis explicitly explores conjunctures of youth and religion; however, intersections of gender, class, ethnicity and (dis)ability are equally central to this research. Examining the differences in the schools of thought within Islam is also a core facet of this research project.

2.3.2.6 -Religion and Extremism

The myriad of roles that religion plays within society are complex and messy, impacting upon the everyday lives of the majority of people worldwide (Holloway and Valins, 2002). Paradoxically however, much of the recent study of religion, across a range of disciplines, has been stimulated by a minority of fundamentalist and extremist strands of religion (Gale, 2007; Kong, 2010). The socio-political shockwaves of the 11 September 2001 New York City and Washington, D.C terrorist attacks (henceforth referred to as 9/11) and the 7 July 2005 London bombings (henceforth referred to as 7/7) have catalysed a research agenda focusing on the role of religion on notions of constructions of identity, social cohesion and cultural practice and their associated psychological motivations and justifications (Yorgason and della Dora, 2009; Mandaville, 2009). Particular scrutiny has surrounded Islam from a western political perspective, with the recent display of terrorist incidents being prominent within academic discussion. A resultant burgeoning interdisciplinary attention to the Islamic community has focused upon issues of cultural and religious identity (Jacobson, 2006; Brown, 2006); migration and transnationalism (Silvey, 2005); assimilation, hybridisation and social cohesion (Hopkins, 2004; Dwyer and Uberoi, 2009); political and religious obligation (Mandaville, 2003).

It is important here to note that research into the lives of British Muslims did not suddenly spring into existence in the wake of terrorist events. Several prominent contributions to the study of Islamic culture and Muslim identities were published before the events of 9/11 brought these debates to the forefront of public consciousness (Dwyer, 1998; 2000; 1999a; 1999b; Knott and Khokher, 1993; Afshar, 1994; McCloughlin, 1996). It is, however, notable that the intensity and volume of research into the perceived mutual exclusivity between Islam and the West has increased in relation to the increasing frequency of terrorism in America and Western Europe (Philips, 2009; Jackson, 2007; Spalek and Lambert, 2008; Brown and Saeed, 2015).

From a British perspective, the 7/7 London bombings brought the Muslim community under greater scrutiny than ever (Abbas, 2009; Gale, 2013). Whilst a great deal of this political probing into the Islamic community has been done under

the guise of public safety and security, the social impacts upon the British Muslim population have been somewhat neglected (ibid). Modood (2005) highlights how 'Islamophobia' has gone relatively unchallenged and uninvestigated, often being justified as the 'rational anxieties' of the British population. The connotations of having a Muslim identity can be seen to have deteriorated significantly within western society in the aftermath of such acts of terrorism, with an individual's religion becoming their defining characteristic (Peach, 2006; Gale, 2007). The small strides that had been made politically under New Labour in the late 1990s to engage with British Muslims and encourage social inclusion within a progressive society were undermined through the juxtaposing 'war on terror' (Abbas, 2009). Hopkins (2004) also highlights the role of the media in producing slanted, homogenising representations of the Islamic community. A combination then of political hostility, social anxiety and media agenda has contributed to a 'moral panic' regarding Islam in Britain (Hopkins, 2004; 2006; Dwyer et al., 2008; Gale, 2013).

Philips' (2009) edited book, entitled 'Muslim Spaces of Hope', offers a response from the academic community to this anti-Islamic rhetoric, and whilst this is by no means the limit of geography's engagement with 'Islamophobia' within Britain (see for example, Philips, 2006; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Modood, 2005; Peach, 2006; 2010; Gale, 2007; 2013), a more comprehensive research framework is required in order to address an issue of such complexity and delicacy. The volatile social consequences that have surrounded western society's response to extremist strands of religion are therefore imperative for understanding the negotiations and struggles of British Muslims.

Islamophobia is a prevalent theme within this thesis and, as such, it is imperative to define what is meant by this term. Awan (2014) describes how instances of criticism, abuse and hate crimes against Muslims are at an all-time high in the UK, largely in response to the blaming of Muslim communities for the instances of terrorism; however, he also notes how an exact definition of the term Islamophobia has become more elusive through the unprecedented typologies of its use. The Oxford English dictionary defines Islamophobia as a "dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force." Even within this definition, two contrasting understandings of Islamophobia can be extracted: (1) prejudice

against Muslims; and (2) the dislike of Islam as a global political force. Within the empirical chapter of this thesis (chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7), the use of the term Islamophobia refers exclusively to prejudicial definition, highlighting the instances of Islamophobia from everyday micro-aggressions, to severe instances of verbal or physical abuse.

2.3.3 - Religion, Identity and Islam

As was highlighted within the previous section (2.3.2.6), Islam is the most academically explored religion in recent years, perhaps due to the social and political conflicts and confrontations that have emerged across the globe (Gale, 2007). Tensions between western society and Islamic fundamentalism have given rise to a highly charged political and religious landscape. High levels of migration of Muslims to Western Europe has in itself been considered to be a threat to issues of national identity and social cohesion (Kong, 2010); however, the prominent transnational linkages that are maintained by this Islamic diaspora (Dwyer, 2000) has been seen to exacerbate these issues socially and politically (Mandaville, 2009). The transnational affiliations that diasporic Muslims have, through ideological notions of home and homeland, religious attachment to Mecca, and cultural relationship to traditional Islamic society, are all seen to stifle the process of assimilation into western society (Hopkins, 2009). This perceived mutual exclusivity of Islamic culture and western culture is seen as a primary topic of concern for the governments of Western Europe (Mandaville, 2009) and has been explored, challenged and contested within geographical research (Philips, 2009; Hopkins, 2009; Bhutto, 2014).

Gale (2007) identifies four recurrent, cross-cutting themes that are employed within geographical research into Islamic society. Firstly, community cohesion and social segregation of Muslims within western urban areas; secondly, a relationship between Islamic clothing and spatial articulation of the gendered identities of Muslims; thirdly, the contestation of space that has accompanied the rise of urban Islam architecture; and fourthly, the (trans)national politics of Muslim constructions of identity. Gale (2007) is keen to note however that despite the growing body of literature focused upon Islam within geography, a greater diversity of research is

required in order to emulate the academic contribution of religious studies, sociology and anthropology.

It is vital here to note how much of the academic literature, as well as media and political reports label 'Islamic society' as a unified, undifferentiated community. This portrayal is however simplistic and fails to explore the complexity, heterogeneity and plurality of Islamic culture. Most overtly is the division within Islam itself between Sunni and Shia Muslims; however, this is not the only theological split within Islam. As well as the theological factions, Islamic culture also varies in terms of the spatial distribution of its population, and the associated intersections of national identity. The hybridisation and social syncretism of Muslims in diaspora also leads to further heterogeneity within the Islamic community (Dwyer, 2000). Peach (2006: 353-354) reveals two rationales for this perceived homogenisation of Muslims. Firstly, a 'clash of civilisations' between Islam and the West, which, although historically entrenched, has been brought to the forefront of discussion through the recent terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7, and has led to the social and political pseudo-homogenisation of all Muslims. Secondly, and perhaps more subtly, Islam has become a reified category, used to classify an ethnically and culturally diverse group (Neilson, 2000).

Hopkins (2009: 27) reveals a false binary between the two apparently divergent cultures of 'the West' and 'the Muslim rest', highlighting an overly simplistic homogenising of these two groups within politics, media and society as a whole. Blunt and McEwan (2002) also reveal the problematic consequences of binary thinking leading to notions of self/other, superiority/inferiority and modernness/backwardness. Nagel's (2002) politics of sameness and difference has gone some way to theorising the dual processes of assimilation juxtaposed to the racial, religious and cultural discrimination within migrant communities in western society. Many scholars, such as Halliday (1999), Modood (2003) and Hopkins (2009) are quick to point out how the simplistic binary fails to engage with the heterogeneity and hybridity of individuals. The internal diversity and spectrum of cultures within both categories of the West and of Islam can be seen to erode any notions of inherent incompatibility between these two cultures. Peach (2006: 354) writes that "identity is nested and contingent", highlighting how Islamic identities are simultaneously embedded in a global Islamic community and subject

to the cross-cultural negotiations of an individual. This expression of a hybridisation offers a scalar insight into the complexity of constructing an identity transcends national boundaries.

Mills' (2009) examination of Muslim citizenship within British society reveals several poignant issues regarding the complex construction of identity for young Muslims in Britain: their engagement with both formal and informal organisations, and the perceived mutual exclusivity of Western and Islamic cultures. The engagement of Muslims with institutional spaces in civil society can therefore be seen as important sites of contact between the supposedly binary ideologies of Western society and Islamic society, where negotiations and dialogues of cohesion can be set in motion.

Gale (2013) highlights how the integration and segregation of British Muslims has gained sustained attention within both the public and political domains. A 'moral panic' concerning the perceived mutual exclusivity of an Islamic identity with British values and ideals (Dwyer et al., 2008; Hopkins, 2006) has been exaggerated in recent years through the reinforcement of Islamophobic representations of young Muslim males in the wake of high profile terrorist events in western society (Gale, 2013; Abbas, 2009). The renewed attention within public policy regarding Islamic segregation has stimulated an equally focused and feverish academic debate within geography (Peach, 2006; 2009; 2010; Phillips, 2006; 2007; 2010; Simpson 2004; 2005; 2007a; 2007b; Finney and Simpson, 2009).

The burgeoning research into Islamic communities and identities is in constant need of self-reflection. Mills and Gokariksel (2014) offer a warning to this effect, questioning the Euro-American focus which has dominated the academic landscape. They argue that a need to look beyond the Western-centric perspectives will promote a diversification of the current narrow set of research priorities within geography. This thesis, by exploring the lives of young British Muslims, somewhat fails to expand the literature in this regard; however, an awareness of the wider landscape of research is imperative throughout this thesis as the 'glocal' scale of the volunteering and charity work within this research

project are also deeply embedded within the shifting structures of global Islamic geopolitics.

2.3.4 - Religion within this Thesis

As an emergent area of research, the study of religion within geography inevitably has numerous lacunae that need to be addressed. The neglect of these areas of research should not however be lamented, but instead inspire a fresh engagement with vigour and energy. The relative immaturity of the study of religion (compared, for example, with race or gender) within geography can be argued to be a potential strength of the sub-discipline moving forwards. This thesis therefore has much to contribute to the geographies of religion, bringing new perspectives to the study of Islam within a UK context.

A focus to the 'everyday' geographies of religion has burgeoned in recent years (Dwyer, 2016; Kong, 2010), challenging geography's orthodox focus upon the 'officially sacred' (Kong, 2005). The prominence that religion plays in the everyday practices and performances of individuals has gained clear recognition within geographical research. The everyday facets of religion are explored within this thesis through the interaction between religion and the practices, performances and experiences of young Muslims volunteers, examining the extent to which these interactions can impact upon negotiations of identity.

The complex interface between different aspects of social difference is central to this thesis. The intersectional approach to the study of Islam within the work of Dwyer (1999a; 1999b; 2000; Dwyer et al., 2008) and Hopkins (2004; 2006; 2007) provides a useful framework for understanding the wider social structures that shape the lives and identities of young British Muslims.

2.4- Intersections of Youth, Volunteering and Religion within this Thesis

This thesis brings together the themes of youth, volunteering and religion, building upon the vibrant bodies of literature within each of these areas that have been discussed within this chapter. This literature review, though providing an individual focus on each of these themes in turn, has remained cognisant of the overlaps, intersections and cross-cutting motifs that thread these research arenas together. Notions of citizenship and identity transcend these themes of youth, volunteering

and religion, drawing this literature review together. Analysis of both the historical and contemporary research within this chapter highlights the timely and salient nature of this research project.

By exploring the narratives of young Muslim volunteers, this thesis contributes to the empirical scholarship within the literature on youth, volunteering and religion through four research questions:

- RQ1.** What is the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham?
- RQ2.** What pathways do young Muslims take to become volunteers?
- RQ3.** What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?
- RQ4.** How does volunteering shape the identities of young Muslims?

The following chapter outlines the methodological approach that was devised in order to explore these research questions thoroughly and effectively.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research project was designed to examine the landscape of volunteering amongst Muslims between the ages of 18-25 in Birmingham, UK, exploring the practices, motivations, experiences and identities of young Muslim volunteers. A triangulation approach was taken within this thesis, using mixed methods to create a range of data, designed to provide valuable insights into the diverse sphere of youth volunteering in Muslim communities. This chapter outlines the methodology that was executed in order to create comprehensive insights into the lives of young Muslim volunteers.

A total of 382 questionnaires made up the quantitative element of the methodology. This relatively extensive data set enabled the broader picture of youth volunteering within Muslim communities in Birmingham to be encapsulated. This then allowed the intensive interview data to be situated within the wider context. A series of 36 individual and paired interviews with 45 Muslims between the ages of 18-25 comprised the qualitative data set. The combination of one-to-one interviews and paired interviews were designed to produce a rich and in-depth picture of youth volunteering from the perspective of different Muslim volunteers. The data collection process took place over the course of one year in order to capture a variety of events across the Islamic calendar.

This chapter is made up of five sections. Section 3.1 discusses the motivation and justification for choosing Birmingham as a study site, outlining its unique socio-spatial context. The rationale for the specific locations within Birmingham is also discussed. Section 3.2 outlines the preparation and planning processes that were involved in the data collection, outlining how the questionnaire survey and interview structure were designed in conjunction with one another to build an in-depth a picture of youth volunteering in Muslim communities. Section 3.3 describes the data collection process and discusses how access was gained to the Muslim volunteers. Positionality, reflexivity and ethics were of utmost importance throughout the course of the data collection and appear as considerations throughout this chapter; however, Section 3.4 specifically addresses some of the key ethical considerations within this thesis. The final section within this chapter (section 3.5) outlines the analysis of the primary data

and how the data sets can be brought together to inform a vibrant and knowledgeable discussion.

3.1 - Case Study Sites

Youth volunteering within Muslim communities can be seen across the UK, and indeed the world. However, the choice to focus on a specific area in which to base the research was necessary within this thesis. The aims of the research are intensive, looking to offer in-depth insights into the highly complex and personal realities of youth volunteering, therefore research on a larger scale would not have been possible given the available resources, or without losing a level of depth and insight within the research. Therefore, comparative multi-site research would have been too extensive for this thesis. The decision to focus the research in the city of Birmingham multifaceted. Whilst several cities in the UK are hubs of vibrant Muslim communities and hives of youth volunteering, none offered a more relevant, interesting and dynamic study site as Birmingham. Accordingly, this section will present a rationale for selecting Birmingham as a study site.

Birmingham is a city of juxtapositions: it is simultaneously affluent and deprived; modernised and historical; cultured and synthetic; religious and secular; and, perhaps most relevant for this thesis, Birmingham is seen as a microcosm of British society whilst simultaneously being depicted as foreign, 'other' and extreme. These contrasting images of Birmingham can be seen clearly within mainstream media. Sensationalist news headlines, such as "*Jihadist plot to take over city schools*" (Express, 2014); "*Nine year old Schoolboy is Jihadi Extremist*" (DailyMail, 2013); and "*So how did Birmingham become the jihadi capital of Britain?*" (DailyMail, 2017) completely contradict the everyday and mundane headlines of Birmingham as an 'ordinary' and 'British' city: "*How Birmingham plans to stop parking on grass verges*" (Birmingham Mail, 2016) and "*Birmingham New Street station unveils long-awaited makeover*" (Guardian, 2015). These conflicting notions of 'ordinary' versus 'extreme' sets Birmingham up as a site of interest, particularly in relation to the large Muslim communities that live in the city (discussed later within this section). Birmingham can therefore be seen to offer a relevant and stimulating case study site to address this thesis' research questions due to its unique socio-spatial composition and its politically charged landscape.

As highlighted above, Birmingham's Muslim population has been the subject of a series of political controversies within recent years, played out across the media. 'Operation Trojan Horse', where a number of inner city Birmingham schools were accused of being taken over by Muslim fundamentalists, was just one in a succession of controversial news stories involving Birmingham's Muslim community. The Trojan Horse story emerged following revelations that Birmingham City Council were investigating a number of schools after receiving an anonymous letter referring to a plot by Muslim groups to install governors at schools (BBC, 2015), and whilst stories surrounding this 'Muslim takeover' of Birmingham schools continued to grab the headlines well into 2015, recent revelations that the entire case was 'based on misinformation' (Guardian, 2016) have failed to resonate as loudly. This notion of an 'Islamising agenda', though continually refuted and controverted, has had significant impacts on perceptions of Muslim communities in Birmingham, and beyond.

The continual scrutiny of Birmingham's Muslim population has been much more than purely a media phenomenon, with government introducing CCTV cameras in Sparkbrook and Washwood Heath in order to track and monitor the Muslim majority population (Mail Online, 2010). The introduction of more than 200 cameras was done covertly and was funded by a national counter-terrorism grant. Following heavy criticism from local councillors and residents, the cameras were covered with plastic bags to "assure the residents" that the cameras were not in use. However, according to Councillor Salma Yaqoob, "It's going to take a lot more than plastic bags [to regain the trust of local residents]." (Mail Online, 2010). Even more recently, the connection between Birmingham and extremism has been put in the media spotlight: a US terrorism expert described Birmingham as a 'totally Muslim' city where non-Muslims 'simply don't go' (Fox News, 2014), and although the former Prime Minister David Cameron was quick to dismiss him as 'a complete idiot', Cameron himself has highlighted the need for Birmingham's Muslim population to challenge the lack of integration, as he described this as a primary route to extremism in his speech on terrorism in Birmingham in 2015 (Telegraph, 2015).

This depiction of Birmingham as a city of divisions and tension, especially between the Muslim population and 'the rest' offers a turbulent backdrop from which to

examine youth volunteering in Muslim communities. It is, however, important to note that whilst the vast majority of mainstream media and politics have depicted Birmingham's Muslim population in a pejorative light, many positive stories have not reached the wider community. For example, the celebration of Eid al-Fitr 2016 saw many Muslims in Small Heath reach out to unite the community with a gathering of 88,000 Muslims and non-Muslims alike (Guardian, 2016). In a time where Islamophobic hate crimes are at an all-time high (increasing by 200% in 2015), not just in Birmingham, but across the UK (Tell MAMA, 2015), events such as these have sought to strength community ties across differences in religion and ethnicity.

Birmingham has one of the highest Muslim populations in Britain, both in terms of percentage of the population and raw numbers (UK Census, 2011). Over 1 in 5 people in Birmingham that responded to the 2011 Census identified themselves as Muslim, making Islam the 2nd largest religion in Birmingham. The city is ranked 9th for the proportion of respondents stating they were Muslim, behind 4 London authorities, Bradford, Luton, Slough and Leicester. However, the number of Muslims living in Birmingham was far greater than any other Local Authority District. At 234,411, the number of Muslims in Birmingham was almost twice the number found in Bradford (129,041), ranked 2nd for number of Muslims (UK Census, 2011). The distribution of Muslims within Birmingham is not equal, with wards such as Bordesley Green, Sparkbrook and Washwood Heath having populations of over 70% Muslim, and more than three times the city average. This is also reflected by the high concentration of Mosques within these wards. Birmingham has a total of 156 Mosques, ranging in their capacities from 10 to 6000 people. The Mosques also vary in terms of their religious denomination or 'theme', the most common of these being Deobandi, Bareilvi, Salafi and, to a lesser extent, Twelvers. However, the majority of Mosques do not explicitly state the fraction or denomination to which they adhere. Most British Mosques are open to all and are used by diverse groups of Muslims. Contradictorily, each Mosque usually is managed in accordance with a specific school of thought and often project clear indications of appropriate practices that are accepted (M.I.B, 2016). They also contrast in the ethnicities of their congregations, with Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Arabic being the most common (UK Census, 2011).

A decision to use Mosques as sites of entry, as opposed to voluntary organisations or charities, was carefully considered. This choice had many benefits as well as challenges. Initial difficulties included finding up to date websites or email addresses in order to establish a connection with the Mosques. Establishing contacts with members of the Mosques with the authority to give access was also a difficult process. Creating contacts with the Mosques was much more successful during a series of visits in person. The (often voluntary) staff were, on the whole, interested in the research project, and put me in direct contact with members of the Mosque with whom access could be authorised. The benefits of using Mosques as sites of entry were manifold. The removal of a bias toward researching student volunteers was a deliberate choice within this project and was achieved by gaining participants through sites unconnected with higher education. Whilst this could similarly have been achieved by using Muslim charities or voluntary organisation as entry points, the use of Mosques did not presuppose a bias towards formal channels of volunteering. Other benefits include the ability to gain a roughly proportional sample, by controlling the number of Mosques selected within areas of different levels of deprivation; within communities of different predominant ethnicities; and Mosques of different denominations (see appendix 3).

There are 162 Mosques in Birmingham according to the latest government statistics (MiB, 2017). From this parent population of 162 Mosques, 25 were carefully selected for the questionnaire survey. Of these 25 Mosques, 5 either could not be contacted, could not find a gatekeeper with the appropriate authority, or refused to take part in the research entirely. Resultantly, a final sample size of 20 Mosques was utilised within this research project. The Mosques were selected to roughly correlate to the ratio of the UK as a whole, with a slight bias towards Shia Mosques (explained below). However, this was highly problematic as (as was previously stated) many Mosques do not overtly claim a specific denomination. At a simplistic level, the majority of Mosques in the UK affiliate to Bareilvi and Deobandi Islam (both of which are Sunni denomination) and less than 5% of UK Mosques openly belong to a Shia denomination. The Mosques selected within this research project were corresponding mainly Deobandi and Bareilvi (13 of 20 Mosques). The number of Shia Mosques was also deliberately increased from the national average to ensure that there would be enough Shia participants to make

the data statistically viable (3 of 20 Mosques). The final four Mosques had unspecified affiliations (Table 3.1). Each of the 20 selected Mosques had a capacity greater than the mean of all Birmingham Mosques. The decision to focus upon the medium and large Mosques over smaller capacity Mosques was multifaceted. It allowed a larger potential sample of participants to be reached without exceeding the time and resources available to the researcher. There was also far less reliable data about the smaller Mosques due to their less frequent opening times and their debatable position as 'official' places of worship within government and Census records.

Table 3.1: *Madhhabs*³ of Mosques in relation to Nation Average

<i>Madhhabs</i>	Estimated percentage of the National Average	Number of Mosques
Deobandi	45%	7
Barelvi	30%	6
Sunni (Other)	15%	3
Twelver	3%	2
Zaidi	1%	0
Ismaili	1%	1
Other	5%	1

The 20 Mosques are located within 12 different wards in Birmingham (Figure 3.1). The 12 wards (Aston; Bordesley Green; Hodge Hill; Ladywood; Lozells and east Handsworth; Moseley and King's Heath; Nechells; Soho; South Yardley; Sparkbrook; Springfield; Washwood Heath) correlate significantly with the distribution of large Muslim communities in Birmingham and the majority of these wards had significantly higher percentages of Muslims than the city average (Appendix 3). The wards vary significantly in terms of their levels of deprivation: Moseley and Kings Heath has only 24% of its population in the 10% most deprived SOAs⁴ in England, whereas Washwood Heath, Sparkbrook and Lozells and East

³ Madhhabs is the Arabic term for 'school of law' and is used to refer to the denomination of Islam. All of the Arabic and Islamic terminology used within this thesis has a footnote to explain the term on its first usage. The glossary of terms contains a complete list of these terms and their meanings.

⁴ Super Output Areas (SOAs) were developed by the 'Office of National Statistics' in order to recognise "pockets" of deprivation within wards. For each SOA, data on income, employment, health, education, housing and crime are collated to build up a high-resolution map of deprivation.

Handsworth all have more than 90% of their populations within the 10% most deprived SOAs. This stark contrast in levels of deprivation was purposely introduced in order to assess any potential differences between landscapes of youth volunteering in Muslim communities of different levels of affluence.

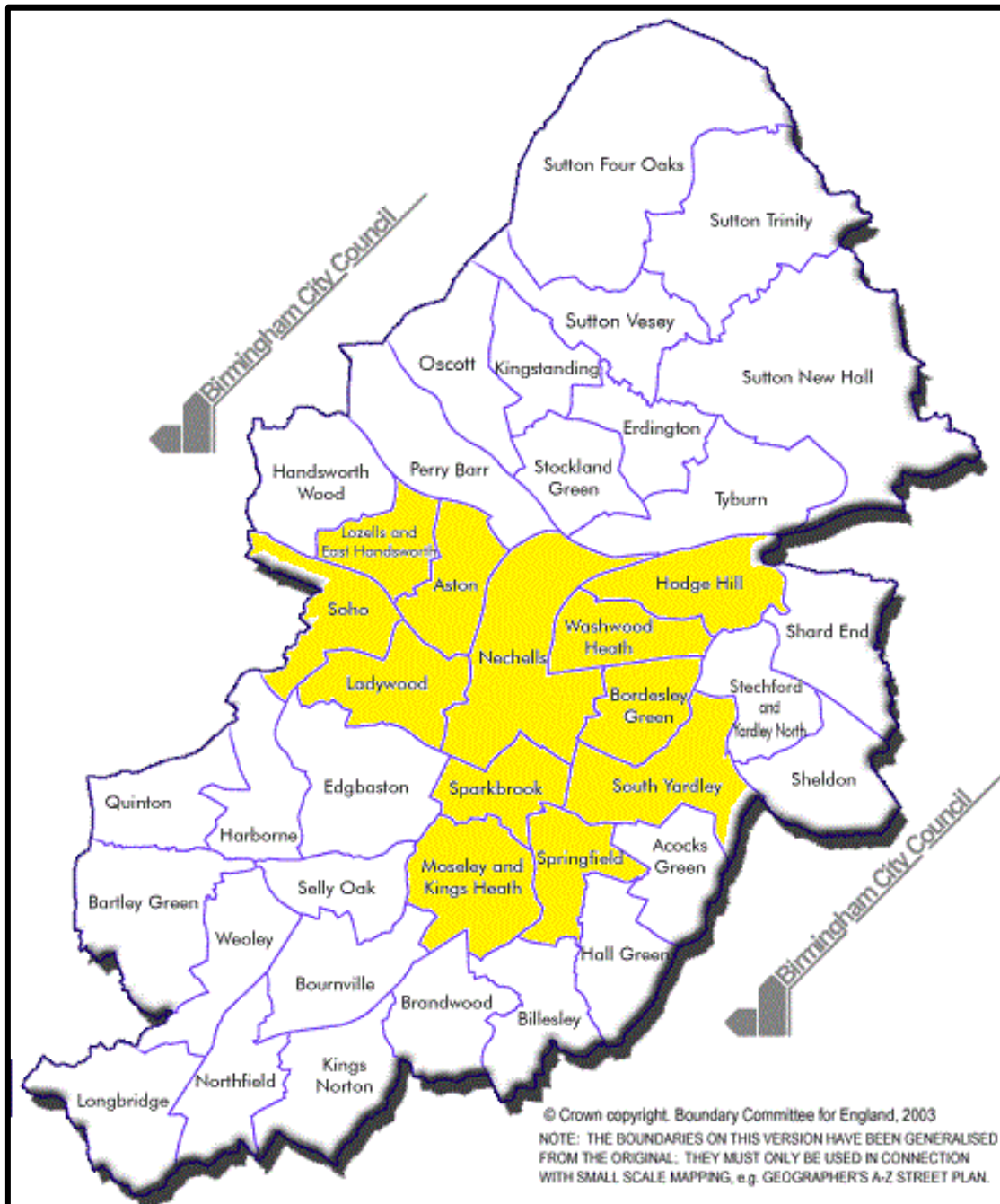


Figure 3.1: Location of the 12 Birmingham wards in which the research was situated. (Source: Birmingham City Council (2003). Available at: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20057/about_birmingham/665/wards_and_constituencies).

3.2 - Preparation and Planning

Hodge (1995: 426) described a division between quantitative and qualitative methods as "a form of intellectual hardening that closes minds, restricts insight, and undermines our collective understanding." Instead, methods should be varied and flexible enough to capture the diversity and dynamism of the world around us (Clifford et al., 2010; Yeager and Steiger, 2013; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Since Hodge's (1995) call for a greater dialogue between quantitative and qualitative data, mixed methods research has become increasingly commonplace within human geography and the social sciences (Cresswell, 2009; 2013), causing Bryman (2006) to describe the combination of quantitative and qualitative research as 'unremarkable' in recent years. Others have gone further, describing mixed methods approaches as a 'third paradigm' for social research (Denscombe, 2008; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This popularity of utilising a mixed methods approach is often justified through the argument that mixed methods can be used to build a more comprehensive picture of the research than either qualitative or quantitative methods could individually (Johnson et al., 2007). Archibald (2015) highlights how a triangulation of mixed methods can be particularly valuable in its capacity to contribute to understandings about complex social and cultural phenomena. However, whilst the benefits of using a mixed methods approach are widely recognised, a strong dialogue between the qualitative and quantitative methods must be maintained throughout the design and planning stage, as well as into the data collection and analysis phases of the research. If the two sides of the research become distinct from one another, then any benefits of a mixed methods approach are negated as a triangulation of the data can become problematic (Youngs and Piggot-Irvine, 2012). This section will go on to outline the design and planning process for the mixed methods approach within this thesis.

A questionnaire survey was designed, refined and distributed in order to encapsulate the volunteering practices of as many 18-25 year-old Muslims as possible from the 20 Mosques within this project. The questionnaires (Appendix 1) went through several phases of development. Feedback from departmental staff with considerable experience of using questionnaire surveys informed evolutions

of the structure and ordering; aesthetics and layout; as well as wording of the questions themselves. The questionnaire was also piloted by 13 Birmingham-based Muslims, some of whom became gatekeepers for future research participants. The feedback they gave informed several minor edits to the questionnaire in terms of language and terminology (for example, the separation of different types of charitable giving, such as Sadaqah and Zakat) and the refinement of the options for some multiple-choice questions. Additional compromises of aesthetics and layout also had to be carefully considered in order for the questionnaire to flow smoothly and easily as an A4 sized document, and A5 sized booklet and also as an online document. These different formats enabled the questionnaires to be distributed in a variety of settings and contexts as efficiently as possible.

The questionnaire was comprised of exactly 20 questions (see appendix 1), each of which was designed to extract useful information in relation to the research questions (McLafferty, 2010) and to facilitate a comparison with the interview data. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the volunteering practices of the participants, looking specifically at the types of volunteering in which they partake and the regularity in which they volunteer. The second section of the questionnaire focused more on the motivations and experiences of volunteering. The use of ranking questions in conjunction with open questions allowed for the views of the participants to be expanded upon. Although the primary aim of the questionnaire survey was to gain a broad picture of the landscape of youth volunteering in Muslim communities, the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the opinions of the volunteers would give some context to the quantitative data. The final section of the questionnaire was designed to extract more personal information about the participants, enabling patterns between different aspects of social difference to be analysed. This section also allowed the sample to be assessed in relation to the parent population in order to maintain a representative sample. The questionnaire had a final option to leave contact details for if the respondents were willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

The design of the interview structure (Appendix 2) was developed with this thesis's research questions at the forefront. The multiple drafts and evolutions of the questions were refined with the purpose of enabling the interviewees to be able to

impart as much information about the areas of interest as clearly and straightforwardly as possible. The language used was simple and a particular emphasis was made to avoid any unnecessary academic jargon (Longhurst, 2010). The questions were intentionally short and direct so as to avoid any potential confusion or misunderstanding, therefore allowing interviewees every opportunity to respond as fully as they could. In contrast to this direct approach, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed scope for the respondents to discuss themes and ideas that had not been accounted for in the questions and giving them the freedom to elaborate on issues they felt to be important (Valentine, 2005; Silverman, 1993). This fluid, conversational feel to the interviews was intentionally designed so as not to 'lead' the interviewees to specific conclusions, but instead giving them the freedom to express their perspectives on their own realities and experiences of volunteering (Longhurst, 2010).

The questions within the interview structure were divided into different themed sections (see Appendix 2). This thematic approach was designed to allow a greater amount of flexibility within the interviews, whereby if responses led the interview to a new area within the given subject matter it could be pursued 'off-piste'. This style of 'conversation with a purpose' was particularly valuable given the researcher's positionality as a non-Muslim, giving the participants the freedom to bring up topics perhaps overlooked within the interview design (Longhurst, 2010; Valentine, 2005; discussed more fully in section 3.5). Each of the themes within the interview structure also corresponded with different sections of the questionnaire, allowing for a cross comparison between the two data sets to be analysed.

In addition to these tangible preparations of question content, style and structure, some more subtle – though equally important – considerations of positionality needed to be reflected on. Although commonalities of age between researcher and participant reduced some of the more intensive institutional ethical checks that would have been essential for working with children or other vulnerable groups, a myriad of complex ethical considerations still needed to be addressed (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). Power relations between the researcher and the participant would naturally vary within each different interview; however, efforts to mitigate any potential power gradients were made in every situation (Anyan, 2013).

A prominent example of this complex researcher-participant relationship emerged through the process of deciding to use a combination of both one-to-one interviews, as well as paired interviews. Within some interpretations of Islam, it would be inappropriate for a female Muslim to be alone with a male, regardless of age, religion or ethnicity. In other situations, it was familial or cultural ideology that prohibited a one-to-one interview with a member of the opposite sex. Furthermore, some participants may have felt uncomfortable in a one-to-one interview regardless of gender or other aspects of social difference. To mitigate these unacceptable situations, the idea of an adult to chaperone the participant was initially constructed to increase the ease at which the interviewees felt and to alleviate the concerns that the participants - or the people around them - may have had. However, a potential issue with the idea of an adult chaperone was that a different power gradient could emerge between the chaperone and the participant, thus affecting the responses of the participants. The idea to use paired interviews therefore developed as a reaction to the potential difficulties that could have been caused by a chaperoned interview. Paired interviews would allow interviewees to act as a chaperone to one another with the additional benefit of a feeling of comfort and security of being with someone they knew and trusted. Not only did this militate against any external pressures or sense of being judged in their responses, but it also allowed for the participants to 'spark' off each other and create vibrant discussion around the interview questions.

3.3 – Data Collection

The data collection was carried out within two overlapping phases: (1) distributing questionnaires and (2) carrying out individual and paired interviews. The empirical research took place over the course of a year, from September 2015 to August 2016. The rationale for using an annual timeframe for the research was both strategic and necessary. It was strategic in the sense that an annual timescale would allow the variety of key dates within the Islamic calendar to be encapsulated. Most obviously, perhaps, would be the month of Ramadan and Eid Ul Adha, but also Eid Ul Fitr, Al Hijra (Islamic New Year) and Milad Un Nabi (Prophet Mohammed's birthday), amongst many others. Each of these events has special significance for Muslims across the world, and has potentially substantial implications for the landscapes of volunteering and charity work within Muslim

communities in the UK. The timeframe for the data collection was also necessarily lengthy due to the diverse pathways that were required in order to gain access to suitable participants. The entry points which enabled me to speak to Muslims between the ages of 18-25 in Birmingham were flexible and continually shifting. The metaphor of a 'snowballing' of interviewees does not accurately represent the diverse and varied ways in which new participants were discovered, approached, engaged with and enrolled as participants.

The gathering of questionnaire data ran parallel to the series of interviews, with each impacting upon the other. The questionnaire survey not only revealed a number of suitable interviewees, but also informed some of the discussions that arose within these interviews. Some of the interviewees also encouraged friends to respond to the questionnaire, resulting in a positive feedback loop.

A total of 382 questionnaires were collected from Muslims between the ages of 18-25, each of whom were affiliated to one of the identified Mosques within this survey. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire survey was not without difficulties, meaning that the methods and techniques for data collection needed to be flexible and creative at times. The 20 selected Mosques were first contacted via email in order to inform them about the research and establish an initial contact. The responses were sporadic, varying from positive and forthcoming, to no response at all. A second interaction with each Mosque was made in person, making contact with a staff member at the Mosques. This personal approach was much more successful, as access was granted to each of the Mosques. The questionnaires were initially distributed within the Mosques being left in the reception areas; however, this passive method of distribution yielded very few responses. A more active approach to the data collection was therefore adopted. The majority of the questionnaire survey was accumulated through several spikes of activity through attending different events that were organised by the Mosques that occurred throughout the year.

Attending a variety of events organised by different Mosques and Birmingham-based Islamic charities also allowed for a greater depth of insight into the everyday processes, interactions and relationships within youth volunteering in Muslim communities. This grounded perspective was drawn upon throughout the data

collection process, informing discussions within interviews and (re)shaping the relationship between the participant and researcher. Getting to know many of the volunteers at these events was vital for building and maintaining a rapport with them. These events therefore had significant impacts upon the positionality of the researcher. Rather than being viewed as an outsider, the researcher became regarded, not as a complete 'insider', but as someone who could be trusted and who shared a common interest in volunteering. Whilst this deep engagement with the young volunteers at such events cannot be claimed to be a full ethnographic method, it did supplement both the interview and questionnaire data. Reflecting on these experiences brought a new level of understanding and appreciation of the complex, plural and dynamic expressions of youth volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham.

Gaining access to potential interviewees was diverse. The most common method of engaging with interviewees initially came through gatekeepers at the 20 Mosques used within the questionnaire survey. These gatekeepers came in various forms, ranging from Imams and Mosque officials to voluntary staff and youth leaders. As the data collection process continued, the use of gatekeepers reduced due to the suggestions of interviewees from other sources becoming more widespread. A number of the respondents from the questionnaire survey left their details and stated that they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. The number of interviewees who were engaged with through the questionnaires naturally increased over time, with more questionnaires being completed creating a higher chance for new interviewees to be uncovered. A small number of interviewees were discovered through recommendations by friends or family members. The limited number of participants gained through this traditional snowballing process was restricted at least in part due to the specific selection criteria within this thesis. Many potential respondents had to be rejected on account of their geographical location (for example, many potential participants from different cities were suggested) or due to their age falling outside of the 18-25 years cut off. One final method of reaching new participants came through attending different events throughout the year. These events, organised by Mosques and Islamic charities, ranged from charity fundraisers to community interfaith meetings.

Once the potential interviewees had first been engaged with, a number of considerations had to be addressed. The first and most important issue was to ensure that the participant was happy to arrange an interview. In order for the participants to make this decision, they were provided with a participant information document (Appendix 4), explaining information about the research and the researcher; about the anonymity of the data, and about their rights throughout the process. If, having read the information document, the participant wished to take part in the research project, an informed consent form was signed by both researcher and participant (Appendix 5). The choice as to whether the participant would prefer a one-to-one interview or a paired interview was then discussed. The location for the interviews was left to the decision of the participant(s), enabling them to choose either a private or public space. These spaces varied significantly, including meeting rooms in Mosques, work offices and cafes. These spaces needed to be comfortable and secure, as well as accessible and convenient for the interviewees. Carrying out the interviews in a setting that allowed the participants to feel relaxed was of great importance for yielding responses that were natural and instinctive, rather than pressured in any sense. Elwood and Martin (2000) observe how the microgeographies of interview spaces can have tangible influences on the interviews themselves, and giving the participants the freedom of choice can create a feeling of empowerment.

In total, 45 Muslims between the ages of 18-25 were interviewed within 36 interviews, 9 of which were paired interviews (Table 2). There was a deliberate attempt to get a roughly 50:50 split of male and female participants in order to keep the sample representative. 73% of the interviewees were Sunni and 22% were Shia. This ratio of participants does not directly reflect the proportion of 95% Sunni: 5% Shia split within the UK (Census, 2011); however the boosted number of Shia interviewees was intentionally incorporated so that the perspective of Shia volunteers could be captured more comprehensively. It is important here to note that whilst the notions of 'Sunni' and 'Shia' perspectives and ideologies are discussed in this chapter, there are a myriad of divisions within these denominations of Islam. Therefore, to categorise these denominations as homogenous groups is both simplistic and problematic, and is a generalisation that this thesis tries to strongly detach itself from within the data analysis.

3.4 - Positionality and reflexivity

Whilst considerations of positionality and power relations have been touched upon throughout this chapter, it is important to address these delicate issues in detail. The reflections that emerged throughout the data collection process were highly situated and context specific, however this does not isolate them from wider debates within geography, and they are therefore discussed here in relation to surrounding literature on positionality and reflexivity.

In 2015, Berger stipulated that:

“Researchers need to increasingly focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity; better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge; carefully self monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the universal.” (2015: 2).

In order to be reflexive about one’s own position and situatedness within research it is imperative for the researcher to turn the focus of attention onto themselves (Berger, 2015). This self-reflection should not however be purely academic, but should transform the nature of the research from a unilateral form of knowledge production, to become a continual feedback of critical self-awareness during the entire research process: from the construction of aims and objectives, to the collection and interpretation of data (Cloke et al., 2000). This active process of self-reflection and adjustment is seen to enhance research quality and reduce bias, allowing for a sense of trustworthiness within the project (Rose, 1997; Berger, 2015). It is also imperative to note here that “no research is free of the biases, assumptions, and personality of the researcher” (Sword, 1999: 277) and the researcher can never fully detach themselves from the research; however, a sense of moral and ethical responsibility should prevail.

A continual reflexivity was particularly pertinent within this thesis, due at least in part to the fact that the vast majority of research into British Asian communities has been conducted by white males (Bulmer and Solomos, 2004; Fletcher, 2010). Whilst this fact does not invalidate the research, it does raise questions of ethics, of access and of appropriate practice. However, discussions of positionality are all

too ready to create an insider–outsider dichotomy, whereby a few overt characteristics are seen to determine this status. In reality however, there are a multitude of commonalities and differences that are found between the researcher and each individual participant (Hamzeh and Oliver, 2010). Race, gender, age, (dis)ability, sexuality, nationality and religion are perhaps the most commonly cited of these determinants; however, these categorisations can be overly simplistic, neglecting the minutia of commonalities including, at the most basic level, the humanity that is shared between researcher and participant. It is therefore not sufficient to say here that this researcher's identity as a white British non-Muslim removes the authenticity of the project, nor is it appropriate to assume that commonalities, such as age, will presume to initiate a viable relationship between researcher and participant. Fletcher (2010: 15) calls for a 'third space' along the insider-outsider spectrum, where "statuses are shared, partial, fluid and, contingent: where one's identities collaborate to create new, more nuanced knowledges that accept the inevitability of their own limitations." A balance is then required between acceptance of difference, understanding of culture and context, and embracing points of commonality.

Within this research project, perhaps the two most evident differences between the researcher and the participants were religion and ethnicity, and whilst these aspects of social difference needed to be considered carefully, they by no means define the researcher's categorisation as an 'outsider'. An understanding of Islam was vital within this thesis, not only in relation to the academic integrity of the research, but also as an emotional and empathetic connection between the researcher and the participants. Many other considerations therefore had to be taken account of and implemented throughout the data collection. These could be as simple as not suggesting meeting in a café for an interview during Ramadan; greeting male and female participants appropriately; and being aware of prayer times when scheduling the interviews. Other considerations were subtler and less tangible. Though these actions appear obvious, they were vitally important in building and maintain a rapport with the participants.

Many commonalities and parallels between the researcher and the participants also shaped the relations within the interviews. Similarities of age; growing up in a household with an Abrahamic faith; and sharing an interest and a passion for

volunteering all provided points of commonality and mutual understanding. Whilst any positionality will inherently affect the relations between the researcher and participants, it is vital to be aware of these subtle dynamics and fine-tune them in order to build and maintain a trust and openness, conducive for producing stimulating two-way dialogue.

The notion of 'entry' within research with human participants has often been described in relation to an initial access point that, once it has been achieved, is then pervasive within the research. In reality, however, this acceptance is continually negotiated through the building of trust and understanding in a two-way relationship between researcher and participant (Hamzeh and Oliver, 2010; Fletcher, 2010). Many of the gatekeepers and participants within this thesis were active within the research process, and to some extent, invested in the research. For the gatekeepers to place significant trust in the researcher to grant access to potential respondents required a strong rapport to be built and a mutual understanding of one another's positions. Many relationships with the respondents were equally two-way, with the interviewees often asking questions of the researcher regarding their motivations for carrying out the research on this particular subject. 'Youth volunteering in Muslim communities' as a subject could therefore be argued to be another mutual point of interest between the participant and the researcher. These bilateral relationships could not then be merely discarded once that section of data collection was completed; therefore regular contact regarding progress of the research was often maintained with many of the participants and gatekeepers beyond the timeframe of the empirical research.

Understanding the social, cultural and emotional ideologies of the participants informed the content of the interview discussion, as well as the format in which these interviews take place. As previously highlighted, within some strands of Islam, it would be unacceptable for a male researcher to be alone with a female participant, regardless of age, ethnicity or religion. In order to address this within the research, two potential solutions were taken to mitigate these issues. Firstly, the use of an open space for the interviews to take place allowed both the researcher and participant to be within full view of a guardian figure. These spaces ranged from public spaces, such as a local café, to a meeting room within a Mosque. Secondly, as was discussed within section 3.3, the use of paired

interviews was employed, whereby the two participants were interviewed together, each acting as a chaperone to the other. This technique had the added attraction that it did not require an adult chaperone in a position of power, which could have had potential to influence the responses of the participants. These considerations were not purely religious and therefore each interview needed to be considered within a wider social and cultural context.

The practicalities of these intricate issues inevitably played out in a complex and dynamic fashion as this research project developed. Therefore, having an honest and applied reflexivity throughout the process was essential to the authenticity of the research. Reflection on the tangled nexus of differences and commonalities that shape the relationship between the researcher and participants, and recognition of the tangible impacts that these interactions can have on the research outcomes was imperative throughout the data collection process.

3.5 – Data Analysis

This section outlines the processes of data input and analysis within this thesis. The various analytical techniques utilised within the quantitative data are outlined, offering a rationale for the statistical testing that was undertaken (section 3.5.1). The use of thematic coding through the analysis software 'Nvivo 11' for the qualitative data is then discussed, highlighting the key processes involved (section 3.5.2). Finally, a brief discussion of how these two contrasting data sets were cross-analysed effectively, transforming raw data into a useful and usable resource for investigating the aims of this research project (section 3.5.3).

The quantitative and qualitative datasets were both analysed as the research took place rather than waiting until after the research was concluded. Analysing the data 'on-the-go' had multiple benefits. As well as breaking up this labour-intensive aspect of the research into manageable chunks, it also allowed for a critical reflection of the data to influence the latter stages of the data collection. Whilst no major adjustments needed to be made as a result of reflections from the early data collection, several small tweaks and minor adjustments allowed the research to be fine-tuned. For example, the wording of some of the questions within the interviews was refined in order to make them less 'academic' and more easily understandable for the participants. An immediate understanding of the

preliminary results offered the opportunity to inform some of the discussions within the later interviews. For example, responses from the 'open' questions from the questionnaire were often used to trigger discussions with the later interviews, comparing whether their experiences of volunteering mapped onto the thoughts and opinions of others.

3.5.1 - Quantitative Analysis

The analysis of the quantitative data was carried out using 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (henceforth, SPSS). SPSS is a relatively user-friendly programme, which enables large volumes of data to be processed and analysed quickly and easily (Bryman and Cramer, 2002). The software is a powerful data analysis tool that enables statistical tests, such as chi squared and student t tests to be carried out, as well as providing simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means and modes to be calculated. (McKendrick, 2010).

A data matrix was constructed within this statistical data analysis software. The matrix allowed the quantitative data from the questionnaires to be input using coded values. For example, 'Question 11' of the questionnaire (see appendix 1) asks "What is your gender?". The responses of 'male' and 'female' were then assigned the values 1 and 2. A blank response was coded with the universal value for 'no data', 999. Inputting the responses of the questionnaires as coded numerical values allows the data to be analysed effectively using the vast array of tools within SPSS (Coakes and Steed, 2009).

The coded data was initially analysed for descriptive statistics using tools embedded within the software itself, providing raw values, averages and percentages for each question, or each 'category' of respondents. Simple cross tabulations were also calculated, showing relationships between two variables to be assessed. After these surface level statistics had been extracted from each question from the questionnaire, a more in-depth analysis was undertaken in order to explore the significance of facets of religious denomination and social difference upon the way in which the young Muslims within this research engage with volunteering.

The most common statistical test that was utilised within this research was a Chi Squared Test. This statistical test examines whether two variables are related (Norusis, 2006). An example from this research could be to analyse whether there is any relationship between gender and whether a participant volunteers. Simply put, the Chi Squared Test compares the expected values (in this case, equal proportions of males and female are 'expected' to volunteer and not volunteer). If the 'actual' numbers are different from the 'expected' numbers beyond a critical threshold (which is determined by the sample size and the significance level), then it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Chi Squared tests are quite robust as they do not rely on a normally distributed sample. Chi Squared tests are therefore effective at producing valid and reliable results when testing a range of variables (Morgan et al., 2016).

A significance level of 95% was used throughout the quantitative analysis. This significance level refers to the confidence that the relationship between two variables has not occurred by chance. Whilst significance levels of 99% or higher are often required within some fields of research (for example, medical research), a significance level of 95% is a frequently used level within social science (Bryman and Cramer, 2002; Morgan, 2016).

3.5.2 - Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken using the software: Nvivo11. This software is designed to organise and analyse the content of qualitative information. This process involved data input, thematic coding and analysis.

Transcribing interviews was a lengthy process that was carried out in parallel to the data collection. Transcribing the interviews as they were carried out, as opposed to leaving this process until after all of the data collection had been completed had several benefits. Firstly, transcribing the interviews within a close temporal proximity to the interview itself meant that some of the discussions were still fresh in the mind. This 'second viewing' of the interviews often allowed the researcher to see some of the issues in a new light, or pick up pieces of interest that might not have emerged as strongly at a first glance. Another benefit, which might initially seem trivial, was understanding the variety of accents and voices within different interviews. With the voice recordings occasionally not being totally

clear, a good memory of the interview was advantageous when transcribing the interviews. Distinguishing voices within the paired interviews was also easier with the transcriptions done soon after. A final benefit of this 'transcribe as you go' method was the mitigation of fatigue that can easily occur if all the transcriptions are attempted in a single block. After all of the transcriptions had been completed, ensuring that any sensitive or personal information was anonymised, the analysis of the qualitative data could begin. All of the transcripts were read through, with notes being made on any emerging themes, frequently occurring ideas and overall impressions of the data.

Using the qualitative data analysis software 'Nvivo 11', a systematic process of thematic coding was conducted, highlighting key concepts within the data. A systematic approach was taken, coding the text line by line. This systematic approach improved the rigor of the research, minimising the potential for 'cherry picking' the data. A key strength of Nvivo software is that multiple codes can be applied to a single line of text. The themes were then considered in relation to the research questions of this thesis, enabling the broader aims of the research project to be considered. A knitting together of different sections and themes was then carried out. This process of threading together themes within the data progressed and developed throughout the writing of the thesis, with different sections of narrative moving from chapter to chapter, as the structure of the thesis began to take shape. Many excerpts from the respondents encompassed multiple thematic codes and therefore had to be carefully considered in order to produce a smooth and coherent overall narrative of the thesis.

The majority of respondents were happy for their identities to be public within this thesis; however, in order to remain consistent with the ethical protocols of this institution, the participants were kept anonymous (Richardson, 2015). Pseudonyms were therefore used for all 45 of the interviewees. The false names were deliberately chosen to convey a representative portrayal of the individual (Guenther, 2009). For example, those interviewees who had a traditional or culturally Islamic name were given a similarly traditional name, ensuring that the pseudonyms were appropriate and realistic. Likewise, respondents who had anglicised their names were also given more commonly British names, without losing the feel and identity of the individuals. A list of all the interviewees, including

their gender, age, religious denomination, ethnicity, socio-economic class and their education level is included within appendix 6. Throughout the empirical chapters the respondents are named and their social differences are given using a short hand code. The code is as follows:

- **Age:** 18-25
- **Gender:** M = Male, F = Female
- **Socio-economic Class:** Hi = Higher, Mi = Middle, Lo = Lower
- **Religious Conservatism:** C = Conservative, N = Non-conservative

This short hand allows their social differences to be identified quickly and easily, without breaking up the flow of the narrative with a long list of social characteristics for each individual respondent.

The classification of participants in terms of their socio-economic class was based on their responses to question 17 and 18 of the questionnaire (see appendix 1). These responses regarding the occupation of the main wage earner of the household allow the participants to be placed within 'National Statistics Socio-economic Classification' (Rose and Pevalin, 2001). These classifications collapse to make three classes: higher, middle and lower.

Throughout the process of this research project, the significance of religious conservatism became clear. Whilst an initial focus upon denominational differences between Sunni and Shia Islam was explored, this exploration shifted towards differences between 'conservative' and 'non-conservative' Islam in light of the preliminary findings. The respondents were categorised as 'conservative or 'non-conservative' in relation to their self-identification of their Islamic denomination, or *Madhhab*. Maintaining a cognisance of the blurred boundaries between Islamic schools of thought, a crude division between conservative and non-conservative Islam can be drawn on the basis of the jurisprudence of each denomination (Hefner and Zaman, 2007; Hassan, 2006; Quora, 2017; WildOlive, 2016; Evans, 2006). The terms 'conservative' and 'non-conservative' have been used deliberately in relation to Islam within this thesis. Reese et al. (2014), in their research into religious attitudes towards homosexuality, note that "it is conservative attitudes, rather than religious belief" that can have most impact on the practices of religious individuals. Whilst Islam is often discussed in reference to

‘radical’ vs ‘liberal’ (Cherney and Murphy, 2016; Kahn, 2003), or ‘fundamentalist’ vs ‘modern’ (Kashyap and Lewis, 2013), these divisions tend to focus on the peripheral interpretations of Islam and ignore the majority of Muslims within the diverse, non-marginal strands of Islam. The term ‘conservative Islam’ was also used by some of the participants themselves, revealing the relevance of the term for young British Muslims today. By using the terms ‘conservative’ and ‘non-conservative’, this thesis will explore the difference between schools of Islam which use very literal and traditional translations of Islamic law, and those which are more flexible in the implementation of Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh*⁵ in relation to contemporary social, political and cultural contexts, without focusing on more extreme religious interpretations. Table 3.2 provides a representation of the categorisations used within this research.

Table 3.2: Islamic *Madhhabs*

Sunni	Shia	Other
Hanafi - Deobandi	Imami (twelvers)	Sufi
Hanafi - Barelvi	Zaidi	Salafi
Hanbali	Ismaili	Wahhabi
Maliki	Other	Other (e.g. Ahmadi)
Shafi		
Other		

In a similar pattern to the respondents, many of the mosques and Islamic charities and voluntary organisations were happy to be identified within this research project,

⁵ *Fiqh* is the Arabic term for ‘profound understanding’ and is used in the context of Islamic jurisprudence

however for the ones that preferred to remain anonymous, it again made sense to obscure the identities of all of the mosques and organisations which participated within this study. For the charities and voluntary organisations in particular, it was often difficult to establish a firm response as to whether they were happy to be identified as the project was deliberately choosing not to direct its research through such organisations themselves, but through mosques whose congregations engaged with these charities and foundations. Therefore, once again, with consistency and integrity in mind none of the Mosques, charities or voluntary organisations are specifically identified within this thesis.

3.5.3 - Overview

Once the analysis of the both the quantitative and qualitative data had been carried out, a cross analysis was carried out linking prominent themes and concepts from the interview data to corresponding data from the questionnaire survey. This triangulation of the data does not necessarily seek to reinforce each other (Archibald, 2016), but instead aims to create an interface for discussion between the two data sets (Bryman, 2007).

The majority of quantitative data addresses the first research question, exploring the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham (chapter 4). This more extensive strand of the research project utilises descriptive statistics to build up a picture of the broader topographies of volunteering amongst young Muslims. More in-depth statistical tests are also used in order to assess the impacts of social difference upon these terrains of volunteering.

The second, third and fourth research questions are discussed within Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 respectively, exploring the pathways young Muslims take to become volunteers; the experience of young Muslim volunteers and the ways in which volunteering impacts upon their identities. These questions are examined using primarily the qualitative data; however, the discussions are contextualised in relation to the broader statistical data.

Chapter 4: The Landscape of Volunteering amongst Young Muslims in Birmingham

4.1 - Introduction

This chapter will offer an analytical overview of the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham. The insights within this chapter are drawn primarily from the quantitative data from the questionnaire survey (Appendix 1) and are contextualised in relation to discussions within current literature. A picture of the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities will be built up within this chapter by examining the age at which young Muslims began to volunteer; the types of volunteering that the respondents are involved in; the channels through which this volunteering takes place; the frequency with which the respondents volunteer; and the respondents views of faith-based volunteering.

Although Muslims are often portrayed as a single, homogenous community, there is as much diversity in the 2.7 million Muslims in Britain (UK Census, 2011) as any collective group. Differences in ethnicity, Islamic jurisprudence and denomination, class and gender are just a few overt variances within a myriad of social and cultural complexities that contribute to British Muslims as not a homogenous group, but a dynamic, plural and heterogeneous series of communities. As such, this chapter will look beyond a simplistic all-encompassing depiction, but instead capture the diverse trends, which will ultimately vary significantly across different parts of the Islamic population in Birmingham.

4.2 - Beginning to volunteer

The results of the questionnaire survey suggest that 99% of Muslims between the ages of 18-25 are engaged in some form of volunteering. The reason for this perhaps surprisingly high percentage is a result of a series of contributing factors. The first of these is a limitation of the research itself, which in focusing upon Muslims who volunteer, potentially discouraged those who were not involved in volunteering from taking part in the survey. For example, the data was often collected at volunteering events, which naturally inflated this value. Even questionnaires that were distributed at non-volunteering events would naturally have appealed more to those with an interest in volunteering. Another factor

contributing to this high percentage is the more encompassing definitions of volunteering within Islamic cultures (discussed in section 4.3.3 of this chapter, and again in chapter 8). However, even taking into account these contributing factors, the importance that volunteering has within Islam is clearly prominent.

The survey respondents revealed that they got involved in volunteering at differing stages of their lives. The majority of respondents highlighted their teenage years or their early twenties as the age at which they began volunteering., but interestingly 12.9% of respondents began volunteering under the age of 12 years old (Figure 4.1).

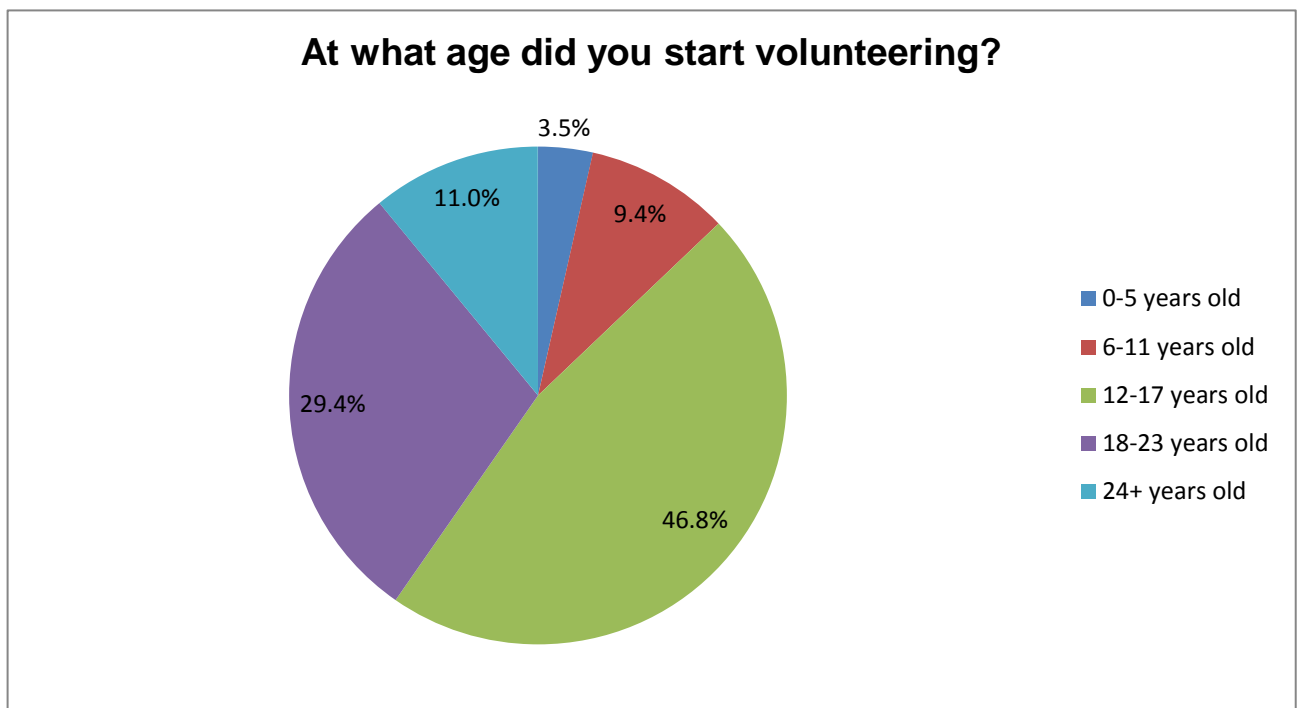


Figure 4.1 – The ages at which young Muslims began volunteering

Within this dataset there were many facets of social difference that had an influence upon the age at which Muslims began to volunteer. The data showed that gender might be an important factor in the age at which young Muslims got involved in volunteering. The average age that Muslim males began volunteering was just under 14 years old, whereas for females this age was slightly under 17 years of age (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Mean Age of Starting Volunteering by Gender

	Male	Female
Mean age starting to volunteer	13.97	16.86

A Chi Squared test showed that gender was statistically significant in the age at which respondents began to volunteer.⁶ The clear indication that gender is an important influence on the age at which the young Muslims in this survey got involved in volunteering reflects much of the current literature, which describes how Muslim females are often less visible within public spaces (Cook and Lawrence, 2005; Falah and Nagel, 2005) and more restricted from participating in social activities (Ahmad, 2011; Brown, 2006). Narratives about the restriction of young Muslim women from participating in volunteering which emerged from the interview data within this research are explored more comprehensively within Chapters 5, 6 and 8.

The influences of class and ethnicity on the age at which respondents began volunteering were not statistically significant within this dataset.⁷ The fact that these aspects of social difference were not seen to impact on the pathways that young Muslims took to become volunteers contrasts with some of the literature on other forms of faith-based youth volunteering (Levitt, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2015; Bricknell, 2012; Judge, 2015), which often highlight both class and ethnicity as either enablers or barriers to volunteering, particularly across transnational scales. The subsequent chapter (5) examines why class and ethnicity were perhaps not as significant within the context of youth volunteering in Muslim communities through the analysis of the interview data.

⁶ A *t-value* of -2.43 and a *p-value* of 0.00204 allow the null hypothesis to be rejected, and therefore shows that the difference in the ages that males and females began to volunteer is statistically significant

⁷ A *t-value* of -2.17 and *p-value* of 0.3213 showed that class was not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, and a *t-value* of -2.91 and *p-value* of 0.6460 revealed that ethnicity was not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

As was discussed within the previous chapter, divisions between the schools of Islam are blurred, with many intersections between different schools of thought within Islam. For example, Sufism, which focuses on the mystical dimension of Islam, can describe themselves as Sunni or Shia or neither. However, within this research it was necessary to categorise the different schools, sects and divisions within Islam in order to offer coherent discussions about their impacts on the landscape of volunteering within Muslim communities. Whilst the data did not reveal a significant difference in the ages at which the respondents of this survey began volunteering between Sunni and Shia Muslims⁸, other divisions within Islamic denominations were found to be significant. The more conservative sects of Islam - Deobandi, Wahhabi and Salafi - had a higher mean age of starting to volunteer than the other Islamic denominations (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Age of starting volunteering by denomination

	Conservative	Non-conservative
Mean age starting to volunteer	15.87	14.24

Using a Student's 't' test on these data sets revealed that the difference between the age at which 'conservative' Muslims began volunteering compared to 'non-conservative' Muslims was significant at the 90% confidence level, but not with a 95% confidence.⁹ This relatively low confidence means that the difference between Islamic denominations cannot be claimed to be strongly statistically significant; however it does hint that with more research, there could be some interesting insights into the links between Islamic denomination and the pathways into volunteering. The greater importance that conservative schools of Islam had in

⁸ A t-value of 1.76 and p-value of 0.4209 showed that the Sunni Shia split was not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

⁹ A 't' value of -1.71 showed a weak significant difference between the ages at which 'conservative' and 'non-conservative' respondents began to volunteer.

shaping the ages at which the respondents began volunteering, compared to any differences within Sunni and Shia divisions contrasts with the majority of the academic literature. Whilst much of contemporary research on Islam tends to focus on the binary divisions between Sunni and Shia schools of thought (Behuria, 2004; Stein, 2006; Nasr, 2007), the findings within this survey highlight that it is imperative to embrace a more comprehensive perspective of the complexities within Islamic divisions. As such, the role that different Islamic schools of thought have in shaping the landscape of volunteering are considered within this empirical chapter.

The pathways that young Muslims take to becoming volunteers are deeply entrenched within aspects of family structure, gender, interpretations of Islam and other wider social structures. These complexities and variations emerged strongly within the interviews and are explored in-depth within the subsequent empirical chapter (Chapter 5).

4.3 - Types and Channels of Volunteering

The types of volunteering carried out by young Muslims in Birmingham varied greatly. The myriad forms of volunteering ranged from highly localised, small scale provision to large scale, international operations; from formal and institutional to informal and individual; from religiously motivated and funded to secular or non-religious. In order to make sense of this vast landscape of volunteering, this chapter will explore types of volunteering, whilst remaining deeply cognisant of the complex and dynamic nature of volunteering. This section will examine three spheres of volunteering that emerged prominently within the survey data: (1) volunteering through the Mosque; (2) volunteering through a charity or voluntary organisation; (3) informal or individual volunteering. It is important to emphasise again that these categorisations are not rigid, with many forms of volunteering straddling the lines between them, or falling outside boundaries altogether; however, these categories can be valuable in building an overarching picture of the landscape of volunteering within Muslim communities in Birmingham.

4.3.1 Volunteering through the Mosque

63% of respondents within the questionnaire survey stated that they volunteered through their Mosque. The responses of survey revealed a dual focus of volunteering through the Mosque: inward volunteering, which might encompass cleaning, maintenance, administrative work or any form of work benefitting the Mosque and its close congregation; and outward volunteering, which focuses more on the wider community, such as food banks and open mosque events.

Inward volunteering was often highlighted as an important use of the volunteers' time and effort as it is seen as a direct form of devoting oneself to Allah. These types of volunteering varied from being very informal, such as volunteering to Hoover the prayer mats or clean the windows, or could be highly formalised positions, such as administrative roles and youth group leaders. These voluntary roles were particularly prominent within the smaller Mosques, whereas the larger Mosques tended to have paid employees to carry out these roles. Forms of outward volunteering include multi-faith events, spreading the message of Islam, fundraising events, food banks and homeless shelters. These forms of outward oriented volunteering ranged in their scales from local community events such as a car wash to raise money for the local community centre, to the national level such as distributing aid during the 2014 Cumbria floods, to an international scale such as partnership Mosques in different countries across the world, offering support and aid.

The gender of the volunteers played an important role in shaping the voluntary practices of young Muslims within Mosques. Whilst there was not a significant difference between the percentage of males and female who volunteer through their Mosques (64.2% and 61.9% respectively), the separation of male and female volunteers was commonplace, particularly within inward forms of volunteering within the Mosques themselves, as some parts of the Mosque were restricted by gender. These practices of separating male and female volunteers emerged within the in-depth interviews when discussing their roles within the Mosque (see chapter 6).

Religious denomination also influenced the outlook of volunteering organised through the Mosque. Events organised by Deobandi, Hanbali and Salafi strands of Islam Mosques were often much less outward looking in their volunteering

practices, often focusing on other Muslims of similar ideologies to their own. These Mosques were less likely to have foodbanks or homeless shelters, but would still have volunteers for *Madrassa*, cleaning and administrative roles. This was reflected in Chi Squared tests which showed that there was a significant difference within the types of volunteering that respondents of different denominations of Islam engaged in through their Mosques (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Type of volunteering through the Mosque

	Conservative	Non-conservative
Given Zakat/Sadaqah/Fundraised	52%	39%
Giving time to help a charity/cause/Improve local area	21%	36%
Campaigning	11%	24%
Tutoring, coaching or mentoring	13%	9%
Visited or cared for people who weren't relatives/Other	7%	28%

There is a significant difference between conservative and non-conservative Islam in the type of volunteering that the respondents were involved in through their Mosques.¹⁰ Looking more closely at the individual values, it can be observed that respondents who were part of a more conservative form of Islam were more likely

¹⁰ Chi squared tests on each of the 'types of volunteering' were calculated in relation to conservative vs non-conservative respondents. A *p*-value of 0.00579 revealed a significant difference between conservative and non-conservative Islam in the percentage of respondents who were involved in giving Zakat/Sadaqah/fundraised through their Mosques. A *p*-value of 0.00512 revealed a significant difference between conservative and non-conservative Islam in the percentage of respondents who were involved in giving time to help a charity/cause/Improve local area through their Mosques. A *p*-value of 0.00442 revealed a significant difference between conservative and non-conservative Islam in the percentage of respondents who were involved in visiting or caring for people who weren't relatives/involved in other voluntary activities through their Mosques. All the results are significant at a 95% confidence.

to be involved in giving 'Zakat, Sadaqah or fundraising' and 'tutoring, coach or mentoring', whilst they were less likely to be involved in giving time to help a charity or cause, or help improve their local area or visit or care for people who weren't relatives than the Non-conservative respondents. It can therefore be seen that the non-conservative Muslims within this survey tended to be more outward looking in their type of volunteering through their Mosques, as they were more likely to be engaged in giving time to help a charity or cause, or help improve their local area or visit or care for people who weren't relatives.

Other aspects of social difference were less important in shaping the types of volunteering that the respondents were involved in through their Mosques. Chi squared analysis showed that differences in class, ethnicity and age did not have a significant influence on the number of respondents who volunteered through their Mosques.¹¹

4.3.2 Volunteering through an institution

Almost two thirds of the young Muslims who responded to the questionnaire regularly volunteered through a charity or voluntary organisation. These organisations were diverse in their size and scope, ranging from small, locally focused voluntary groups to large international charities. The survey data suggests that the majority of volunteers were engaged with larger scale charities, often with an international outlook. A common focus of these organisations was to raise funds locally and distribute aid to parts of the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa. The rationale for providing aid in these regions is spatially, temporally and religiously specific (Erdal and Borchgrevink, 2017; Pollard et al., 2015). The conflicts that have arisen in these regions over the past decade have galvanised Islamic charities to focus their attention to these areas. The fact that the majority of the populations of these regions are Muslim is also a substantial factor, with different charities often targeting aid to regions where they have religious connections (Pollard et al., 2015; Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2004).

Class was a facet of social difference that had an influence in the percentage of respondents who volunteered through an institution. The questionnaire allowed

¹¹ P values of >0.05 showed that differences in class, ethnicity and age were not statistically significant at 95% confidence

social class to be established based on occupation, known as the ‘National Statistics Socio-economic Classification’ (Rose and Pevalin, 2001). The respondents who were identified as ‘managerial and professional occupations’ or ‘higher education students’ were more likely to volunteer through a charity or voluntary organisation than those who were ‘intermediate occupation’, ‘lower occupation’ or ‘never worked/long-term unemployed’. 71% of the ‘managerial and professional occupations’ or ‘higher education students’ had volunteered through a charity or voluntary organisation, in contrast to only 49% of respondents of an ‘intermediate occupation’, ‘lower occupation’ or ‘never worked/long-term unemployed’.

The data from this survey showed that ethnicity did not impact upon the numbers of respondents who volunteered through voluntary or charitable institutions; however, ethnicity played a significant role in the types of institutions that the volunteers engaged with (Table 4.4).¹²

Table 4.4: Types of Volunteering by Ethnicity

	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	White	Other
Given Zakat/Sadaqah/Fundraising	31%	37%	29%	50%	48%
Giving time to help a charity/cause/Improve local area	28%	39%	31%	44%	42%
Campaigning	28%	27%	23%	28%	31%
Tutoring, coaching or mentoring	13%	24%	29%	24%	16%
Visited or cared for people	16%	11%	18%	18%	21%

¹². A Chi Square value of 35.01 and a *p* value of 0.00713 indicated that ethnicity was significant in determining the percentage of respondents who gave time to help a charity/cause/improve the local area

who weren't relatives/Other					
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Islamic denomination also had an influence in both the number of respondents who volunteered through a charity or voluntary organisation, and the types of institution that the respondents of this survey volunteered through. Once more, the difference between Sunni and Shia was seen to be less than the differences between conservative and non-conservative forms of Islam. There was not a relationship between the Sunni-Shia divide and the types of volunteering that the respondents of the survey were engaged in in relation to a voluntary organisation or charity; however, a Chi Squared analysis of the conservative respondents and non-conservative respondents revealed that these variables did have an influence on the type of volunteering that the respondents were engaged in.¹³

The data from this survey did not show that age had a statistically significant impact on the types of institutions that the respondents were involved in¹⁴; however, the small age range of the respondents within this survey makes this data unsurprising. So therefore, whilst age was not found to be significant within the survey data explicitly, that does not negate the importance that age had in shaping the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities.

4.3.3 Informal volunteering

Informal volunteering has often been overlooked from an academic perspective, with the majority of discussions tending to focus on formal channels of volunteering (Lee and Brudney, 2012; Smith, 1995; Williams, 2004). However, there has been a recent recognition that more research is needed to address this dearth of knowledge regarding informal volunteering (Lim and Laurence, 2015; Lee and Brudney, 2012). This section highlights the importance that informal volunteering plays in shaping the landscape of volunteering within Muslim communities in Birmingham.

¹³ A Chi Squared value of 17.04 and a *p* value of 0.0011 meant that the relationship between conservatism of Islam and the types of volunteering is significant at a 95% confidence.

¹⁴ A chi square value of 4.01 and a *p*-value of 0.0537 showed that age was not a statistically significant determinant of the on the types of institutions that the respondents were involved in.

64% of the Muslims surveyed described some form of informal volunteering as part of their life. The questionnaire responses¹⁵ revealed an extreme diversity of these practices and activities that makes discussing these voluntary practices challenging. Smiling at a stranger (16%), picking up litter (11%), looking after elderly or young relatives or friends (9%), handing out flyers about the message of Islam (7%), photographing or filming volunteering events (4%) and updating charity webpages (4%) are just a sample of countless forms of what has been termed 'micro-volunteering' (Browne et al., 2013) carried out by young Muslims in Birmingham. To push this notion further, these practices of '*embodied* micro-volunteering' were most likely to be performed as a solitary practice, with 73% of respondents stating that they engaged in these forms of volunteering by themselves. These performances of embodied micro-volunteering can be understood as expressions of informal 'worship' (Macdonald, 2002; Mills, 2012). Mills (2012) describes how individual and shared actions that occur outside of 'officially sacred' spaces can still occur as a form of worship, echoing the performances within this study. These informal actions and interactions are regarded as a religious responsibility within Islam and these deeds can therefore translate as an expression of worship.

Smiling and talking to strangers was a common form of volunteering encouraged within Islam and represented in this study. These expressions of embodied micro-volunteering reflect the intercultural encounters (Askins, 2016; Valentine, 2008; Hemming, 2011), whereby these emotional interactions can (re)shape notions of insider/outsider perspectives. So, whilst many of the young Muslims described that they only felt comfortable engaging with fellow Muslims in this regard, many others felt that these informal actions should not be limited to just people of the same religion. The respondents often cited presenting Muslims in a better light than the media often portrays them as a motivation for engaging with non-Muslims. These meaningful encounters within everyday spaces were forms of micro-volunteering that emerged organically, rather than as an organised formalised volunteering events; however, this did not make them any less important for the volunteers themselves, who strived to engage with others to reshape perspectives of Islam.

¹⁵ Question 3 of the questionnaire (See Appendix 1) had an open section, which allowed respondents to highlight 'Other' forms of volunteering that they engaged in.

However, for others, Islamophobic abuse, or fear of this abuse from non-Muslims limited their engagement with people outside of their immediate community (Afshar et al., 2005). Women tended to be vulnerable to Islamophobic abuse, with 68% of female respondents citing Islamophobia as a barrier to volunteering, in comparison to 39% of males. This difference between males and females was found to be statistically significant.¹⁶

The stark contrast in the gendered nature of Islamophobia was often due to the more visible presence of Islam amongst female participants:

“Hijabs and Niqabs make us stand out to non-Muslims, like literally a target on our heads. I’m not saying the boys don’t get it at all, but they just don’t stand out as much” – Kali (18, F, Mi, N)¹⁷

This gendered pattern of Islamophobia evidenced within this research project reflects a study by Afshar (2008) which suggests that women have ‘burdened’ much of the current climate of Islamophobia, due at least in part to their exposure through dress. The fear of Islamophobia began to influence the types of volunteering that the female participants of this study would get involved in, with many stating that they felt less comfortable volunteering in non-Muslim spaces. These findings mirror the work of Green and Singleton (2007) on ‘safe and risky spaces’, and impacts that these ‘risky spaces’ can have on the leisure activities of Asian women in the UK. Participants within this research project revealed that some women they knew had stopped volunteering completely due to fear of Islamophobic attacks. Many also felt that these cases would become more common as the portrayal of Islam in the media exacerbated these issues. These complex and difficult issues had substantial impacts upon the participants’

¹⁶ A Chi Square statistic of 14.91 and a *p* value of 0.0121 show that the result is significant at a 95% confidence.

¹⁷ The age, gender, socio-economic class and religious conservatism of each participant is coded throughout this thesis (see appendix 6 for a full list of participants and their descriptors):

Age: 18-25

Gender: M = Male, F = Female

Socio-economic Class: Hi = Higher, Mi = Middle, Lo = Lower

Religious Conservatism: C = Conservative, N = Non-conservative

experiences of volunteering, and are therefore discussed more thoroughly in relation to the interview data within the third empirical chapter (Chapter 6).

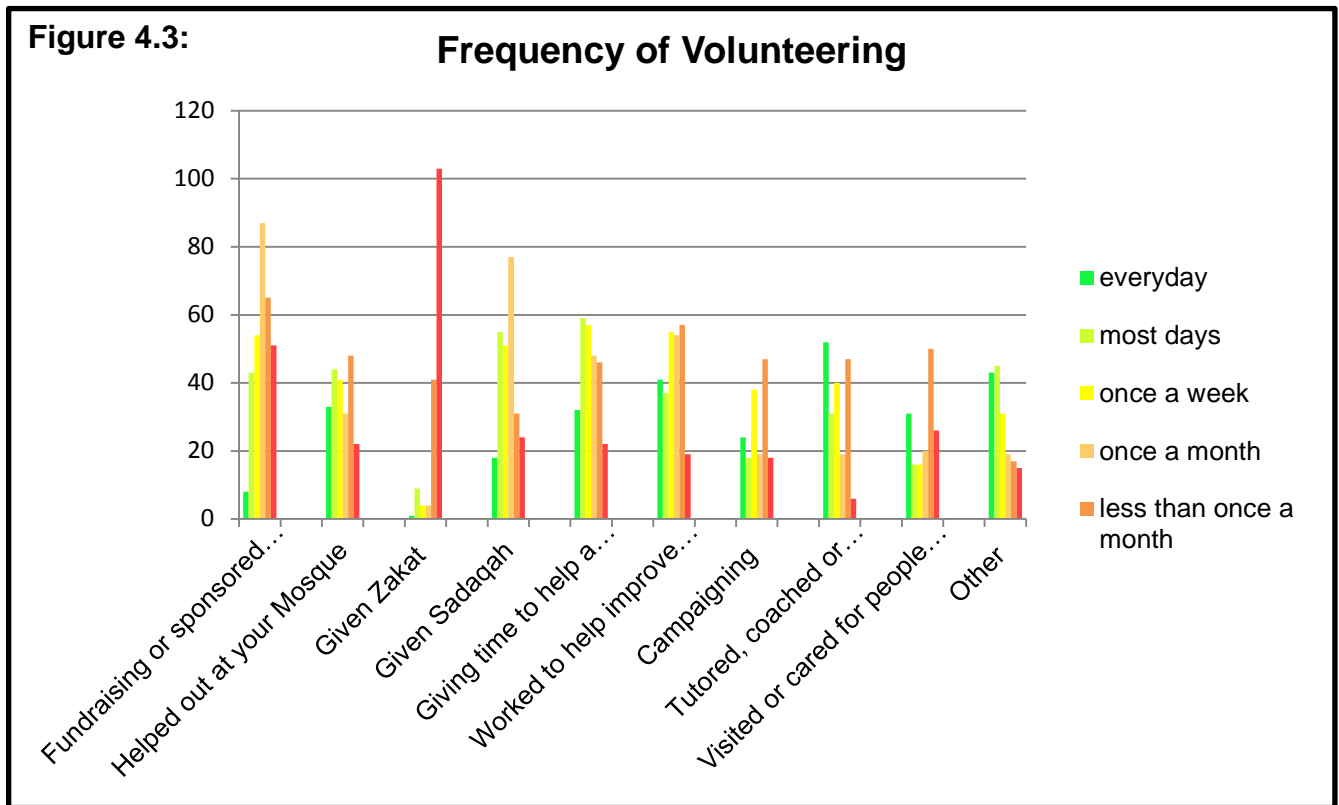
4.4 - Frequencies of volunteering

The landscape of volunteering in Birmingham is not static; it changes dynamically across time and space. The Islamic calendar is a primary shaper of the landscape of volunteering within Muslim communities, with different dates and events having significant impacts upon the frequency, intensity and types of volunteering. Perhaps the most overt of these stimuli upon the landscape of volunteering would be the month of Ramadan. During this month Muslims believe that “every action of the son of Adam is given manifold reward, each good deed receiving then times it’s like, up to seven hundred times.” (Al-Munajjid, 2013: 1). This gathering of ‘Islamic capital’ is a primary driver in shaping the activity of volunteers across the Islamic calendar (Franceschelli and O’Brien, 2014), and is discussed in relation to the motivations and pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers within Chapter 5 of this thesis. It is important to note here though as the religious incentive to volunteer during this month has a very tangible influence upon the landscape of volunteering, with an influx of temporary volunteers engaging in different forms of volunteering. Muslim charities and volunteering organisations also become much more visible within the public eye during these times through advertising on bill boards and buses, and bucket collecting in Birmingham city centre (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Bus Advertisement for Charity during Ramadan



The frequency with which the respondents in this survey volunteered ranged extensively within, and between, different types of volunteering (Figure 4.3).



‘Tutoring/mentoring’, ‘Helping a charity/cause’, ‘Improving the local area’ and ‘Other’ were the most frequent voluntary activities undertaken by the respondents within this survey. For those who tutored, this was a daily voluntary activity for almost 40% of respondents. This often took the form of an informal *Madrassa*, helping young family members with their Islamic studies and learning the Quran. The ‘Other’ forms of volunteering also occurred very frequently, with 71% of those who were involved in ‘other’ forms of volunteering, carrying out these activities ‘every day’ or ‘most days’. These ‘other’ forms of volunteering were often described similarly to the forms of informal volunteering or embodied micro-volunteering discussed within the previous section.

‘Giving Zakat’ has a very different temporal pattern to the majority of other forms of volunteering. This highly formalised alms-giving is often given annually, usually

during the month of Ramadan, as Muslims believe that good-deeds within this month are multiplied many fold. There were also large numbers of respondents who had never given Zakat, which can be explained by the age of the sample. Zakat is calculated based on the wealth of the individual and therefore young people, who often have less disposable income, are not required to give Zakat. This is reflected within the survey data, which showed that of the respondents between the ages of 18-21, only 38% had given Zakat, whereas respondents between the ages of 22-25, 59% had given Zakat.

However, 'age' was not just significant in the frequency of giving Zakat, but had implications for the frequency of engaging in all forms of volunteering (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Modal Frequency of Volunteering by Age

Age	Modal frequency
18	Most days
19	Most days
20	Once a month
21	Once a week
22	Annually
23	Once a month
24	Less than once a month
25	Annually

This table reveals a correlation between the age of the respondent and the frequency of volunteering, with the younger respondents tending to volunteer more regularly. A Pearson's Correlation Coefficient showed a strong negative correlation

between age and frequency of volunteering.¹⁸ The negative correlation reflects the pattern shown in Table 4.5 which demonstrates a general trend whereby the older the respondent, the less frequently they tend to volunteer.

The idea that young people have 'more free time and less disposable income' emerged repeatedly within the interviews. As Saskia phrased it,

“as young people, we have quite a lot of free time so it makes sense for us to give our time to help out... Our parents have more money, but can't volunteer their time cos they've got way more responsibilities so they donate their money instead.” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

The young Muslims within this research project often saw it as a responsibility for themselves to volunteer whilst they were still young, before the time constraints that families and full-time jobs can have. This finding reflects many of the discussions within current literature, which often highlight how young people tend to be highly engaged in voluntary action (Jones, 2011; Marta and Pozzi, 2008). Much of the academic debates on volunteering have spread to the margins of age, focusing on volunteering amongst older people (Cattan et al., 2011; Hardill and Baines, 2009; Hardill and Baines, 2011; Lie et al., 2009) and volunteering amongst young people (Hopkins et al., 2015; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008), mirroring the buzz around volunteering at these stages of the lifecourse. The importance that age has in shaping the frequency of volunteering is explored further in relation to the interview data within the following empirical chapters (5 and 8).

Similarly, marital status had an influence upon the frequency of volunteering for the respondents of this survey. Of the married respondents, the modal frequency of volunteering was 'once a month', whereas the modal response for those who were unmarried was almost exactly equal between 'most days' and 'weekly' in comparison to just 19% of unmarried respondents. However, due to the low number of respondents who were married (10.4%) a robust chi squared analysis could not be calculated to test whether this difference was statistically significant.

¹⁸ An R value of -0.7637 shows a strong negative correlation, with a confidence of 95%.

Differences in social class, ethnicity, gender and Islamic denomination were not found to have significant impacts on the frequency that the respondents engaged in volunteering.¹⁹

4.5 - Views on Faith-Based Volunteering

The survey uncovered the motivations and barriers to volunteering. The two most commonly cited motivations for volunteering were ‘helping those in need’ and a ‘religious or moral responsibility’, with 69% and 65% of respondents highlighting these motivations respectively (Table 6). The least frequently cited motivations for getting involved in volunteering were ‘increased employability’ (10%), ‘family duty’ (15%) and ‘meeting up with friends’ (28%).

Table 4.6: Motivation for Volunteering

Motivations	Percentage of Respondents
Helping those in need	69%
Religious/moral responsibility	65%
Raising money	62%
Community spirit	55%
Challenging media stereotypes	38%
Meeting new people	34%
Meeting up with friends	28%
Family duty	15%
Increased employability	10%

¹⁹ P values of >0.001 showed that differences in age, gender, ethnicity and class were not significant at the 95% confidence level

These statistics counter the dominant narratives within much of the literature on youth volunteering. Research by Jones (2011) and Holdsworth and Brewis (2014) has stipulated that young people often engage with volunteering as a form of personal and professional development, or in order to improve their own employability; however, only 10% of the respondents from this survey stated that 'increased employability' was a motivation for them to get involved in volunteering. Instead, the respondents within this research project were primarily motivated by religious and moral stimuli. These findings suggest that impetuses for young people to get involved in volunteering are perhaps more altruistic than simply for personal development.

Whilst only 28% of respondents from the survey cited meeting up with friends as a motivation for getting involved in volunteering to begin with, the importance that friendships played in shaping the experiences of young volunteers, particularly volunteering through a charity or voluntary organisation, was recurrent throughout many of the interviews (see chapters 5 and 6). Many events organised by institutions, such as street collections and fundraising events would become very social activities, with the volunteers building their social capital. Similarly, 'family duty', which was only highlighted by 15% of respondents as a motivation for getting involved in volunteering, was another form of social structure that shaped how young Muslims engaged with volunteering and emerged much more significantly within the interview data. As such, these social nexuses of family and friends are explored within the next chapter (Chapter 5).

Differences in age, gender, ethnicity and class were not found to have had a statistically significant influence on the different motivations for engaging in volunteering²⁰; however religious conservatism was again found to be statistically significant (Table 4.7).

²⁰ P values of >0.05 showed that differences in age, gender, ethnicity and class were not significant at the 95% confidence level

Table 4.7: Motivations for Volunteering by Religious Conservatism

Motivations	Conservative	Non-conservative
Community Spirit	35%	73%
Raising Money	41%	69%
Helping Those in Need	42%	74%
Meeting Up with Friends	15%	41%
Family Duty	4%	11%
Religious/Moral Responsibility	46%	67%
Increased Employability	12%	15%
Meeting New People	12%	43%
Challenging Media Stereotypes	22%	52%

There was a statistically significant relationship between religious conservatism and motivations for volunteering²¹. For conservative Muslims within this survey, 'religious/ moral responsibility' was the most frequently stated motivation for volunteering, followed by 'helping those in need' and 'raising money'. For non-conservative Muslims, this survey found that 'helping those in need and 'community spirit' were the two most regularly cited motivations.

²¹ P values of <0.001 showed that this was significant at the 95% confidence level for Community Spirit, Raising Money, Helping Those in Need, Meeting Up with Friends, Meeting New People and Challenging Media Stereotypes

The most commonly cited barrier for getting involved in volunteering was educational commitments and work commitments (61%), followed by fear of Islamophobia or abuse (49%) (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Barriers to Volunteering

Barriers to Volunteering	Percentage of Respondents
University/work commitments	61%
Fear of Islamophobia/abuse	49%
Domestic responsibility/family duty	21%
Meeting friends/commitment to clubs	13%
No interest/feeling won't help	9%

Whilst aspects of class, ethnicity and religious denomination were not seen to have a statistically significant impact on the respondents' barriers to volunteering, age and gender were found to have impacted upon this.

'School, university or work commitments' and 'domestic responsibility' or 'family duty' were more highly cited amongst 22-25 years olds than 18-21 years, whereas the 18-21 years olds within this survey stated that they 'preferred meeting up with friends' more frequently as a barrier to volunteering (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Barriers to Volunteering by Age

Barriers to Volunteering	18-21	22-25
University/work commitments	59%	63%
Fear of Islamophobia	48%	50%
Meeting friends/commitment to clubs	25%	15%
Domestic responsibility/family duty	9%	21%
No interest/feeling won't help	9%	7%

Age was seen to have a statistically significant relationship with respondents' views on what stopped them from getting involved in volunteering. Significantly more of the respondents between the ages of 18-21 cited meeting up with friends or commitments to other clubs and societies as barriers for volunteering than those between the ages of 22-25.²² However, respondents within the older age category were much more likely to highlight domestic responsibility or family duty as an impediment to volunteering.²³ The notion that age plays significant a role in moulding the pathways that Muslims within this survey took to become volunteers reflects some of the discussions within the literature on volunteering which highlights age as a primary shaper of volunteering (Jones, 2011; Matra and Pozzi, 2008), but importantly adds another dimension to these debates in relation to religious belief.

Gender also had an influence on which issues stopped the respondents from engaging in more volunteering. Male respondents were more likely to cite 'no interest' or 'feeling like volunteering won't help' and 'school/work commitments' as impediments to volunteering, whereas females tended to highlight that 'meeting up with friends' or 'commitment to clubs or other activities' as activities that would stop them from getting involved in further volunteering (Table 4.10).

²² A Chi Square statistic of 13.29 and a *p* value of 0.0099 show that the result is significant at a 95% confidence.

²³ A Chi Square statistic of 14.91 and a *p* value of 0.0121 show that the result is significant at a 95% confidence.

Table 4.10: Barriers to Volunteering by Gender

Barriers to Volunteering	Male	Female
University/work commitments	59%	62%
Fear of Islamophobia	39%	68%
Domestic responsibility	13%	29%
Meeting friends/commitment to clubs	8%	15%
No interest/feeling won't help	11%	8%

The relationship between gender and the respondents' views on what impeded them from getting involved in volunteering was found to be statistically significant. Fear of Islamophobia was significantly higher amongst female respondents.²⁴ As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the stark contrast between males and females had tangible impacts on the experiences of volunteering and even the types of volunteering that young Muslims felt comfortable engaging in.

There was also a significant difference between the number of males and females who cited domestic responsibilities as a barrier to volunteering.²⁵ Females were significantly more likely to state that domestic responsibilities could stop them from volunteering. This finding reflects some of the discussions within academic research into the gendered roles of Muslims (Kay, 2006; Maumoon, 1999; Jouili and Amir-Moazami, 2006). Kay's (2006) research into female Muslims' participation in sport found that family expectations and domestic responsibilities had to be carefully navigated for them to engage in different social activities. These processes of navigating between domestic responsibility, family expectation and social activity are discussed further in relation to the pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

²⁴ A Chi Squared value of 10.08 and a p value 0.39 shows that the result is significant at a 95% confidence.

²⁵ This is shown through a Chi Squared value of 8.45 and a p value of 0.142 at the 95% confidence level.

Although the survey did not produce enough data to carry out a robust statistical test with regards to 'marital status', some surface level conclusions can be observed. 58% of married respondents cited 'domestic responsibility' or 'family duty' as a barrier to volunteering, in comparison to 20% of non-married participants. This substantial impediment to volunteering for married Muslims is perhaps not surprising given the amount of time that is invested within the early years of marriage (Hogg, 2016; Mattingly and Bianchi, 2003; Sayer, 2005); however, this is nonetheless a key driver in limiting the amount of voluntary activity that can be undertaken by married individuals compared to single people.

This section has revealed how the motivations and barriers for volunteering are entrenched within aspects of social difference, and these tensions and complexities which shape the ways in which young Muslims engage with volunteering emerge throughout the interview data. The statistical findings highlighted within this section will therefore be discussed in relation to the interview data within the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) which examines the pathways that young Muslims take to becoming volunteers.

4.6– Conclusion

This chapter has provided a statistical exploration of the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham, examining trends and patterns within the ages at which young Muslims began to volunteer; the types of volunteering that the respondents are involved in; the channels through which the volunteering takes place; the frequency with which the respondents volunteer; and the respondents views of faith-based volunteering. The statistical findings within this chapter offer a platform from which the qualitative analysis of the interviews is based within the subsequent empirical chapters. However, this chapter goes beyond a simple descriptive capacity, also offering conceptual and empirical contributions to the geographical literatures on volunteering and Islam. This chapter concludes by highlighting four interrelated points of interest that emerged from the survey data: (1) the diversity of how young Muslims engage with volunteering; (2) the concept of embodied micro-volunteering and its value for understanding the fuzzy boundaries of the term 'volunteering'; (3) the significance

of gender in shaping the landscape of volunteering; and (4) challenging the narrative of young volunteers as having strategic or self-interested motivations.

Firstly, the sheer diversity of what 'volunteering' means to different individuals within different contexts is a finding that expands not only academic definitions of volunteering, but the ways in which researchers should understand and engage with the study of volunteering. With much of the literature on volunteering subscribing to the dominant Western imaginations of volunteers as older, retired and white, or young elites within higher education, the findings from this chapter highlight the importance of showcasing the diversity of volunteers and their practices (Judge, 2016; 2017).

Secondly, linked in with this diverse scope of volunteering, the concept of embodied micro-volunteering was introduced within this chapter in relation to the informal actions and practices that were highlighted by the respondents within this survey. This concept can offer new perspectives for understanding the blurred boundaries between volunteering, religious actions and social interactions. Small-scale embodied actions, such as smiling at strangers or picking up litter, have often slipped through the net in the context of research on volunteering; however, the notion of embodied micro-volunteering provides a conceptual framework for these diverse actions to be contextualised within contemporary discourses on religion and volunteering.

Thirdly, this chapter reveals a stark gendered dynamic within the experiences of the young Muslim volunteers from this survey, particularly in relation to Islamophobia and fear of Islamophobic abuse. Discussions surrounding the relationship between Islam and gender have been prominent within current academic debates (Dwyer, 2008; 1999a; 1999b; Hopkins, 2006; 2009; Gale, 2007); however, many of these discussions have focused upon the differences in the rights and roles of males and females within Islamic cultures. Whilst these debates in relation to gender divides within Islam are important, the gendered experiences of young Muslim volunteers found within this research project highlight how external actions and attitudes can shape the lives of young British Muslims in an equally impactful way.

Fourthly, this chapter also counters dominant narratives of young people's motivations for engaging in volunteering. Much of the literature on youth volunteering has stipulated that 'CV building' and 'enhanced employability' are often the primary motivators for young people to engage with volunteering (Jones, 2011; Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011); however, the survey data has contradicted this perspective. The motivations for volunteering that were most commonly identified by the respondents within this research project were religious and moral drivers. These findings suggest that impetuses for young people to get involved in volunteering are more altruistic than simply for personal and professional enhancement.

In summary, the diversity and dynamism of the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham has been clearly demonstrated within this chapter. The importance that aspects of social differences play in shaping the landscape of volunteering is evident throughout, having a tangible role in the decisions that young Muslims make about what forms of volunteering they should be engaging with and the frequency with which they volunteer. The focus now turns specifically to the pathways young Muslims take to become volunteers. Chapter 5 draws on the qualitative data analysis to explore the motivations, facilitators and barriers that shape how young Muslims engage with volunteering.

Chapter 5: Pathways to Volunteering

5.1 Introduction

The pathways that young Muslims have to navigate to become volunteers are multiple and diverse. A myriad of motivations (section 5.2), facilitators (section 5.3) and barriers (section 5.4) all contribute to shape a unique path taken by each individual volunteer. This chapter draws upon qualitative data from the in-depth interviews, exploring the experiences of young Muslims as they negotiate their own journeys to become a volunteer. These narratives are contextualised in relation to statistical evidence from the previous chapter and the key debates within contemporary geographical literature.

5.2 Motivations

Reimer et al. (2004: 2) describe motivations as “the ‘why’ of behaviour”. This notion of ‘motivations’ being a key driving force in the decisions and actions taken by young people therefore makes it imperative to understand how these processes are negotiated by young Muslims, carving out their unique pathways to become volunteers. The motivations for engaging in volunteering are embedded within the specific social, cultural, economic and religious contexts of each individual volunteer; however, there are many common stimuli which drive young Muslims to participate in volunteering. Unlike the body of research which has conceptualised youth volunteering as a form of preparation for corporate work (Jones, 2011; Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014), this research project has found that the catalysts for young Muslims to get involved with volunteering are more diverse and, often, more altruistic. Religious and moral responsibilities, as well as building intercultural relations, dominate the rationales for respondents who engage in charitable activities and voluntary action.

5.2.1 Altruism, Compassion and Philanthropy

Unger (1991) describes how research into the motivations for volunteering has tended to minimise the importance of altruism. Contrastingly, the questionnaire survey within this research project revealed that the most commonly cited motivation for volunteering is ‘helping those in need’, as was discussed within the previous chapter (Section 4.4.1). This expression of altruism and compassion also

emerged strongly within the interviews, with the majority of interviewees highlighting altruistic motivations for volunteering. For example, Kamran's explanation that:

“There are so many reasons to volunteer, but at its most basic level, helping people in need is what inspires me to volunteer as much as I do.” – Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

This quote from Kamran reflects the views of many interviewees within this research project, describing his motivations for volunteering in an altruistic and philanthropic context. The idea that people are motivated to volunteer in order to promote the welfare of others is, perhaps, a logical assumption. However, much of the discussion within recent academic discourse on volunteering tends to overlook this most 'basic' of impetuses, instead focusing on pathways to corporate work (Jones, 2011; Rothwell and Charleston, 2013; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Booth et al., 2009), routes in/to higher education (Spalding, 2013; Holdsworth and Brewis, 2014; Holdsworth and Quinn, 2010), a personal interest in the activity (Schlesinger et al., 2013), or more egocentric motivations (Curtin, 2014; Hayakawa, 2015; Winniford et al., 1997). The responses from the interviewees within this research project, however, highlight an intensely compassionate set of motivations for volunteering amongst young Muslim volunteers.

An excerpt from an interview with Saskia exemplifies this compassionate motivation for volunteering in dualistic terms, based on faith and a shared humanity:

“As a Muslim, and a human being, we should be selfless and think of others as well as ourselves so supporting our community and taking care of others is a duty placed upon us. We are taught to be kind to others and even a simple smile to another is a form of charity... We are all one in this world, and at the end of the day, we are all human.” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

Her idea of a common humanity as a driving force to engage in volunteering represents a sense of moral duty to actively attempt to improve the quality of life of those around her. A popular theory within social science has portrayed the

motivations for volunteering as dualistic: simultaneously altruistic and selfish (Wuthnow, 2012; Fechter, 2012; Hayakawa, 2014). However, the motivations described within interviews such as this discussion with Saskia revealed a seemingly 'purer' desire to improve the wellbeing of others. That is not to say that gratification or satisfaction was not derived through the acts of volunteering and its outcomes. Saskia explains how she gains immense pleasure from the voluntary work she does, but that it is a side effect as opposed to a motivation.

"It feels so good to know that you are helping other people. I get so excited when I find out stuff like how much money we have raised and what that can do for the people we are trying to help." – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

In his research into the motivations of youthful volunteers in Switzerland, Rehberg (2005) describes how the motivation for many volunteers is "achieving something positive for others". Psychological studies of volunteers have coined these altruistic actions as 'prosocial behaviour' (Eisenberg and Miller, 1990; Eisenberg et al., 2007; Van Lange et al., 2011; Grant and Gino, 2010), meaning a voluntary action that aims to benefit others. These prosocial behaviours can be identified clearly within Tariq's description of why he chooses to engage in volunteering.

"I volunteer with charities who aim to help causes that I think are in most need of attention. There are obviously loads of worthy causes out there, but I try to do what I can to make a difference in peoples' lives [who] need it most" – Tariq (19, M, Mi, C)

Tariq's prosocial behaviour goes beyond his actions as a volunteer. His philanthropic motivations can also be seen within this excerpt of the interview, as he discusses the financial aspects of charity work.

"Giving money to a good cause is really important for me. I know people think that in Islam that we've got to give our money away to charity [through Zakat], but I think a lot of people give way more than what is compulsory... I just can't watch the news or whatever, and see so many devastating things and not think, I need to do what I can to help" – Tariq (19, M, Mi, C)

As this quote from Tariq reveals, motivations for volunteering could be interpreted on the outside as a purely religious responsibility, but in reality, the more important factor in determining his actions is a compassionate disposition.

The following section (5.2.2) specifically examines the importance that Islam plays in motivating young Muslims to volunteer. However, there are also examples that were expressed by the respondents which demonstrate that altruistic motivations for volunteering can become deeply entangled with religious motivations which are described here. The idea of altruistic motivations outweighing feelings of religious responsibility are reflected in this quote from Raya.

“I felt that it is not just a religious pull that got me involved in volunteering, but just a feeling of wanting to do good and help people as much as I can”.
– Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

These explanations of their motivations from Raya and Tariq suggest that they are not being directed to volunteer by their religion, but are actively choosing that specific path. Whilst this notion of personal autonomous decision making perhaps ignores some of the wider social and cultural contexts, it is clear that the choices to engage in volunteering, in these cases, are beyond a purely religious obligation.

For others, the distinction between religious obligation and prosocial sensibility is messier. The following quote from Mo portrays an altruistic motivation for volunteering which is synchronously incentivised through a belief that these actions will enable him to accumulate ‘religious capital’ (Caputo, 2009; Park and Smith, 2000):

“Helping the community is something almost all of us would naturally want to do if we could. It is nice to give something without having anything in return, but actually, helping those around you can bring you some inner peace, and strengthen your spirituality” – Mo (18, M, Lo, N)

The blurred boundaries between altruism and religious responsibility are difficult to discern, with moral motivations often becoming indistinguishable from a religious expectation. Mo, for example, went on to say that his motivations for volunteering are “rooted in the teachings of Islam, but personal to [himself] as well”.

This section has highlighted how altruistic and prosocial motivations can be the defining stimuli that encourage young Muslims to volunteer. However, these compassionate motivations can also be strongly intertwined with religious responsibilities, amongst other impetuses, in the decision making of the young Muslims within this project. Therefore, whilst altruism was evidently an essential inspiration for many young Muslim volunteers, this motivation cannot be taken in isolation, but must be understood in the context of a mesh of interconnecting stimuli. The following section will focus more specifically on faith-based motivations for volunteering as a form of religious responsibility, or as a way of gathering religious capital.

5.2.2 Religious Responsibility

Almost two thirds of the respondents of the questionnaire survey highlighted a religious motivation for volunteering (see section 4.5). These religious motivations for engaging in volunteering are multiple and diverse, being influenced by the schools of thought within different strands of Islam; however, some common themes still emerged from the interviews. Religious responsibility, imitating the thoughts and actions of the Prophet Mohammed, and gathering religious capital or 'rewards' were three concepts which emerged most strongly within discussions of religion as a motivation for volunteering. This section will therefore explore these themes in turn, offering some perspectives as to how these processes relate to discussion within the current literature on religion, volunteering and young people. Take, for example, Sadiq's reflections:

"It's important to live by the true teachings of Islam, to help your fellow human being, to help the needy, or anyone that asks. Islam teaches us that service to humanity is a massive part of what it is to be Muslim. Serving humanity is also a form of worship and a way to serve God. In fact, it's stressed quite explicitly. You cannot cut yourself off from mankind and be as a hermit in Islam, or stay engaged only in a private worship of God. Humans have a right over you. Every penny you earn belongs to God and it is He who commands us to spend it in his way, the poor have a right to a portion of it." – Sadiq (19, M, Mi, C)

This eloquent explanation of why Islamic teachings are such an integral motivation for volunteering is not a unique perspective. Both Fatima and Mira describes how volunteering is an active expression of the teachings of Islam:

“Islam teaches love and respect and volunteering is a perfect way to display these qualities.” – Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

“Islam encourages us to volunteer. That obviously doesn't mean that all Muslims are gonna volunteer, [but] it's probably why loads of us do....” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

Badriyyah also described that, for her, prosocial volunteering is an essential component of Islam:

“Giving back and helping those in need are seen as just as important as praying or fasting” – Badriyyah (21, F, Hi, N)

Each of these expressions of the interconnectedness of volunteering and Islam from Badriyya, Fatima and Sadiq begin to portray a common stimulus amongst young Muslims to become actively involved in volunteering. The entanglement between religion, charity and volunteering is not unique to this research project, with Teah et al. (2014) observing a clear positive link between religion and charity work. A study into youth volunteering in the US by Youniss et al. (1999: 243) concluded that religious young people are “more likely to do service than youth who do not believe that religion is important in their lives”; Cloke et al. (2010) similarly highlights faith based motivations of volunteers in relation to working with homeless people in the UK; and Heinick (2014) hypothesises that religion enhances prosocial behaviour. Whilst these studies have focused primarily on Christian volunteers, research by Taniguchi and Thomas (2011) reveals that this pattern of increased volunteering amongst young people can be extended to religiosity more broadly. More specifically to Islam is Atia's (2011) notion ‘pious neoliberalism’. Atia's research into Islam and Faith-Based Development in Cairo reveals that religion can be utilised in order to stimulate volunteerism, investment and entrepreneurship.

Another faith based motivation for volunteering is inspired by the recorded actions and teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Whilst the *hadiths* are contested by

different schools of thought within Islam, the importance that, as Sadiq puts it, “living in the likeness of the Prophet Mohammed” has in motivating Muslims to volunteer is still highly visible. This excerpt from an interview with Nadin highlights the importance that the behaviour of the Prophet Mohammed has in inspiring Muslims to volunteer:

“For me the ultimate role model is the Prophet Mohammed, so I look at his life and there are so many stories of him doing good deeds that for me to just be, like ‘no, I’d rather spend my free time doing stuff for myself’ would be pretty hypocritical” – Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

Being motivated by the teachings within different *hadiths* is also described by Aaron within this quote:

“There are loads of *hadiths* encouraging us to volunteer our time and our money. All Muslims should volunteer and donate money to good causes and help out where we can... It’s a huge part of our religion.” – Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

Within Islam it is also believed that carrying out good deeds can lead to religious ‘rewards’:

“The fact that Allah rewards us for doing good things, for trying to make a difference in people’s lives, no matter how small, is a great incentive for me” – Adil (20, M, Mi, N)

One hadith that summarises this rewarding of good deeds states that: “Every good deed of the son of Adam is multiplied from ten to seven hundred times. Allah the Exalted says: Except for fasting, for it is done for my sake and I will reward it.” (Source: Sahih Muslim 1151, Grade: *Sahih*²⁶). Such ‘good deeds’ can be understood as embodied micro-volunteering (as discussed in Chapter 4). This diverse range of actions can be seen in this quote from Sammi:

“It doesn't have to be big, impressive gestures like giving a million pounds to charity, the little things are really important too... Picking up litter or

²⁶ *Hadiths* are graded as to their authenticity. **Sahih** refers to a hadith that is widely accepted as authentic and accurate in its recording.

giving up your seat on the bus, cheering up someone who's feeling down or stuff like that. Allah rewards these." - Sammi (24, M, Lo, N)

The idea of volunteering as a method of strengthening one's religiosity or accumulating religious capital is not specific to this research project. In their research with young Christian volunteers, Hopkins et al. (2015: 392) note that "the central motivation of many of the young people is a desire to develop and grow their religiosity in a specific setting and build on particular religious relationalities." Nevertheless, the idea of gathering 'rewards' for volunteering is more specific to an Islamic context.

The notion of volunteering in order to accumulate religious capital could be conceptualised in a similar way to volunteering within the medical field, whereby volunteers are compensated financially for their participation (Frey and Groette, 1999; Firoillo, 2011). However, whilst the monetary rewards for volunteering in the medical sphere are extrinsic incentives, the idea of gaining religious capital can be seen much more as an intrinsic motivation. Whilst the financial incentives used within medical volunteering are overtly quantifiable, it is much more difficult to measure religious capital. Sadiq expresses the deeply personal and intrinsic nature of gathering religious capital, stating that:

"In Islam, we believe that the heart is the centre of spirituality and the home of the soul, and how you live your life outwardly will reflect inwardly in a positive way. So to live your life in a good way, doing good deeds, doing charity work, volunteering and so on, all of these contribute to your own *Ibaadah*²⁷" – Sadiq (19, M, Mi, C)

This spiritual notion of religious capital described by Sadiq is also discrete from the ideas of gathering rewards, but is still equally important as a motivation. Although both of these religious motivations for volunteering are unquantifiable 'feelings', both are seen to have perceptible impacts on volunteering amongst young Muslims. This intersection between the spiritual and corporeal reflects Tse's (2013)

²⁷ *Ibaadah* is a collective term for everything which Allah loves and is pleased with from among the words and actions such as supplication, prayer, and patience.

concept of 'grounded theologies', explaining how the intangibility of faith can produce a clear set of physical actions, practices and performances.

Looking beyond the tangibility of this spiritual capital, a parallel can be drawn between the religious motivations described here and corporate motivations for volunteering discussed within research by Jones (2011) and Baillie Smith and Laurie (2011). Whilst interviewees such as Sadiq and Adil reject the financial benefits of volunteering with the intention of building a corporate CV, they instead seek to bolster their spiritual 'portfolios', accumulating religious capital for when they endeavour to enter *Jannah*.²⁸ In both the spiritual and financial scenarios, the motivation to improve one's own situation can therefore be seen to mirror each other.

In addition to the notion of accumulating religious capital, Islam also acted as a motivation for young Muslims to volunteer in a different way: presenting their religion in a positive image. This process of creating a parallel narrative of Islam to that which the media tends to perpetuate is discussed in the subsequent section (5.2.3), examining how aspirations to create social cohesion motivates many of the respondents from this research project to engage in different forms of volunteering.

5.2.3 Building Community and Intercultural Connections

Two frequently cited motivations for volunteering that were revealed from the questionnaire survey were 'building community spirit' and 'challenging media stereotypes' (see section 4.5). These motivations, though disparate in their scopes, are connected by a common desire to enhance intercultural connections and break down social barriers. This ambition for social cohesion was expressed very clearly within several narratives from the interviewees, echoing the findings from the questionnaire survey.

Hassan volunteers for an Islamic theatre company that spreads the message of Islam through its productions in Birmingham and across the UK. Many of its productions are directed towards non-Muslims and aim to build intercultural connections, portraying Islam in a positive image. Hassan describes here how he is motivated to build bridges across cultural divides:

²⁸ *Jannah*, meaning 'garden', is the Islamic notion of heaven or eternal paradise

“The productions are so well written and messages are really moving sometimes. Its inspirational for me to show people what Islam is really about. I hope that people understand that we are trying to spread a message of unity across people of all faiths and race....” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

Green and Jones (2005: 164) highlight that volunteering, in some contexts, can be “a time and place to parade and celebrate a valued social identity”. Whilst Green and Jones (2005) conceptualise this element of volunteering as a way of enhancing or reaffirming one’s social identity, Hassan’s description of volunteering can be understood as an outward expression of his identity through the productions of the theatre company.

Kara also volunteers her time acting with the same theatre company. Similarly to Hassan, Kara expresses that creating a sense of community cohesion was a primary inspiration that kept her motivation to devote her time to the theatre company:

“It brings different communities together... People who usually wouldn’t usually have much to do with each other can be in the same room and have a shared experience. Hopefully people like what we do and it brings people together through [the productions]” – Kara (18, F, Lo, N)

These motivations to connect individuals and communities across social and cultural divisions echo a recent body of research by Wilson (2013; 2014; 2016a; 2016b; see also Valentine, 2008; Andersson et al., 2011; Gibson, 2009) focusing on ‘encountering difference’. Wilson’s work, which focuses primarily on social and cultural differences within diverse urban settings, argues that ‘meaningful encounters’ have the potential to catalyse change in the way perceptions of difference can manifest (Wilson, 2016a; Mayblin et al., 2016; Valentine, 2008). The term ‘encounter’ refers to more than just a meeting of people; it is ‘laden with value’ and has a ‘transformative capacity’ (Wilson, 2016a: 14). In a similar fashion to the meaningful encounters described here, the theatre company’s ambition to build bridges between people of different social, cultural and religious identities provides more than just an exposure of difference, but a relational interaction with it (Mayblin et al., 2016).

For Zaida, although her volunteering was not explicitly targeted towards non-Muslims in order to breakdown social and cultural barriers in the same way as Hassan and Kara, she nevertheless expressed how important she felt it was that Muslim charities represent Islam in a positive image:

“[Volunteering] makes me proud to be a Muslim, and when people see what we achieve, I hope it changes their ideas about Islam. We aren’t all the way the Daily Mail says we are” – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

This quote from Zaida reveals her desire to counteract the negative media representations of Islam and she specifically associates this with one media outlet. She believes that faith-based volunteering has the ability to achieve its primary aims of improving the welfare of people in need, whilst simultaneously promoting a positive presentation of Islam. Breaking down social barriers was a key motivation for Zaida to engage with volunteering, using charity work as a tool to improve the welfare of others, not only through its altruistic outlook, but also through its ability to erode negative stereotypes surrounding the religion of Islam.

5.2.4 Personal and Professional Development

Discussions of youth volunteering have increasingly examined the relationship between the voluntary sector and preparation for corporate work (Grant, 2012; Isaac, 2015; Mills, 2015) particularly amongst international volunteering (Jones, 2011) to the point where Mills (2015: 524) notes that “it is almost impossible to discuss volunteering by adults or young people today without reference to labour market dynamics”. This chapter has emphasised how the motivations for many young people are much more diverse than simply as a form of preparation for corporate employment. Personal and professional development was far less frequently expressed as a motivation for volunteering within the questionnaire survey (section 4.5); however, it did still emerge within many discussions from the interviews, but often as a subsidiary motive. For example, Faas explained that the possibility of becoming more employable through volunteering was a contributing factor for him to engage in volunteering:

“I guess [improving my CV] was part of the reason I got involved in volunteering and charity work... School was always telling us that these things can make you more employable” – Faas (19, M, Mi, N)

Similarly, Tamar explained that her motivations for volunteering were not specifically aimed towards progressing her higher education, but that it was a personal bonus for her:

“I don’t know if it was the main reason I started volunteering, but I had it in the back of my mind that it could help me get into uni[versity]...” – Tamar (21, F, Mi, N)

On the other hand, Hassan describes much more openly how his volunteering for an Islamic theatre company could be useful to both his personal and professional development:

“It was my teacher who encouraged us to get involved initially... I still want to go into acting or directing as career eventually, so volunteering here is a great stepping-stone for that. I’ve gained loads of other skills and an acting qualification that has gone straight on my CV” - Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

Whilst Hassan does not currently work within the acting profession, he is fully aware that acting as an amateur and volunteering his time at a theatre company could open doors for him in the future. The role of schools in encouraging young people to volunteer is clear within the quotes from Faas and Hassan in particular. These narratives appear to reflect the increasing influence of schools in promoting a self-development agenda, through schemes such as ‘National Citizen Service’ (Mills and Waite, 2017).

Rather than these hopes or aspirations in relation to educational futures (Holloway et al., 2010), here Saskia illustrates a tangible connection between volunteering and her own professional development. Saskia describes how taking photos at fundraising events in her local Mosque contributed to her job in media:

“To be honest I wouldn't have got my job now if I hadn't volunteered. I got really into photography on the back of some of the events I helped out at

my Mosque... I actually used some of the photos from different events in my portfolio” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

These quotes revealed that increased employability ‘skills’ as a result of volunteering tended not to be a primary motivation for volunteering, but often evolved as a secondary benefit.

Conversely, other interviewees actively distanced themselves from personal and professional development as a motivation for engaging in volunteering. This is a significant finding in relation to knowledge on youth volunteering:

“Employability wasn’t something I thought about at all when I started volunteering. It was just something my family were involved in, and I was like, yeah, I want to do that too. Helping out people with less than you is a way more important reason to volunteer than to make yourself get more money or a better job. That's not really volunteering then is it? Volunteering to help yourself is fake” – Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

Immo is particularly hostile to the idea of volunteering as a means to achieve personal goals, stipulating that this form of egoistic volunteering is ‘fake’. Immo’s insistence that being motivated to volunteer as a self-interested exploit does not count as volunteering at all, and thereby questions the definition of volunteering itself. The notion that volunteering as a process of personal development is categorised in the same bracket as altruistic volunteering, is clearly contested within Immo’s understanding of the term ‘volunteering’. Whilst the boundaries between egocentric volunteering and altruistic volunteering are undoubtedly more fuzzy than Immo describes, the idea of separate definitions for these contrasting notions of volunteering is discussed within Chapter 8.

5.2.5 Motivations Conclusion

Section 5.2, as a whole, has discussed the importance that diverse and intersecting motivations can have on young Muslims’ engagements with volunteering. The narratives from this section counter some of the hegemonic notions of young people’s motivations for volunteering by highlighting some of the altruistic, religious and moral inspirations for volunteering, as well as personal and professional development. The following section (5.3) will examine how these

motivations are put into action, exploring a range of facilitators that enabled young Muslims to carve their own unique pathways to becoming volunteers.

5.3 Facilitators

The young Muslims within this research project seldom stated that their pathways to becoming volunteers were solo ventures. Instead, the majority of respondents described a complex web of social, religious or familial networks as catalysts and gateways to becoming volunteers. The boundaries between these different networks were blurred, as the young volunteers did not have compartmentalised lives, but had deeply entangled structures of religion, family and friends. These interrelated networks shaped the pathways that young Muslim navigated in becoming volunteers. In order to make sense of these complex networks, this section will discuss the facilitators that emerged most prominently within the in-depth interviews, examining family networks (5.3.1), social networks (5.3.2), online networks (5.3.3) and religious networks (5.3.4) in turn, whilst remaining cognisant of the intersections and overlaps between them.

5.3.1 Family Networks

Family networks and connections were frequently cited as important facilitators that enabled young Muslims to engage with volunteering. Whilst only 15% of respondents from the questionnaire survey cited ‘family duty’ as a motivation for volunteering, narratives from the interviews revealed that processes of emulating the actions of siblings, parental guidance for extra-curricular activities and family ties to specific voluntary schemes all play a role in shaping the pathways the young Muslims take to become volunteers, and can all be seen within these series of excerpts of conversation with young Muslim volunteers. Saskia explains:

“My uncle started this charity so I started volunteering with him... it was quite a natural thing in my family to volunteer. We are all involved in different types of charity work, but whatever, wherever we volunteer, everyone is really supportive of each other” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

Aaron similarly describes:

“My older brothers were already volunteering loads, so I kinda wanted to just tag along and see what it was like... My parents were quite pleased and proud of us I think. Or maybe they just like us all volunteering together so they didn't have to drive us all [to] different places!” – Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

This narrative of volunteering as a family is reflected in this account of Fatima’s introduction to volunteering:

“My parents are really active in the community, volunteering at the mosque and doing loads of charity stuff. I’ve been volunteering with them for about as long as I can remember” – Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

Research into volunteering as a family has only been touched upon with academic literature (Porritt, 1995; Littlepage et al., 2003; Reilly and Vesic, 2002) and has tended to focus on the impacts that it has upon family dynamics. The narratives from this research reflect conclusions from Littlepage et al. (2003) and Reilly and Vesic (2002) which highlight the intra-familial benefits that volunteering can produce. The idea that volunteering as a family unit can strengthen family ties is echoed within this statement from Rohan:

“I definitely [became] closer with my brothers when we volunteered together. We didn't really have much in common before, but volunteering was good for that” – Rohan (18, M, Mi, C)

These intra-familial benefits of volunteering are discussed within the subsequent chapter in more detail (section 6.3), exploring the respondents’ experiences of volunteering as a family. Importantly though, this research project goes beyond examining these intimate benefits of volunteering as a family unit. The descriptions from the interviewees reveal a process of socialisation, whereby the action of volunteering can become a normalised practice through the family milieu. Understanding the impact that family socialisation can have upon the volunteering practices of young Muslims is imperative in understanding how the high levels of volunteering amongst young Muslims (section 4.4) can be retained as they transition to a more autonomous period in their lives. For example, both Saskia

and Fatima highlight that although they currently volunteer with their families, they will inevitably continue to volunteer within different settings. Saskia explained that:

“It was just what we did. I don't think any of us thought about it really. We just volunteer... Everyone in my family volunteers in some way, so it would be weird if I didn't” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

Similarly, Fatima describes that:

“I'm pretty sure I will always volunteer in some way or other. I can't predict how a lot of things in my life are going to go, but I'm confident I will always [be] doing charity work” - Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

For other participants, family remained a vital facilitator of volunteering, but were not necessarily volunteers themselves. Teejay explained that his parents regularly supported voluntary activities by driving him to meetings, or attending his events:

“I literally couldn't've done it without my parents. Before I got my [driver's] licence, they used to drive me everywhere. They were really supportive of all the charity events we put on and stuff like that... They didn't volunteer themselves, but everyone at the charity knows them just cos they support it so much.” – Teejay (19, M, Hi, N)

This family support network described by Teejay is often referred to within a sporting context as a 'non-participating entourage' (Lamont et al., 2015; Hinch and Holt, 2017). In a similar finding to the research by Lamont et al. (2015), this research found that family relationships could be enhanced through the positive connection that Teejay and his non-participating entourage (his parents) established through his charity work.

However for others, the pathway to volunteering was not necessarily laid out before them by the facilitation of their family. The dominant theme of family volunteering, described above, is contrasted in this excerpt from Rammir:

“It was basically the only thing that my parents would let me do. I wasn't allowed to play sport or music growing up, and they didn't want me going out in the evenings, but they were cool with me volunteering with [this

charity] cos they know I'm not just gonna be out on the street getting into trouble or nothing" – Rammir (20, M, Lo, C)

Although it was not a dominant theme across the interviews, Rammir's choice to volunteer as a result of family imposed restrictions remains an important circumstance within his pathway to volunteering. This description from Rammir, whilst sharply contrasting the narratives from Saskia, Aaron and Fatima, equally reveal how family values and ideals shaped his pathway to become a volunteer.

This section has highlighted how vital family networks can be in facilitating young Muslims' pathways to volunteering; contrastingly, however, there are many narratives which portray family expectations and domestic responsibilities as barriers to volunteering. These descriptions of family dynamics being restrictions and constraints to volunteering are explored within section 5.4.1.

5.3.2 Social Networks and Friendships

Friendship groups and social connections are key networks that stimulate young Muslims to volunteer. Around a third of the respondents from the questionnaire survey highlighted meeting up with friends, or meeting new people as motivations for volunteering, and this is reflected within the interviews, whereby friendship groups facilitating volunteering was a relatively common theme.

Zaida describes here that the sociability of volunteering was what stimulated her to first get involved:

"I started giving up my weekends [to volunteering] cos all my mates were already volunteering, so I was like, why not. I might as well get involved... It was more of a social thing to start with, but yeah, it was down to my mates that I started volunteering" – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

The influence that friendship groups have upon the decision making and actions of young people has been widely researched from a sociological perspective (Eccles and Barber, 1999) and this phenomenon is equally evident within the choices of young people to engage in volunteering (Lough et al., 2014). In Hopkins et al.'s (2011) research into young Christians volunteering in Latin America, they found that friendship connections often became points of entry for potential new

volunteers to discover the specific voluntary organisation. The findings from Hopkins et al.'s (2011) research can be seen to reflect some of the narratives within this project. For example, Shabaz describes being invited to volunteer through a friend, who facilitated his ongoing engagement with volunteering.

“I got invited to come to some events by a friend from college and I just got sucked in. The friend [who] invited me stopped volunteering like straight away, but I stayed on and never looked back” – Shabaz (22, M, Lo, N)

Again, the role of friendship in facilitating young Muslims to volunteer is reflected in this excerpt from Kali. She describes how her friends were instrumental in her pathway to becoming a volunteer, and her continued volunteering activity:

“My best friends volunteering for [a Muslim charity] and I used to hear all their stories and it sounded like so much fun... When I started volunteering as well, we all used to share lifts and we stayed really close through that. Like especially now we all finished college, we love to doing charity stuff together... It's a great chance to catch up if we haven't seen each other in a while” - Kali (18, F, Mi, N)

Whilst friendship groups have been shown here to facilitate many young Muslims to engage in volunteering, this quote from Zahra reveals a double edge to volunteering with friends. Whilst meeting up with her friends is a primary reason for Zahra to volunteer, this friendship group also has the potential to disrupt the effectiveness of the volunteering:

“We never used to get anything done during the planning meetings cos we were all so busy talking; catching up with people we hadn't seen in a while. The meetings would usually take about double the length of time they were meant to as well.” – Zahra (21, F, Mi, N)

Hassan, who volunteers for an Islamic theatre company discussed within section 5.2.3, took a slightly different route to becoming a volunteer. Whilst many of the interviewees were encouraged to volunteer by their friends or family, it was Hassan's teacher who first persuaded him to get involved:

“It was my teacher who encouraged us to get involved initially. A few of my friends were already part of [the theatre company] and I really wanted to get in to acting a bit more seriously, so it was a great opportunity. My parents weren’t really that keen for me to do it, but I managed to persuade them to let me go...” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

As was discussed within the previous section, Hassan’s school became a primary facilitator for him to engage in volunteering; however, Hassan’s narrative is more complex. It was a combination of factors that facilitated his pathway to become a volunteer. His initial interest in volunteering within this sector, though certainly important within his aspiration to volunteer, may not have come to fruition had it not been catalysed through his social connections. Furthermore, his feeling of comfort in volunteering was due to some of his friends already being involved with the theatre company. This interest in volunteering was then converted into a physical action through the facilitation of his teacher; a man who Hassan describes as:

“...a bit like a mentor in a lot of ways. I really respected him ‘cos he always treated us like adults, even if we didn't always act like it”. – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

Conversely, Hassan received resistance from his parents and this was not an uncommon experience for many of the interviewees. These familial barriers to volunteering are explored further with section 5.4.1.

Whilst social networks have been shown here to inspire many young Muslims to become volunteers, these social connections are becoming increasingly facilitated through online communities and social media. Therefore, the following section (5.3.4) will, at least to some extent, be an extension of this discussion on social networks; however, the use of electronic, mobile or web-based social networks in shaping the routes for young Muslims to engage in volunteering will be examined.

5.3.3 Social Media

The role of social media is widely acknowledged as a primary actor in shaping the lives of young people (Boyd, 2014; O’keefe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Livingstone, 2002). The importance and prevalence that social media has in the

lives of young people makes it unsurprising that the voluntary actions of young Muslims are often facilitated, and even governed, across digital platforms. This section offers several examples which highlight how social media can facilitate and enable young Muslims to come together to volunteer. For example, Yasmin describes that:

“Everything we do is via Facebook and Whatsapp. It makes sense for us to organise stuff like that ‘cos everyone can check stuff instantly. It just makes it easier.” - Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

This explanation of how social media can be utilised as an organisational tool reveal the flexibility and spontaneity that young people have in arranging their volunteering itineraries. The instantaneousness of social media allowed young volunteers to quickly make arrangements without the necessity of physically attending a planning meeting.

Additionally, Zahra explains here how vital social media is, not just for organising, but also for recruiting and advertising volunteer work:

“Most of our volunteering is organised by social media these days. We organise meeting and events, and advertise for new volunteers... We get loads of volunteers advertising on our Facebook page” – Zahra (21, F, Mi, N)

The recruitment of potential new volunteers through social media is a distinctly new phenomenon that many charities and organisations have begun to implement (Reuter et al., 2013). Whilst recruitment of volunteers can be integral to the success of a voluntary organisation, social media can also be utilised in order to raise money and disseminate the philosophy of the charitable organisation, as described here by Adil:

“Say I put on Facebook that I am doing a sponsored event, I’ll raise way more money than if I don’t... It makes more people aware of what you’re doing and I hope even if people don’t donate, they can be made aware of the causes we are helping” – Adil (20, M, Mi, N)

Social media can therefore be seen to enhance the impact of volunteering through its access to what Reuter et al. (2013) describe as ‘virtual volunteers’. Accessing these ‘virtual’ or ‘digital’ volunteers can facilitate an enhancement of the volunteers’ effectiveness as the spatial component of volunteering is removed (Starbird and Palen, 2011). Reuter et al. (2013) highlight that a combination of real and virtual volunteers, as in Adil’s account, can be most effective as the hands-on volunteers are supported by the geographically unconstrained digital volunteers.

5.3.4 Religious Networks

Religion has often been associated with high levels of charity and volunteering (Smidt, 2003; Campbell and Yonish, 2003; Haers and Von Essen et al., 2015; Wilson and Janoski, 1995; Lim and MacGregor, 2012) and Islam is no exception (Pollard et al., 2015; Clarke, 2009). Religion as a motivation for volunteering (as discussed in section 5.2.2) is one of the primary reasons for the correlation between Islam and volunteering, but religious networks also have the ability to facilitate volunteering opportunities for young Muslims. Religious networks are defined here as any relations or consociates that an individual has accumulated as a direct result of their religion, whether that be a religious leader, a fellow member of the congregation, or the organisation of the Mosque itself. This section therefore explores how religious networks are able to facilitate and catalyse young Muslims to engage in volunteering.

As was discussed within the landscape of volunteering (Chapter 4), volunteering through the mosques was a point of entry for volunteering amongst many young Muslims. These narratives emerged similarly within the interviews, with many respondents highlighting either their mosque or member of their Mosque’s congregation as primary facilitators of them engaging with voluntary work. With charity being one of the five pillars of Islam, Mosques often have outreach schemes that are in need of volunteers to enable such programmes. These mosque outreach programmes (as described in section 4.3) are the entry points for a number of volunteers, such as Tania, who described that:

“They were always advertising for people to help out with the outreach schemes at our mosque, so I went for it. It was in my school holidays when I first got started I think. I had a bit more time and [volunteering] was

something that I had always been wanting to do, so it was a great opportunity.” – Taalia (20, F, Lo, C)

Similarly, Kazim’s route to volunteering was facilitated by his Mosque advertising for people to help with their feeding the homeless project:

“My mosque runs a soup kitchen type thing for homeless people in the city. I knew they always needed volunteers with all sorts of things, like cooking or washing up an all sorts. It was really well run because I think it’s something the mosque has been doing for ages, so it was a really nice way to get involved in voluntary work without having to, like, apply, like you do for some actual charities.” – Kazim (M, 25, Lo, N)

Again, projects run through the Mosque inspired Raya to begin volunteering:

“When there was ever anything being organised through my Mosque I would also volunteer... Sponsored walks and fundraising events, helping out local homeless people, litter picks. There’s so many ways to get involved through my Mosque. There’s something for everyone.” - Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

Although each of these respondents attend different Mosques, with different Islamic denominations, the charity work carried out by each of them is similar in its role in catalysing young Muslims to volunteer.

Many other interviewees described how they became involved in volunteering, not through their Mosques directly, but through an Imam or religious mentor within their community. Hirani, for example, expresses how the youth group leader encouraged him to start engaging in charity work:

“We had a group of young Brothers. We must’ve been about 16 at the time and we would meet most weeks to learn some teachings and have some food and just hang out a bit. Our leader, who I actually still volunteer with quite regularly, always suggested we did charity stuff or volunteered at different things. He would teach us how important charity is in Islam.” – Hirani (21, M, Mi, N)

Likewise, it was a religious leader who inspired Mo to first get involved in volunteering:

“During a madrassa, our Imam was giving a talk about service in the community and about helping fellow Brothers and Sisters in times of need... It was the words of my Imam that really spoke to me; inspired me to volunteer.” Mo (18, M, Lo, N)

For others, it was a congregational influence that facilitated young Muslims to begin volunteering. Kamran describes how some acquaintances from his Mosque encouraged him to volunteer with them:

“Some of the elders were talking about some of the charity stuff they were doing and they invited me along. It was quite a cool thing really. I didn’t really know them that well before, but I thought it would be a good thing to be doing.” - Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

These narratives show an insight into the importance that religious networks play in facilitating young Muslims to volunteer. From the Mosque-run projects described by Tania, Kazim and Raya, to the inspiration from the religious community highlighted by Hiranin, Mo and Kamran, religious networks are often highly accessible entry points to volunteering for young Muslims.

5.3.5 Facilitators Conclusion

This section has highlighted the complex web of familial, social and religious networks that enabled the young Muslims from this research project to engage in different forms of volunteering. However, whilst the facilitators described within this section have all empowered young Muslims to volunteer, there are a number of barriers to volunteering that were stressed by the interviewees within this project which are explored within the next section.

5.4 Barriers

Barriers and impediments to volunteering, such as family expectations and domestic responsibilities; education and work commitments; Islamophobia and racism; and religious and cultural expectations, had to be negotiated, contested or challenged for the respondents to participate in volunteering. These obstacles to

volunteering had tangible impacts on the types and amounts of volunteering which participants were able to engage in. This section outlines a series of narratives that highlight how young Muslim volunteers negotiate different barriers and how these experiences can shape their voluntary activities.

5.4.1 Family Expectations and Domestic Responsibilities

Family networks are important facilitators for volunteering amongst many of the respondents (discussed within section 5.3.1). However, for many other respondents, family expectations and domestic responsibilities can act as influential barriers for volunteering. This section outlines a range of narratives highlighting how pressure from families can impede the voluntary actions of young Muslims.

The first set of narratives that are discussed in this section share a theme of 'time'. Many of the interviewees were heavily involved in multiple volunteering projects, and it is therefore perhaps unsurprising that many of their respective families felt that they were devoting too much of their time to these voluntary actions. Dillion explains that:

"My family are always on my back cos they think I volunteer too much. I don't think they really believe that I am planning meeting when I get home late. I think they think I'm just out with my friends." – Dillion (20, M, Lo, N)

Dillion's family's resistance to his volunteering is not an isolated account. Maka correspondingly explains:

"I'm definitely guilty of over-volunteering. I spend so much time... My parents do put their foot down sometimes and are like, 'no, it's too much, you can't go'." – Maka (19, M, Mi, C)

Kali's father has similar concerns regarding her 'over-volunteering':

"I argue with my dad all the time [about how much I volunteer]. He tries to stop me from coming to loads of the events and says it's a waste of my time." – Kali (18, F, Mi, N)

This excerpt from Anurada also reveals that it is not just parents who can challenge the amount of time that the respondents are investing in volunteering. Her partner is equally keen for her to reduce the amount of volunteering she does in order to make space for their relationship:

“My husband always says ‘can’t you just have a weekend off?’... I suppose I am away quite a lot of the time at different [charity] events. I should probably spend a bit more time with him to be honest!” – Anurada (24, F, Mi, N)

As well as the issue of spending too much time volunteering, many respondents also had to balance their domestic responsibilities with volunteering. Veeda describes how she must sacrifice volunteering in order to fulfil her domestic responsibilities in the eyes of her parents:

“As long as I’ve done my chores and stuff, [my parents] are fine with me volunteering... It probably limits me sometimes. I would probably be involved way more if my parents would let me.” - Veeda (18, F, Lo, N)

This prioritisation of domestic duties is also reflected in Sadiq’s description:

“I sometimes have to leave early to pick up my sister... I don’t mind pulling my weight at home, but it can be frustrating when I clashes with charity events.” – Sadiq (19, M, Mi, C)

For other respondents, it was not a balance between volunteering and domestic responsibilities, but a battle to volunteer at all. Hassan is continually challenged by his parents, who do not believe that his volunteering is a suitable use of his time.

“They would much prefer it if I focused on my *madrassa*, or if I was studying for work... It was more difficult when I was younger because they had more control over what I could and couldn’t do, but it still makes it difficult sometimes even now.” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

Overcoming the barrier of his parent’s disapproval of his volunteering was an important event in shaping Hassan’s relationship with volunteering:

“One of my proudest memories is when my parents came to watch [a production] and they said, ‘So this is what you’ve spent all this time doing’. And they actually enjoyed it and approved of the message. That made it really worth it for me... It has given me a bit more freedom to do what I love”

- Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

Although Hassan lives away from his parents and sees himself as autonomous in his decision making, he still considered his parents blessing on his volunteering as highly influential on his engagement with these activities.

The importance that family expectations and domestic duties have in sculpting the voluntary practices of young people has been demonstrated throughout this section. Education and work commitments similarly emerged as a barrier to volunteering amongst many of the respondents, although as a less dominant theme. The following section will therefore examine these constraints and how the respondents balanced these conflicting commitments.

5.4.2 Education and Work Commitments

For many of the young Muslim interviewees within this research project, commitments to education and work made volunteering more difficult. The explanation that young people are able to volunteer more frequently due to having fewer domestic responsibilities and work commitments (as discussed in section 4.4) remains a prevalent theme within many of the interviews. However, this does not negate the impact that educational and work commitments have in restricting the amount of volunteering that interviewees are able to participate in.

With all of the interviewees being aged between the ages of 18 to 25, a high proportion of them were in the early phases of their careers ($\approx 50\%$), or else in higher education ($\approx 40\%$). The pressurised environment that exists within higher education (Robotham and Julien, 2006; Robotham, 2008; Mitchie et al., 2001) and early stage careers (Carlson and Rotondo, 2001) can ultimately cause a spill over into the ability of young people to engage in extra-curricular activities. Mira explains that:

“During exam seasons I usually stop volunteering pretty much altogether cos I get so stressed about them... I literally don't have enough time when I am revising.” - Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

This is echoed in Saskia's account of compromising between her education and voluntary work:

“It's hard to juggle college and volunteering and social life all at once. Like I would never miss a big fundraising event or anything, but if I have big coursework or whatever then I have to compromise sometimes.” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

Again, this notion of compromise is highlighted by Tariq:

“Volunteering sometimes has to take a bit of a back seat if my work starts taking over. There are some times when you've got to prioritise. I'm quite new in my job so I gotta take it seriously.” Tariq (19, M, Mi, C)

For other respondents, it was commitment to their careers that caused conflict with their volunteering habits. Immo describes how his job often has to take priority over his volunteering:

“My job isn't just a plain old nine to five... If my boss calls up I can't really say 'no' even if I am meant to be helping out [at a charity event]. It's not like I would get fired if I didn't go, but it wouldn't help my prospects going forwards. And realistically I need the money too!” - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

Prioritising his career over his voluntary actions is a necessity for Immo. Whilst volunteering is a passion for him, the realities of life necessitate that he focuses upon his work if a conflict arises between the two.

5.4.3 Islamophobia and Racism

Incidents of racism and Islamophobia were often highlighted as impediments to volunteering. The questionnaire data, as discussed within the previous chapter (4.3.3 and 4.5), revealed that not only did these abuses affect nearly half of the respondents, but that these incidents were also highly gendered in their distribution with 68% of female respondents citing Islamophobia as a barrier to

volunteering, in comparison to 39% of males. Whilst Islamophobic abuse is by no means limited to Muslim females, the interviews provided some insights into why females tended to be more frequently the target of such abuse. This section outlines some of the incidents that were described by interviewees within this research project, highlighting its impacts upon the practices of volunteering and as barriers to further voluntary action.

The stark gendered contrast in the manifestations of Islamophobia was echoed within many of the narratives from both male and female interviewees. Kali describes a feeling of exposure and vulnerability whilst she volunteers due to the choice of clothing that she wears:

“Hijabs and Niqabs make us stand out to non-Muslims, like literally a target on our heads... It can make me more cautious when I’m volunteering. There are sometimes when I feel really uncomfortable” – Kali (18, F, Mi, N)

This quote reveals the power that Islamophobia has to restrict and limit Muslim women’s engagement with volunteering. Afshar (2008: 411) addresses these abuses of female Muslims, stipulating that “the current climate of Islamophobia has burdened Muslim women who cover with additional problems in terms of their politics, their lived experiences and their life chances.”

This quote from Tamar agrees with Kali’s feeling of exposure due to the clothes that she wears. She uses a similar metaphor of feeling that she is wearing a ‘target’:

“[Wearing a hijab] can make you feel a bit exposed when you’re out and about. I’ve heard people say it’s like a target, which is kind of true sometimes. It is really obvious that you are Muslim; that you are different. It’s so heart-breaking because the reason we wear them is to be modest, as a sign of respect, but people don’t understand. They just see what we wear and associate it with ISIS.” - Tamar (21, F, Mi, N)

The spread of ISIS and the associated tensions that have dominated the narrative of Muslims around the world (Heck, 2017) is clearly a concern for Tamar. Whilst this thesis has remained wary of overindulging a connection between the everyday lives of young British Muslims with overarching geopolitical forces, it is impossible

to completely disconnect the two as media stereotypes and fear of Islamophobic abuse are a real and continual concern for young Muslim in the UK (Shaw, 2016; Richards and Brown, 2017; Morgan, 2016).

Tamar also expresses a feeling of not being understood, both on an individual level and as part of a religion. The perceived incompatibility of Islam and Western culture has almost invariably been expressed in relation to the laws and traditions of Islam (Philips, 2009). There has, however, been a dearth of research that has understood a separation between Islam and Western culture in relation to the rigidity of Western stereotyping of Islam (Philips, 2009; Dwyer, 1999a).

Kamran reiterates the notion that it can be more difficult for female Muslims to engage in volunteering, particularly outside of their own communities:

“Islamophobia is obviously awful in any situation. I think everyone knows someone who has been affected by abuse in some way or other... I definitely think women are more vulnerable to these incidents, probably because they are really visible, because it’s easier for these idiots to think she’s a Muslim...”. - Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

Incidents of islamophobia, or even fear of such incidents, have been shown through a variety of narratives to be a severe barrier to volunteering, particularly amongst female Muslims. These narratives, in conjunction with other accounts of Islamophobia, are expanded upon with the subsequent chapter (section 6.4) on the experiences that young Muslims have of volunteering.

5.4.4 Religious and Cultural Expectations

It was not, however, just abuses from non-Muslims that impacted upon the voluntary actions of the young Muslims interviewed within this project. Differences between how more conservative Muslims and less conservative Muslims view volunteering can be clearly seen within these quotes from Hirani and Zahra:

“The Wahhabis and the Saudi’s are obviously not gonna get involved in community volunteering. They’re so focused on themselves; they wouldn’t help out other Muslims let alone non-Muslims.” – Hirani (21, M, Mi, N)

“It depends on what type of Muslim you are... Most Muslim communities are really connected with, like, local churches or community centres, and are well involved in, like, local projects... [However,] some Muslim groups are way more, you know, like, they don't want anything to do with their wider community. They're so OCD²⁹ about, like, how you should pray, or, like, how you should dress, but they can't see what's actually important.” – Zahra (F, 21, Mi, N)

This distinction between different denominations of Islam perhaps reflects the statistical differences between the landscape of volunteering amongst conservative and non-conservative schools of Islam (Chapter 4). Some of the interviewees also described how members of their own communities expressed disapproval at the volunteering that they were engaging in. These expressions of resistance ranged from incidents of polite questioning of their motives, to episodes of severe verbal aggression towards the volunteers. Nadin here describes a scenario that was, in her case, a regular occurrence:

“I argued with my uncle all the way [to a fundraising event]. He didn't think that it was something I should be doing. I dunno, he's just pretty, like, old fashioned. I think it's partly cos he knew there would be boys there too.” - Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

Whilst Nadin explains that her volunteering is a religiously inspired activity (see section 5.2.2), her family are often disapproving of these actions, paradoxically citing religious justifications for not wanting her to volunteer:

“[My family] use different hadith to try and show me that its *haram*³⁰ to work with men. These [religious debates] can get quite intense.” - Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

Nadin also explains that, whilst she is aware of many young Muslims who felt they were unable to volunteer against the wishes of family members, she was determined to overcome this barrier to volunteering:

²⁹ OCD stands for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and is used as a slang term for any overly 'picky' or compulsive tendencies

³⁰ *Haram* refers to anything that is prohibited within Islamic law

“It doesn’t stop me volunteering, it’s just a bit more difficult. They’re saying its *haram* for me to be volunteering with [an organisation] that has boys and girls, but I’m my own person now and I have to make my own life decisions”
- Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

Nadin highlights her autonomy as a factor in overcoming her family’s religious concerns regarding her volunteering practices. Whilst Nadin is able to use her independence to enable her to volunteer, she is fully aware that other young Muslims might not be able to overcome these barriers as easily:

“Some Muslim families can be really strict... There are 100% Muslims who would volunteer if their family would let them, but it’s not always that easy... I guess I’m quite lucky.” - Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

As was acknowledged within the methodology chapter, a limitation of this research project is that it did not access young Muslims who do not engage in volunteering, and therefore fails to capture these narratives. However, Nadin’s assertion that religious and cultural expectations can impede many young Muslims from volunteering reflects the body of research which has begun to explore Muslim’s engagement with sporting activity and the many obstacles that they have to overcome (Nakamura, 2002; Benn and Ahmed, 2006; Walseth, 2004; Dagkas and Benn, 2006). Reflecting the statistical evidence from Chapter 4, notions of being restricted by religious and cultural expectations was a more dominant theme within the narratives of the more conservatively religious interviewees.

It is not only family members that posed a resistance to young Muslims volunteering. This excerpt taken from a paired interview between Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N) and Mira (19, F, Mi, N) describes an abusive confrontation between themselves and a man from their local community during a street collection, raising money for the recent refugee crisis:

Yasmin: “It actually got aggressive. Like, shouting that we shouldn’t be hanging about on street corners, like we were prostitutes or something.”

Mira: “Yeah, like they didn’t think women should be doing that sort of thing. You’ve just got to, like, ignore that sort of thing. They’re just idiots, but it’s still pretty upsetting”

Interviewer: Would [these abuses] ever stop you from volunteering?

Mira: “Like not for me, but its still, like hurt me, you know”

Yasmin: “Yeah, but we know people who stopped doing street collections cos of people like them.”

Mira: “Yeah”

Similarly to the Islamophobic abuses described within the previous section (5.4.3), the narratives of religious and cultural expectations being barriers to volunteering appear to have an unequal gendered impact. Whilst it was not specifically referred to as a ‘gendered barrier’ to volunteering by the respondents, this theme was significantly more common amongst females than males. These culturally different expectations of males and females within some Islamic communities can produce inequalities in what is considered acceptable practices within and across gendered divides. The gender dynamics highlighted within this section are also visible within the accounts of the interviewees’ experiences of volunteering. These narratives will therefore be expanded upon within the subsequent chapter (section 6.5).

5.5 Conclusion:

This chapter has discussed the diverse pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers, examining how a combination of motivations, facilitators and barriers can impact upon how young Muslims engage with volunteering to different degrees. This section will highlight the key findings from the chapter: (1) the importance of altruism as a motivation for volunteering; (2) the rejection of corporate capital in favour of ‘religious capital’; (3) the contrasting roles of family and religion as either facilitators or as barriers to volunteering; (4) the challenge of maintaining a balanced life; and (5) the impact of Islamophobia in shaping young Muslims’ engagements with volunteering.

Firstly, this chapter has contributed to the body of geographical literature on volunteering, offering new insights into the motivations for young people’s engagement with volunteering. The notion of altruism as an incentive for volunteering has been largely absent from much of the current research in this field; however, the findings from this research project have highlighted the

importance that altruism and compassion have in shaping the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims.

Secondly, with respondents tending to reject the idea of volunteering as a route of self-development and preparation for corporate work, the concept of 'religious capital' could be seen as a religiously inspired alternative. A wealth of contemporary literature has highlighted the potential long-term financial benefits of volunteering (Jones, 2011; Brewis and Holdsworth, 2014); however, the narratives within this chapter have revealed a parallel motivation, based not in the corporate sphere, but in the accumulation of religious capital. Whilst research by Jones (2011) identifies a short-term 'pay-out' of volunteering through employment in the corporate world, the faith-based volunteering within this research project can be understood as an investment for *Jannah* (the afterlife).

Thirdly, family and social spheres were identified as the dominant facilitators of volunteering for most young Muslims, with religious connections also playing an important role for others. Family and friends often act as points of entry for young Muslims getting involved in volunteering. Social media was also a tool that helped facilitate volunteering, particularly in reaching potential new volunteers. Contrastingly, whilst both family and religion acted as clear pathways for young Muslims to become volunteers for many of the interviewees, the role of families and religious-cultural expectations in restricting young Muslims from volunteering was significant for many of the participants. These barriers tended to be more dominant themes within the narratives of more conservatively religious interviewees.

Fourthly, achieving a life balance was a relatively common theme for the majority of interviewees. Finding the balance between family lives, social lives, work and education, as well as volunteering, is a challenge for many young volunteers and, in some situations, became sites of contestation and conflict. For those in work and/or with families to look after, the balance between volunteering and other aspects of life was more consistent, though equally difficult for many of the participants to negotiate. For students, these points of stress were highly temporal, tending to cause most conflict during exam periods, whilst easing off during

holidays. The notion of 'over-volunteering' was highlighted by some interviewees, reflecting this balance between work, education, family, friends and volunteering.

Finally, Islamophobic abuse, or fear of such abuse, although slightly less frequently raised as a barrier for volunteering, is perhaps more pertinent for those who were affected by such situations. The narratives from this chapter highlight a deeply gender driven form of abuse, both from within and from outside of the Muslim community. Feelings of exposure and vulnerability amongst young Muslim women are not, in themselves, new (Hopkins, 2016; Zine, 2006; Afshar, 2008). However, the power that these abuses can have in restricting the participation of young Muslims with volunteering is clear cause for concern that needs addressing through more specific, in-depth research, leading to tangible, political action.

Chapter 6: Experience of Volunteering

6.1 – Introduction

Individuals' experiences of volunteering have been shown to shape their engagement with voluntary practices. Hoeber (2010: 207) highlights the importance of researching these experiences, stating that:

“our understandings of volunteering... can be challenged and broadened by examining the experiences of those whose volunteer efforts go unrecognized or unnoticed.”

The voluntary practices of young British Muslims have gone largely unacknowledged from an academic stand-point, and this research project has therefore sought to bring these narratives to light, addressing Hoeber's (2010) call for researchers to understand the importance of voluntary work through the experiences of the volunteers themselves. This chapter responds to Smith et al.'s (2010) call for an 'enlivened' approach within the geographies of volunteering, outlining the emotional, embodied and situated experiences of young Muslim volunteers, highlighting the vital conjunctures and encounters which shape these experiences of 'doing' volunteering.

This chapter will examine five key areas that emerged most prominently with the interviews in regards to the respondents' experiences and encounters with volunteering and, as such, addresses Research Question 3: 'What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?'. These five themes are discussed across the interview data, beginning with the most dominant: personal experiences (6.2); social and life experiences (6.3); family experiences (6.4); serious leisure (6.5); challenging experiences (6.5); and moral and political challenges (6.6). Each of these sections will draw upon accounts from the in-depth interviews, discussing how these experiential narratives relate to current geographical understandings of volunteering.

6.2 - Personal Experiences

Meier and Stutzer (2008: 39) posed the question: "Is volunteering rewarding in itself?" This question has sparked a lively academic discussion across multiple

disciplines as to the extent of the personal benefits of volunteering (Aknin et al., 2013; Binder and Freytag, 2013; Welty et al., 2013; Chowdry, 2016; Vecina et al., 2013; Okun and Kim, 2016). Whilst this research project does not have the scope to support Meier and Stutzer's (2008: 39) claim that "volunteers are more satisfied with their life than non-volunteers", the responses from this research does suggest a strong connection between prosocial volunteering and rewarding experiences. The most regularly occurring response to discussions of the participants' experiences of volunteering highlights a 'rewarding feeling', or 'feeling of satisfaction and pride' in making a difference in the lives of others. The reaffirming feedback cycle of voluntary action creating meaningful results, leading to positive experiences, and thus resulting in desire to engage in more voluntary action is a common theme amongst many of the respondents. This section will examine the personal experiences of the respondents, exploring how these affirmative experiences can create positive feedback of volunteering.

Three short excerpts from respondents describing their experiences of volunteering reveal an intrinsic feeling of positivity, reflecting Meier and Stutzer's (2008) notion that volunteering can increase people's individual wellbeing:

"I love volunteering... There isn't much more to it than that. It just makes me feel good, you know?" – Teejay (19, M, Hi, N)

"You get a warm feeling inside, you just feel good" - Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

"You know yourself what you are doing is worthwhile. When I wake up I just feel good about what I'm doing and that helps me feel good about myself as well." – Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

The repetition of the phrase 'feeling good' as a result of volunteering is a prominent theme within these descriptions, highlighting the personal psychological benefits of volunteering. These personal benefits are increasingly being recognised as important outcomes for volunteering and have been researched extensively in relation to the social and mental wellbeing of older volunteers in particular (Morrow-Howell et al., 2009; Baines and Hardill, 2008; Cattan et al., 2011; Lie et al., 2009; Morrol-Howell et al., 2003; Greenfield and Marks, 2004; Van Willigen, 2000; Lum and Lightfoot, 2005; Anderson et al., 2014). Whilst the

increased mental wellbeing of young people has been much more sparsely examined in relation to volunteering, the narratives from the young volunteers in this research project reveal a comparable set of processes to the myriad of research projects examining older volunteers. Volunteering has been shown to help improve the self-esteem and life satisfaction of older volunteers through their rewarding experiences (Morrow-Howell et al., 2009) and these intrinsic psychological benefits of volunteering emerged similarly within the narratives of the young Muslim volunteers in this research. This excerpt of conversation taken from a paired interview between Ailsa (19, F, Lo, N) and Lana (19, F, Lo, N) highlights the link between positive experiences of volunteering and an improved self-esteem:

Lana: “When I’m volunteering, I’m happy. It literally makes me happy”

Ailsa: “Me too. Especially the extra stuff we get to do, like the chances to do cool fundraising stuff... There’s stuff I wouldn’t’ve done a few years ago, but now I just dive right in”

Lana: “Like a confidence thing or you wouldn’t’ve done it cos you didn’t want to try new things?”

Ailsa: “Both really. Like I’ll give anything a go now, I’m way less worried about stuff. Yeah confidence I guess. Not just like volunteering. Everything really.”

These positive experiences of volunteering, described by Lana and Ailsa, show how the psychological benefits of volunteering can spill over to all aspects of their lives. This transformative capability of volunteering has been similarly recognised within ‘serious leisure’ theory (Stebbins, 1996; 2000; Misener et al., 2010; Green and Jones, 2006). The findings within Misener et al.’s (2010) research into the experiences of older volunteers reflect the “extremely positive” experiences of this research into young Muslim volunteers. Misener et al.’s (2010: 267) similarly found that the positive experiences of volunteers enabled them to “make a meaningful contribution and to receive several benefits of participation”. This notion of a dual benefit of volunteering for both the recipients and participants is a common theme throughout the narratives in this chapter.

For many interviewees, extrinsic experiences also impact upon how they realise their voluntary actions. Mira describes that, for her, seeing the results of her volunteering is a highly rewarding experience:

“When I hear about how much good the money we raised is doing, it makes me so happy... I volunteer to make a difference and so when we find out the stuff that we have achieved, it's a great feeling.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

Hassan and Kara also describe how the outcomes of their volunteering are gratifying and positive experiences:

“The responses of the audience are always incredible. It's always right at the end and you get that feeling of, ‘Phew! it's all done and the audience loved it’. That's great. You can't ask for much more.” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

“Feedback from people after the show can make [volunteering as an actor] so rewarding. It's obviously great when friends or family say they enjoyed [the performances], but it is amazing when people you don't know say how much they liked it, or it made them think, or it connected with them in some way... Those are the best experiences.” – Kara (18, F, Lo, N)

This notion of feedback from the recipients of volunteering (in this case, the audience) influencing the way in which volunteers experience their practices can have tangible impacts upon young peoples 'commitment' to volunteering (Yanay and Yanay, 2008). Hassan and Kara both here describe how extrinsic feedback on their performances creates feelings of accomplishment. The confidence and self-esteem that the volunteers gain through these rewarding experiences of volunteering are clear to see within these narratives. Yanay and Yanay (2008) highlight how volunteers are much more likely to continue their participation of volunteering if they have positive experiences. Therefore, whilst much of the research on young people's engagement with volunteering has tended to examine their motivations (Reimer et al., 2004; Chapters 4 and 5), it is also vital to understand young people's experiences of volunteering (this chapter).

Zaida describes how extrinsic feedback processes influence her engagement with volunteering, even within challenging circumstances. She explains that any

challenging or difficult experiences of volunteering are outweighed by the resulting rewarding experiences:

“Seeing the smiles on the faces of the children [we are helping] makes everything worthwhile. All the sacrifices you make are insignificant when you see the difference you are making in their lives” – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

The narratives within this section reveal how both intrinsic feedback and extrinsic feedback of volunteering can create positive experiences for the volunteers themselves. These positive experiences have been shown within a range of research projects to increase continued participation amongst volunteers (Yanay and Yanay, 2008; Green and Jones, 2006). Many of the experiences highlighted within this section reveal how the outcomes of volunteering can be dually beneficial, both for the recipient of volunteering and for the volunteers themselves. The following section (6.3) draws upon many of the same themes, examining how the social experiences of the respondents in this thesis can impact upon their engagement with volunteering.

6.3 – Social and Life Experiences

Smith et al. (2010: 271) describe how “people’s experiences [of volunteering] reflect their encounters and relations with people and places”. The experiences that young Muslims have of volunteering therefore are embedded within their specific social milieus. Whilst there are a few isolated accounts of negative social experiences of volunteering addressed within this section, the vast majority of interviewees highlight how positive social interactions with other volunteers enhanced their experiences of volunteering. The nexus of social encounters, often with likeminded individuals, creates an affirmative environment which forms a basis for experiencing volunteering in a positive way (Misener et al., 2010). The concept of volunteering as a form of ‘serious leisure’ (Stebbins, 1982) understands how volunteering can be simultaneously a social activity and a sincere prosocial action. This section offers insights into how these two parallel components of serious leisure can become entangled to produce a series of social experiences amongst the respondents from this research. In addition to these social interactions, a notion of gaining life experiences is expressed amongst many of the volunteers from this research project. Exploring the world around them and taking

on new life challenges emerge regularly within discussions of their experiences of volunteering.

The idea of gaining life experience through volunteering is highlighted within a number of academic investigations of volunteering amongst young people, particularly in relation to international volunteering (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015; Rehberg, 2005; Jones, 2011). Similarly, the notion of volunteers wanting to experience the world around them through their volunteering practices was a common theme within this research project. The importance of gaining these life experiences is evident within these descriptions from Mira and Ailsa:

“I just wanted to get stuck in. There are so many doors that were opened when I start volunteering. Seeing new places; experiencing new challenges; taking on new things.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

“Stuff like climbing Snowdonia at sunrise or raising money bungee jumping... They’re just things you couldn't do otherwise. I owe so many of my best memories to stuff I’ve done for charity” – Ailsa (19, F, Lo, N)

The extra-voluntary activities described here by Ailsa are not just methods of encouraging young people to engage in volunteering; they are another example of the dual benefits of volunteering: raising money for charity, whilst simultaneously providing the volunteers with experiences that they could not achieve elsewhere. Although the majority of voluntary activities described by the participants of this research project took place within local neighbourhoods in Birmingham, others described national or international scales of engagement. This quote from Mo echoes the experiences of Mira and Ailsa by highlighting the importance of life experiences, whilst also emphasising the significance that social aspects of volunteering can have upon his experiences:

“There are loads of great opportunities to see the world around you and meet new people and experience new things, and all the time you know you are doing your best to help other people.” – Mo (18, M, Lo, N)

Correspondingly to this statement from Mo, Hopkins et al. (2015), in their research into young Christian volunteers, describe how this combination of gaining life

experiences and new social interactions can occur in unison with a 'serious' prosocial outreach. These more 'serious' elements of volunteering are discussed within section 6.5 of this chapter.

This excerpt of conversation from a paired interview between Mira and Yasmin exemplifies many of the social experiences described by the young Muslim volunteers within this research project:

Mira: "Volunteering gives you such a buzz. The events we do, the people we meet. [The other] volunteers are what make it such a laugh; such a fun time."

Yasmin: "Yeah, we always have such a good time as a group. I think everyone looks forward to getting together."

Mira: "Every time you volunteer it's different. You do different things and meet new people. It's never boring."

The idea here that experiences of volunteering can facilitate social interaction is not unique to this thesis. Serious leisure theory has often been utilised in order to understand how the experiences of volunteering can impact upon the well-being of older adults by creating support networks and stimulating social interaction (Heo et al., 2010; Misener et al., 2010; Cattan et al., 2011); however, as was discussed within the previous sections, there have been fewer attempts to understand the social benefits of volunteering amongst young adults. Narratives from this section therefore address this lacuna of research into the personal benefits of volunteering amongst young people, highlighting how positive social experiences can transform the way young Muslims engage with volunteering.

Misener et al. (2010: 268) describe how volunteering "enables people to find personal meaning and identity, and to explore their needs, interests, and social and political values through action". Likewise, many narratives in this research project can be accurately understood in relation to an accumulation of social capital, supplementing a personal interest in volunteering. This is demonstrated through these quotations from the respondents:

“You meet people through volunteering and they become part of your life. We go out for dinner and have loads of social events as a group... All the volunteers are good friends” - Junaid (18, F, Mi, N)

Research into volunteering amongst older people tends to highlight access to support systems as a primary benefit of volunteering; however, narratives from the young Muslim volunteers in this research revealed that it is often the shared social experiences of volunteering that were most prominent. Green and Jones (2006) describe volunteering as “a time and place to interact with others sharing the ethos of the activity” and this idea of social interaction through shared experiences is reflected within these narratives from the interviewees in this research project:

“All the [volunteers] are supportive of each other. We help each other out in loads of ways, even if it’s not really related to our volunteering. It’s cool to have a good bunch of people that you can depend on, you know?” – Teejay (19, M, N, Hi)

“I’ve built such a strong friendship with the other volunteers. Everyone is really similar in the way we think and what we do. We get along pretty easily. When someone new joins they usually slot right in because we have loads in common without even trying” - Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

“We do a lot in the community, especially in Ramadan. We do charity work during the day and then we break our fast together in the evening... It’s a great way to bring us together during Ramadan, as most people are resting indoors, but volunteering together is good for the community and good for our wellbeing” – Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

These shared experiences reflect some findings from research which has conceptualised volunteering as serious leisure. Green and Jones (2005) outline a primary effect of serious leisure volunteering in terms of the interaction between individuals with a shared the interest or ‘ethos’ of the activity. Orr (2006) similarly describes how the positive experiences of volunteering are achieved through the personal interests that the participant has in the activity, but furthermore, these

experiences can be enriched by sharing these experiences with like-minded people.

The majority of respondents highlight overwhelmingly positive experiences of volunteering; however, a small minority of interviewees describe the negative social experiences of volunteering, through a feeling of exclusion or rejection from other volunteers.

“I don’t always get on with all the volunteers. I don't have much in common with most of them so we don't talk much. We had to work in pairs during the last street fundraiser and the guy I was with made it pretty clear he’d rather be with anyone else. That was pretty depressing.” – Darmien (M, 24, Lo, C)

This quote from Darmien reveals a feeling of rejection that he describes as ‘depressing’. Therefore, as much as Darmien expressed his positive social and prosocial motivations for volunteering (Chapter 5), the actions of another volunteer could still tarnish his experiences of volunteering. Nyla also describes how social interactions, or lack thereof, could limit her experiences of volunteering:

“I’m quite quiet. Most of the others are pretty loud so I don't talk much. I usually hang out with my best friend, but when she’s not there I just keep myself to myself.” – Nyla (F, 18, Mi, N)

These experiences of rejection and isolation, though far from being the dominant narrative within this research, still have the ability to transform the experiences of volunteering amongst young Muslim volunteers. Just as positive experiences of volunteering can strengthen the commitment of a volunteer, Yanay and Yanay (2008) highlight how negative experiences can influence people’s decision to either change their voluntary practices, or stop volunteering all together. Whilst this research project only examines current, active volunteers, Darmien hinted that he was likely to leave the the charity he currently volunteers with in favour of another.

This section has examined a number of narratives from the young Muslim volunteers within this research project, focusing on their social experiences. Serious leisure theory can act as a useful mechanism for understanding the complex overlaps between the ‘serious’ aims of voluntary actions and the ‘leisure’ experiences of the volunteers themselves. The majority of respondents highlight a

positive influence of their social interactions and a shared 'ethos' of volunteering bringing them together. However, this positive experience of the social element of volunteering is not universal. A minority of respondents highlight how negative social interactions with fellow volunteers could leave them with feelings of rejection or failure, transforming the nature of their experiences of volunteering. Following on from this section, which has examined the social experiences of volunteering, section 6.4 specifically addresses family experiences of volunteering and how these interactions can transform the nature of both the volunteering practices and the relationships between family members.

6.4 - Family Experiences

As alluded to within the previous chapter (section 5.3), the volunteering practices of many of the interviewees were embedded within a familial context. Volunteering with parents, siblings and cousins not only shaped the pathways that enabled young Muslims to engage in volunteering, but also produced some tangible impacts upon the experiences of volunteering amongst the interviewees. The impact that family can have on the pathways young Muslims take to become volunteers is deeply divided (section 5.3). Many families encourage and facilitate the respondents to engage in volunteering, whilst other (often conservative) families actively attempt to discourage or limit their participation. The narratives within this section, however, depict a much more positive image of the family dynamics of volunteering. The reason for this less divided perspective of family impacts on volunteering is that this section focuses on families who volunteer together. Families that are engaged in volunteering as a unit are heavily invested in such activities and are therefore less likely to restrict the experiences of the young volunteers from this research project. A common theme that emerged regularly amongst respondents who volunteered as part of a family was a feeling of cohesion through a set of shared experiences. Immo, Saskia and Yasmin all describe how volunteering with family members was an integral aspect of their experiences of volunteering:

“My dad just roped us all into it to start with. I’m not sure we were that keen, but it quickly became something that we loved doing together. I can’t actually remember when we first volunteered together or what it was that

we were doing it for, but I remember it becoming like 'our thing'. We were that family that were always at everything, like always at the stuff put on by the Mosque, or helping out at a local charity thing, we were always there. Now we're older it's a bit more difficult to get us all together, but we still try and meet up when we can to give something back to our community." - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

"Everyone is really supportive and we look out for each other. We always try to volunteer together when we can. It gets us all together to do something good for other people." – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

"My family have been involved with helping out at the Mosque for about as long as time. It was pretty natural that I would get sucked in as well. I started out just helping my mum making biscuits and cakes and serving tea... We are so close now and loads of that is cos we just used to gossip when we were doing these things. It really brought us closer." Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

These shared experiences described by Immo, Saskia and Yasmin highlight how volunteering became the catalyst for strengthening their family relationships. Most research into youth volunteering has accurately described how, for many young people, volunteering can be an escape from family dependence: an expression of freedom, increasing autonomy and journey of self-discovery in their transition towards adulthood (Hopkins et al., 2015; Ansell, 2008; Bussell and Forbes, 2002; Baillie Smith et al., 2013). Hopkins et al., (2015), for example, describe how for many young Christians, international volunteering "offered the opportunity to break away from the aged relationships of the UK, face new challenges, learn new skills". However, the narratives here reveal that volunteering can also act as a cohesive family activity. Whilst this idea of volunteering as a social glue for Muslim families can be understood as a positive action for community structure and social cohesion, there may equally be implications of family volunteering acting as a mechanism for controlling the actions and experiences of young Muslims. The choices of which types of volunteering are considered to be 'appropriate' by families can be seen as a mechanism for reproducing cultural principles and

ideologies. For example, Barni describes how his father heavily influences the way he and his siblings engage with volunteering:

“Our dad takes quite a lot of interest in the volunteering that we do. He’s usually pretty encouraging and likes to hear about what we’re up to... [but] if there’s a cause that we are raising money for, or something that he doesn’t agree with though he puts his foot down pretty hard... It makes us think twice about the stuff we sign up for, for sure.” – Barni (18, M, Mi, C)

Although Barni explains how he often bonds with his father through their shared interest in volunteering, the restrictive behaviour from Barni’s father also can be seen as a form of social control. As has been highlighted within the previous chapter, being part of a conservatively religious background could be relevant when considering the stance of Barni’s father. Hopkins et al. (2015) highlight that for many young Christians, volunteering can provide the opportunities to gain independent experiences that can shape their transitions to ‘religious adulthood’. The ‘exceptional’ experiences of volunteering can interrupt the everyday lives of young Christian volunteers, providing unique spaces in which these young people can increase their religious maturity. In contrast to this notion of strengthening faith through exceptional experiences (Hopkins et al., 2015), the narratives within this section suggest that religious and cultural maturation can be achieved through volunteering as an everyday process. Barni’s narrative in particular highlights how this cultural-religious growth can be moulded through the boundaries placed upon his everyday voluntary actions by his parents.

However, for others, no such restrictions were placed upon them in terms of the ‘appropriateness’ of their voluntary activities. Rohan simply describes volunteering as a bonding experience for him and his brothers. Rohan, as the youngest of four brothers, explains that he used to feel left out when his siblings were doing things that he was not allowed to do:

“I wasn’t allowed to go with them at first, cos my parents said I was too young, but they eventually let me go with them... I definitely [became] closer with my brothers when we volunteered together.” – Rohan (18, M, Mi, C)

These experiences of family cohesion were not universal, however. A minority of volunteers described how volunteering with family members could lead to tension and result in a strain on their relationships. Hussein describes here how his family used to boss him around whilst volunteering together:

“Cos I was the youngest, I was always given the shitty jobs to do, you know? The stuff that no one else wants to do... I prefer it now when I don't have to volunteer with my family, I can just hang out with my friends. I'm relaxed volunteering now, cos, you know, it's voluntary now, I'm not being told what I can and can't do.” – Hussein (19, M, Mi, N)

Hussein suggests here that, whilst he was doing what would be considered to be 'voluntary work', he had no choice in these practices. The blurred boundaries between voluntary work and unpaid labour are called in to question through Hussein's narrative. These questions surrounding the definitions of volunteering have begun to be addressed with research in health and care work (Van der Horst, 2016; South et al., 2014; see section 2.2.4.5), however, Hussein's description highlights the need to address these imprecise definitions of 'voluntary work' within other research arenas. The notion of 'unvoluntary volunteering' within Hussein's narrative challenge the assumptions of choice and freewill within prevailing definitions of volunteering. The term 'unvoluntary' was used deliberately utilised in order to distance itself from notions of volunteering as a 'reflex' or as an 'automatic process' which could be inferred from the phraseology of 'involuntary volunteering'.

This quote from Mira reveals how volunteering with her sister can lead to tensions in their relationship, negatively impacting upon her experience of volunteering:

“I used to squabble with my sister all the time about anything. Our parents used to make me volunteer with her, I guess cos they thought we'd like look out for each other, but in the end, we had our own friends and everything. We might as well not have been working for the same charity at all.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

The experiences of volunteering with family members, whilst largely positive, did present some challenges that need to be negotiated by young Muslim volunteers. These challenges of balancing family relationships within the context of

volunteering are a small portion of the numerous challenges and difficulties that emerged for the volunteers within this research project. This section, along with the previous sections (6.2 and 6.3), have focused upon the social and familial aspects of volunteering, and whilst these personal experiences of volunteering emerge most prominently within the interviews, they do not reveal the full narrative. The more 'serious' outward dimensions of volunteering can equally impact how young Muslims engage with and experience their own voluntary actions. The following section utilises the concept of volunteering as serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982; 2001) in order to understand some of the more outreach focused objectives of youth volunteering in Muslim communities and the associated experiences.

6.5 – Serious Leisure

The idea of volunteering as a form of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982; 2001) has been touched upon within the preceding sections of this chapter (6.1, 6.2, 6.3). However, whilst the previous sections focused upon the side of volunteering that benefits the volunteers themselves, this section will examine the more 'serious' element of volunteering.

Saskia describes how volunteering within her local Muslim community can break down divisions between different denominations of Islam:

“There are loads of events where we bring the local Mosques together and people can get to know each other and understand each other, regardless of our differences. Sure we discuss our interpretation of *hadiths* and what is *haram* or *halal*,³¹ but the main focus of these events is more to get Muslims united with the things we have in common, rather than the things that we disagree with.” - Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

Whilst divisions within and between different Islamic schools of thought can be highly divisive, Saskia explains how her volunteering to help organise interdenominational meetings within the community can break down barriers and promote social cohesion. The effects of these cross-cultural encounters have been researched in relation to individuals and communities of different ethnicities and religions (Wilson, 2014; 2016; Valentine, 2008), however Saskia's narrative reveal

³¹ Halal refers to anything that is permissible within Islamic jurisprudence

how these meaningful encounters can be effective in eroding barriers within communities of the same religion.

These social experiences of volunteering are not just limited to a closed-off Islamic community. This quote from Raya describes the multitude of positive impacts that volunteering can have upon the wider local community:

“Even the little things like our litter-picks make a real difference in the community. Like no one wants to go and play in the park or take their kids there if it’s like full of rubbish... It’s not saving lives, but it’s still good to bring local people together.” - Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

Raya highlights that the aesthetic benefits of picking up litter is, in her mind, a secondary outcome compared to the social benefits that can result from even such small-scale volunteering. Similarly, Kamran, who is involved in a range of volunteering projects, stresses the importance of the volunteers who come in to make tea and coffee. This volunteering can be easily overlooked, but the impacts that these actions can have are clear within this quote from Kamran:

“We run multi-faith events that are held in different Mosques across the city. We invite religious leaders from the Churches and Synagogues and we just have some talks and discussions about our shared values. We have a great team of volunteers, who help get set up, make tea and coffee, take photos, and just generally help the day run smoothly... Islam is seen as quite an inward-looking religion, but actually, we try to bring people from all different religions together. It’s amazing how well we all get on when we are just having a cup of tea, chatting and getting to know each other.” - Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

The idea of bringing people together through leisure activities is an example of how volunteering as a form of ‘serious leisure’ can simultaneously bring communities together through informal social interactions. These prosocial outcomes described within Kamran’s narrative are also reflected within Yasmin’s description of their community car wash:

“We want to live in harmony with the people around us so we really try to get people from all parts of our community together... At our car wash last

week we had loads of people from [the area] involved. We teamed up with the local church to get as many people interested as possible and the money we made went back into local projects.” - Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

These narratives from Kamran and Yasmin reflect the idea that the social rewards of volunteering can be inseparable from the contributions that they aim to make in the local community (Orr, 2006; Stebbins, 2005; Misener et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2016). The concept of serious leisure has been effective in conceptualising many of the experiences of the young Muslim volunteers within this chapter so far; however, the serious leisure theory is less useful for understanding the challenging experiences that also impact upon their engagement with volunteering. The following section (6.6) goes on to address challenges of volunteering in detail, exploring how they can influence the experiences that young Muslims have of volunteering.

6.6 – Challenging experiences

As has been demonstrated within this chapter so far, the vast majority of narratives describe an almost exclusively positive set of experiences of volunteering; however, many difficulties and challenges also emerged within the interviews. Yanay and Yanay (2008), in their research into the experiences of volunteers at the ‘Centre for Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence’ in Israel, highlight a stark contrast between the ‘ought’ and ‘actual’ experiences of these volunteers, where the volunteers expect to have a positive outcome, but the realities of volunteering can be significantly more difficult. The impact of this discrepancy between individuals’ expectations of ‘feeling good’ through their voluntary practices and the actual experiences of helplessness, low self-esteem or contestation can have tangible impacts on the continued participation of volunteers (Yanay and Yanay, 2008).

6.6.1 - Experiencing Logistical Challenges

Balancing a desire to volunteer regularly, with the pressures and demands of education and work, was a challenge for many respondents (see Chapter 5). Feelings of exhaustion and stress caused by difficulties in managing their time effectively resulted in a less satisfactory experience of volunteering for some

young Muslim volunteers. Whilst volunteering can be conceptualised as a form of serious leisure (section 6.3), these actions require a large amount of investment on the part of the volunteer themselves. These investments can be mental exertions or physical effort, financial investments or investments of time. Negotiating their participation of volunteering with domestic responsibilities or expectations is a relatively common experience for the most active volunteers within this research project. The need for volunteers to balance the resources at their disposal can mean sacrificing elements of volunteering, as in this quote from Kamran:

“There are times where you’ve got to take a break from volunteering. Like when things are getting stressful at work then volunteering has to take a back-seat... You can’t do everything.” - Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

This quote from Kamran reflects Stebbins (2000: 154) idea that volunteering as serious leisure is characterised by ‘flexible obligation’ and ‘a relative freedom to honour commitments’. For other volunteers, who are less willing to reduce the amount of volunteering in which they participate, fatigue can become a factor that shapes the experiences of volunteering. This excerpt from Maka shows how tiredness affects his feelings towards volunteering:

“There are some days where I am just really tired. You know the feeling when everything in your life starts stacking up... I enjoy [volunteering] less when I’m tired because I’m just thinking that I could be getting some time to relax now, but it frustrates me when people commit [to volunteering] and don’t show up, so I just go with it.” - Maka (19, M, Mi, C)

Maka’s mind-set of not wanting to disrupt his commitment to volunteering can be understood through the concept of ‘flow’. Heo et al. (2010: 209) describe ‘flow’ as “the psychological state in which people are so intensely involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter.” Whilst the concept of flow has been linked with improving the quality of daily life amongst active volunteers (Heo et al., 2010; Asakawa, 2004) and reduced anxiety and stress (Heo et al., 2010), this description from Maka reveals pressure points within his daily life that can be exacerbated by his ‘flow’ of volunteering. Similarly, Dillion and Sammi describe feelings of frustration regarding the efficiency of volunteering:

“I seem to be busy all the time at the moment, so if we have a meeting or whatever and it’s just really not productive, or people aren’t pulling their weight it kinda makes you wish you hadn’t bothered. I’m just thinking, ‘I could’ve been using my time to get on with my work...’” – Dillion (20, M, Lo, N)

“Volunteering is great most of the time, but there are times when it can be difficult. When the people you’re volunteering with aren’t getting on, or you miss something with your friends, or even sometimes just when it’s raining it can make it a bit less fun to be part of.” – Sammi (24, M, Lo, N)

Whilst these quotes depict narratives of challenges that can undermine the experiences of the volunteers, Hassan explains how he tries to harness the pressure within his volunteering:

“There can be loads of pressure to perform well... You want to do justice to the play and not let [the director] down. You want to make sure the audience enjoys what you are doing, and that they understand the message you are trying to get across.” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

The positive experiences of volunteering are not necessarily guaranteed. Whilst the majority of interviewees highlight their various successful voluntary actions (as demonstrated throughout this chapter so far), other respondents highlighted how challenges and obstacles can hinder the experiences of volunteering. Nevertheless, narratives from these young volunteers revealed that a lack of enthusiasm and participation from members of the public, both Muslim and non-Muslim alike, could severely impact upon their experiences of volunteering, as this quote from Zaida reveals:

“People just don’t want to join in, and if they don’t want to get involved, there isn’t much you can do to make them... It’s just a shame when you put in so much hard work and it doesn’t really come to anything... This is obviously pretty rare, but it’s still a shame.” – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

A similar story emerged within this narrative from Faas, who describes how the outreach schemes promoted by a Muslim charity and some of the local Mosques had very little impact due to a lack of interest from the general public:

“We put on some events to local people, to show that we wanted to integrate into, like, British culture and to show we weren’t just isolating ourselves into a Muslim only community, but no one really came, so what can you do?... Frustrating.” – Faas (19, M, Mi, N)

These two narratives highlight an issue that has been academically explored in relation to the isolation of some Muslim communities in Western society (Sobolewska et al., 2015; Ratna, 2016; Tyler, 2016; Westrop, 2016). These two descriptions from Zaida and Faas also reveal a challenge to volunteering that has been explored less with contemporary research. Whilst many researchers have analysed participation amongst the volunteers themselves, there is a dearth of research that examines the engagement of the public with such outreach schemes.

In the same vein, fundraising efforts were heavily reliant upon the combined efforts of the volunteers, supporting entourage and general public. Whilst the majority of narratives reveal a strongly positive relationship between the volunteers and the public, a minority of interviewees highlighted some of the challenges that could arise whilst raising money through ‘street collections’. This quote from Yasmin describes the realities of fundraising in the public domain:

“The locals weren’t happy with us fundraising there. One man said to me ‘Go and ask rich people for money. We don’t have anything to give you here’” - Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

This short quote from Yasmin reveals an aspect of voluntarism that is widely debated and contested from an academic perspective. The decline of the welfare state in recent years (see chapter 2) has been propped up by the ‘third sector’ (Fyfe, 2005). Therefore, whilst the aims and intentions of volunteering and charity work are almost universally good, and the impacts they can have in transforming the lives of individuals and communities can be hugely beneficial, they can also mask the impacts of austerity and the lack of state support within the lowest socio-

economic communities (Halford et al., 2015; Bach, 2012; Alcock, 2010). So, whilst Yasmin's experience of fundraising can be made more difficult by a lack of engagement from the public, it is actually the wider issue of reduced state welfare and its associated social problems that are most starkly revealed within Yasmin's narrative. Veeda and Hussein similarly highlight how experiences of rejection can impact how they perceive not just their engagement with volunteering, but also their own positions within society:

"Some days are better than others. It just feels like sometimes or some places no one wants to donate anything. You get on a roll of rejection. You just have to keep your spirits up and hope that eventually someone is gonna give you even some shrapnel." - Veeda (18, F, Lo, N)

"People sometimes don't want us to be volunteering where we are. I think they think that us volunteering in the city centre is us trying to take over. They don't want anything to do with it" – Hussein (19, M, Mi, N)

These descriptions of Muslims volunteering within public places reveal some of the difficulties that can restrict Muslims from having the positive impacts to which they aspire. Yasmin and Veeda both highlight how difficult it can be to convince people to give money to their cause, especially whilst collecting in areas with high levels of deprivation. The visible presence of Muslims in public spaces, from Hussein's perspective, is viewed by many people as a threat to British way of life and the voluntary actions of young Muslims can often receive push-back from non-Muslims. However, Hussein's assertion that the public do not want to engage with volunteering as a result an irrational fear of Islam is not necessarily representative of the public's choice of actions. Whilst experiences of conflict between himself and non-Muslims in public spaces may have caused these notions of feeling unwelcome within public spaces, the public's lack of engagement with fundraisers in the city centre could emerge as a result of numerous viewpoints. Much of the research into charitable giving and philanthropy highlights a connection or vested interest between the giver and the charity (Smith et al., 2007; Knowles et al., 2012). Therefore, whilst from the perspectives of Hussien and Veeda it may appear that the lack of engagement from the general public is prejudicial reaction, it may equally manifest from a lack of interest in either the charitable aims, the religious

attachment of the charity, or the overall 'place' of fundraising interrupting the everyday mobilities of the street and public space.

6.6.2 – Experiencing Challenges of Aid Distribution

A small number of the respondents describe the challenges they experienced whilst distributing aid, a less common yet importantly 'glocal' voluntary activity undertaken by a minority of research participants. In contrast to the majority of Muslim volunteers within this research project who highlight the positive feedback they received from the recipients of volunteering (section 6.2), some volunteers explain how:

“When you see the hardship that some of the refugees we are helping have to go through, the terrible situations that they're in. It's tough. It's not all fun and games like we have at the fundraisers” – Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

MacNeela (2008) explains how, whilst the majority of research in this field deals with the benefits of volunteering for the volunteers, the realities of volunteering can be considerably more challenging. These difficult, unforeseen experiences can be seen within this research project. Aaron continues to explain how he was not mentally prepared to deal with some of the situations in which he volunteers, describing his recent mission to a refugee camp in Jordan:

“It was so much harder than I expected... The conditions that these people are living; the amount of people in this situation. You can't really understand it without seeing it. It hit me like a ton of brick and I was just speechless to start with.” - Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

This narrative of feeling overawed shows how the practical realities of the situation Aaron was attempting to help and benefit were vastly more challenging than he had expected. Although the long-term effects of witnessing and experiencing such difficult situations are not examined within this research, it does echo some of the findings from Bhushan and Kumar's (2012) research into post-traumatic stress experienced by many volunteers for post-tsunami relief operations in South East Asia. Bhushan and Kumar's (2012) observed that although the volunteers received “an increased appreciation of life” and “a sense of greater personal strength”,

these were often offset by symptoms of post-traumatic stress. These personal and emotional stresses can be seen within this quote from Immo:

“When you’re actually on the ground, distributing aid it can be really difficult... Like physically demanding, emotionally draining. Some of the horrible situations that these people are in are so horrific it can be overwhelming and you just think ‘how can I help these people, we need so many more volunteers and resources’.” - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

Other challenges to the experiences of volunteering were similarly down to the overwhelming scale of the problems that the volunteers themselves were facing. Shabaz describes a comparable scenario at a refugee camp in Yemen, in which he felt inadequately equipped to deal with the crisis before him:

“I knew we needed to do more to help these people. We needed more volunteers, more food, more shelter, more of everything. What we did achieve... was above and beyond what we had planned, but it still barely scratched the surface.” – Shabaz (22, M, Lo, N)

This description reveals that even though the impact of Shabaz’s voluntary actions were beyond what he had expected and planned for, he still felt that he had not been able to achieve enough. Shabaz recognised this challenge to be overcome and explains that it inspired him to re-evaluate how his voluntary organisation could be more effective in their aid distribution:

“We’re planning our next mission to the same camp. We’ve raised more money for more supplies and have more volunteers coming out with us, so I’m really confident that we can build on the experiences of last time and make a massive difference this time.” – Shabaz (22, M, Lo, N)

This ability to adapt and develop volunteering strategies described here has not been examined from an academic perspective; however, understanding these evolutionary volunteering strategies could offer models for producing effective outcomes for future volunteering projects and the experiences of the volunteers themselves.

The visceral, emotional and embodied narratives within this section reveal the situatedness of 'doing' volunteering (Smith et al., 2010). The challenges experienced by the volunteers are embedded within the socio-spatial context in which they take place. Aaron, for example, continues his narrative, describing the contrast between volunteering in Birmingham and Jordan:

"It's like two different worlds. When you're having a laugh, raising money in back in Birmingham, it's just so different. Surrounded by people you know, it's fun and safe. It's easy. Jordan was a whole other world, [but] that is where the real work gets done." – Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

Aaron's comparison between volunteering in the 'fun', 'safe' and 'easy' streets of Birmingham and the 'terrible situations' in Jordan highlight the importance of place within the experiences of volunteers (Jupp, 2008). Whilst the narratives of distributing aid in refugee camps might not reflect the 'everyday' experiences of 'doing' volunteering, they reveal how his voluntary activities are highly 'situated', 'emotional' and 'embodied' (Smith et al., 2010).

6.5.2 – Religious Challenges and Islamophobia

As has been touched upon throughout this thesis, different schools of thought within Islam can have very diverse perspectives on what constitutes appropriate volunteering. For many young Muslim volunteers, wrestling with their own understandings of Islam, volunteering can become a setting in which they are able to contest ideas of what it means to be a Muslim in modern British society. However, for others, pressures from members of their community to act in specific ways restrict the experiences of volunteering for some young Muslims.

"Some Muslims give us a bit of grief... They're usually more conservative Muslims who don't think we should integrate into normal society. They think charity is great, until it involved talking to non-Muslims..." – Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

"Some Muslims don't like us doing what we do. Not all of us are as over the top as the Saudi's. It isn't even part of Islam; they just take the subjugation of women to a new level." – Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

“It isn’t ‘Islam’ that makes people uneasy about us volunteering in public spaces, or, as they call it, like Western a place, like in a shopping centre or places like that, it’s just a cultural thing. They’re the same people who think that all women should be wearing a Burka. I think you can tell what I think of that (*She points to her head to indicate not wearing any form of headscarf*). It doesn’t make me any less of a Muslim; it’s just their outdated traditions.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

These narratives highlight how the more conservative Islamic *Madhhabs* can restrict the ways in which young Muslims engage in volunteering, particularly the participation of Muslim women. These cultural and religious expectations of Muslim women, particularly within Saudi Arabian culture (often associated with Salafi/Wahhabi Islam), tarnish the experiences of some volunteers, or act as a barrier to volunteering for others.

Throughout this thesis, the impact that Islamophobic abuse can have on how young Muslims engage with volunteering has been prevalent. This section specifically examines the effects that such incidents can have on the experiences of volunteering, utilising the narratives of four female and two male respondents across a range of Islamic denominations and socio-economic statuses.

“It just makes you want to stop and give up. Quit. Those sorts of feelings don’t last long, but it can ruin your day completely. When you’re not doing anyone any harm and people just shout things like ‘terrorist’ at you... It really pisses me off.” – Rammir (20, M, Lo, C)

“I’m not really exposed to Islamophobia that much, so the first time I really experienced it I was really devastated. I was like 14 or 15 at the time and we were doing a sponsored litter pick in the park. It was one of my first times volunteering and I was so shocked. This guy just started laying into our group leader, calling him a raghead and a paki and a terrorist. I remember it so vividly still. Our leader... dealt with it so well, he was so calm, he didn’t react at all, but I was fuming inside.” - Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

Both of these narratives reveal how incidents of Islamophobia can tarnish any positive feelings of volunteering, replacing them with feelings of anger and

resentment. The notion of vital conjunctures is useful in this context to conceptualise critical events that shape the lives of young Muslim volunteers.

The connection between volunteer's experiences and their long-term engagement with volunteering may appear obvious (Yanay and Yanay, 2008); however, with charitable deeds and voluntary action being such a major component of Islam, it could be easy to overlook the importance of experiences of volunteering and focus on a strong religious conviction on the persistence of young Muslims' participation in volunteering. As Sefi describes:

“There was a group of us in the city centre doing a bucket collection, you know? And some guys started getting aggressive and just shouting some racist stuff at us. I think they had been drinking, you know... The police came in the end to move them on, but it disrupted the fundraiser a lot. Some of our volunteers were a bit nervous to approach people after that, you know?” – Sefi (23, F, Hi, N)

As was discussed within the previous chapters (sections 4.4 and 5.4), Islamophobia is significantly more impactful on women than men. Whilst the two narratives described in this section so far reveal how Islamophobic abuse can be equally destructive experiences for male Muslims, these accounts were fewer amongst the male respondents. Kali and Zaida explain how these experiences can disproportionately affect young female Muslims:

“There was just a group of us girls doing a car washing fundraiser. All the people we got coming to get their cars washed were basically just our parents or people from our mosque, but then some chavs came up, and saying some stuff about Islam. They were just looking for trouble. Luckily one of the parents who was there managed to get rid of them.” Kali (18, F, Mi, N)

“I genuinely believe that being visible in the community is a great way to break down social barriers, but it can be more difficult 'cos you can be exposed to more idiots dishing out chat about terrorists. Of course, it's never nice have Islamophobic stuff said to you, but I'm sort of becoming immune to it. I try to rise above it” – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

These feelings of vulnerability and exposure are not new for young Muslim women (Afshar, 2008; Hopkins, 2016; Hopkins and Greenwood, 2013). Afshar (2008: 411) addresses these abuses of female Muslims, stipulating that “the current climate of Islamophobia has burdened Muslim women who cover with additional problems in terms of their politics, their lived experiences and their life chances.” The contrasting experiences of safety and vulnerability were highly localised and deeply embedded with the volunteer’s emotional and corporal enactments within different spaces in Birmingham. Abdulla and Nyla describe:

“People think Sparkbrook’s a dangerous place, but I feel safe in place like that when I’m volunteering cos I know it. It’s where I’m from... Other people like fundraising in the centre [of Birmingham] cos there’s more people to donate money, but I don’t feel as comfortable there...” - Abdulla (M, 21, Mi, N)

“I feel at home in the streets where I live cos people know us from the Mosque. It’s easier to do volunteering in your own neighbourhood sometimes cos you don’t need to worry about what people are thinking about you.” – Nyla (F, 18, Mi, N)

These narratives of specific places that are imbued feelings of safety or vulnerability reflect Green and Singleton’s (2007) notion of ‘safe and risky spaces’, whereby people strategically map their public participation in accordance with their perceptions of safe spaces.

With all of the respondents from this research project being active volunteers, the challenges that they faced did not stop them from volunteering completely, but they did have the power to restrict the volunteering actions of many young Muslims, shaping their experiences in ways that the volunteers were often not expecting. For example, Aaron’s experiences of the refugee camp, or Barni’s negotiations between volunteering and the religions expectations placed upon him by his father. Whilst the agency that the respondents have to navigate these challenges can mitigate some of the negative impacts of these conflicts, the experiences of volunteering for many young Muslims was ultimately less enjoyable and fulfilling as a result.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the experiences of young Muslim volunteers and how these experiences can produce tangible impacts upon how these young people engage with volunteering more broadly. The majority of narratives from the young Muslims within this research portrayed a series of positive experiences, through intrinsic and extrinsic feedback, shared social experiences and family cohesion. Other respondents highlighted challenges and difficulties that they faced during their voluntary activities. These more challenging experiences of volunteering did not necessarily stop young Muslims from participating in volunteering, but it did shape their experiences of volunteering and their potential future participation (Yanay and Yanay, 2008). This conclusion offers a thematic summary of the key findings in relation to the experiences of volunteering amongst young Muslims, outlining: (1) the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic feedback; (2) the role of family in shaping the experiences of the participants; (3) the analytical traction of 'serious leisure' theory; and (4) the challenging experiences of the young Muslim volunteers in this research project.

Firstly, this chapter has highlighted that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are both vital in shaping young Muslims' experiences of volunteering. Intrinsic feelings of satisfaction and contribution, and at its most basic level, 'feeling good' enhance the experience of volunteering for many young Muslims. Extrinsic feedback simultaneously impacts upon how young Muslims experience their voluntary actions. Feedback from the recipients of volunteering are not, as is often presumed, passive beneficiaries, but are actively able to shape how the volunteers engage with and experience their volunteering through different processes of feedback. Overt or deliberate feedback, such as receiving praise from the audience after a performance is clearly impactful on how the volunteers experience their own actions; however, equally important are the more subtle channels of feedback, such as seeing the smile of a child who has benefited from the volunteering. These personal rewarding experiences of volunteering are common themes within this data set.

Secondly, as has been demonstrated throughout each of the empirical chapters so far (see sections 4.5 and sections 5.4), the role of family is significant. This chapter

highlights how, for many young Muslims, family interactions can shape their experiences of volunteering. The majority of interviewees who volunteered with their families describe a process of unity, cohesion and cementing bonds between their family members. These social benefits strengthen cultural connections that are embedded within many Muslim families. However, the research hints at a form of social control through the restriction of which voluntary activities are accepted by different families. Allowing Muslims to volunteer only within specific situations or within limited parameters can therefore reproduce cultural expectations for these young people.

Thirdly, this chapter has demonstrated the potency of conceptualising of volunteering as 'serious leisure' (Stebbins, 1982). Volunteering is a leisure activity that stimulates many beneficial personal and social experiences whilst simultaneously achieving more serious outcomes, for both the volunteer and recipient of volunteering. Serious leisure does not separate the intrinsic social and psychological benefits for the volunteers from the aims and outcomes of volunteering. Therefore, by considering these interconnected processes in conjunction with each, a 'serious leisure' framework can produce a more comprehensive understanding of how volunteers experience their own voluntary practices within the context of wider social and cultural structures.

Finally, the challenges that volunteers experience during their voluntary activities vary extensively, from logistical challenges to serious issues of Islamophobia and experiences of oppression under the guise of religious or cultural rules. The emotive narratives of abuse within this chapter highlight the importance of dissecting the stereotyping of Muslims within public imaginations (Saeed, 2007). Many of the narratives of Islamophobia from this chapter describe how the identities of young British Muslims are often essentialised through depictions of Muslims as non-British, extremist Others. The following chapter challenges these benighted representations, highlighting the complex, hybrid, fluid and plural identities of young British Muslims, exploring the intricate intersections between volunteering, youth, religion and identity.

Chapter 7: Volunteering, Youth, Religion and Identity

7.1 – Introduction

This chapter relates to the final research question by exploring how volunteering shapes the identities of young British Muslims. This chapter will be divided into two main sections: ‘Youth Transitions’ (section 7.2) and ‘Muslim Identities in British Society’ (section 7.3). The first of these two sections focuses upon the fluidity and malleability of identity, exploring how transitions towards adulthood (section 7.2.1), independence (section 7.2.2), corporate work (section 7.2.3) and religious maturity (section 7.2.4) are negotiated by young Muslims amidst the backdrop of contemporary British society. The second of these sections (7.3) examines how two seemingly disparate facets of identity – Islamic and British – can collide and intersect in varied and complex ways, and how young Muslims negotiate a sense of self within these turbulent milieus. The ways in which volunteering can impact upon these overarching themes is also drawn out within this section. Once again, the impacts that volunteering can have upon young people’s attempts to carve out their own pathways into emerging adulthood are teased out through the narratives of the respondents of this research project.

7.2 - Youth Transitions

The notion of youth as a series of transitions has become a popular conceptualisation for this dynamic and often turbulent period within the lives of young people (Chapter 2; Evans, 2016). Transitions towards adulthood (Furlong, 2009; Worth, 2009; Hurrellmann and Quenzel, 2015; Wehman et al., 2014; Molgat, 2007) (Section 7.2.1); transitions towards religious maturity (Smith and Snell, 2009; Ingersoll-Dayton et al.’ 2002) (Section 7.2.2); and transitions towards corporate work (Hopkins, 2006; Roberts, 2004; Pastore, 2014) (section 7.2.3) have all been examined within recent academic attention on young people in society. Transitions are also prevalent themes within the narratives of the respondents from this thesis. This section will therefore examine these different transitions in turn, whilst remaining cognisant of how they overlap and interact within each individuals’ shifting identity.

7.2.1 - Transitions to Adulthood

As was discussed in Chapter 2, it is imperative to move away from thinking of adulthood as a fixed and ultimate stage in the lifecourse. However, understanding the importance that volunteering can have upon shaping young people's transitions towards adulthood is imperative. This section therefore seeks to understand the relationship between volunteering and the shifting identities of young Muslims.

The most dominant theme amongst the participants' narratives of the impact of volunteering is a building of confidence. Mira, Yasmin and Teejay each reveal here how the responsibility that they took on through their volunteering practices gave them a confidence boost and helped them to 'grow up':

"I have become way more confident, cos I used to be really shy. You wouldn't really believe it cos I talk so much now!" Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

"You've gotta take a bit more responsibility sometimes, especially for the younger volunteers. I feel like a proper adult!" Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

"Volunteering has given me a lot of confidence to do things that I wouldn't've done before. I get given a lot of responsibility these days, now I'm a more experienced volunteer... It makes you grow up a bit." Teejay (19, M, Hi, N)

A description from Rammir goes beyond the idea of volunteering helping young people to grow up as he explains how volunteering transformed his life:

"I used to think I was a bit of a bad man... I didn't try at school, I was always getting in trouble. It started getting pretty out of hand. I was hanging out with the wrong crowd, hanging out on the wrong side of the law to be honest. Maybe I knew inside that I had to turn things around, but I needed that trigger. It was an old mate of my dad who got me involved in this charity stuff... He showed faith in me and I tried to repay that faith by working hard and keeping honest. I still am. I don't think the people around me would have guessed I would be doing well – keeping on the straight and narrow – if you'd asked them a few years back" – Rammir (20, M, Lo, C)

This narrative from Rammir highlights how his decision to take his volunteering seriously kept him on a more 'honest' path than perhaps the people around him would have expected. The use of the concept of 'trajectories' within understandings of youth transitions is therefore unhelpful. The metaphor of young people 'navigating' through the lifecourse is then more appropriate as it can account for the life-choices which shape these pathways in life (Evans and Furlong, 1997).

The impacts of volunteering on the identities of young people have regularly been examined within geographic literature (Baillie Smith et al., 2016). Volunteering has often been conceptualised as a 'rite of passage' for many young people to gain independence that can simulate and shape a path to adulthood (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011). These findings are echoed within these descriptions from Raya, Kali and Fatima:

"I've had to become more independent in my life. I've moved out and I don't rely on my parents anymore - well, not as much as I used to anyway... Volunteering has been great for me and my confidence. It's given me responsibilities and instilled the confidence to take on new things." - Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

"I'm still pretty young, but I think volunteering makes you more mature... People usually think I'm older than I am because of how I act, not how I look" - Kali (18, F, Mi, N)

"I still feel like a kid most of the time, but you gotta act like a grown up [when you're volunteering]. People are relying on you, so you gotta make sure you're doing what you should be doing, not kidding around." - Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

Having to show maturity, or as Fatima puts it, "acting like a grown up" in certain aspects of life, whilst simultaneously not identifying as an adult is a common thread within many narratives of "growing up as a Muslim volunteer". Therefore, a recognition of adulthood, not as a final or ultimate point in the lifecourse, but as a flexible and continually evolving period within the life of an individual, is imperative

within these discussions. The idea of transitioning to adulthood at different rates within different contexts described by Fatima is similarly echoed by Immo:

“People grow up pretty slow these days. If you’re at uni[versity] you’re not an adult. Students don’t think of themselves as adults. I’ve finished uni[versity], got a job, got my own flat, but I still don’t think I’m a proper adult. But when you’re distributing aid in North Africa or the Middle East, you have to act grown up. [I learnt] so many life lessons in those two weeks. More than my 3 years at uni[versity], that’s for sure.” - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

The notion of a ‘delayed’ adulthood within contemporary western society is a widely recognised phenomenon, so much so that Brynner (2005: 367) “argues for recognition of a new stage of the life-course between adolescence and adulthood reflecting the extension of youth transitions to independence”. However, whilst Immo echoes this notion of delayed onset adulthood, he highlights how volunteering forces him to think and act in a more mature manner. Immo’s description here describes how his transition to adult is non-linear, proceeding at different rates within different contexts, reflecting Thomson et al’s (2002: 336) idea of transitional ‘strands’, whereby “transitions do not necessarily occur at the same rate along each of these strands”.

As Johnson-Hanks (2002) highlights, a single action cannot, in isolation, shape an individual’s identity. However, ‘critical moments’, or ‘vital conjunctures’ in an individual’s lifecourse can play key roles in shaping the lives and identities of young people (Jeffrey, 2010; Johnson-Hanks, 2002). Thomson et al. (2002) posit that ‘critical moments’ in young people’s biographies can have significant impacts upon the pathways of their lifecourse. For many of the interviewees, volunteering provided some of these vital conjunctures that shaped their lives (Jeffrey, 2010).

Yasmin described how a fundraising event became a critical moment in her life through the people she met:

“We climbed Snowden recently to raise money for charity... We had people from London, Birmingham, Manchester, all over the place. It was great to meet people from different parts of the country who still had the same attitude as you. These people became so important in my life, I wonder how

different my life would've been if I hadn't gone that day." - Yasmin (20, F, Mi, N)

A vital juncture outlined by Aaron was initially a negative experience, but with hindsight, Aaron was spurred on by this experience to devote more of his time and resources to volunteer in the refugee camps that have emerged in tandem with the refugee crisis in the Middle East and North Africa:

"It was one of those watershed moments in your life, and I just thought I have to do more to help these people in any way I can... We give *duas*³² to Allah to help us in task" - Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

This quote from Aaron also describes how in times of difficulty, he turns to religion for support. The following section builds upon this idea of being strengthened in faith through volunteering.

7.2.2 - Transitions to Religious Adulthood

Just as identity cannot be understood as a static, monolithic entity; faith, religion and spirituality are flexible, fluid and multifaceted concepts, shifting within different contexts and transforming in unison with the construction of an individual's personality and identity. Faith-based volunteering has often been shown to strengthen the religiosity of volunteers (Hopkins et al., 2015) and this is reflected in the narratives of many young Muslims within this research project:

"I think my faith in Allah has been strengthened [through my volunteering]. Seeing amazing work done in the name of Islam and in the name of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) just makes me grow in faith." – Kara (18, F, Lo, N)

"Charity and Islam are inseparable.... It's impossible to separate them in my opinion, so of course I feel that my faith and my religious conviction are strengthened through the charity work that I do." - Nadin (18, F, Lo, C)

This quote from Nadin highlights that regardless of whether her volunteering has religious objectives, her religiosity will always impact upon her voluntary practices. Similarly, Hopkins et al. (2015: 393) describe that "religious practices and

³² Dua refers to the act of supplication to Allah. It is, simply put, a prayer of request.

theologies can also influence other aspects of social, political and economic activity and may not only be confined to the religious realm” (see also Cloke et al., 2010; Olson et al., 2013). This idea can be seen strongly within some of the volunteers within this research project who view volunteering as an extension of their faith and an expression of worship. Hassan and Rohan each describe how Islam and volunteering influence each other:

“Volunteering goes hand-in-hand with religion. The more we achieve in the name of Islam, through the strength of Allah, through the guidance of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), the more it proves to me that Islam is the truth and that I should devote myself to His work.” – Hassan (22, M, Mi, C)

“For me, volunteering is an expression of my faith. I volunteering in the name of Allah and Allah gives me the strength and wisdom to do good in this world.” - Rohan (18, M, Mi, C)

In their research into the development of young Christians and their involvement with international volunteering, Hopkins et al. (2015) highlight how these young volunteers strengthened their religiosity by increasing their religious resilience, as young Christians tested their faith within circumstances outside of their ‘everyday’ lives. Again, this can be seen in some of the narratives of young Muslim volunteers in this research project. This quote from Immo reveals how in times of difficulty, he would place his faith in Allah:

“When you’re actually on the ground, distributing aid it can be really difficult... You just have to put your faith in Allah” - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

This quote from Immo reflects Aaron’s narrative from the previous section, highlighting the entanglements between faith and volunteering. The trust that both Immo and Aaron place on Allah to assist in their volunteering objectives reveals how challenging experiences shaped their religious resilience. Mira, on the other hand, explains how volunteering has not moulded her religious identity:

“It’s not like transformed me into some like angel. I just like volunteering. I’m the same person I always was.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

Whilst Mira's motivations to volunteer included a religious dimension (see Chapter 5), her practices and experiences of volunteering have not 'transformed' her religiosity. In general however, the narratives within this section demonstrate how the religious beliefs of young Muslim's can be strengthened through their engagement with volunteering.

7.2.3 - Transitions to Corporate work

Volunteering as a pathway to corporate work has become a common theme within research on volunteering amongst young people (Jones, 2011; Rothwell and Charleston, 2013). Even though this notion of young people being motivated to volunteer as a preparation for corporate work has been frequently contested within this thesis (see sections 4.5, 5.4 and 6.5), it still emerged as a minor theme within the narratives of some of the respondents. Whilst volunteering as a preparation for employment tended not to be the primary motivation for volunteers within this research project, many respondents highlighted how getting a foothold in the current job market was an unforeseen side-effect of their volunteering. This section will therefore outline some of these narratives, highlighting how volunteering could carve out different pathways for young Muslims to transition into paid work. Hassan and Junaid explain here how volunteering has increased their employability:

“I still want to go into acting or directing as career, so volunteering here is a great stepping-stone for that. I've gained loads of other skills and an acting qualification that has gone straight on my CV” – Hassan (M, 22, Mi, C)

“I use my volunteering and charity work in my job interviews... employers like it cos it shows you're a team player and that you're willing to work hard.”
– Junaid (F, 18, Mi, N)

Some of the interviewees also expressed that their involvement in volunteering and charity work had convinced them to work within the charity sector. The boundaries between voluntary work and corporate work therefore become increasingly blurred. As Ushna and Sammi describe:

“I actually got a part time job at [this charity]. I was spending so much time here anyway that when a position opened up, I leapt at the opportunity.” – Ushna (F, 18, Mi, N)

“I’m working for [the voluntary organisation] now... I was on the committee, so I was already involved in organising loads of the events and stuff. The team knew I wanted to get a job doing this sort of thing so they sort of created me a full time job. I didn't even have an interview or anything.” – Sammi (M, 24, Lo, N)

Whilst research has often highlighted the benefits of volunteering on employability (Rothwell and Charleston, 2013; Jones, 2011), the narratives from Ushna and Sammi reveal how these pathways to employment can remain embedded within the sphere of voluntary work.

7.2.4 – Citizens in the Making

A commonly researched ‘transition’ within the lives of young people is their development towards full citizenship (Mills, 2013; Pykett, 2009; Hall and Coffee, 2007; Georgi, 2008). However, this concept did not materialise within interviews from this research project, perhaps in relation to the relatively outlying position of Islam within British society (Nayak, 2017). Modood (1994) describes how British citizenship has been inextricably linked with the Church of England; however, the role of Christianity has reduced steadily, partly in response to an increasingly multicultural and multi-religious Britain. Two decades on from Modood’s comments, Muslims in Britain are still wrestling with their (lack of) acceptance as British citizens (Favell, 2016; Van Zoonen et al. 2010). Although the notion of young people as ‘citizens in the making’ did not emerge as a strong theme within the narratives of interviewees, a small number of participants highlighted how volunteering facilitated a congruence between Islamic culture and British citizenship. Badriyyah, for example, describes:

“I don’t really see a difference between like when I was doing ‘D of E’³³, or now like volunteering with ‘ISOC’³⁴ ...or volunteering with [a charity]...

³³ D of E refers to The Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme

³⁴ ISOC refers to the Islamic Society at Badriyyah’s university

Volunteering is part of growing up in Britain and its also part of being a good person and a good Muslim... I don't really make a distinction between them”
– Badriyyah (21, F, Hi, N)

Mills and Waite (2017: 74) describe how being a “‘good’ citizen and a good ‘young person’” have become synonymous within the latest ‘brand’ of youth citizenship. A key component of this new form of youth citizenship is volunteering. Therefore, whilst young Muslims often identify themselves as discrete from ‘model’ British citizens (Modood, 2010), the rest of this chapter will wrestle with notions of Islam and Britishness, highlighting the role of volunteering in shaping these connections.

The following section (7.3) builds upon this perceived incompatibility of having both a ‘Muslim identity’ and a ‘British identity’. Remaining cognisant of the fluidity and malleability of the identities of young Muslim volunteers through their transitions towards adulthood, religious maturity and corporate work, the subsequent section contextualises these identities within contemporary British society.

7.3– Muslim Identities in British Society

Identities cannot be simplified to reflect one essentialist characteristic. To understand the identities of young Muslims within this research project, it is vital to look beyond overt characteristics of religion, ethnicity, age and gender. Whilst these facets of their lives inevitably play a tangible role in shaping their identities to a certain extent, it is the myriad of everyday processes, encounters, negotiations, actions and interactions that ultimately mould how individuals understand themselves in relation to the world around them. Identities are fluid, flexible and plural concepts which encompass not only the entirety of each individual, but how they interact within different social and cultural contexts. The outward expression of each identity can therefore morph and transform over time as individuals understand their own position in different ways within society.

Whilst very few of the interviewees explicitly defined their identities in relation to their volunteering practices, their identities were deeply entwined with their everyday lives. As such, the relationship between volunteering and identity was expressed very subtly within the narratives of the young Muslim volunteers within

this research project. The notion of having a complex identity shaped by a combination of personal experiences and external structures was, however, a dominant theme within the majority of the interviews. This section therefore responds to Smith et al.'s (2010: 270) call for research on volunteering to explore "what (else) matters" alongside the formal practices of volunteering.

This section will be broken down into five sub-sections: hybrid identities (section 7.2.1); plural identities (section 7.2.2); identity-lessness (section 7.2.3); bridging the divide between Islam and the West (section 7.2.4); volunteering as a remedy for the disharmony between Islam and some corners of British society (section 7.3.5).

7.3.1 Hybrid Identities

Research into the identities of British Muslims has traditionally been oriented towards the essentialist connections that unite these communities with their shared sense of religion or their ancestral 'homelands'; however, a recent, contested paradigm has focused on the concepts of hybridity and cultural syncretism (Hutnyk, 2005; Faist, 2010; Brubaker, 2005). This simple description from Adil expresses his composite identity:

"I'm British Asian. Not like one or the other. Both." - Adil (M, 25, Mi, N)

Adil goes on to explain how his identity is a fusion of ideas from his current British life, his Indian heritage and his Islamic faith:

"I pick and choose the best parts of British and the best parts of Asian. As long as it isn't *haram*, as long as it doesn't conflict with my faith, I'm all for it."
- Adil (M, 25, Mi, N)

This quotation from Immo reveals his connection to both Pakistan and Britain through his obsession with sport:

"I think of myself as British for sure. Obviously, I still keep true to my roots and family back in Pakistan, but I'm happy here... I support Pakistan in the cricket and England in the football, not that they're any good! Pakistan are much worse mind you." - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

Immo's comments here are light-hearted; however they still offer interesting insights into his relationship between two places that he thinks of as 'home'. Burdsey (2006) highlights the importance that sport can have as a sphere in which the identities of many members of the Muslim community are negotiated. The multifaceted decision on whether to support their country of origin, or the 'host' nation is embedded in perceptions of cultural identity (Werbner, 2002; Fletcher, 2012), reflecting the extent to which they identify with different cultures and nationalities. Burdsey (2006: 11) describes how the "diverse sporting affiliations of young British Asians enable them to emphasize both their cultural traditions and the permanency of South Asian settlement in Britain."

Building on this negotiation between cultural heritage and British society, Immo goes on to explain how he views himself as a 'British Muslim':

"When people think of someone as British, I don't think they would probably think of a Muslim, and when people think of Muslims, they don't really think of them as British, but that's who I am. I know that I am who I am because of these two cultures." - Immo (24, M, Lo, N)

This quote from Immo reflects Samers' (2003) research into French Muslims, which describes how the identities of diasporic communities can be simultaneously shaped by national, cultural and religious stimuli. This process of syncretism is echoed in Bhatia and Ram's (2004) investigation into South Asian diaspora in the US, where second and third generation migrants often develop much more conflicted and complex notions of self-identity. In a similar way, Layla describes how her identification of Britishness is stronger than her parents and grandparents due to the roots that her family have created in Britain, whilst a spatial and temporal detachment from her ancestral 'home' erode her sense of a dual identity:

"It was probably different for my grandparents when they first came over cos they were the first ones in our family to set up home in England. It's just normal for us now though. We've got family and friends here. We feel at home here. We're British now." – Layla (F, 24, Lo, N)

Taking this quote from Layla in isolation, it would be all too easy to reduce her identities to simply a 'British' identity, but as Dwyer (2000) highlights, identities are

'compound' incorporating aspects of cultural heritage, religion and ethnicity, amongst a myriad of other social differences. Layla, for example, goes on to describe her identity as:

“...a bit of a jumble of stuff really. I’m a wife, a mother, a Muslim, I’m a volunteer. I’m foreign to some people, but I’m local to [others]. Yeah, its not easy to pin down.” – Layla (F, 24, Lo, N)

Layla’s ‘plural’ and ‘situated’ identity, reflects Dwyer et al.’s (2008: 130) research into the lives of young British Pakistani men, who highlight how “everyday negotiations, emotional struggles, and structural constraints” all mould the identities of young British Muslims.

The identities of individuals within diasporic communities are transformed through an increased exposure to aspects of ‘host’ culture. As connections with the homeland become reduced through temporal and spatial detachment, migrants become more engaged with the culture of the host society leading to a positive feedback cycle of hybridisation (Dwyer, 2000). The blurring of notions of ‘host’ and ‘home’ encroaches upon Nagel’s (2002) politics of sameness and difference, whereby syncretism, unlike politically enforced assimilation, is an inevitable process. This idea of a natural process of syncretism is reflected within these narratives from Abdulla and Mo:

“My parents still talk about Bangladesh like its home, but its not for me. I’ve been there twice in my life. I’ve got a load of family out there still and it is a country that holds a lot for me, but it’s not my home... I know there are some people from the Bangladeshi community that have reservations about saying that they’re British, but I dunno, for me it feels natural.” - Abdulla (M, 21, Mi, N)

“I dunno if my family would say the same, but I’m 100% British. I’ve lived here all my life. My parents lived here all their lives. We speak English at home. I work as an estate agent. The only thing that is different is my religion.” – Mo (18, M, Lo, N)

Similarly, Hussein, Saskia and Mira each describe here how, whilst they stay true to their Islamic principles and cultural heritage, they equally adopt aspects of

British culture through encountering difference (Wilson, 2013; 2016). Instead of avoiding potential conflicts through isolation, these narratives reveal the importance of encountering different cultures and individuals in creating hybrid identities:

“I identify with Pakistani community that I grew up in because that’s just how it is, isn’t it? If your family and everyone in your neighbourhood is from the same place and has similar, like, values and beliefs, then of course that’s just gonna become part of you, but I identify as British as well. I’ve got a British passport, had a British education. This country has given me opportunities which I couldn’t have taken if I had just stayed in my comfort zone. Like if I’d said I’m gonna stay in this small Pakistani community all my life, I would’ve been fine, but I wouldn’t’ve been able to become a rounded person. There are people in my neighbourhood who have literally never been outside that community and you just think, it’s no wonder you don’t see yourself as British.” – Hussein (M, 23, Mi, C)

“If you wear a headscarf that doesn’t stop you being British. If you fast for Ramadan, or don’t eat bacon or any of those things that are seen as dangerous to Britishness, that doesn’t stop you from still being British. Isolating ourselves is just going to make things better, we’ve got to understand Britishness in the same way as they’ve got to understand what Islam really is. We need to learn from each other.” – Saskia (19, F, Mi, N)

“I have adopted loads of British traits without really even thinking about it. It just happens when you’re hanging out with your mates, or in college or work. I didn’t just wake up and say I’m gonna be British now. You just get used to it in life.” – Mira (19, F, Mi, N)

These narratives reveal how everyday exposure to different cultures can not only strengthen community relations (Wilson, 2014), but can actively influence the identities of young people. In her research into the intercultural encounters on urban public transport, Wilson (2011: 634) positions buses as “crucial site[s] of everyday multiculturalism” in which such encounters play out. These tacit exchanges and interactions have the potential to erode cultural divides. Conceptualising the bus in Wilson’s research as a microcosm of British society more generally reveals

the importance that encounters of difference have in shaping identities and this is reflected in the narratives from young Muslims within this research project.

Such intercultural differences, as with Wilson's (2011) bus, are exaggerated through the process of volunteering. Many respondents highlight how volunteering stimulates these encounters with difference:

“You meet so many different people at [the charity that I work for]. People from all of the world, young and old, male and female... You don't really experience that much diversity in my community, so it's really great to work with all these different people.” – Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

“Obviously Birmingham is a pretty multicultural place, but you often don't really get to know people from different backgrounds to you. Volunteering encourages you to talk to these people. If you're at a charity event it sort of forces you to chat to anyone and everyone. It really boosts your confidence and makes you think we aren't so different after all.” – Maka (19, M, Mi, C)

“The interfaith events we put on at our Mosque are literally all about introducing each other to new ideas, new cultures, new people. We focus on the stuff that brings us together and the stuff that we have in common... People aren't shy about their beliefs. It's a safe space for us to learn about each other.” Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

These encounters, catalysed through volunteering and charity work, are shown within these narratives to expose these young British Muslims to a range of people and cultures that they may have otherwise been isolated. Volunteering can therefore shape the lives and identities for young Muslims, not through the 'official' aims and objectives of the volunteering, but through the countless everyday intercultural interactions that volunteering creates and stimulates.

7.3.2 Plural Identities

Plural identities are conceptually similar to hybrid identities; however, instead of focusing upon how identities form through an amalgamation of different cultures and ideas, plural identities explain how an individual's identity can change within different social contexts and cultural settings. Josselson and Harway (2012: 3)

explain that “people live at the edges of more than one communal affiliation, bridging loyalties and identifications.” This notion of a fluid identity has often been examined in relation to minority communities who express their personalities in relation to different socio-cultural contexts (Josselson and Harway, 2012; Yeoh et al., 2003).

Hussein here describes a dual identity: one that is negotiated between aspects British culture and Islamic:

“I’m British in that I live here and speak English, but I’m also part of the Ummah. I’m part of the global Islamic community...I see myself differently when I’m at work, or when I’m with my family, or when I’m at the Mosque.” – Hussein (M, 23, Mi, C)

Hussein views his own identity differently within different contexts; however, identities can be more than a process of understanding one’s position within different cultures. Identities can be embodied through the actions of individuals. These outward expressions of identity are emphasised within these narratives from Emre and Zahra:

“I’m British and Turkish. Obviously, I’m just one guy, but it feels like I’m two different guys... I speak English at work, wear a suit and all that, but at home I speak Turkish, eat Turkish food. Its like a subconscious switch in your brain.” – Emre (M, 25, Mi, N)

“I don’t, like, change as a person, or, like, put on a façade. I just sort of blend in in different situation, like there is an etiquette in the Mosque and a way we are expected to behave at home or work or with friends or when you’re volunteering.” – Zahra (F, 21, Mi, N)

These expressions of Zahra’s personality within different contexts are, as she describes, not an act or a façade, but are a result of multiple feelings of belonging. Whilst Dwyer (1999a) describes how some young Muslims make ‘strategic’ decisions on whether to wear headscarves within different socio-cultural contexts, Zahra’s narrative depicts a far less conscious decision making process.

Josselson and Harway (2012:169) describe how an increasing number of people have to “manage multiple racial, ethnic, national or gender identities”, echoing the narratives within this section that exemplify this notion of having to manage multiple different strands of identity. In contrast to the plural identities within this section, the following section will discuss how some young Muslims can feel that they have no identity due to being in a state of liminality.

7.3.3 Identity-lessness

‘Identity-lessness’ does not mean that an individual is without an identity; instead, this term is used to demonstrate how young people can struggle to understand their own position within society. Therefore, the use of the term ‘identity-lessness’ within this section is not utilised in order to dismiss the complex issues which can cause an identity crisis within a young person’s sense of self, but to bring these complexities to light, highlighting how young Muslims can feel ‘in between’ cultures or out of place within society. The narratives within this section describe how many young Muslims see themselves as outside of society in terms of their religion, ethnicity, age or gender. Many interviewees within this research project describe how they do not fit into either communities based purely on their cultural heritage, nor do they feel that they fully identify with British society. However, this section also explores narratives which describe how volunteering can offer a sense of belonging for young Muslims that is often missing within other aspects of their lives.

Feeling ‘in between’ can negatively impact young people’s notions of self-worth and self-esteem. Faas describes here how these feelings of liminality cause him to feel outside of society and to question his identity:

“It just makes it worse really when you are already feeling like you don’t quite fit in and there isn’t anyone you can really turn to. Its hard to have an identity when everyone else around you seem to have so much in common [with each other] and they can’t understand why you don’t feel like you belong. Or even worse, they can see exactly why you don’t fit in, but don’t care.” – Faas (19, M, Mi, N)

In Dwyer’s (2000) research into the identities of South Asian British Muslim women, she highlights a notion of feeling “British but not British”. The hybrid

identities of the young British Muslims within Dwyer's research cross-cut national boundaries, with the interviewees seeing themselves as simultaneously Asian and British. These notions of having a transnational identity are echoed within the statements from other respondents within this research project; however, the narratives from Sefi, Zaida and Layla highlight how their cross-national identities can create feelings of in-betweenness:

"It's weird. British people don't really see you as British, but if you go back to Pakistan, people would see you as British, not Pakistani." – Sefi (23, F, Hi, N)

"I don't know how I would describe my identity to be honest. One of my parents is from India, the other is from East Africa. I was born in France, but lived in the UK most of my life. I've been seen as an outsider right from the start cos I couldn't speak English. People weren't being racist or anything, but what teenager wants to be friends with kid who can't understand anything." – Zaida (20, F, Mi, C)

"You can feel a bit in between sometimes. Its hard to live as a good Muslim and still do all the things that a normal British girl would do growing up"
Layla (F, 24, Lo, N)

Each of these narratives reveal how their multiple identities has resulted in them feeling out of place and unable to fully connect to any elements of their own social and cultural milieu (Dwyer, 2000). As Layla goes on to say:

"Being a Muslim woman in Britain isn't always plain sailing and that obviously impacts how I see myself and how I feel like I fit in here...I've always been surrounded by a good bunch people who help me feel comfortable here though... but my religion and the colour of my skin can make me feel a bit alone. Isolated." – Layla (F, 24, Lo, N)

This extension of Layla's narrative reveals how race and racism can erode her feelings of belonging and undermined her sense of self-worth. Hopkins (2016a; 2016b) describes how, whilst portrayals of Islam within mainstream Western imaginations tend to depict a homogenous community that actively maintains an isolation from the rest of British society; in reality, attempts to integrate and

assimilate with British culture can be restricted by the attitudes of non-Muslims rather than Muslims (Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2006; Hopkins, 2016a). The following sub-section (7.2.4) examines the division between Islam and Western culture in more detail, using narratives from respondents within this research to demonstrate how clashes between these two cultures can shape the identities of young Muslims.

In contrast, for many of the respondents who felt out of place within society, volunteering offers the opportunity to feel part of something. Faas, for example, explains:

“Volunteering and surrounding myself with these people who I could relate to helped me find myself. I found my niche.” – Faas (19, M, Mi, N)

The narrative given by Faas earlier in this section highlights a feeling of liminality and of not belonging. However, this statement describes how surrounding himself with likeminded people transformed his identity. Faas’ feeling of belonging is echoed within these narratives from young Muslims whose identities are moulded through their active participation in volunteering:

“Even if you’ve got nothing in common with the other volunteers other than volunteering, that’s fine, cos we can bond over that. We’ve got something in common just by the fact that we’re there together.” Teejay (19, M, Hi, N)

“I just feel super comfortable when I’m with the people at [my voluntary organisation] in a way that I haven’t when I’m at school or college. We’re like a family here and everyone looks after each other. It’s a great atmosphere, its loads of fun. Yeah, everyone’s just comfortable and relaxed and no worries about not fitting in or being judged. There’s a place for anyone. Everyone can just be themselves... Most of our volunteers are Muslims, but not all. Non-Muslims are more than welcome... People often bring their friends to help out or get involved with our fun days.” – Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

“[This charity] is built by the volunteers and can only operate because of them, [which] makes everyone really close... We rely on each other... We’re a tight knit group.” – Ushna (18, F, Mi, N)

These three narratives show the unity that is created within different voluntary organisations. Kamran, in particular, highlights a sense of belonging and collective identity within his group of volunteers that he felt was missing within other aspects of his life. Research into the social benefits of volunteering amongst older people offers some similar findings to the narratives within this section. Baines et al. (2006) describe how elderly people are often on the periphery of society, causing feelings of loneliness, depression and feeling out of place within society. However, volunteering can improve the quality of life for elderly people by giving them a sense of purpose and self-worth, as well as increase social networks (Morrow-Howell et al., 2003; Cattan et al., 2011; Baines and Hardill, 2008; Hardill and Baines, 2007). The identities of elderly people that form as a result of volunteering is comparable to the descriptions of the participants of this research project, whereby a sense of purpose and belonging enables volunteers to feel more confident and comfortable in themselves and their position within society.

A crisis of identity is often the result of individuals struggling to understand how their own values fit in with the culture around them (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). The following narratives explain how a shared set of principles and values enables young Muslims to give relevance and importance to their own identities:

“We’ve got shared values... and a shared commitment to volunteering. Its awesome to have people that think the same way as you... I’m always proud to be part of what we achieve together.” – Barni (18, M, Mi, C)

“Everyone gives everything they have because we believe in the same stuff. We believe in helping people who need it. We all pull together and we can accomplish more. We’re part of something bigger than ourselves and its so refreshing.” – Raya (25, F, Hi, N)

The notion of being ‘part of something bigger’ than yourself is common to both of these narratives and is recognised as vital to creating a positive self-identity (Hattie and Beagan, 2013). Gronlund (2011) describes how volunteering and identity are deeply intertwined through the shared values and beliefs which are strengthened through volunteering with like-minded people. The sense of community and belonging that is built through volunteering is therefore able to enhance the self-worth of an individual.

The narratives within this section demonstrate how identity-lessness through feelings of not belonging are common amongst young Muslims in Britain; however, equally prominent within the discussions with the respondents from this research project is the notion that volunteering can provide a sense of belonging and, concurrently, a sense of purpose and self-esteem. The subsequent section builds upon these themes, addressing the perceived mutual exclusivity of Islamic culture and Western values.

7.3.4 – Bridging the Divide between Islam and the West

The political and media attention that has scrutinised how Islam ‘fits in’ with Western society has been paralleled by a myriad of research projects that have wrestled with the compatibility of Islam and “the West”. Whilst Phillips (2009: 1) acknowledges that these debates have taken “some understandably negative turns in the depressing atmosphere of the war on terror and its aftermath”, an increasing recognition of both ‘the Islamic community’ and ‘the West’ as heterogeneous and diverse categories has begun to erode the perception of incompatibility between these two groups, within some sections of the academic community at least (Hopkins, 2016a; 2016b; Mandeville, 2007; Dwyer, 1999a; 1999b; 2000; Jacobson, 2006). This section begins by examining the accounts from young Muslims who describe a feeling of not being accepted within British society, often experiencing first hand incidents of racism and Islamophobia. This section then goes on to explore narratives which express the restrictions within Islamic laws and their impact on integrating in British society. This section finishes by going full circle, offering narratives of ‘hope’ for harmony between Islam and British society and highlighting the role that volunteering can play in breaking down barriers.

Whilst this chapter has so far contested the notion that Islam is incompatible with Western culture, a small number of narratives reveal the difficulty that some young Muslims face when trying to find belonging in a country where they are often a racial minority and viewed as a religious ‘threat’ (Dwyer et al., 2008; Hopkins, 2006). This feeling of not belonging can play out in numerous directions, however a common thread of feeling rejected and identity-lessness tie many of these narratives together. The narratives in this section reveal how ‘fitting in’ is not as

simple as just engaging with British culture. Resistance and abuse from non-Muslims makes it impossible to feel a sense of belonging.

Brown (2008: 472) explains that Muslim communities have been framed, not simply as “‘problem communities’ but as security concerns”. Whilst the majority of media and politics within Britain focuses on the threat of extremist Islamism, much less tends to be spoken about the impact that being seen as a threat can have upon the Muslim communities (Mandeville, 2007; 2009; Dwyer et al., 2008). The affects of being seen as a danger to society upon the identities of Muslims are clear within these narratives from Fatima and Darmien:

“It’s hard to feel like you fit in when you’re always looked at differently. You can see it when you get on a train or on the bus, people are thinking ‘he looks dodgy’. Maybe it’s just me being paranoid, but you get that feeling people are judging you all the time.” – Darmien (M, 24, Lo, C)

“When all that people are hearing on the news about Muslims is that their terrorists, that they’re gonna blow you up, it’s not a surprise that everyone believes all of us are like that, but it isn’t good. It isn’t true. Not even close, but it makes more young Muslims angry which just makes things worse.”
Fatima (18, F, Lo, N)

Both of these descriptions reveal the frequent micro-aggressions that can upset any sense of belonging within British society. The narratives show how the perceived dichotomy between Islam and the West (Halliday, 1999; Hopkins, 2009; Bhutto, 2014) can become a self-perpetuating mechanism, with each imagining the other as a potential threat to their existence (Shannahan, 2011). Even more explicit narratives of racism and Islamophobia from Rammir and Aaron highlight how difficult fitting in can be within a society that is frequently told that Islam is a danger to a British way of life (Hopkins and Gale, 2009):

“People say ‘go back to the desert’ or ‘f*** off paki’. I’ve lived as long as you have fam.³⁵ What are you talking about. How are you expected to fit in and love this country when you hear stuff like that on a daily basis. I got no love

³⁵ Fam is a slang term meaning ‘friend’ or ‘mate’ and is derived from the word ‘family’.

for terrorism so why are people always thinking we are all part of ISIS. You can't win." – Rammir (20, M, Lo, C)

"If all Muslims were terrorists, don't you reckon there would be more attacks in this country? Islam is a religion of peace, but people target us because of the actions of a few people who don't have anything to do with us. How do you think that must make us feel? Not welcome would be an understatement." – Aaron (19, M, Lo, N)

Philips (2009) notes that the Muslim community are often constructed as a "troubled and troublesome minority". The continual reinforcement of this description both through media hyperbole and political rhetoric (Mandeville, 2009) can be seen, notably within these narratives, to cause tangible and ugly impacts upon the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. These processes create a negative feedback cycle of marginalisation, negative media portrayal, fear of Islam and Islamophobia all creating further marginalisation and isolation of Muslim communities in Britain.

Processes of marginalisation and isolation are not all enforced through stigmatisation from sections of British society. Research into how religious doctrines can influence processes of assimilation and cultural identity have become increasingly intense in recent years, particularly in relation to British multiculturalism and the perceived threat of Islam to Western society. For example, Dwyer (1999b) explores the case of South Asian diasporas in Britain, highlighting how guidelines laid out within Islamic culture can restrict the extent to which syncretism can occur, particularly in terms of food, clothing, language and social relationships (Werbner, 2004; Dwyer, 1999b; Dwyer, 2000). As Kamran and Tariq describe:

"When you can't eat the same as the people around you, or dress the same, or go for a pint after work, or even go for lunch during Ramadan, you can try to convince the people around you that you are the same, but it's hard when you can't even convince yourself sometimes." – Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

"When everyone at Uni is getting boozed or swearing loads or whatever, it can make it tough to fit in." – Tariq (19, M, Mi, C)

“It’s hardest at Ramadan when you can’t eat and you’ve got no energy to do nothing. You can’t go out with your mates or play sport... It’s tough, you know? ...Even voluntary work is hard when you’re fasting.” – Kazim (M, 25, Lo, N)

Brown (2008: 472) explains that “for many British Muslim women Islam has become the cornerstone of their identity”; however, this Islamic identity can often be viewed differently by people outside of the Muslim community than those within the Muslim community:

“People see you as brainwashed, like why would you want to be a Muslim if you’re a woman? Like, Muslim women aren’t allowed to do anything as a Muslim. They must be trapped into being a Muslim... All those dumb attitudes actually make me want to avoid being part of such an ignorant society.” – Sefi (23, F, Hi, N)

This statement from Sefi echoes some of the sentiments of Muslim women within Dwyer’s (1999a) research which examines the construction and contestation of identities for young British Muslims. Dwyer (1999a; Meer et al., 2010; Abu-Lughod, 2013) notes that headscarves and veils have become a sign for non-Muslims to reference as a symbol of suppression. However, unlike the young Muslim women within Dwyer’s (1999a) research, who often chose to ‘strategically’ wear their headscarves within different social or cultural contexts, Sefi suggests that she is more likely to withdraw from society than alter her dress.

7.3.5 - Volunteering as a Pathway to Harmony

In contrast to the narratives within this section so far, many young Muslims highlight how volunteering can disrupt the feedback cycle of marginalisation and Islamophobia:

“Volunteering ain’t about integration or multiculturalism. I don’t see it as a political thing, but that don’t mean that it don’t break down barriers. If we’re putting ourselves out there, doing good in our communities, it’s like people forget that you’re ‘foreign’ and they accept you.” – Lana (F, 19, Lo, N)

“For sure it can break down barriers. Volunteering isn’t just about one type of people. We don’t just help other Muslims. We do what we can for all people who need help. It breaks down barriers.” – Zaida (F, 20, Mi, C)

“I don’t volunteer with a ‘Muslim only’ charity. I just get involved wherever: at college; at work; on my own. A lot Muslims fall into the trap of volunteering just with other Muslims, in their comfort zones so to speak. Its not about breaking down barriers for other people, but breaking down barriers for yourself. You live in a multicultural world – get used to it!” – Rohan (18, M, Mi, N)

A common theme of ‘breaking down barriers’ emerges within these statements. Whilst breaking down barriers within society does not necessarily create a sense of belonging for young Muslims, it does disrupt the feedback cycle of isolation and fear which can enforce the notion of incompatibility between Islam and British culture. Just as Phillips (2009: 3) asserts that “assumptions that Muslims are non-liberal and anti-modern are challenged with evidence about their negotiations of liberalism and modernity”, these narratives depict how young Muslims contest the essentialist imaginations of themselves through their active engagement in local communities.

This section ends by offering some narratives of hope. Each of these light-hearted quotes from young British Muslims portrays a strong sense of belonging within Britain:

“Listen to my accent! I’m about as Brummy as they come. Race and religion don’t matter. It’s how you feel inside.” – Yasmin (F, 18, Mi, N)

“I love Birmingham apart from the rain and Aston Villa. The media can paint us as terrorists and whatever they want, but I’m so at home in England.” Kamran (25, M, Mi, N)

“My family gets a fish and chips every Friday and we drink about a hundred cups of tea a day... I think that shows we’re pretty British!” Zahra (F, 21, Mi, N)

This section has explored a number of narratives that can be seen to comply with the perceived mutual exclusivity between Islam and Britishness; however, the narratives of optimism from Yasmin, Kamran and Zahra reveal that harmony between these two cultural identities is more than just a naïve utopia.

7.4 – Conclusion

The identities of young British Muslims are complex and malleable. They are far deeper than the few overt characteristics to which they are so often essentialised. Not only is adolescence widely recognised as critical stage of the lifecourse through intense self-discovery, internal reflection and transformation, but these processes are further complicated for many young Muslims by feeling in a state of liminality. These feelings of in-betweenness of age, in-betweenness of culture and in-betweenness of nationality can cause a potential identity crisis to spiral out of control. This chapter has contributed to the literatures on youth transitions, hybrid identities and debates surround the perceived incompatibility between Islam and the West. The impact that volunteering had upon these contributions is also central to this chapter. This chapter concludes by underscoring three central themes which emerged most prominently within this chapter: (1) plural and hybrid identities; (2) vital conjunctures; and (3) the perceived dichotomy between Islamic and British identities.

Firstly, the narratives of the young Muslim volunteers within this research project highlight a complex set of unique identities. Whilst the notion of hybrid identities has received a substantial amount of attention within geographical research (Mavroudi, 2007; Dwyer, 2000), the idea of plural identities has been much less explored. The narratives of the some of the participants reveal a ‘fluidity’ to their identities, altering their expressions of identity within different social and cultural contexts. In contrast to much of the research on plural identities which describe a form of ‘strategic’ performance of identity (Josselson and Harway, 2012), the ‘identity shifts’ described by the participants of this research project were not a façade, but a natural and autonomic process.

Secondly, as has been highlighted recurrently throughout this chapter, volunteering, for many young Muslims, positively shapes their identity and sense of self-worth. Vital conjuncture and critical moments within this stage of the

lifecourse are able to produce long-lasting impacts upon the identities of young people (Thomson et al., 2002; Jeffrey, 2010). The voluntary practices and experiences moulded the transitions of the young Muslims within this research project. Transitions towards adulthood, religious maturity and corporate work were often facilitated, or smoothed out through the processes of volunteering. Narratives within this chapter also reveal how volunteering provides opportunities to engage with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds; facilitates common ground from which these young people can form social bonds with likeminded individual; increases the confidence that young people have in themselves; and creates a sense of belonging within charities and voluntary organisations.

Finally, a perceived mutual exclusivity between Islam and the West is undermined within many of the narratives of young Muslims in this research project; however, that does not negate the difficulties that many of these respondents had in balancing their elements of their faith-based identities with the non-Islamic interactions and encounters that they experienced in day to day life. Experiences of racism and Islamophobia severely impacted upon the ways in which young Muslims viewed their own positions within British society. Volunteering, on the other hand, offered a sense of belonging for many respondents within this project, through a sense of shared identity.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 – Introduction

This chapter draws out the key contributions to knowledge made within this thesis and situates them within current academic discussions. Section 8.2 outlines the primary findings in relation to each of the four research questions: ‘What is the landscape of volunteering in Muslim communities in Birmingham?’ (section 8.2.1); ‘What are the pathways young Muslims take to become volunteers?’ (section 8.2.2); ‘What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?’ (section 8.2.3); and ‘How does volunteering shape the identities of young Muslims?’ (section 8.2.4). This chapter then discusses these findings in the context of the three central themes of this research project: youth (section 8.3), volunteering (section 8.4) and religion (section 8.5), before an intersectional overview (section 8.6) highlights the cross-cutting themes within this thesis.

8.2 - Key Findings

8.2.1 - What is the Landscape of Volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham?

The quantitative data maps out the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham. However, the statistical data provides more than a backdrop from which to underpin the narratives from the interview data. The questionnaire survey reveals many trends and significant differences which emerge within the landscape of volunteering. Gender and religious conservatism are found to be highly significant in shaping the landscape of volunteering; however, ethnicity, socio-economic status, marital status and disabilities are found to have much less impact.

Women are significantly more vulnerable to Islamophobic abuse, with 68% of female respondents describing Islamophobia as a barrier to volunteering, in comparison to 39% of males. The fear of Islamophobia also influences the types of volunteering that the female participants of this study become involved in, with many explaining that they feel less comfortable volunteering in ‘non-Muslim spaces’. Females are also significantly more likely to state that domestic

responsibilities could stop them from volunteering. These processes of navigating between domestic responsibility, family expectation and social activity are found to have tangible impacts upon their engagement with volunteering.

Religious conservatism also influences how young Muslims engage with volunteering. There is a significant difference between conservative and non-conservative Islam in the type of volunteering that the respondents are involved in through their Mosques. Non-conservative Muslims within this survey tend to be more outward looking in their type of volunteering, as they are more likely to be engaged in giving time to help a charity or cause, help improve their local area or care for people who aren't relatives.

The questionnaire survey also revealed a more widely encompassing definition of volunteering than is often described within the academic literature. By using Mosques as sites of entry, as opposed to registered charities or voluntary organisations, the respondents were able to dictate what they felt 'volunteering' meant to them. As was described within the methodology chapter, if the research had taken place within a voluntary organisation, this may have restricted how the participants thought about volunteering, as they may have felt that the research had already established its definitions of volunteering. Instead, respondents highlighted a diverse set of definitions of volunteering ranging from informal, embodied micro-volunteering to the more familiar formal ideas of charity and fundraising. This diversity within the definitions of volunteering is not only interesting from the perspective of understanding how young Muslims engage with the wider community through voluntary activities, but can offer new perspectives for understanding volunteering in a more comprehensive way.

8.2.2 – What are the Pathways young Muslims take to become Volunteers?

In examining the pathways young Muslims took to become volunteers, this research examined the motivations, facilitators and barriers that shaped how young Muslims became engaged in volunteering. The pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers are diverse; however, there were common themes of being introduced to volunteering by family or friends; motivated through a desire to 'do good' on both a human level and a religious level; and being restricted through domestic responsibilities and work commitments.

In contrast with the majority of research into youth volunteering which conceptualises volunteering as a form of preparation for corporate work (see, for example, Jones 2011), the motivations of engaging in volunteering amongst the young Muslims within this research are more altruistic or moralistic. These prosocial motivations for volunteering, though often intertwined with a sense of religious duty, are almost universally cited as motivations for volunteering amongst the young Muslims within this research project.

Religious inspirations for volunteering are evident in two discrete motivations: (1) presenting Islam in a positive image and (2) accumulating religious capital. The first of these motivations for volunteering often takes the form of wanting to build intercultural bridges through positive actions within the community. The deliberate visibility of their volunteering creates a parallel representation of Islam in contrast to the narrative of Islam perpetuated through the tabloid media in Britain. The second religious motivation can be seen as a reflection of the accumulation of corporate capital that is described within other research into youth volunteering; however, instead of accumulating skills that will be of benefit in a transition to corporate work, the volunteers within this research are more focused upon building a 'religious CV' which would serve them well in *Jannah*.

The role of family in influencing how young Muslims engage with volunteering is highly significant and deeply contrasting, with families acting as either facilitators or inhibitors. Many Muslim families are so heavily involved in charity work and volunteering that they created an atmosphere in which the youngest family members are naturally swept along a similar pathway. However, other families are often resistive to their younger members engaging in voluntary work deeming it inappropriate from either a cultural or religious vantage. Once again, female Muslims are more prone to such family barriers to volunteering, as the domestic expectations on some Muslim women can conflict with their desire to engage in voluntary work.

8.2.3 – What are the experiences of young Muslims who volunteer?

The experiences of young Muslim volunteers are, naturally, varied. The vast majority of interviewees describe largely positive experiences of volunteering through feelings of increased self-worth and making a difference in the lives of

people around them. The social benefits of volunteering are also significant, with young Muslims attaining social capital through the like-minded people with whom they surrounded themselves.

The concept of volunteering as 'serious leisure' (Section 2.2.4) is useful in order to comprehend the dual experiences of volunteering: outward expressions of generosity and compassion, juxtaposed to the personal, social experiences of volunteering. Many of the young Muslims within this research describe volunteering as a leisure activity that stimulates many beneficial personal and social experiences, whilst simultaneously achieving more serious outcomes, for both the volunteer and recipient of volunteering.

However, the volunteers also experience a number of challenges, from logistical challenges to serious issues of Islamophobia and experiences of oppression manifesting under the guise of religious or cultural rules. Again, gender is a significant factor in shaping the experiences of young Muslim volunteers. Muslim women are more exposed to abuse within their own communities, through cultural and religious expectations, and more exposed to abuse from outside of their communities, through their visibility due to their clothing. Cultural and religious expectations, particularly amongst more conservative Muslims, can create tensions within their own communities when young Muslim women volunteer within public spaces. These tensions can spill over into abusive behaviour, severely affecting the experiences of young female Muslim volunteers. Islamophobic abuse similarly affects females more than males, at least in part due to their exposure that occurs as a result of their religious clothing. Islamophobia is not, however, exclusive to female Muslims, and such instances of abuse impact upon the experiences of many young Muslim volunteers.

8.2.4 – How does volunteering shape the identities of young Muslims?

As the young Muslims within this research project transition towards adulthood, independence and corporate work, volunteering is one of a number of crucial factors that shape these transitions. Volunteering gives many young Muslims the confidence in themselves to take on new challenges and helps them feel more comfortable taking on responsibilities. For some young Muslims, volunteering also keeps them from straying towards less desirable life-choices.

Faith-based volunteering strengthens the religiosity of many young Muslims as they feel their voluntary actions are an expression of their worship. The notion of doing good deeds is a central tenet of Islam, and Muslims naturally feel charity work and volunteering is therefore imperative for being a good Muslim. Consequently, many Muslims feel that volunteering offers a pathway that leads toward religious maturity.

Many of the respondents from this research are comfortable identifying themselves as British Muslims; however, others felt in a state of liminality – stranded between two disparate cultures. Volunteering is viewed as a remedy for these feelings of identity-lessness through a number of mechanisms. Firstly, volunteering provides a sense of belonging for many young Muslims. Many young Muslims form strong social connections through their volunteering. Volunteering also helps create the notion of being ‘part of something bigger’ than yourself, which many young Muslims find comforting. Additionally, volunteering amongst young Muslims is able to erode stereotypes and break down barriers within society by presenting Islam in a different light to the ‘securitisation’ angle that is pervasive within British politics and media; however, these progressive impacts can be undermined through the fear of Islamophobic abuse which can result in Muslim volunteers isolating themselves within their own communities.

Following on from this synopsis of the findings from each of the four research questions, this chapter will outline the contributions of this thesis within the context of contemporary social, political and academic discussions more broadly. The foundations of this thesis are firmly rooted within three intersecting and cross-cutting areas of research which form the structural basis for this chapter. Youth, volunteering and religion have been integral throughout this research project and it is therefore important to examine how this thesis has influenced and been influenced by each of these three themes. The dialogue between this thesis and geographical literature on youth, volunteering and religion will be discussed within the following sections (8.3, 8.4 and 8.5).

8.3 – Youth

8.3.1 – Youth Matters

From the outset, this thesis has emphasised the importance of considering youth in the context of Islamic faith based volunteering. The idea that young people have more time and less money, whereas older people have more money and less time played a key role in shaping the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims in Birmingham. This concept emerged within a variety of contexts throughout the thesis, from the direct quotes from the interviewees to the statistical data from the questionnaire, and plays a key role in shaping how the participants view their positions within society. The landscape of volunteering that has been mapped across this thesis is therefore uniquely specific to the youthfulness of the participants within this research project.

This thesis, however, has contributed more to literature on youth than merely showcasing the role of young Muslim volunteers. This section outlines the key contributions to the geographies of youth, broadening research on youth beyond higher education (section 8.3.2); exploring the complex interrelations between young people and their families (section 8.3.3); highlighting the analytical purchase of 'vital conjunctures' within youth transitions (section 8.3.4); and outlining the negotiations of youth, citizenship and identity for young Muslims in Britain (section 8.3.5). Whilst the contributions of this thesis do not reconceptualise the way in which youth is understood, they do provide contemporary and topical insights into the 'hidden' and everyday lives of young people.

8.3.2 - Broadening a narrow focus on youth

The vibrant research outlook of the 'Geographies of Children, Youth and Families' has been integral in expanding research beyond an adult centric perspective (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Holloway and Valentine, 2004). An initial focus on children within this discipline offered a sharp alternative to mainstream geographical research. Only in the last couple of decades has an interest in youth approached the forefront of geographical attention (Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Evans, 2008). Despite this recognition however, the majority of research on youth has been from a higher education perspective (for example, Holdsworth, 2009; Smith, 2008; Hopkins, 2006; Beech, 2014).

Accordingly, a conscious decision was made within the planning of this thesis to avoid a bias towards student volunteering, as this field of research becomes

increasingly profuse. That is not to say that this research project has ignored or distanced itself from the literature on student volunteers; nor does it disparage the contributions that student geographies have made to the study of youth. Instead, this thesis runs in parallel to those studies, drawing comparisons and contrasts in a pursuit to expand the study of youth volunteering, and of youth more broadly.

Many of the themes within the body of research on student volunteering were reproduced within the narratives of the participants in this research project. The accumulation of social capital was a key component for many volunteers. Whether the social benefits of volunteering were specific motivations of the volunteers or whether they occurred circumstantially is not fully disentangled within this project; however, a sense of belonging and collective identity is clear within the narratives of the participants and is reflective of much of the literature on youth volunteering (Dean, 2015) and volunteering amongst older people (Cattan et al., 2011) alike.

Conversely, the narratives of the young Muslims within this thesis go beyond these 'neoliberal' depictions of youth volunteering (Jones, 2011). An intensely altruistic set of motivations for volunteering, that is clear within this thesis, is not found within much of the literature on youth volunteering. Whether these motivations are less focused upon an 'egoistic' self-development towards corporate work due to the volunteers themselves being 'outside' of the higher education driven ambition for corporate work, or whether the religiosity of the volunteers played a role, is unclear. Most likely, a combination of religious stimuli and non-corporate agendas shaped these more altruistic motivations for volunteering.

However, whilst a more altruistic and less corporate motivated rationale for volunteering emerged within the motivations of the respondents, they were not entirely selfless. The notion of accumulating religious capital was a dominant theme within these narratives. A central principle of Islam is the idea that good deeds are rewarded by Allah. The notion of volunteering as a source of religious capital has been examined within Christian volunteers (Park and Smith, 2000; Caputo, 2009). However, without the specific belief of 'rewards' within Christianity, the notion of religious capital within these studies becomes conflated with social and cultural capital, or else becomes lost in an abstract notion of spirituality or religiosity. The findings in this research portray a much more concrete notion of

religious capital within Islam. Whilst the religious capital within the narratives of the participants of this thesis is still embedded within an intangible or spiritual realm, it is more quantifiable in the minds of the young Muslims and therefore creates a specific imprint upon the landscape of volunteering. The notion of religious capital is inextricably interlinked with the age of the volunteers, and echoes back to the idea that young people have more time and less money. The importance, then, for young Muslims to volunteer their time (rather than money) in order to accumulate religious capital is overt within many of the narratives within this research project. This idea is explored further in relation to the uneven landscape of volunteering across the Islamic calendar within section 8.5.1.

The idea that volunteering is common amongst young people due to their socio-economic situation has implications beyond the study of youth volunteering. As older people enter the stage of their lifecourse where they leave corporate work, their resources of time and money begin to reflect the circumstances of young people. The notion of volunteering as a response to the economic and corporeal resources of an individual can therefore have implications for understanding motivations for volunteering across the lifecourse, reflecting Baines and Hardill's (2008: 308) comment that many people volunteer in order to say: "at least I can do something".

The empirical research within this thesis contributes to a new, holistic approach to the study of youth, beyond the neoliberal view of youth as a stage in the lifecourse that is primarily comprised of preparation for the corporate world (see, for example, Jones, 2011; Brewer, 2013; Neumark and Rothstien, 2006). This research on youth without a bias towards higher education bolsters the literature on youth, providing new insights into the lives of young people who do not subscribe to a lifecourse on the corporate treadmill. The lives of young people cannot, however, be understood in isolation. The interactions, negotiations and relationships within family networks are fundamental in affecting the lifecourses of young people. These complex and fluid family dynamics are significant within the narratives in this thesis and, as such, are explored within the following section.

8.3.3 – Family

The role of family in shaping the lives of young people is a widely acknowledged idea (Ruspini, 2016; Holloway et al., 2010). Correspondingly, this research project found that family dynamics play a major part in moulding the way that young Muslims engage with and experience not just volunteering, but their broader experiences of living in 21st Century British society. The narratives of interviewees were deeply contrasting. Whilst many families supported, facilitated and encouraged the participants to engage in volunteering, other families controlled and limited their voluntary activities.

Many narratives from the interviewees within this thesis reveal a supportive family network with regards to their volunteering practices. Many participants also describe how they volunteer as a family unit. These accounts reflect the research of Hogg (2016) who explores volunteering across different stages of the lifecourse. He describes how those who volunteer with the support of a family network are more likely to continue volunteering rather than the intermittent or 'trigger' volunteering of others (Hogg, 2016). Research on intergenerationalities has become increasingly prominent within geographical literature (Vanderbeck, 2007; Hopkins et al., 2010; Tarrant, 2010), especially in the context of intra-familial interactions (Richardson, 2015). The recognition that the lives of young people are inextricably interwoven into the fabrics of familial networks has been shown to shape people's everyday actions as well as their pathways through the lifecourse (Tarrant, 2010). Lawler (2008: 37) describes family networks as "at the heart of understandings of identity, both through the 'doing' of family relationships, and through understandings of kin groups and one's place within them."

Conversely, the families who were more restrictive in how they let their children volunteer tended to be more conservative in the Islamic faith. As is discussed further within section 8.5, the reason for these more regulated forms of volunteering within conservative households could be due to a less flexible interpretation of Islamic teachings and laws. In Dwyer's (2000) research into the identities of young British South Asian Muslim women, she highlights how families can often apply pressure upon the young members of their family units. The expectations of elders within a family for the younger members to uphold particular cultural and religious expectations is a common notion, with Dwyer (2000) describing how such expectations can reinforce gender roles and suppress the

young Muslims' expressions of self. However, the expressions of these expectations can play out in a variety of ways as they are negotiated and contested by the young Muslims pushing the boundaries of their autonomy. The findings within this thesis reveal how young Muslims can challenge the restrictions of their parents as they transition, not only towards greater levels of independence, but also towards religious maturity, where they begin to act upon their individual religious convictions.

These themes reflect a body of literature on the negotiations between identities of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth with, and in, the family (Valentine et al., 2003; Gorman-Murray, 2008). Although young people are at the stage in their lives where they are gaining more independence and autonomy, they are still embedded within networks of family and friends. Valentine et al. (2003: 495) describe that:

“Families are important to young people because of the financial and emotional support they provide and, as such, any decision to come out is tinged with fear of potential loss. Yet, young people also feel love for their families and a responsibility to protect their parents and siblings from feelings of hurt, guilt, or shame.”

Whilst this quote is taken from a very different context to this thesis, the complex negotiations, challenges and submissions to the will of the family are reflective of the narratives of many of the young Muslims within this research project.

Hogg (2016) notes how the associated responsibilities of creating a family can often impact upon the voluntary participation of women more than men (see also Baines et al., 2006). Whilst the majority of the respondents of the questionnaire survey and the participants from the interviews were unmarried, the uneven gendered responsibilities either within their parental households, or their newly created household, were clear. Hogg's (2016) research into the voluntary participation of 'older volunteers' highlights that the lifecourses of individuals are embedded within the context of family interactions. The findings within this section, in conjunction with the work of Hogg (2016), open the door for a more intergenerational approach to the study of volunteering within the context of British Muslim families and beyond.

Therefore, whilst the majority of research on young volunteers explores the everyday practices and experiences as deeply personal narratives, the findings within this research project emphasise the importance of appreciating the lives of young people within the context of family dynamics and relationships.

This section has outlined the dynamics between family members which shape the way in which young Muslims engage with volunteering. These dynamics are continually shifting, particularly in relation to the transitions of the participants. The following section explores these transitions, highlighting the unique narratives of the young Muslim volunteers.

8.3.2 – Youth Transitions and Culture

Definitions of youth, as discussed within Chapter 2, have moved away from static notions of 'youth'. Collins et al. (2013) describe this more fluid, transitional approach to understanding the lives of young people as 'youth in motion'. Transitions toward adulthood, independence and corporate work have all been explored within academic research on youth; however, the intersections between these series of transitions and the Islamic culture is much less explored. This thesis has offered new perspective to the study of youth transitions, highlighting how many of the vital conjunctures are amplified for young Muslims as a result of the context of contemporary British attitudes towards Islam.

Recent contributions to the study of youth transitions has attempted to move away from depicting narrow, uniform pathways towards a homogenised notion of adulthood (Wood, 2017). Instead, a more holistic understanding of the divergent transitions has begun to revitalise this body of literature. The narratives within this thesis provide an empirical basis to Wood's (2017) call for a less narrow approach to the study of youth transitions and a consideration of youth culture within these transitions. Therefore, whilst many of the narratives of the participants reflect hegemonic depictions of transitions towards independence, maturity and work, the pathways that the young Muslims took were varied and divergent. The transitions of young Muslims are tied into their specific social, cultural and religious structures. Even considering the autonomy and agency of the participants, it is impossible to separate the vital conjunctures that sculpt their pathways from the terrain of their specific and shifting social, cultural and religious environments (Jeffrey, 2010).

This research project has highlighted how many of the experiences, challenges and vital conjunctures that young people must navigate during this turbulent stage of the lifecourse are amplified for young Muslims. Having lived the majority of their lives against the backdrop of the 'war on terror' and the negative portrayal of Islam within much of the mainstream media, these critical periods in which young people begin to develop an independent identity are intensified for young British Muslims.

This thesis contributes to the body of literature on youth transitions and youth culture through the grounded narratives of young Muslim volunteers. Excluding the vibrant body of research into the lives of young people in the global South (Gough and Langevang, 2013; Gough et al., 2016; Punch, 2015), the literature on youth transitions has been largely Western centric (Evans, 2008). Therefore, whilst this thesis does not reconceptualise the notion of youth transitions, it does offer analytical purchase to the framework of 'vital conjunctures' (Jeffrey, 2010). By applying the lens to the transitions of young Muslims, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of understanding the vital conjunctures that shape the lifecourses of religious minorities in the UK (Jeffrey, 2010). These negotiations of youth agency within religious and cultural structures emphasise Wood's (2017) advocacy of an approach to the study of young people which understands youth transitions in the context of wider cultural assemblages. Wood (2017) equally describes how "citizenship thinking prompts (such as participation, belonging and recognition) provide a way to bridge 'transitions' and 'cultural' perspectives of youth studies." (see also Harris, 2015). The following section therefore positions the findings within this thesis in relation to contemporary academic discussions on youth, citizenship and identity.

8.3.4 – Youth, Citizenship and Identity

Jupp (2008) describes how "initiatives around 'public participation' and 'community involvement' have become increasingly central to UK government policy programmes" and these have been particularly pertinent within the latest 'brand' of youth citizenship (Mills and Waite, 2017; Baillie Smith et al., 2016). This relationship between young people, volunteering and citizenship has captured the political imagination and, whilst Mills and Waite (2017) examine the formal expression of contemporary youth citizenship in the UK (through the government

sponsored 'National Citizen Service'), this thesis provides insights into the informal and unofficial intersections of youth, volunteering and citizenship.

Jeffrey and Staeheli (2016) describe how young people are in the process of 'learning to be a citizen' (see also Mills, 2013; Mills and Waite, 2017) through government sponsored schemes. The notion of identity was a dominant theme that emerged from the accounts of the interviewees in this thesis; however, the concept of citizenship was mentioned much less frequently. For the participants of this research project, volunteering was less an expression of active citizenship, or a process of learning to be a citizen, but was instead more intimately entangled with religious frameworks. This disconnect between youth volunteering and youth citizenship reflects Smith et al.'s (2010) notion of a division between the agendas that matter to the volunteers in their doing of volunteering and the national-level policies designed to educate the 'citizens of the future' through volunteering programmes. The findings from this thesis therefore challenge Mills and Waite's (2017: 71) stipulation that "active citizenship... is ubiquitous with youth volunteering schemes".

Therefore, although the notion of youth citizenship has become increasingly synonymous with volunteering in recent years, particularly with regards to the government's latest iteration of the idealised youth citizen (Baillie Smith et al., 2016; Mills and Waite, 2017; Jupp, 2008), for the young Muslims in this research project the relationship between volunteering and citizenship was far less distinct. The following section provides a more focused exploration of 'volunteering', highlighting the contributions that this thesis has made to the literature in this field.

8.4 – Volunteering

8.4.1 – Volunteering Matters

As Britain becomes seen as a 'volunteer nation' through an increasing emphasis on volunteering as a central thread of 'model' citizenship (BBC, 2015; Mills and Waite, 2017), this thesis is well placed to consider how these notions of volunteering and youth citizenship collide in the context of the everyday lives of young British Muslims. As the previous section discussed, entanglements of youth, citizenship and volunteering are becoming increasingly politicised. Exploring how

young volunteers can either reproduce or contest notions of 'ideal' citizenship is therefore not just a contribution of this thesis, but also within literature on volunteering more broadly.

Debates surrounding volunteering go beyond a focus on citizenship. Horton and Kraftl's (2008) call for researchers to examine 'what else matters' has stimulated discussion on a more rounded understanding of volunteering. Volunteering is not just the embodied action, nor is it the aims of these activities, nor the outcomes. It is the process of interaction between those who volunteer and those who are volunteered upon. It is a nexus of the motivations, experiences, emotions and practices of people who devote their personal time and resources to a particular cause. It has the ability to shape the lives of individuals and change society through P/political action. The research within this thesis offers more than just a description of what volunteering young Muslims are doing. It positions the everyday lives of young Muslim volunteers in the context of modern British society, providing insights into the innumerable encounters which shape the identities of young British Muslims. This research project responds to Smith et al.'s (2010) call for the 'enlivened' and 'creative' narratives of the everyday practices, experiences and interactions of volunteers to be given a platform within geographical literature.

Two further sub-sections detail the contributions this thesis has made in relation to the geographies of volunteering. Section 8.4.2 demonstrates that understandings of volunteering need to be expanded in response to the findings within this thesis. Section 8.4.3 outlines the contributions that this research project has made to academic literature on volunteering more broadly, examining the findings of this thesis in the context of contemporary geographical research on volunteering.

8.4.2 – Broadening understandings of volunteering

Definitions of volunteering are messy and problematic (Jones and Heley, 2013; see also section 2.2.2). Academic definitions are rooted within traditional Western depictions of volunteering. Whilst research has pushed the boundaries of understanding volunteering across a variety of contexts, definitions have remained static. Without wishing to generate more smoke than heat, this section will break down some of these definitions and offer new understandings of volunteering that have emerged within this thesis.

The majority of literature within the 'geographies of volunteering' has understandably focused upon traditional and formal channels of volunteering (Milligan and Conradson, 2006). Whilst informal volunteering has begun to receive a small amount of recognition within recent research projects (Milligan, 2007), there remains a heavy imbalance biased towards formal channels of volunteering (Smith et al., 2010). This thesis redressed this balance of formal and informal volunteering, allowing the participants to dictate which practices they categorise as 'volunteering'. The diversity of actions and practices that the participants highlighted not only supported the dearth of literature on informal volunteering, but also eroded the dichotomy between these two sides of volunteering. The narratives of the volunteers within this research project reveal the difficulty of separating formal and informal volunteering. An example of the difficulty in disentangling the formal from the informal volunteering can be seen in the actions of young Muslims within the Mosque. Volunteers may simultaneously be involved in a fundraising activity, whilst also making tea for a guest speaker. These two actions are divergent in their formality, but were considered under the same umbrella of volunteering for the young Muslims, revealing a blurred boundary between formal and informal volunteering practices.

The concept of embodied micro-volunteering was introduced within this thesis in order to make sense of the myriad of small-scale, embodied actions of the volunteers. These subtle actions go largely unacknowledged, not only from an academic perspective, but also within political and societal understandings of volunteering. The concept of 'micro-volunteering' has most prominently been utilised within the contexts of online and digital volunteerism (Young and McChesney, 2013) in order to encapsulate the vast array of internet-based actions which sit at the periphery of traditional definitions of volunteering (Browne et al., 2013). With the potential for online volunteering being realised at an exponential rate, definitions of volunteering have failed to keep up. Therefore, whilst there is no fixed definition of 'micro-volunteering', there is a consensus that it is 'quick', 'convenient' and 'informal' (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2016; Browne et al., 2013). The concept of 'embodied micro-volunteering' builds upon the notion of 'micro-volunteering', translating the insights of research on digital volunteering into the offline world. These 'quick', 'convenient' and 'informal' embodied actions, such as

picking up litter or smiling at a stranger, are significant portions of the repertoire of volunteering amongst young British Muslims. The concept of embodied micro-volunteering makes sense of these actions, drawing attention to diversity of small-scale voluntary actions that go unacknowledged within literature on volunteering.

The notion of 'unvoluntary volunteering' also emphasises the indistinct boundaries of 'volunteering'. This concept straddles the margins between what is considered volunteering and what is not. The notion of unvoluntary volunteering was not a common theme within the narratives of the volunteers; however, it highlights the pressure that some young people are put under to perform in specific ways and engage in activities to which they have no choice. The narratives within this research project reveal that the source of these pressures are often manifested through the family. These findings echo a body of research into the pressure applied to young people to participate in sport. Wuerth et al. (2004) highlight the role of parents in shaping how young people engage in sporting activities. However, despite this recognition within the arena of sports participation, there is no equivalent research into pressured participation in volunteering. A body of literature on volunteering which does offer some similarities is the research on non-professional care workers (South et al., 2014). Whilst these studies highlight the problematic nature of compensating 'lay' healthcare workers for their time (Van der Horst, 2016; South et al., 2014), they tend to focus on the economic challenges of this form of "volunteering" (Handy et al., 2008). The idea of unvoluntary volunteering erodes the homogenous definition of volunteering further, interrogating the intersections of volunteering, choice and social pressure. This thesis provides an initial glimpse into these unrecognised aspects of volunteering amongst young people, providing a platform from which future research could build.

For the majority of other participants within this thesis, the decision to volunteer was unpressured. So much so, that many of the interviewees described a process of 'over-volunteering'. Many of the young Muslims within this project were deeply involved in multiple channels of volunteering and, consequently, struggled to balance their volunteering activities with other aspects of their lives. As Horton and Kraftl (2008) call for an exploration of 'what else matters' in conjunction with volunteering, this thesis demonstrates how volunteering could disadvantage young

people as it took over their lives. Challenges of juggling family life, social life, higher education and work took a toll on many of the participants. These narratives of over-volunteering counter the dominant understandings of volunteering as a panacea for social capital (Lindstrom, 2016; Brown and Ferris, 2007) and transitioning into corporate work (Jones, 2011).

Conversely, for some of the participants, this over-volunteering became a defining decision within their transitions, as they chose to carve out careers within charities or voluntary organisations. This decision of volunteers to seek work within the voluntary sector highlights the haziness between paid and unpaid labour, reflecting Taylor's (2004: 29) argument that the "conceptual boundaries [between] work, voluntary work and employment" need to be disentangled within academic discussions.

8.4.3 – Contributions to literature on volunteering

As well as (re)constructing definitions of volunteering, this thesis has diversified dominant British imaginations of who and what a volunteer is. Academic literature tends to reflect the way British society depicts volunteers: white, middle-class students and white, older volunteers. These two overriding illustrations of the 'classic' British volunteer are, however, unrepresentative of the variety and diversity of volunteers in Britain. This thesis challenges these representations by showcasing the existing, yet hidden, voluntary practices of young British Muslims (see also Judge, 2016).

The findings from this thesis have both reproduced and challenged the literature on volunteering. The findings within this thesis regarding the social and personal benefits of volunteering correlate with the majority of literature on volunteering, outlining increasing confidence, as well as positive social experiences of volunteering (Hopkins et al., 2015). Additionally, the narratives within this thesis highlight how encounters of difference can erode stereotypes and break down barriers within society. Volunteering, then, can be understood as a powerful tool for social cohesion and as a vital method of small 'p' political action (Skelton and Valentine, 2003).

Conversely, many of the narratives contest the dominant literature on youth volunteering. The idea of an altruistic set of motivations for volunteering amongst young people is rarely seen within the literature (discussed within the previous section). Experiences of abuse and Islamophobia whilst participating in volunteering is also unexplored within geographical research (discussed within the following section).

The use of 'serious leisure' theory within this thesis has provided a valuable framework from which to understand the experiences of volunteers in parallel to the aims of the volunteering. Serious leisure theory has been widely utilised within literature on volunteering since Stebbins' conception of the idea in 1982. This thesis reveals the relevance of the framework today, applying a new perspective to the concept of serious leisure. As this theory stipulates, volunteering can only be understood in relation to the experiences of volunteers in conjunction with their practices and objectives. Beyond the concept of serious leisure, the narratives within this thesis contribute to an enlivened approach to the study of volunteering. The 'situated', 'emotional' and 'embodied' narratives of 'doing' volunteering respond to Smith et al.'s (2010) call for a more holistic approach to the study of volunteering. Through the narratives of 'doing' volunteering within this research project, insights into 'more than' volunteering can be understood (Smith et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the scale of volunteering was an important theme within this thesis. Bathelt et al. (2004) developed the concept of 'local buzz' and 'global pipelines' in relation to knowledge exchange within high-tech and service industries. This concept, however, reflects the 'glocal' scale of volunteering amongst young Muslims. Local fundraising events within Muslim communities in Birmingham produced money through which aid could be distributed abroad. The spatial landscape of volunteering is specific to Islam, with transnational linkages tending to occur within diasporic communities of a similar religious or national heritage. The importance that religion plays in carving these landscapes of volunteering is clear within the narratives of the young volunteers within this thesis. As such, the following section provides a specific focus on religion, examining the contributions of this thesis within the context of literature on the geographies of religion.

8.5 - Religion

8.5.1 - Religion matters

Dwyer (2016: 758) recently asked “Why does religion matter for cultural geographers?”. This thesis has strengthened the credence that religion is a central tenet for understanding the everyday experiences and practices of individuals; not only those who are explicitly ‘religious’, but how encounters between people of similar or different religiosities interact with one another and how they engage with ‘secular’ society more widely. This research project has highlighted how neither culture nor religion can be understood in isolation from the other and therefore to ignore the role of faith and religion in society undermines a rounded understanding of the social, cultural and religious topographies of British society. The narratives within this thesis explore the landscapes of British society specifically in relation to Islam; however, the need to uncover uneven spatial interactions between a wide range of cultural and religious communities is imperative for cultural geographers moving forward. This section will outline the relevance of Islam to this thesis, highlighting the socio-political context of Islam in Britain and examining the unique spatial and temporal geographies of volunteering amongst young Muslims. The importance of appreciating the heterogeneity of Islamic communities is also underscored within this section.

Britain is at a time where scrutiny upon the Islamic communities is at an all-time high. With the continual threat of ‘home-grown’ Islamist terrorism this scrutiny has focused ever more intently upon the Muslim youth and their engagement with modern British society (Mandaville, 2009). This thesis offers new perspectives on these individuals, showcasing the narratives of young Muslim volunteers, exploring how their everyday lives are impacted by their own religiosity and the perceptions of Islamic religiosity within British society. The empirical chapters within this thesis have continually stressed the complexity, intricacy and dynamism of Muslim communities and individuals. Heterogeneity within and between different strands of Islam, as well as variations of class, ethnicity, gender and age have all been shown to influence the lives of young Muslims (Dwyer, 1999a; 1999b). Whilst recent research into Muslim communities has begun to acknowledge the importance of understanding such complexities (Philips, 2009; Hopkins, 2016),

there remains a deep lack of understanding of Islamic culture within British politics (Fetzer and Soper, 2005), media (Saeed, 2007; Poole, 2002; Moore et al., 2008) and public imaginations (Meer et al., 2010; Dwyer, 1999b). Drawing out how a nexus of social differences can produce tangible impacts upon the experiences and practices of young Muslim volunteers has therefore been integral to this thesis, particularly from a statistical stand point in Chapter 4. Therefore, without subverting appreciations of complexity and context sensitivity, this section will draw out some of the dominant overarching themes that emerged within the realities of volunteering as a young British Muslim. This section explores how religion can act either as a catalyst for volunteering or as a barrier to volunteering within different contexts. The importance of religious conservatism is then analysed, before discussions on how Islamophobia can shape, not only the volunteering practices of young Muslims, but their negotiations of identity within British society.

8.5.2 – Religion as a Catalyst

This thesis contributes to academic understandings of the intersections between religion and volunteering, offering the concept of a 'religious CV' in order to encapsulate the resonances between accumulating 'religious capital' and 'corporate capital' through volunteering. The notion of accruing 'religious capital' through positive actions has been utilised within research on Christian volunteering (Park and Smith, 2000; Caputo, 2009). This thesis develops the idea of 'religious capital' further, introducing the concept of a 'religious CV' as a framework for interpreting the range religious motivations which shape the participatory practices of many young Muslims.

Tse (2013) argues that the geographies of religion have not engaged critically with the theologies of religion and therefore struggle to understand the complex subjectivities which govern the everyday practices and performances of both religious and non-religious individuals. Whilst this thesis did not actively adopt the 'grounded theologies' framework, it does provide critical insights into the principles of Islam and the performances of young Muslims. Religion played a significant role in encouraging young Muslims to volunteer. The narratives of the interviewees highlight how living in the likeness of the Prophet Mohammed was a primary

motivation for volunteering. The rules and values laid down within the Quran and within the *hadiths* also shape the participation of young Muslims, through a belief that good deeds will result in spiritual rewards. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the concept of 'religious capital' can be understood to mirror the notion of 'corporate capital'. Whilst a significant body of literature on youth volunteering has highlighted how students are often motivated to volunteer as a form of preparation for corporate work, the Muslims within this research were more motivated by improving their religious CV.

This thesis also contributes to the consideration of unique relationship between Islam and volunteering. The uneven spatial and temporal landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims is moulded by Islamic structures and beliefs. The findings from the quantitative data reveal the importance of the Islamic calendar in shaping the temporal landscape of volunteering. As highlighted earlier, the tenet that good deeds are rewarded by Allah is highly regarded within Islamic jurisprudence. Differences within the value of these rewards are entrenched within the topography of the Islamic calendar. Ramadan is perhaps the most overt example of this translation of the theological beliefs manifesting themselves as grounded actions of Muslims (Tse, 2013). This thesis has provided an empirical foundation to this temporal fluctuation of volunteering amongst young Muslims, highlighting in particular the flurry of voluntary action during the month of Ramadan.

8.5.3 – Religion as a Barrier

The previous section highlighted the ways in which religion can act as a catalyst for young Muslims to engage in a range of voluntary practices. Conversely, the narratives from this research project also reveal how cultural and religious expectations and guidelines can restrict, control and inhibit the participation of young Muslim volunteers. The role of religion in curtailing the voluntary activities of young Muslims was not purely from within Islamic expectations; Islamophobic aggressions from non-Muslims played a significant role in disrupting the practices and experiences of young Muslim volunteers. Consequently, this section will analyse two parallel processes from inside and outside of Islam: the restrictive traditions of 'conservative' Islam (section 8.5.3.1) and the uneven impact of Islamophobia amongst young British Muslims (section 8.5.3.2).

8.5.3.1 – Religious Conservatism

Whilst the Sunni-Shia divide is the most overtly discussed within political and academic discourse (Gonzalez, 2013; Behuria, 2004), this thesis found that there was no significant differences between the volunteering practices of young Sunni Muslims and young Shia Muslims. Instead, religious conservatism was found to be an important factor shaping and controlling the ways in which young Muslims engaged with volunteering. This difference was shown to be statistically significant within the quantitative data and was also a prominent theme within the interview data.

Rather than focusing on the extremities of Islamic *fiqh*, such as Salafi or Wahhabi Islam (Hassan, 2006), this research project grappled with the more intricate divisions in the more central ground of Islamic schools of thought. Whilst the complexities and pluralities within and between different Islamic *Madhhabs* inevitably made the conservative – non-conservative division slightly problematic, the statistical findings within this research were reinforced through the narratives of the young Muslims within this research project. These findings are summarised by Zahra's (F, 21, Mi, N) explanation that conservative schools of Islam are so focused on rules about "how you should pray" or "how you should dress", that they cannot see the value in engaging with their local communities (see Chapter 5).

These cultural and religious structures that shaped the ways in which young Muslims engaged with volunteering were played out across a myriad of socio-spatial contexts, manifesting in diverse and divergent ways. For example, as was discussed earlier within this chapter, family networks can reinforce cultural and religious expectations.

This thesis found that conservative Muslims are significantly less likely to engage in volunteering, particularly for causes outside of their own Islamic community. This thesis does not, however, stipulate that Muslims must embrace the "right sort of Islam" (Glynn, 2009: 86). Glynn (2009) highlights how a liberalising Islam has become a highly politicised issue, with a series of attempts by the British government to promote a moderate Islam. Glynn argues, however, that such attempts are inevitably doomed to failure by a set of foreign policies which continue to produce conflicting loyalties and identities within Muslim diasporas.

Proponents of a liberal, flexible and open Islam have not always been welcomed with open arms, particularly within more conservative Islamic communities. However, in the wake of recurrent Islamist terrorism in the UK in recent years, the volume and persistence of calls, from both inside and outside of Islamic communities, for Islam to become more reflexive and more engaged with modern British society have begun to penetrate many areas of thought surrounding Islam. Such conversations around 'liberal Islam' are not straightforward, however. Disputes over the 'true' meaning and jurisprudence of Islam have been relentless since the birth of Islam in the early 7th Century and show no signs of abating. The direction and focus of these debates has been shaped, at least in part, by the question of Western cultures and values appearing seemingly at odds with many Islamic laws and traditions (Hopkins, 2009).

The notion of 'conservative' vs 'non-conservative' Islam is not entirely flawless, nor is it completely original (see, for example, Edis, 2009; McIntosh and Islam, 2010). As this thesis has continually stressed, Islam is far from a monolithic religion, and even within the many schools of thought, there is a vast amount of diversity, fluidity and overlap. However, this division was shown to be significant within both the statistical data and a dominant theme within the narratives of the participants. Chapter 4 highlights a difference between the voluntary practices of young Muslims in accordance with their religious conservatism and this difference is shown to shape the pathways that young Muslims take to become volunteers (Chapter 5) and their experiences of volunteering (Chapter 6). In summary, whilst more research is necessary to unpick the entanglements between the blurred conservative – non-conservative dividing line, this thesis has highlighted how the subtle intricacies of religious conservatism can play a tangible and significant role in shaping the everyday experiences of doing volunteering amongst young British Muslims.

In contrast to the restrictive and controlling religious expectations within the narratives of some young Muslim volunteers, abuse from non-Muslims was another dominant theme that emerged within this research project. The subsequent section will therefore examine these instances of Islamophobia in relation to recent research in this field.

8.5.3.2 – *Islamophobia*

This thesis bolsters the growing appreciation of the severity of the impacts of Islamophobia in shaping the everyday lives of young British Muslims. The data from both the questionnaire survey and the interviews revealed the significance of Islamophobia in shaping how young Muslims engage with volunteering. Instances of abuse often became vital conjunctions within the lives of young Muslims and shaped how they constructed their identities within the context of British society. Even the interviewees who had not directly been affected by Islamophobia revealed how a fear of abuse could shape the ways in which they participated in voluntary activities. Therefore, whilst volunteering is commonly understood to be an easy, safe and innocuous activity (Holdsworth, 2010; Jones, 2011), participation for young Muslims can be markedly less secure.

Incidents of Islamophobia were significant and impactful for many young Muslims within this research project. Through their participation in voluntary activities, the interviewees were often exposed to situations of Islamophobia, racism and abuse. These critical events transformed the experiences of the volunteers instantaneously, whilst also shaping their long-term future participation. These findings corroborate the research by Findlay et al. (2017) who note that, whilst an increased visibility of Muslims within society could break down misconceptions about Islam, many young Muslims were afraid to engage in social action due to a fear of Islamophobic abuse. Whilst the contributions that this thesis makes to our understandings of Islamophobia are not unique, they are vital in building a comprehensive picture of the everyday experiences of young British Muslims.

Feelings of vulnerability are uniquely spatial. The unique socio-spatial dimensions of Birmingham provided more than just a site of interest within this thesis. The narratives of the young Muslim volunteers were embedded within the social, cultural, political, economic and religious landscapes of the city. Different spaces held significance for the participants in various ways, with some areas imbued with feelings of 'home', 'comfort', 'safety' and 'familiarity', whilst other places held notions of 'exposure', 'vulnerability' and 'unbelonging'. These relationships between the young Muslims and the streets of Birmingham were not static, but were continually negotiated through doing volunteering. Different places within the

city took on new meanings as they encountered these spaces in different contexts. Whilst experiences of Islamophobia might create or amplify feelings of insecurity or 'unbelonging', positive interactions through volunteering could also enhance a sense of comfort or belonging to a particular space.

This thesis exposed that women were significantly more vulnerable to Islamophobic abuse than men, with 68% of female respondents citing Islamophobia as a barrier to volunteering compared with 39% of males. These statistical findings echo the sentiments of Ashfar (2008), who describes how "the current climate of Islamophobia has burdened Muslim women who cover [their hair] with additional problems in terms of their politics, their lived experiences and their life chances." Islamic clothing has maintained a high profile within mainstream media, within political debate and within academic discussions across a variety of contexts (Dwyer, 1999a; Duncan, 2015; Perry, 2014). A recent report entitled 'Forgotten women: The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women in the UK' was commissioned by the European Network Against Racism and British group Faith Matter in order to understand the experiences of British Muslim women (Forgotten Women Report, 2015). The report found that discrimination against Muslim women was significant across numerous spheres of life. The report highlighted that "this multiple discrimination is a composition of gender-based, ethnic, and religious factors" (Forgotten Women Report, 2015: 2). This thesis did not specifically focus upon clothing; however, cultural and religious dress emerged prominently within discussions of the gendered nature of Islamophobia. The narratives of the young Muslim volunteers regularly cited clothing as a factor which exposed young Muslim women to Islamophobia more than men. These accounts reflect the findings with the Forgotten Women Report (2015: 4) which stated that:

"Muslim women face significant levels of racism, harassment, abuse and, in some cases, violence due to their religious identity. The challenges faced by Muslim women can be made particularly acute for those that are 'visibly' Muslim: wearing the hijab, niqab or burqa increases the likelihood that a woman will be targeted for a hate crime."

This 'Forgotten Women Report' reveals many of the discriminations and abuses that impact the lives of British Muslim women, and corroborates many of the

findings from this thesis; however, the recommendations of the report are far too narrowly focused upon legislation and policing. Ensuring that policy and legislation are effective in dealing with discriminations and abuses is, of course, essential. This thesis reveals how instances of Islamophobia are often sparked by misinformation, stereotyping and ignorance of Islamic culture(s). However, the report fails to identify that these primary causes of such instances of abuse are produced at a grassroots level, and therefore the recommendations of the report should highlight the importance of social engagement at all levels of society. Only with a combined attitudinal shift amongst individuals and communities can such changes in policy be effective. The findings within this thesis highlight the divisiveness created through instances of Islamophobia can affect the way in which young people perceive their sense of belonging in Birmingham. On the other hand, the participants of this research project also revealed that volunteering could erode these divisions through positive encounters of difference (Wilson, 2016a). Volunteering, then, can create an increased exposure to Islamophobia whilst simultaneously eroding the stereotypes of Islam that lead to instances of abuse.

Although it might appear counter-intuitive, the impacts of Islamophobia are not limited to Muslim individuals and communities. Recent research has uncovered how many Sikh, Hindu and other minority individuals are becoming the victims of 'Islamophobia' through misidentification in the UK (Selod, 2016). The findings within this thesis therefore offer insights beyond a focus on Islam, revealing the importance for creating societal understandings intersections between religious and secular landscapes in Britain.

8.6 - Intersectional Overview

This thesis has perhaps been guilty of divorcing the themes of youth, religion and volunteering too readily; however, this separation has been necessary in order to maintain a coherent and flowing structure. Particularly with regards to the literature review (Chapter 2), this thesis also maintained a distinction between these themes in order to reflect the wider research that has been carried out within the discipline of geography. Conversely, a cognisance of the fluidity and overlapping of these themes has remained an important consideration throughout this research. This

section therefore briefly draws together some of the intersections motifs which intertwine the central pillars of youth, volunteering and religion within this thesis.

8.6.1 – Religious Capital

The notion of religious capital permeates throughout this thesis. However, as has been discussed within previous chapters (6 and 7), the nuances of this concept have shifted subtly from author to author (Franchelli and O'brien, 2014). In line with Baker's (2009) distinction between 'religious capital' and 'spiritual capital', this thesis has utilised both of these twin ideas in discrete, but intertwining ways. Religious capital, in this project, explains to the macro, practical actions of the young Muslim volunteers, whilst spiritual capital has been used in order to comprehend the intangible and emotional interactions that influence the everyday decision-making of the individual volunteers. The concept of a 'religious CV', adopted within this research project (see, for example, Section 7.3), straddles the blurred boundaries between religious and spiritual capital. Paralleling the body of research which has categorised youth volunteering as primarily a preparation for corporate work (Jones, 2008), the interviews within this project revealed the importance for young Muslims to develop their 'religious portfolios'. This transcendent accumulation of capital outweighed the importance of the corporate equivalent in the eyes of the interviewees. This finding is not necessarily unique to young Muslims (see, for example, Baillie Smith et al., 2013); however, the manifestations of religious capital are ultimately nuanced through the specific religious and cultural influences within and between different Islamic denominations.

Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' has underpinned a series of concepts in relation to the complex intersections of religion, culture and social interactions within the heterogeneous Muslim communities in Britain. Modood's (2004) concept of 'ethnic capital' refers to a set of common values shared by a particular community. In his research into representations of different ethnic groups within higher education, Modood suggests that ethnicity plays a central role in shaping the aspirations and transitions of young British Muslims. Modood (2004) envisions ethnic capital as the entanglement between social and cultural capital. As such, ethnic capital expresses the relationship between "cultural capital, acquired

through the family, and social capital resulting from interaction and social relations in the community” (Franceschelli and O’Brien, 2014: 48). Shah et al. (2010) develop this idea further within their research into the educational aspirations of young British Pakistanis. Shah et al. (2010) reveal a set of common values within these Muslim communities can influence outcomes that are desirable for the individuals and families, as well as society more broadly.

Franceschelli and O’Brien’s (2014) notion of ‘Islamic capital’ was developed with Modood’s (2004) ‘ethnic capital’ firmly in mind. Franceschelli and O’Brien (2014) describe how Islam can be understood as a ‘resource’ for Muslim parents, providing a structure to guide and support Muslims within their everyday lives. Whilst Franceschelli and O’Brien (2014) depict Islamic capital as a method through which parents can exercise control over their children, this research project identifies the effects that religious capital can have upon young Muslims directly. This research project builds upon these ideas of ethnic and Islamic capital (Modood, 2004; Shah et al., 2010; Franceschelli and O’Brien, 2014); however, whilst these concepts focus on collective shared values embedded within socio-cultural and religious structures, this thesis reveals the more personal nature of religiosity and spirituality as resource for young Muslims.

The belief in an afterlife is in no way unique to Islam; however, the system of accruing rewards in order to assert one’s position in *Jannah* is distinctive and specific to the religion of Islam. Therefore, this thesis does not offer a new conceptual term for understanding this relationship between the actions and decisions of young Muslims with their personal and ethereal relationship with Allah. Instead, the narratives within this thesis reveal a more complex manifestation of religious capital: one that straddles the blurred divisions between transcendent and everyday; intangible and material; spiritual and corporeal. Whilst the notion of ‘spiritual capital’ tends to neglect the material, and Modood’s (2004) ‘ethnic capital’ somewhat overlooks the transcendent, the conceptualisation of ‘religious capital’ within this thesis builds upon both of these ideas combining elements of each in order to comprehend the specific interactions of religion, culture and ethnicity that shape the identities of young British Muslims. Without ignoring the conceptual strengths of Modood (2004) and Shah et al.’s (2010) ethnic capital, the narratives of the young Muslims within this research project fit more neatly the concept of

religious capital. The use of ethnicity as a 'resource' for young Muslim volunteers may well play a significant role in shaping the landscape volunteering within and between different Islamic communities, however this notion was not explicit within the narratives of participants of this research. As such, this thesis contributes to ways in which the concept of religious capital can be understood within the context of social, cultural and religious intersections. This thesis stretches the utility of the concept of religious capital, revealing how facets of Islam can become integral resources for young Muslims to accrue.

Many parallels can be drawn between the narratives within this research project, and the findings from Hopkins et al.'s (2015) research into young Christian volunteers. This study explains how the enhanced economic and corporate capital that can be gained through volunteering was not a central motivation for these young religious individuals. Instead they note how the transition of Christian volunteers to religious adulthood is strengthened through a 'spiritual maturity' (Baillie Smith et al., 2011). This idea reflects the concept of the 'religious CV' developed within this thesis; however, a direct comparison cannot be drawn. The notion of spiritual maturity, identified within these studies, is subjective and deeply personal. On the other hand, the young Muslims in this research project felt that the religious capital they were accruing was, in many respects, quantifiable. These differences are entrenched within the religious structures of Islam. The notion of spiritual rewards subtly alters the ways in which the young Muslims view their own actions and performances in comparison to the young Christians with Hopkins et al.'s (2015) research. The idea of a religious CV is, therefore, reflective of this more 'quantifiable' accumulation of religious capital that is specific to the Islamic faith.

8.6.2 – Social Difference

Considerations of social difference are fundamental to this thesis. Facets of age, gender, religious denomination, ethnicity and class all intersect with one-another to produce the heterogeneous set of narratives of volunteering amongst young Muslims within research project. This thesis has sought to illuminate some the social differences that impact upon the lives of young Muslim volunteers. On top of the significant divisions between conservative and non-conservative strands of

Islam (as discussed within Section 8.2.1), gender was the most significant facet of social difference that shaped the experiences of the young Muslims within this research project. Each of the empirical chapters within this thesis highlighted how gender shaped the lives of young Muslims in Birmingham. The role of gender in shaping the religious, cultural and familial expectations was a dominant theme within this thesis. An uneven gendered exposure to Islamophobia was highlighted within the narratives of both male and female participants. Incidents of Islamophobia were not exclusively targeted towards women; however, women were often more vulnerable due to the visibility and identifiability of their clothing in particular. These findings of an uneven gendered exposure to Islamophobia are not new; however, they corroborate a growing body of research on Islamophobia (see, for example, Findlay et al., 2017; Hopkins, 2016; Mirza, 2015). Therefore, whilst the contributions that this thesis makes to our understandings of Islamophobia are not unique, they are vital in building a comprehensive picture of the everyday experiences of young British Muslims.

8.6.3 – Types and Spaces of Volunteering

The research design of this project inevitably shaped the findings of the research. This was particularly integral to be able to explore the vast array of volunteering practices undertaken by young Muslims in Birmingham. The decision to use Mosques as sites of entry for the research as opposed to charities or voluntary organisations was deliberate. This methodology, by not restricting the research to such formal channels of enquiry, enabled a more accurate reflection of the myriad types of volunteering to be encapsulated. The questionnaire survey was also designed in such a way as to not dictate the types of volunteering that were of interest, but to allow the respondent to outline their own perspective of what volunteering meant to them.

The types of volunteering that young Muslims in Birmingham are involved in diverse and distinctive. The typology of volunteering, presented within Chapter 4, demonstrates a simultaneous diversity within the types of volunteering that young Muslims are involved, paralleled with a distinctive landscape that is unique to the Muslim communities in Birmingham. This thesis has contributed, not only to build up a map of the landscape of volunteering amongst Muslims in Birmingham, but

also to understandings of what volunteering is in the first place (see Section 8.4.2 and 8.4.3).

The numerous forms of volunteering ranged from highly localised, small scale provision to large scale, international operations; from formal and institutional to informal and individual; from religiously motivated and funded to secular or non-religious. The more formal of these can be broadly categorised into Sadaqah, charity work and fundraising; campaigning, raising awareness and promoting Islam; tutoring and mentoring; delivering aid locally or internationally; improving the local area and community work; and care work. However, this formalised aspect of was just the tip of the iceberg. Smiling at a stranger, picking up litter, looking after elderly or young relatives or friends, handing out flyers about the message of Islam, photographing or filming volunteering events and updating charity webpages are just a sample of countless forms 'micro-volunteering' (Browne et al., 2013) carried out by young Muslims in Birmingham. In order to understand these informal, small-scale practices, this thesis developed the notion of '*embodied* micro-volunteering'.

As has been alluded to, the specific geographies of this thesis were also noteworthy. The research was based within the city of Birmingham, UK, and, whilst the highly localised narratives of the volunteers highlighted several important perceptions of space within the city, they also revealed the importance of scale. Transnational linkages, often established through familial, cultural or religious ties to particular areas were particularly evident within the distinctive patterns of volunteering amongst young British Muslims. The participants of this study explained how much of the fundraising carried out on the streets of Birmingham was distributed across the global Islamic diaspora. The most common of these charitable transnational connections were to Syria, Palestine and Jordan, reflecting the geopolitical challenges effecting the Middle East. The idea of a 'local buzz' generating financial resources, disseminated through specific ethnic and religious 'global pipelines', mirror the model of knowledge mobilities from Bathelt et al. (2004) and offer a conceptually relevant way of understanding the distinctives spaces and scales of volunteering amongst young Birmingham-based Muslims.

The spatialities of volunteering in Birmingham varied from person to person; however, many commonalities still emerged. Many of the narratives of young Muslim volunteers were imbued with feelings of safety or vulnerability (Singleton's, 2007). This notion of 'safe and risky spaces', whereby people strategically map their public participation in accordance with their perceptions of safe spaces was an overt part of how the young Muslims in this research project experienced volunteering. The unique socio-spatial dimensions of Birmingham were saturated with feelings of 'home', 'comfort', 'safety' and 'familiarity', as well as 'exposure', 'vulnerability' and 'unbelonging' for young Muslims. These relationships between the young Muslims and the streets of Birmingham were not stationary, but were frequently negotiated through doing volunteering. Different places within the city therefore took on new meanings as the participants encountered these spaces in different contexts.

8.6.4 - Citizenship and Islam

The notion of citizenship cuts across themes of youth, volunteering and religion. This thesis has shed new light on these relationships between citizenship, youth and religion, exploring how young Muslims negotiate complex and often conflicting facets of religious, cultural and national identity. These negotiations of identity and belonging amongst the participants were embedded within distinctive social, cultural and religious structures; however, the ways in which the young Muslims understand their position within British society are continually shifting in relation to a myriad of intersections, encounters and vital conjunctures within their everyday lives.

The interconnections of volunteering and citizenship have been well mapped in recent years (Mills and Waite, 2017) with volunteering often being pedestalled as a pathway to becoming a model British citizen. However, this thesis has revealed that, for young Muslims, volunteering is not a performance that they undertake in order to 'fit in' with the depiction of the model British citizen. Instead, the narratives suggested a distinct apathy to the idea of volunteering as pathway to idealised Britishness. This image clashes with Zavos' (2015) research on Hindu volunteering. Zavos argues that Hindus have been depicted as model British citizens through their contributions to what the 'Big Society'. An equivalent of

this active effort to present Hindus as ideal British citizens has not materialised for the Muslim communities. The strained relationship between Islam and Britain in recent years has had a negative feedback loop. Pejorative media attention on Muslims has caused many people to associate Islam as incompatible with British culture. Muslims themselves have therefore often reduced the visibility of their community work in response. The climate of surveillance on these communities has further triggered Muslims to turn away from the active attempts to promote themselves as ideal British citizens as the Hindu communities have (Zavos, 2015). Whilst some of the participants of this research explained that presenting Islam in a positive light was a desirable effect of volunteering, the politicised rhetoric of citizenship and social cohesion has understandably failed to resonate with Muslim communities. Therefore, for many young Muslims, volunteering is far more of an expression of their religious identity than an active statement of citizenship.

8.6.5 - Concluding Comments

Overall, this thesis provides a holistic insight into the intersections of youth, volunteering and religion through the narratives of young Muslim volunteers in Birmingham. The contributions that this research makes to the wider literatures on each of these distinct, yet overlapping areas of research are manifold, ranging from new understandings of what volunteering looks like, to the importance of both transcendent and corporeal facets of religious capital for young Muslims. At its core, this thesis develops the literature on faith-based volunteering, revealing the complex subjectivities that young Muslims navigate during their transitions towards adulthood. Volunteering provides a creative lens through which the everyday narratives of young Muslims have been explored.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Building upon the discussions within the previous chapter (8), this chapter offers a succinct summary of the key empirical and conceptual contributions from this research project. This chapter will be divided into three sections: the first section (9.1) will offer some concluding comments on the contributions of this research project; the second section (9.2) will highlight some of the limitations of this research and offer some potential avenues for further research; and the final section (9.3) will provide some final reflections of this thesis.

9. 1 - Thesis concluding remarks

In summary, this thesis has showcased the narratives of young Muslim volunteers in Birmingham, examining the landscape of volunteering amongst young Muslims, the pathways young Muslims took to become volunteers, their experiences of volunteering and how these practices influenced their identities. In the process of analysing these narratives, this thesis has contributed to three overlapping bodies of literature: youth, volunteering and religion. This section offers a brief outline of some of the key intersectional motifs which cut across this thesis.

The role that gender played in shaping how young Muslims participated in voluntary activities, from the types of volunteering and the regularity of their engagement to their experiences and outcomes, was highly significant. These uneven gendered experiences of volunteering emerged from fear of abuse from non-Muslims (through targeted Islamophobia and racism) and from inside the 'Muslim community' (through cultural, religious and domestic expectations and responsibilities).

In relation to the cultural, religious and domestic responsibilities, the contrasting role of family was significant in sculpting the how young Muslims participated in voluntary activities. Whilst many families acted as facilitators of voluntary participation and actively engaged in volunteering as a family unit, others were restrictive and controlling, limiting the frequency or variety of volunteering that the participants of this project were involved in.

The precarious position of Islam within British society is continually shifting as each perceives the other through conflicting and diverging lenses. The importance,

then, in showcasing the everyday realities of young Muslims offers the potential to erode pejorative imaginations surrounding Muslim youth in Birmingham, and across the UK. By enlivening the narratives of volunteering amongst young Muslims from Birmingham (Smith et al., 2010), this thesis has the potential to expand public imaginations of who 'a volunteer' is. Whilst perceptions of volunteering being reflected within wider academic discourse on volunteering (through a focus on student volunteering and volunteering amongst older people), this thesis offers a counter-hegemonic depiction of the 'everyday volunteer'.

9.2 – Limitations of this Study

The research within this thesis has revealed many points of interest worthy of further investigation. The scope of this project, though widely encompassing in the range of volunteering that it examined, is relatively limited in its geographical area. Using Birmingham as a case study site was highly relevant with regard to its socio-cultural position within British imaginations. Replicating this research across other UK cities, or even contrasting this research within rural locations could yield some interesting comparisons.

One key limitation of the research within this thesis was that, in focusing specifically upon young Muslims who are actively engaged in volunteering, the experiences of individuals who are not volunteers are noticeably absent. Therefore, whilst some of the barriers to volunteering are captured within the narratives of the young Muslim volunteers, a more in-depth look at the Muslims who slip through the net could provide some vital information for potentially engaging young Muslims in voluntary action. A lack of opportunities; restrictions from family or community; a fear of discrimination; or even a lack of interest could limit who becomes involved.

The specific focus upon *young* Muslim volunteers produced a thought-provoking set of narratives, outlining some of the vital conjunctures that shaped the lives and lifecourses of these young people. Correspondingly, an alternative avenue of future research could shed light on the landscape of volunteering amongst Muslims of different ages. Research on intergenerationalities illuminated the ways in which intergenerational interactions can shape the lifecourses of people across all ages (Hopkins and Pain, 2007) and a specific focus on these relations can

shape the participation of people across different stages of the life course could yield interesting contributions to the study of volunteering and intergenerationality (Hogg, 2016).

Postsecular literature on faith based volunteering has created a rich tapestry of research which encompasses the experiences of the recipients of volunteering (Cloke et al., 2005; Williams 2015); however, the outcomes of volunteering amongst those who are volunteered upon are not encapsulated within this research project. A possible direction of further research into faith based volunteering amongst young Muslims could therefore consider the products of charity work and volunteering from the perspective of the receivers. Interviews with the heads of Muslim charities and voluntary organisations could provide insights into the targeting of aid in conjunction with research with the recipients of such aid could be carried out in order to gain perspectives from the opposite end of voluntary action.

Diversifying the literature on volunteering through the study of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, or other religious minorities could also take this research arena to new and exciting places. As this thesis has regularly noted, the study of not only faith based volunteering, but religion in general, has primarily been concerned with Christian and Islamic perspectives. Applying the lens of a less explored religion could offer new understandings and appreciations of the diverse landscape of volunteering in the UK (Kong, 2010).

These proposed avenues for further research within this field are far from comprehensive. The magnitude and diversity of volunteering, charity work and social participation amongst young British Muslims offers a myriad of opportunities for innovative and pertinent research directions. The uneven and shifting relationship between Islam and British society continue to amplify the relevance of such research projects within contemporary social, cultural and religious contexts across the UK.

9.3 - Final reflections

The introductory chapter of this thesis cited Gale's (2007) call for a diversification of research on Islam within the discipline of geography. A decade after Gale's (2007) overview of the 'Geographies of Islam', there remains an intense socio-

political interest in the Islamic communities of Britain. With the on-going war on terror seeming to have no end in sight; the continued British military involvement in the Middle East; and the intensity of the current refugee crisis dividing opinions within politics and society, bilateral understandings between Muslim and Western cultures are paramount. Whilst neither the 'Muslim community' nor the 'British community' are homogenous entities (Peach, 2006), intense and honest dialogues between these two diverse groups are essential in breaking down enmity (Phillips, 2006; 2009). The importance, then, in understanding how young Muslims can be positively engaged in British society goes beyond a purely academic interest. Continued research into the motivations, facilitators and barriers for young Muslims becoming actively involved within British society, whether that be through volunteering, charity, or a host of other actions, is imperative in contemporary British society. Indeed, this thesis is not suggesting that volunteering is a panacea to the wider social, economic or political issues in British society, or that it should be compulsory for all young people; however, volunteering is often framed as a way to engage and participate in civil society and therefore barriers to this, or other forms of participation should be examined, and the existing voluntary work of young Muslims brought into the spotlight. This research has shown that whilst there are many imperfections and discriminations within voluntary activities of young British Muslims, these actions can, in the right circumstances, erode ignorance and misunderstandings of Islam. These voluntary activities of young people, and of a religious minority, should be part of the wider national discourse of voluntary action, both in disciplinary work and in society's understanding more broadly.

Appendix 1: Example Questionnaire

Youth Volunteering in Muslim Communities in Britain

I am a PhD student from the Department of Geography at Loughborough University exploring youth volunteering in Muslim communities in Britain. **Please only complete the questionnaire if you are between the ages of 18 to 25.** Your answers will help the researcher find out about the motivations and experiences of young Muslim volunteers. Your information will be kept **anonymous and confidential**.

About your volunteering practices

1. Do you engage in any form of voluntary work (Please tick one answer)

Yes No (Go to question 7) Don't know

2. At what age did you start volunteering?

0-5 years 6-11 years 12-17 years 18-23 years 24+ years

3. Which types of volunteering have you participated in and how did you hear about those opportunities? (If none apply, please leave row blank)

	Through your College/ University	Through your Mosque/ Place of worship	Through a Voluntary group/ club scheme	By yourself	With your family	With your friends	Other
Fundraising or sponsored event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donated money/ alms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving time to help a charity/cause	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked to help improve local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campaigning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tutored, coached or mentored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visited or cared for people who weren't relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please state any formal voluntary organisation(s) or group(s) that you are involved with:

5. On average, how often do you get involved in different types of volunteering?

	Everyday	Most days	Once a week	Once a month	Less than once a month	Never
Fundraising or sponsored event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Donated money/ alms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving time to help a charity/cause	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked to help improve local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campaigning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tutored, coached or mentored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visited or cared for people who weren't relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your views on faith-based volunteering

6. What motivates you to get involved in volunteering? (Please rank from 1 to 8, with 1 being most the important)

Creating a sense of community spirit	Family duty	
Raising money for a good cause	Religious/moral responsibility	
Helping those in need	Increased employability	
Meeting up with friends	Meeting new people	

7. What has stopped you from getting involved in volunteering? (Please rank from 1 to 8, with 1 being most the important)

No interest in volunteering	Work commitments	
Feeling your contribution will not help	Domestic responsibility/ family duty	
School/university work commitments	Worried about meeting new people	
Prefer to meet up with friends	Commitment to other clubs/societies	

8. Please tick to show the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(a) Faith-based volunteering can help break down social barriers in British society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Community volunteering is an important part of being a good Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Volunteering to help out fellow Muslims is the most important type of volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Please explain your answer to each of the statements in the previous question

	Please Explain
(a) Faith-based volunteering can help break down social barriers in British society	
(b) Community volunteering is an important part of being a good Muslim	
(c) Volunteering to help out fellow Muslims is the most important type of volunteering	

10. Are there any forms of volunteering that you would not want to get involved in? Why?

About you

11. What is your gender?

- Male Female

12. What is your age?

Please specify.....

13. Which language(s) are commonly spoken in your home? (Please tick all that apply)

- English Arabic Punjabi Pothwari Urdu Hindi Gujarati Bengali
 Sylheti Other(s) please specify all

14. What is your ethnic group? (Please tick one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: British | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian: Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group:
Please specify: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian: Chinese | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black: Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian: Other | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black: African | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: Black | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian: Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: Asian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian: Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab | |

15. How would you describe your religious denomination?

- Sunni Shia Other Please specify.....

16. What is your marital status?

- Single Engaged to be married Married Separated

17. Thinking about the main wage earner in your household are they:

- No one in paid work
- Employee → How many people work for the employer? 1 to 24 25 or more
→ Do you (they) supervise other people? Yes No
- Self-employed with employees
→ How many people do you employ? 1 to 24 25 or more
→ Do you (they) supervise other people? Yes No
- Self-employed /freelance without employees

18. Which best describes the sort of work the main wage earner does (tick one box):

- Routine manual & service:** HGV/van/taxi driver, cleaner, labourer, waiter, bar staff, porter
- Semi-routine manual & service:** postal worker, machine operative, security guard, catering, assistant, receptionist, sales assistant, caretaker
- Technical & craft:** mechanic, train driver, electrician, plumber, gardener
- Clerical & intermediate:** secretary, office worker, nursery nurse, call centre agent
- Middle or junior managers:** office manager, bank manager, publican, retail manager
- Senior managers or administrators:** finance manager, chief executive
- Modern professional:** teacher, nurse, social worker, artist, musician
- Traditional professional:** accountant, solicitor, scientist, civil engineer, medical practitioner

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you would be happy to discuss your experiences of volunteering in an interview then please leave your contact details below. This could be one-to-one, or with a chaperone/friend if you prefer.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

If you have any questions about the research that is being done, or wish to speak to the researcher directly, please contact Timothy Fewtrell at:

+44(0)1509 222797

T.Fewtrell@lboro.ac.uk

Room NN.1.34, Martin Hall building, East Park, Loughborough University

Appendix 2: Interview Structure

Interview Structure:

This document gives an outline for an interview structure with young Muslim volunteers. The questions within this outlined structure each relate to a specific aspect of the four research questions. The structure is not, however, set in stone; it will develop and evolve in relation to the unique answers of the individual participants.

1. What are the pathways that young Muslims take into volunteering?

- Can you tell me how you first got involved in volunteering?
- How long have you been involved in volunteering?
- How regularly do you volunteer in your local community?
- What motivates you to get involved in volunteering?
- Has anything stopped you getting involved in volunteering/limited the amount you can do?

Family:

- Do your family also volunteer?
- Do they support/encourage you in your voluntary work?
- Do you volunteer with your family?

Friends:

- Do your friends also volunteer?
- Do they support/encourage you in your voluntary work?
- Do you volunteer with your friends?

Work/other:

- Do you feel that volunteering helps your future employability (e.g. transferable skills, CV etc)?
- Are there other benefits that you think that volunteering can have?

Religion:

- Is any of your voluntary work organised by your mosque or voluntary foundation?
- What role does your Islamic faith play within your volunteering practices?

2. What experiences do young Muslims have of volunteering?

- What kind of voluntary work do you like to get involved in? Why?
- Do you enjoy volunteering in your community?
- What are the challenges of volunteering in your local community?
- Do you get to meet people through volunteering that you might not have otherwise?

- Do you feel you have gained anything or learnt anything from your experiences of volunteering?
- Does your Islamic identity affect your volunteering practices?
- Are there types of volunteering that you think are more important than others?

3. How do young Muslim volunteers contribute to local society and community?

- What do you hope to achieve through volunteering?
- Do you think volunteering helps bring together different groups in your community?
- How does the voluntary work you do benefit the local community?
- Is your faith something that you discuss with people in the local community?

4. How does faith-based volunteering shape the identities of young British Muslims?

Self and Society

- What role does volunteering play in your life?
- Does voluntary work impact the way you see yourself?
- Does voluntary work change the way you see others?
- Does community volunteering influence the way you think about society?

Self and Religion

- Do you think volunteering is an important part of being a Muslim?
- Does volunteering affect your relationship with Islam?

Appendix 3: Socio-Economic Areas of the Mosques

Ward	Economically inactive population (%)	Population with No qualifications (%)	Deprivation*	Percentage of population who are Muslim	Number of Mosques selected
Aston	44	28	85	54	2
Bordesley Green	44	32	88	73.9	1
Hodge Hill	35	28	41	41.5	1
Ladywood	28	10	36	11.6	2
Lozells and East Handsworth	39	29	90	48.9	1
Moseley and King's Heath	24	12	24	21.7	1
Nechells	43	24	82	43.5	3
Soho	37	26	62	29.4	1
South Yardley	30	26	50	33.6	2
Sparkbrook	47	31	93	70.2	2
Springfield	40	26	40	61.2	3
Washwood Heath	46	36	94	77.3	1
Birmingham	31	21	40	21.8	20
Source: 2011 Census, Crown Copyright/BCC					
Source: Index of Deprivation 2010/Economic Research & Policy					
more than twice city average					
more than city average					
equal to city average					
Below city average					
<p>*Deprivation: (Percentage of the ward population in the 10% most deprived SOAs in England)</p> <p>This measure describes the district as a whole and is calculated by averaging the score for each SOA, weighted for its population. Using this measure Birmingham ranks as the 9th most deprived out of the 354 authorities in England.</p> <p>Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a set of geographical areas developed following the 2001 census, initially to facilitate the calculation of the Indices of Deprivation 2004 and subsequently for a range of additional Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS).</p>					

Youth Volunteering in Muslim Communities in Britain

The research

The aim of this study is to examine youth volunteering in Muslim communities in Britain. This study will investigate the motivations and experiences of young Muslim volunteers, the benefits that young volunteers gain, and how faith-based volunteering contributes to local communities.

The investigators

Mr Tim Fewtrell (Main Investigator)

Department of Geography, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU

t.fewtrell@lboro.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1509 222794

I am a PhD student in Human Geography from Loughborough University. My research interests stem from a desire to engage with issues of social justice, youth volunteering and give a voice to young people who might otherwise be overlooked with research.

This research project is funded and supported by Loughborough University. If you have any further questions please contact Tim Fewtrell.

Your insights

The study will involve asking questions relating to your own experiences about volunteering. The interview will take place in a location chosen by the participant. A chaperone will also be organised at the participant's request. The interviews will last about 1 hour and I will ask a range of questions relating to youth volunteering. I am interested in how you got involved in volunteering, the experiences you have had and how you think volunteering has contributed to local communities. There are no right or wrong answers and there is nothing you need to prepare beforehand. I want to use your views to make sure I have covered all the relevant issues on this topic. I record interviews to ensure all the information you give me is documented.

Deciding to be involved and choosing to withdraw from the study

Yes. After you have read this information and asked any questions you may have, I will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form, however if at any time, before, during or after the sessions you wish to withdraw from the study please just contact the main investigator. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing. Please keep in mind however, that once the results of the study have been submitted (expected to be by October 2017), it will not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research.

Confidentiality

The names of participants, locations and other sensitive information will be anonymised. I may wish to use short quotes from you to illustrate the point you've made, but these will be anonymised to remove any identifying information and a pseudonym will be used.

All data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Loughborough University policy. Audio recordings from the interviews will be transcribed and stored on a secure University server. The information will be treated in strict confidence and remain confidential to the researchers of the study. The information will be stored for five years after the end date of the project (October 2017).

Research conduct

This study has been granted ethical approval by Loughborough University. It is very important to me that research participants are happy with the way research has been conducted. If you are not happy with any part of the process please do not hesitate to contact Tim Fewtrell (t.fewtrell@lboro.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can contact my supervisors, Professor Sarah Holloway (s.l.holloway@lboro.ac.uk) or Dr Sarah Mills (S.Mills@lboro.ac.uk).

The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which is available online at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice/>.

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form



Youth Volunteering in Muslim Communities in Britain

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee. Yes No

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. Yes No

I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation. Yes No

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study. Yes No

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing. Yes No

I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others. Yes No

I agree to participate in this study. Yes No

Your name _____

Your signature _____

Signature of investigator _____

Date _____

Appendix 6: List of Participants

	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Socio-economic Classification	Religious Conservatism	Higher Education
1	Kamran	25	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	Completed Higher Education
2	Saskia	19	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
3	Tariq	19	Male	Middle	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
4	Raya	25	Female	Higher	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
5	Mo	18	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
6	Sadiq	19	Male	Middle	Conservative	In Higher Education
7	Fatima	18	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
8	Badriyyah	21	Female	Higher	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
9	Nadin	18	Female	Lower	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
10	Aaron	19	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
11	Adil	20	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
12	Sammi	24	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
13	Hassan	22	Male	Middle	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
14	Kara	18	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
15	Zaida	20	Female	Middle	Conservative	Completed Higher

						Education
16	Faas	19	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
17	Tamar	21	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	Completed Higher Education
18	Immo	24	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
19	Rohan	18	Male	Middle	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
20	Teejay	19	Male	Higher	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
21	Rammir	20	Male	Lower	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
22	Shabaz	22	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
23	Kali	18	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
24	Zahra	21	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
25	Yasmin	20	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
26	Taalaa	20	Female	Lower	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
27	Kazim	25	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
28	Hirani	21	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
29	Dillion	20	Male	Lower	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
30	Maka	19	Male	Middle	Conservative	In Higher Education
31	Anurada	24	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	Completed Higher Education

32	Veeda	18	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
33	Mira	19	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
34	Ailsa	19	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
35	Lana	19	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
36	Junaid	18	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
37	Darmien	24	Male	Lower	Conservative	Not in Higher Education
38	Nyla	18	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
39	Barni	18	Male	Middle	Conservative	In Higher Education
40	Hussein	19	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	In Higher Education
41	Sefi	23	Female	Higher	Non-Conservative	Completed Higher Education
42	Layla	24	Female	Lower	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
43	Abdulla	21	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
44	Emre	25	Male	Middle	Non-Conservative	Completed Higher Education
45	Ushna	18	Female	Middle	Non-Conservative	Not in Higher Education
	Breakdown		24 male, 21 female	4 Higher, 24 middle, 17 lower	9 conservative, 36 non-conservative	20 NiHE, 6 CHE, 19 IHE

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