

**From Big Brother to terrorism;  
understanding people's perceptions of  
surveillance, privacy and Islam**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology.

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I declare that this work was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of London. I declare that this submission is my own work, and to the best of my knowledge does not represent the works of others, published or unpublished, except where duly acknowledged in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted for a higher degree at another university or institution.

Signed:

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## Abstract

Freedom of expression has a critical role in modern democracies and consequently the influence of social media on the expression of national and political identities is growing. In light of recent revelations regarding the extent of surveillance, issues of privacy have come to the forefront of attention. In the first exploratory study using interpretive phenomenological analysis of individual interviews, British citizens' views on surveillance and its different domains, their thoughts, beliefs and concerns about privacy in general and online were explored. Trust in the British Government, its services and also in online companies (e.g., Google) in regard to surveillance was also investigated. Deriving from knowledge gained from *Study 1*, *Study 2* was designed using a quantitative approach. Predictors of both online and Facebook privacy concerns were assessed, such as personality traits, self-esteem, and attitudes towards openness and trust. In another quantitative study, the relationship between British identity and system justification, perceived need, perceived benefits, and concerns about government surveillance were examined (*Study 3*). Recent terrorist events provided the opportunity to investigate individuals' realistic and symbolic threat perceptions in the aftermath of the attacks as well as their support or rejection of surveillance, and attitudes towards Islam. In *Study 4*, in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris attacks, using thematic analysis of an online forum discussion, people's attitudes towards the proposed implementation of more invasive surveillance measures by the British Government were investigated. Finally, in *Study 5*, content analysis of tweets after the 2015 Westminster attack explored people's attitudes towards Islam on Twitter and network analysis was utilised to identify and gain insight into groups within the network structure. The body of work promotes a new way to conceptualise attitudes toward surveillance and privacy that recognizes how they can intertwine with social identity and threat perceptions in complex and sometimes unexpected ways.

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# 1. Introduction

Surveillance, as well as the issues surrounding privacy and civil liberties are increasingly prevalent in modern societies. Due to the technological advancements beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mass surveillance has been more and more integrated into everyday life and the ubiquitous nature of surveillance has become normalised. The rationale for this thesis was to explore the layperson's understanding of freedom, citizenship and national identity as manifested in cyberspace, deploying social psychological theories. Privacy concerns and trust in institutions were amongst our themes we aimed to explore. The research narrated in this thesis was conducted during the time between 2015 and 2018. However, recent events have not only changed the landscape of UK democracy but also largely shaped the development and execution of the rationale and extended its focus. The unfortunate recent terrorist events (Paris attacks in 2015 and Westminster attack in 2017) have provided us with opportunities to investigate lay perceptions of surveillance and attitudes towards Islam in the context of such events as expressed in cyberspace. Through interviews, attitude surveys and thematic analysis of cyberspace communications within the UK, this thesis utilised qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how surveillance, privacy, trust, British national identity, and Islam related post-terrorist attack attitudes are constructed and manifested at a psychological level on mediums such as Twitter, Facebook and online forums.

This thesis comprises five empirical studies utilising different methodologies; two qualitative, two quantitative and one mixed method approach. The broad linking theme of these studies is the manifestation of social constructions in cyberspace.

Starting with a rather large focus, in Study 1 (*Chapter 3*) through the analysis of twenty one-to-one interviews, I explore the views of British young adults on surveillance using inductive thematic analysis. Based on the identified themes of this study, I shape the narrative and rationale for the rest of the thesis and design upcoming studies with a narrower focus. This research also provides a guideline as to which topics I will investigate throughout this thesis.

The privacy paradox refers to the phenomenon that has been highlighted in numerous studies examining online behaviour, whereby people claim to be concerned about their privacy, yet very little is done to safeguard their personal data. While in general this thesis focuses on social processes and social identity constructions, I believe in order to investigate privacy concerns and the paradoxical relationship between disclosing personal data and worrying about privacy, individual differences have to be understood and appreciated. As certain personality dispositions have been shown to relate to online information privacy concerns, I decided to measure people's personality traits (Big 5) and their privacy concerns in regard to a specific online medium – which to my understanding has not been investigated previously. Being the most popular social networking site, I focus on concerns about information privacy on Facebook. Furthermore, cost-benefit analysis has been widely applied to explain online information sharing behaviour, with some suggesting that trust has a mediating effect. People show a greater propensity to enter into an exchange relationship if costs are outweighed by the benefits; trust can reduce cost perception. Intrigued by these findings, I also measure people's propensity to trust others in general and the trust they place in Facebook as well as their attitudes towards being open in sharing personal information. This quantitative study (*Chapter 4*) utilises an online attitude survey to explore the association between privacy concerns on Facebook and personality dimensions in addition to different measures of trust as well to discover whether any of these measures predict such concerns.

In Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) I return to tackling the issues surrounding surveillance, focusing on measures imposed by the British Government. It has been argued that the UK is the embodiment of a surveillance society, mainly as a result of the extensive surveillance practices implemented across the country and which ultimately leads to the normalisation of such measures. Research over the past few decades has reported diverse public opinions on surveillance, largely influenced by socio-political events. For example, people tend to express more positive attitudes towards surveillance after terrorist events – 9/11 being the most significant example

– for national security reasons. However, views were hugely shifted, and concerns amplified as a result of the 2013 revelations by Edward Snowden about the extraordinary scope of mass surveillance by the NSA and GCHQ. My interest in these events and their subsequent effects on public perceptions led to the initiation of my PhD studies and sparked an interest in understanding surveillance perceptions through the lens of psychology. The role of shared social identity with the source of surveillance in surveillance acceptance has been investigated previously, however the effect of national identity specifically has not been explored. Surveillance measures are often framed and justified by governments to serve national security, which ultimately is a function served by national identity. Therefore, in Study 3, a quantitative approach is adopted in order to measure the effect of British national identity on three different facets of surveillance perceptions; need, benefit and concern, by using a priming manipulation. Furthermore, I predict that British national identity will be positively related to perceived need for and perceived benefit of government surveillance, but will negatively relate to concern about it.

As mentioned previously, various events occurred during the conduct of this thesis that not only shaped modern history but also my research narrative. A series of co-ordinated terrorist attacks took place in Paris on 13 November 2015 leading to the death and injury of hundreds. As a result of the attack – and the Charlie Hebdo shooting that occurred in January the same year – the British Government started to fast-track the passing of the Surveillance Law Investigatory Powers Act (nicknamed the Snoopers’ Charter) to implement stricter surveillance measures. However unfortunate, these events provided a uniquely suitable climate for the conduct of Study 4 (*Chapter 6*). In order to gain in-depth insight into public constructions of surveillance and support or opposition for the implementation of stricter measures, I conducted qualitative thematic analysis on an organically occurring forum discussion between internet forum members. Research has previously suggested that surveillance acceptance can be influenced by trust (in the institutions imposing it, in this context, the Government), perception of threat and perception of how effective the measures are. In this study I examine whether there

is evidence for the emergence of such factors in the forum discussion, in addition to monitoring the conversation for other potential themes.

Throughout the thesis I investigated people's constructions of surveillance (mostly government related) and the perception of threat of terrorism turned out to be a reoccurring notion, hugely intertwined with surveillance perceptions. As mentioned above, the 2015 Paris attacks provided a uniquely suitable setting for the previous qualitative study (Study 4; *Chapter 6*) and terrorist events in Europe throughout the design and writing of this thesis increased in frequency (e.g., in 2016; Nice attack, Berlin attack, Brussels bombings etc.). While these attacks occurred across Europe, the first terrorist attack in the UK since 7/7 happened on 22 March 2017 when a British lone offender drove his car into pedestrians on Westminster bridge and stabbed an unarmed police officer. Inspired by current events, in addition to dialogues and patterns discovered in previous studies of this thesis (Study 1, *Chapter 3*; Study 4, *Chapter 6*), the narrative of my research took a strong but rational turn towards an Islam related focus. The manifestation of Islamophobia and negative attitudes towards Islam has been demonstrated to be increasingly widespread in the West since 9/11. Furthermore, it has been shown that Twitter has become a popular online platform for online hate and Islamophobia. In addition, the majority of social science research on Islamophobia explores negative thinking about Islam and neglects the counter-discourses which seek to defend Islam.

Similarly to Study 4 (*Chapter 6*), the Westminster attack provided a suitable climate to conduct Study 5 (*Chapter 7*) to explore people's views and perceptions of Islam after a terrorist attack committed by a Muslim perpetrator, as manifested on Twitter in the aftermath of the attack. In this mixed method study I classify tweets in terms of their sentiment regarding Islam, and perform an in-depth content analysis of such tweets to identify themes, arguments and constructions of nation, Islam, Muslims and terrorism. Twitter has been shown to be an excellent platform to study the expression of social identity and social processes on a large-scale network. Therefore, as a complement to qualitative analyses, a quantitative network analysis is also conducted to gain insight into ingroup following, the social identities of the

groups and their following behaviour. Study 5 (*Chapter 7*) aimed to present a unique perspective to understanding views on Islam and following behaviour on Twitter post-terrorist attack by the application of mixed methods and deployment of social psychological theories.

Our identity is a construct which consists of the way in which we see ourselves and our position in society as a whole and is mediated via our interactions with other people (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 2002). Identity can be understood as a continuum encompassing individual differentiators, as well as our role in society, as is defined by our interactions within our community. Another way in which to understand identity, is the character of the personal attributes ascribed to an individual such as gender, ethnicity, or political affiliation. Our identity is a powerful motivator behind the way we behave, what we believe and who we associate with. Considering the important role identity plays in who we interact with and how we express ourselves, it may be useful to consider the ways in which communication within a digital context can shape identity processes.

Due to a set of social and technical elements, communication in online environments has the potential to affect identity. Online communication often masks identity cues and so while it has been found that people are keen to re-create their offline selves online, facets of self are often edited to curate a desired impression (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Facets of self can be misrepresented, withheld or shared and so identity is primarily typed into being (Sundén, 2003). The reduced/absence of identity cues and asynchronicity in online communications facilitates selective self-presentation (Walther, 1996) and the formation of a networked self (Papacharissi, 2012). Online users transmit cues they deem desirable by constructing messages portraying themselves in a preferential light and highlighting desirable characteristics so as to evoke preferential reactions (Walther, 2011). These processes therefore function at both the individual and social level; individuals make declarations about their identity which need to be recognised by other people (Buckingham, 2008). By defining their identity, individuals attempt to propound their individuality but also to join with others and

fit in within their chosen community. Identity formation therefore involves the process of stereotyping, allowing individuals to distinguish between self, group members and others. The performance of the self is a way in which to express the self and to manage social relations (Papacharissi, 2012). With the absence of identity cues in online communication, the presentation of a selective self-presented network self allows for the assertion of an individual and group identity (Papacharissi, 2012). Selective self-presentation can be carried out by an individual in a multitude of ways. A study has found the way in which teenagers construct their identities online develops as they age, with younger teenagers placing emphasis on the aesthetic parts of their profiles, while older teenagers focus more on their social connections with others (Livingstone, 2008).

Social media offers many, complex, interconnected ways to exhibit ourselves, communicate and connect with others; providing us new ways to construct and express our identity (Miller, 2013). However, online social communication has become inculcated into our daily lives and it is now clear it forms part of our communicative ecology. Our behaviour online is not merely a reflection of our selves offline, but a facet of ourselves as a whole and interactions online are as real as our offline interactions. Although online and offline performances differ due to the aforementioned affordances (reduced identity cues, asynchronicity, selective self-presentation), many individuals using social media are in communication with people they know offline, potentially reducing the opportunity for identity exploration and modification (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Many studies have concluded that we need to move away from overly simplistic arguments based on dualism between online and offline communication and towards a more contextualised, culturally contingent understanding of individual identity as a construct/s that encompasses our online and offline identities (Livingstone, 2008; Miller, 2013; Hampton & Wellman, 2003; Baym, 2010).

Lieberman and Schroeder (2020) proposed four structural ways in which online text-based communication diverges from offline communication; reduced number of nonverbal cues, increased anonymity, increased opportunity to form and bolster



ties, and a greater potential for wider dissemination of information. These structural changes can alter the way people behave in an online setting. The absence of non-verbal cues can reduce people's ability to understand the communicator's thoughts and feelings (increasing the possibility for miscommunication) (Hall & Mast, 2007) and the lack of vocals can reduce feelings of social connection, when compared to offline communication (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2020). Reading people's comments and opinions, compared to hearing them casts the communicator as less mentally capable (Schroeder & Epley, 2015), thus potentially dehumanising them (Waytz, Schroeder, & Epley, 2014). Increased anonymity can result in disinhibition and aggression, potentially as a result of decreased accountability (Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, 1983). Thus, online environments can encourage such behaviours, and studies have suggested that social media sites can incite moral outrage and social conflict (Crocket, 2017). Due to an increased capability to form ties with others online, homophily becomes a larger driver of whether an individual reaches out to another, when compared to offline communication (Huber & Malhotra, 2017). This can lead to 'filter bubbles' and intellectual isolation (Pariser, 2011). The shift from offline to online communication has therefore fundamentally altered the ways people socialise and interact with one another, and casts a question mark on the impact digital technology has on human well-being. These considerations are most pertinent in Chapter 6 and 7.

This thesis offers a unique and fresh perspective on people's understanding and meaning making about some of the most pressing issues of modern societies; surveillance, privacy, trust, threat of terrorism and Islamophobia. These timely issues are addressed through empirical research that deploys a range of varied qualitative and quantitative methodologies, some of which (e.g., network analysis of Twitter data) are unusual within (social) psychology. The body of work highlights new ways to understand lay perceptions of surveillance and privacy, showing how these perceptions intertwine with the juxtaposition of competing constructions of national identity, as well as how they can dovetail with competing social constructions of Islam and the threat of terrorism. Additionally, novel methodological and theoretical insights are gained into the manifestation of

Islamophobic prejudice in online environments. An eclectic theoretical approach evolves out of this work that draws upon theories as diverse as Billig's banal nationalism, Social Identity Theory, Intergroup Threat Theory, and research on personality and support for surveillance. After five varied empirical studies, it emerges that lay beliefs about surveillance and privacy in the UK context are indelibly linked to current terror events and to manifestations of British national identity. The novelty of the work lies in the focus on the UK context, the theoretical diversity adopted, the mixed methods approach, and the inclusion of both offline and internet studies.

## **2. Methodology**

Mixed methods research is an approach that intends to provide a framework for combining both qualitative and quantitative methods (Almeida, 2018; Aramo-Immonen, 2011). For further discussion on mixed methods research, please see *Section 2.5.3*.

This thesis deployed a mixed methods approach, taking advantage of a range of data collection methodologies and analysis techniques, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. These methods are described and evaluated below, and further detail provided in the respective chapters of the thesis that present each empirical study.

### **2.1 Ethical Approvals**

Ethical approvals were obtained prior to the conduct of studies requiring participants. More specifically, for Study 1 (Chapter 3) I submitted an ethics approval with my supervisor, and it was granted by the Departmental Ethics Committee (DEC) in November 2015. The process involved the completion of an online form – including the name of researchers, duration of the project, funder etc. –, a twelve-point checklist in line with the British Psychological Society’s guidelines for ethical practices, and the submission consent form, interview questions and debrief sheet.

As the DEC ceased to exist as of 1st January 2016, ethics applications for Study 2 (Chapter 4) and 3 (Chapter 5) were submitted to the College Ethics Committee in accordance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Accompanied by my supervisor, I completed online self assessment forms for both studies that required information regarding the project, academic supervisor, student, email address, project title, funder and six yes/no questions identifying any issues of ethical concern. After submission, the system confirmed that no further action was needed, and the ‘Ethics Self Assessment’ forms were obtained in March 2016 for Study 2 (Chapter 4) and in August 2016 for Study 3 (Chapter 5).

Study 4 (Chapter 6) and 5 (Chapter 7) relied on analysis of publicly available online data. Both studies were internet-mediated projects involving non-reactive methods whereby data was collected unobtrusively and was derived from sources of information which were not created within an explicit research context (Hewson, 2008). In study 4 (Chapter 6) I analysed ‘found text’ in an online discussion forum and registration for the forum members on the forum was a prerequisite to read and contribute to the discussions. Although forum members were not aware that their conversation constituted the basis for my analysis (lack of informed consent, debrief), the Terms and Conditions of the website stated that all user-posted content can be used by users. Furthermore, there seemed to be a general consensus regarding online data use, suggesting that by signing up for social media sites, people have already consented for their contributions to be used, analysed and published (Shaw, 2008). I applied the same rationale to Study 5 (Chapter 7) where publicly available tweets of Twitter users were downloaded and analysed. Nevertheless, the anonymity of all users whose content we drew upon was maintained by removing real usernames and twitter account names. Although there are ongoing debates about ethics and internet research, it could be argued that our discussion forum and Twitter study do not constitute research with human participants in the traditional sense, but rather, are more akin to archival or secondary analysis. The British Psychological Society Ethics Guidelines for Internet Mediated Research (Hewson & Buchanan, 2013) suggests that where no reasonable expectation of privacy is in place, it should be acceptable to not have an informed consent process. Furthermore, my supervisor was in direct correspondence with the Chair of the B.P.S. Ethics Committee, who confirmed our interpretation of B.P.S. guidance on this matter. Key issues are maintaining the anonymity, dignity and integrity of participants and not causing them harm. I believe I have adhered to these standards in the conduct of the internet research reported herein – we anonymised any reported content and note that Twitter users can be expected to understand that their tweets are in the public domain. In the case of the online football forum we used, while registration was required, this was open to any member of the public, and as such I would argue that content posted to the

forum would be perceived by the content authors as essentially in the public domain. In conclusion, I believe that the empirical work reported in this thesis was conducted in full accordance with the published ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society at the time, and this is the standard requirement for ethical research required by the Psychology Department at Royal Holloway.

## **2.2 Participants**

Study 1 (*Chapter 3*), 2 (*Chapter 4*), and 3 (*Chapter 5*) required participant recruitment which I did personally from my offline and online social network, with the sample therefore being one of convenience, relying on initial personal contacts but then widened out through snowball sampling beyond my immediate circle of acquaintances. Being British was a prerequisite of Study 1; where I conducted twenty face-to-face interviews, so recruitment took only a day, and of Study 3; where recruitment took months as I was aiming for a larger sample size ( $N = 214$ ). The need for a desired sample size ( $N = 191$ ) was determined by conducting an a-priori power analysis using G\*Power in order to detect a small to medium effect.

Since UK nationality was not an inclusion criterion for Study 2 (*Chapter 4*), recruitment took significantly less time. Furthermore, in the final stage of data collection I used an online crowdsourcing service (CrowdFlower) for 10% of the data collection. The sample ( $N = 246$ ) in this study was diverse, consisting of different nationalities. It is important to note that participants providing largely incomplete responses ( $n = 24$ ) were excluded from the analysis, and most of those participants were recruited from CrowdFlower. In addition, CrowdFlower had been criticised for its quality and reliability due to intentional or unintentional inaccuracies by workers (Kittur, Chi, & Suh, 2008). As a result, I decided not to use a crowdsourcing service in subsequent studies (Study 3; *Chapter 5*).

As a weakness, I highlight that in all three studies that required sample recruitment, most of my participants held an undergraduate or even postgraduate degree, representing a highly educated demographic. Therefore, I could argue that the samples utilised in these studies were not necessarily representative of the general

population, although this is not unusual in much of social psychology. However, since the aim of the work was not to map population attitudes *per se*, but instead to delve deeper into the relationships between attitudes and other variables (such as personality and social identity), and also to uncover the arguments used to derive those attitudes, I would argue that the lack of a truly representative sample (e.g., of UK citizens) is not a major flaw, especially given the resources available for the purposes of a PhD (buying attitude questions on large probability sample surveys from survey companies such as MORI is very expensive).

Participant recruitment *per se* did not take place in Study 4 (*Chapter 6*) and 5 (*Chapter 7*), as both studies relied on analysis of online data. For more information regarding ethics, please see *Section 2.2*.

A potential weakness of utilising online public data is the lack of any demographic information linked to individual users, unless provided in user biographies. Both in the online forum (Study 4; *Chapter 6*) and on Twitter (Study 5; *Chapter 7*) participants are identified with an alias (fake username) and no specific demographic information is known about our participants. While potentially constraining, I would argue that this is mitigated by the benefit of being able to access real-world discourse in cyberspace, unconstrained by the demand characteristics and socially desirable responding that can plague experimental and survey research.

## **2.3 Materials and Measures**

Study 2 and Study 3 in this thesis measured outcomes via self-report scales in the form of Likert scale responses. Both studies were constructed using Qualtrics Survey Software.

In Study 2 (*Chapter 4*), the questionnaires employed were taken from other studies; Facebook intensity scale (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007), Mini IPIP measuring the Big Five personality dimension (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006), propensity to trust scale (Evans & Revelle, 2008), trust in Facebook

(Shu & Chuang, 2011), self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), attitude towards openness (Mckinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012). Only one questionnaire was modified to measure information privacy concerns specifically on Facebook instead of ‘Internet Users’ Information Privacy Concerns’ (Malhotra, Kim, & Agarwal, 2004).

In Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) the questionnaires employed were taken from other studies; British national identity scale (Cinnirella & Hamilton, 2007); perceived need for government surveillance scale (Dinev, Hart, & Mullen, 2008); concerns about government surveillance (Dinev et al., 2008). Two questionnaires were modified to measure government surveillance (instead of general surveillance/monitoring) specifically; potential benefit of and concerns about government surveillance (Bayerl & Akhgar, 2015).

The reliability of each scale used was well-established previously and in addition, to ensure the internal consistencies of the questionnaires, scale internal reliability was analysed in both studies using Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Both quantitative studies in this research relied on self-report attitude-style measures, a well-established procedure in social psychology, however they have been criticised for a number of reasons, e.g., response bias (Van de Mortel, 2008). While these issues are acknowledged yet difficult to control for, I believe a potential weakness of my quantitative studies using online attitude surveys is the lack of ‘attention checks’ which are sometimes implemented in studies to ensure participants pay continued attention to survey content (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009). However, a majority of our quantitative findings were interpretable, and this suggests that response ‘noise’ such as random answering or bot answering of online surveys, was not a feature of our data.

## **2.4 Data Management**

I conducted 20 face-to-face interviews for Study 1 (*Chapter 3*) which were recorded by my iPhone, transferred to my personal computer, then saved on to a USB flash drive. The recordings were saved according to the pseudonyms participants were

given, and were deleted from both the iPhone – they were not backed up in iCloud – and the computer. I transcribed the interviews using the USB flash drive to individual Microsoft Word Documents that were saved using pseudonyms, and did not include any personally identifiable information apart from age, gender and ethnicity – as they were relevant demographic information. In order to ensure data back up, the transcriptions, together with data for all other studies (e.g., SPSS data files), were saved in my personal Dropbox account and on two external hard drives. Apart from myself, nobody has access to the hard drives or the account.

As Study 2 (Chapter 4) and Study 3 (Chapter 5) were attitude surveys and were conducted using Qualtrics Survey Software, data were gathered and saved on the survey platform using my account that I myself and my supervisor accessed. The Qualtrics XM online survey platform conforms to ISO 27001 security standards and more information about the security of data on this platform is available on the Qualtrics website ([Qualtrics Security and Privacy Accreditations | Qualtrics](#)). Data for both studies were downloaded and analysed using SPSS on my personal computer.

## **2.5 Design and Analysis**

This thesis consists of two quantitative (Study 2, *Chapter 4*; Study 3, *Chapter 5*), two qualitative (Study 1, *Chapter 3*; Study 4, *Chapter 6*) and one mixed method study (Study 5; *Chapter 7*).

### **2.5.1 Quantitative research**

Each quantitative study employs an online survey research design; correlation analyses were conducted to explore the relationship between personality traits, trust, self-esteem and information privacy concerns on Facebook (Study 2; *Chapter 4*), and to investigate the relationship between British national identity and perceptions of government surveillance – need, benefit, concern – (Study 3; *Chapter 5*). In addition, multiple regression analysis was conducted in Study 2 (*Chapter 4*) to examine predictors of Facebook privacy concerns.



Experimental design was used only in Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) where we employed a British national identity priming manipulation to investigate whether increased feelings of Britishness have an effect on people's perception of government surveillance.

Correlational survey research does not allow for inferences to be made about causality; instead, the association between two variables is quantified, and in multiple regression the predictive relationship between multiple predictor variables and a criterion variable is examined. Given this limitation of correlational attitude survey designs, in the chapter discussions of the relevant studies (see *Chapter 4* and *5*), I suggest that subsequent work may focus on ascertaining the causal interactions between the variables of interest by using more sophisticated analyses with larger samples and/or through use of experimental approaches.

### **2.5.2 Qualitative research**

Qualitative methods are not concerned with the formulation of universal laws but instead are interested in meaning, how people make sense of the world and experience events and phenomena from their own subjective frame of reference (Willig, 2001).

When studying an area which has undergone little prior research, qualitative work can be utilised so as to identify principal elements which can then form the foundation for the development of measurement instruments e.g., questionnaires or surveys (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). In Study 1 (*Chapter 3*) people's views of surveillance were explored and in Study 4 (*Chapter 6*) people's beliefs regarding the implementation of stricter surveillance measures were investigated. In both qualitative studies I conducted thematic analysis to identify and analyse patterns in the data.

### 2.5.2.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis cannot be claimed to have been developed by an individual or group of people (Clarke & Braun, 2016). Various versions of thematic analysis were used in the 1960s when systematic procedures of qualitative data analysis started developing (see Benner, 1985). Thematic analysis was not only used to describe a technique of generic themes, but it was also used to describe interpretative or qualitative content analysis (Woodrum, 1984) and was even used interchangeably with content analysis itself (Christ, 1970). Even recently, there is sometimes a degree of confusion amongst researchers regarding the difference between thematic and content analysis, and the terms are still often used interchangeably (Sandelowski, 2010) or even referred to as one method ('thematic content analysis', see Green & Thorogood, 2004).

Braun and Clarke (2006) have identified another confusion about thematic analysis amongst qualitative researchers, whereby themes are often described as emerging from the data – lacking the clarity of the analytic procedures followed. By stating that themes emerge from the data, the active role played by the researcher in the systematic engagement with, analysis and reporting of the data is denied (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Taylor & Ussher, 2001).

In the 1990s (see Aronson, 1995), systematic procedures for conducting thematic analysis started to be described and now a number of them exist (for example, Guest, MacQueen, & Namey). The studies included in this thesis followed the six-phase step-by-step guide developed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

In contrast to other methodologies used in qualitative data analysis (such as narrative and discourse analysis), thematic analysis (which is in fact a method, not a methodology) offers epistemological flexibility and can be used within any theoretical and epistemological framework underlying qualitative research (Clarke & Braun, 2016). For further discussion on the epistemological position of this thesis, please see *Section 2.5.1.2*.

Alongside its flexibility, thematic analysis also has other advantages, such as its accessibility to those researchers who are only just beginning their career in qualitative research and have little to no experience, such as myself.

There are two ways in which themes can be identified in thematic analysis: in a deductive – ‘top down’ – way where the analysis is driven by existing theory or in an inductive – ‘bottom up’ – way where the analysis is grounded in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The studies in the present thesis adopted an inductive approach. Inductive thematic analysis is data-driven, whereby data is coded without attempting to place it within a pre-existing coding frame.

Furthermore, themes can be identified at a semantic level that captures the surface meanings in the data, or at a latent level that searches for underlying ideas and conceptualisations in the data. In this thesis, the data in the qualitative studies were coded for and described semantic meaning.

Thematic analysis is the process of looking through a data set in order to identify recurrent patterns of meaning. Thematic analysis is a useful analytic approach when data is detailed and rich in contextual information (Howitt, 2010). A theme captures important information pertinent to the research question in the data, and comprises meaning or patterned responses within the data set.

Braun and Clarke (2006) offer a six-phase guide to thematic analysis starting from data familiarisation through coding ending with writing up the analysis, which was adopted in the qualitative studies of this thesis. Although they identified six distinctive phases, the process is not linear but more recursive where one can go back and forth as needed. As mentioned above, I used this six-phase guide when conducting thematic analyses in the studies included in this thesis. These phases are described below in detail and short summaries are included in the relevant chapters.

The process starts with data familiarisation where researchers must immerse themselves in the data. This phase involves multiple readings of the data, which

allows researchers to familiarise themselves with the semantic meanings of, and engage analytically with the data. Researchers should note down ideas and observations that they will go back to during coding and when developing themes. Transcription of verbal data (such as interviews) is regarded as a good way to start this phase.

After data familiarisation and generation of the initial list of ideas, phase two begins when researchers start developing the initial codes from the data. Codes are not only labels that identify key analytic ideas in the data related to the research question but also capture the researchers' interpretations of the data. In other words, some codes identify semantic features of the data that are descriptive and more obvious, and some identify latent aspects that are interpretative and less obvious. Coding should be performed systematically throughout the whole data set. In order for the data to be coded in a consistent and comprehensive way, a double round of coding is recommended (Clarke & Braun, 2016).

When the data set has been coded and a list of codes have been identified, the third phase begins where the researchers sort the codes into different potential themes. At this phase, the analysis should move beyond codes, to the broader level of themes that can be identified within the data. Codes should be analysed and combined to create overarching themes and sub-themes within them. A theme should be underpinned by a central organising concept that brings the codes together in a coherent manner. Although usually themes are developed by clustering codes together that are associated with a certain issue, sometimes a code can become a theme if it is sufficiently complex (Charmaz, 2014). Braun and Clarke (2012) suggested that themes can be seen as jigsaw pieces, and the analysis as a completed jigsaw puzzle.

The fourth phase is about the review and refinement of the themes identified during the third phase. In this review process, candidate themes should be checked i) against all coded data and ii) against the entire data set to make sure there is a good fit between them. This phase is essential in order for researchers to make sure that

i) certain aspects of the data were not missed during coding and that the analysis ii) represents the data, iii) presents a meaningful and thorough description of the data. During this phase, themes can be discarded, combined, dismantled into different ones and kept but refined. There should be distinctions between themes (external heterogeneity) but the data within them should still cohere together (internal homogeneity) in a meaningful way (see Patton, 1990).

Phase five is about refining and defining each theme and subtheme and choosing the data extracts that will be presented in phase 6 (the write up). In this phase the analytic narrative is built based on the data and refined so that a story is determined for each theme and for all themes together. This story will inform the reader of what is being shown, why it is important and how it answers the research question.

The final phase of the thematic analysis is the writing up. Typically results and discussion are reported as one, with the analytic section covering the importance and relevance of the data presented in the narrative. The report can follow an illustrative approach, whereby the data extracts illustrate the claims made but the specifics of the extracts are not mentioned. Alternatively, it can also follow an analytic approach whereby analytical comments relate to the specifics of the data extracts – which is what was done in the qualitative studies contained in this thesis. The write up needs to contextualise, explain and locate the research findings within existing literature and theory. Alongside a literature review, the researcher must re-engage with previous research findings, discern coherence and intertextuality, incoherence and disagreement, extend insights gleaned from the data or potentially shed new light or reinterpret previous research.

#### **2.5.2.2 Epistemological considerations**

Qualitative research is inextricably tied to particular sets of assumptions regarding the possibilities for knowledge, or epistemology (Coyle, 2016). Epistemology is concerned with questions regarding the theory of knowledge; what we can know and how we can know it. Thematic analysis itself is not tied to any specific theoretical framework and so can be used within different theoretical frameworks

allowing it to be wielded flexibly (Braun & Clark, 2016). These theoretical frameworks exist across a spectrum, ranging from realism and essentialism which can map the meanings and experiences of participants onto reality through to relativism and constructionism, which attempt to examine the ways in which experiences, meanings and events are the result of the reality built by the discourses occurring throughout society (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Coyle, 2016). Between these two poles sits contextualism and theories such as critical realism, which maintains that there is an observer-independent reality, but individual and social contexts mean that this reality cannot be known with certainty.

The foundations of critical realism were established by Bhaskar (1975) as a post-positivist ontology, so as to consolidate epistemological relativism, ontological realism and judgemental rationality (Archer, 1995). Critical realism therefore holds that epistemology (knowledge) is distinct from ontology (reality); an objective reality exists but our ability to know it is imperfect, as our knowledge is historically, culturally, and socially situated (Archer et al., 2016). According to critical realism, to make more accurate claims about observable events and reality itself, an understanding of the underlying unobservable structures and mechanisms must be attained (Cruickshank, 2012). As is the case with other qualitative approaches, critical realism embraces synthesis and context but its emphasis on objective reality distinguishes it from approaches focusing solely on social constructions, which may be inadequate. An amalgamation of the realist's aspiration to understand the nature of reality with the admission that the researcher's observations may not tally directly with this reality means that critical realism can help to uncover the root causes and underlying social structures behind phenomena (Willig, 2008).

Madill et al. (2000) argued that researchers must make their theoretical and epistemological assumptions transparent, so that readers can evaluate their work effectively. Furthermore, the research process and analysis must remain consistent with the researcher's chosen epistemological stance (Lyons, 2016). As such, the qualitative studies in the present thesis adopted a critical realist stance in its exploration of the opinions, experiences and meaning the participants construct

regarding surveillance, whilst also taking into consideration the wider socio-political and socio-economic factors that can influence this reality.

In both qualitative studies, data were analysed using thematic analysis within a critical realist framework.

### **2.5.3 Mixed methods research**

Mixed methods research is an approach that intends to provide a framework for combining both qualitative and quantitative methods (Almeida, 2018; Aramo-Immonen, 2011). It has become increasingly popular – particularly after 2006 – in the field of behavioural and social sciences (Creswell, 2012; Timans, Wouters, & Heilbron, 2019).

The recent history of mixed research in the behavioural and social sciences began with researchers who considered both quantitative and qualitative methods and perspectives to be useful when tackling their research questions. Although the label “mixed methods” was coined relatively recently, “mixed research” can be found in the work of fieldwork sociologists and cultural anthropologists from the early 20th century (e.g., Hollingshead, 1949; Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, & Zeisel, 1931/2003). Formalisation of the method began in the mid to late 1980s, when both quantitative and qualitative researchers began to realise the benefits of combining the two approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative researchers came to appreciate the added contextualisation and details provided by qualitative methods, while qualitative researchers appreciated the way in which quantitative research could be more easily generalised to many more individuals and audiences.

In the early 2000s, after mixed methods research’s inclusion in the *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003), the method was defined by Creswell, Plano Clark, Guntmann and Hanson (2003) as the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. This definition was very much focused on the mechanics of data collection. Over the next several years, definitions of mixed methods research increased in

sophistication to include outlines of analysis and its advantages, with the identification of five core themes by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, p. 123), “Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or a team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.” Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) describe mixed methods research as a methodology involving philosophical assumptions that guide the collection, analysis and combination of qualitative and quantitative methods throughout the research process. This definition included, for the first time, the use of philosophical assumptions to inform upon the use of mixed method research.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) later proposed a definition of core characteristics so as to better capture the essence of MMR. These characteristics provide a broad definition of mixed methods research, and describe the key elements to consider in the design and conduction of a research study:

1. Meticulous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, founded on research questions.
2. Integrating or linking the two types of data.
3. Prioritising or assigning weight to the types of data based on the research questions.
4. Performing these procedures within a single study.
5. Using philosophical and theoretical perspectives to frame these procedures.
6. Using these procedures to create research designs that can be used to conduct the study.

Mixed method research can therefore guard against quantitative/qualitative dogmatism and the combination of the two can benefit the other, leading to broader, richer and more in-depth analysis (Coyle, 2016). Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings can be challenging, as the epistemological assumptions underlying each can be very different, so explaining all findings under the umbrella



of a single framework can therefore be difficult. Moran-Ellis et al. (2006) suggests that the different methods used to answer the research question be integrated with one another by assigning equal weighting to each. This would mean that qualitative and quantitative methods are employed discontinuously, each contributing equally but distinctly to address the research question (Coyle, 2016).

Mixed methods research is able to provide an array of strengths that can offset the inherent weaknesses in quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). It can provide more comprehensive evidence than either method in isolation and all available data collection tools can be utilised. Mixed method research is able to address questions that are not able to be answered satisfactorily by either quantitative or qualitative methods on their own. It can also aid in the collaboration between quantitative and qualitative researchers and encourage collaboration rather than adversarialism in solving problems in social, psychological and behavioural sciences. In turn this can catalyse the use and exchange of multiple paradigms or worldviews between quantitative and qualitative researchers, and perhaps lead to innovation in the use of paradigms within research. Additionally, combining the use of numbers and words in an analysis can infuse the research with more meaningful insights.

However, mixed method research can be challenging due to the resources, expertise and time required to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Partly for this reason, it should not be assumed that mixed method research is always superior to an approach which makes use of a single method (Coyle, 2016). Prior to deciding upon a method, it is therefore important to determine the approach best suited to answer the research questions.

In Study 5 (*Chapter 7*) a mixed method approach was employed in order to link qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative methods are interested in how people make sense of the world and experience events and phenomena from their own subjective frame of reference (Willig, 2001). Therefore, the qualitative

analysis of tweets in this study allowed for a richer social psychological understanding of online communities in cyberspace.

Sentiment analysis on the Islam related post Westminster attack tweets were employed manually to categorise them into positive, negative, neutral and ambiguous sentiments. Due to the large amount of data (3623 tweets) and the intention to quantify the occurrence of qualitatively identified themes, I employed content analysis on the positive and negative tweets in order to identify and analyse people's views on Islam. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to thematic was used in the analysis. In order to be able to draw conclusions from large-scale content analysis of qualitative data, reliability needs to be demonstrated. Therefore, an inter-coder reliability analysis for the codes was conducted using Krippendorff's alpha as a standard reliability measure (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) after a second coder coded 10% of the data.

There is sometimes a degree of confusion amongst researchers regarding the difference between thematic and content analysis, as the boundaries between the two have not been clearly specified and the terms are often used interchangeably (Sandelowski, 2010) or even referred to as one method ('thematic content analysis', see Green & Thorogood, 2004). It has been suggested that the key difference between the two is the opportunity for quantitative analysis of the data; content analysis allows for frequency measurements of categories and themes (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

As a complement to the qualitative analyses conducted in this study, a quantitative network analysis was also carried out to gain insight into ingroup following, the social identities of the groups and their following behaviour. Methods from network theory and statistical physics were adopted to identify groups in the network structure of tweets. A method developed by Bryden, Funk and Jansen (2013) was used in collaboration with Dr John Bryden, one of my supervisors whose contribution to the network analysis should be acknowledged. Sentiments and themes identified with qualitative analysis were then employed to define social

groups on Twitter using quantitative ‘big data’ algorithms that required bespoke computer coding by Dr Bryden.

This study presented a unique perspective to understanding views on Islam and following behaviour on Twitter post-terrorist attack by the application of mixed methods. Using network analysis (quantitative method), online groups tweeting about the Westminster attack on Twitter were identified. In addition, the sentiments and main themes (qualitative methods) of such groups’ Westminster attack related tweets regarding Muslims were also explored. For this study, combining quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for the detailed understanding of post terrorist attack Muslim related views expressed on Twitter in the context of online groups.

Using network analysis to generate community groups in the network and gain insight into online group behaviour (e.g., ingroup following) combined with qualitative analysis to provide meaning in and sensitivity to context allows for a thorough understanding of meaning making from copious amounts of data. This methodology could be useful for researchers wishing to gain a deep understanding of discussions, in context, within online groups as part of a network (e.g., on Twitter) on a given topic.

In conclusion, the body of empirical work presented in this thesis spans attitudinal survey, experimental survey, qualitative interview, and internet psychology research methods, including techniques applied from network analysis. It is unusual to see this mix of methods within a social psychology research project, but I believe that there is added validity to the work afforded by this methodological diversity, with each method being sensitive to somewhat different aspects of the data, and the findings complementing each other substantially. While this chapter endeavours to provide a brief overview of the methods deployed, within each empirical chapter more detailed information is included about the methods deployed for the empirical studies. I also return to an evaluation of methodological concerns in the final discussion chapter.

## 2.6 Reflections on my Research Journey

Reflexivity refers to the critical examination of the researcher's speaking position, judgments, beliefs, values and experiences, and how these might have influenced the research process (Finlay, 1998). Reflexivity can be further divided into 'personal' and 'functional' views, though they cannot be separated from one another (Wilkinson, 1988). Reflexive evaluation allows the researcher to discuss any subjectivity and any personal or professional biases that may have influenced the research process and its outcomes (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). Reflexive self-awareness is a key aspect of the research process (Wilkinson, 1988) and its acknowledgment can aid transparency and so the understanding and evaluation of the research (Coyle, 2016).

Although writing personal reflections in a distinct section instead of allocating them at appropriate points throughout the research narrative may run the risk of de-emphasising its importance (Coyle, 2016), I decided to include it as a single text confined to a separate section as I felt that this would provide a more coherent and analytical account.

I started conducting the first study of my PhD research (Study 1 – *Chapter 3*) just after having completed my undergraduate degree. During my degree, unfortunately I had not had the opportunity to learn about or to conduct qualitative research. In fact, apart from my third-year research project, I had not conducted any research on my own or had any research experience in the form of employment or a Master's degree. Therefore, even though I was excited to explore the then-unknown and to carry out my first qualitative study, I was also somewhat anxious. I was unsure about where and how to begin. It is not uncommon to have similar feelings when embarking upon qualitative research (Coyle, 2016).

The main goal of my first study was to explore and to glean detailed insights into people's views on surveillance, privacy and trust. As semi-structured interviews are believed to be the most appropriate method for this purpose, I decided to conduct twenty interviews – which in retrospect might have been overly ambitious and

perhaps more than what would have been necessary. Most of the participants I interviewed were fellow postgraduate researchers, the majority of whom – like myself – had just begun their own research. They were therefore eager to help out, not only because of possible future reciprocation but because our PhD office has always maintained a culture of supporting one another.

It is important to note that at the time of conducting my first study I had only been living in the UK for four years and I still lacked confidence in my English language skills. Thus, prior to my first interview I was quite nervous not only because this was my first attempt at interviewing educated and knowledgeable participants on a complex topic but also because I felt slightly inadequate due to my language skills. To provide both a professional and psychological crutch, my supervisor listened to the recording of my first interview to ensure that it was conducted well. Over time, I gained more confidence in my interviewing skills.

Throughout my interviewing I felt as if I was somewhat stepping out of line, a feeling tinged with a mild sense of inferiority. In hindsight I think these feelings could be attributed to the fact that I was an immigrant interviewing British people on their views on surveillance, which to me at the time felt slightly incongruent. To be a foreigner, and yet to be dissecting, analysing and theorising on British domestic matters, and how natives view these issues was at times uncomfortable.

Given the focus of the research – surveillance, privacy and trust – my background as a Hungarian should be taken into consideration. Growing up in Hungary, I was surrounded by stories of the era of Soviet control over the county. The Soviet state engaged in mass surveillance of Hungarian citizens' private lives, the extent to which was not fully known until archives became publicly available in 1989 following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Over time, this knowledge became part of the collective domain and to this day remains part of Hungary's "cultural memory". Although I do not consider surveillance an unmitigated negative, my childhood and adolescent experience raised an acute awareness of how mass surveillance can be employed by totalitarian governments, not for the benefit of

their citizens but for their own expedient motives. These concerns were only further amplified by several English language books I read as a young adult, including George Orwell's '1984' and 'Animal Farm'. Upon reflection, it is therefore possible that my position may have influenced the way in which I phrased some follow-up questions during the interviews, and I may have subconsciously attempted to elicit views that conform to my world view.

Mass surveillance has been used as a preventative strategy to counter terrorism, therefore I naturally *expected* the topic to arise during the interviews. What was *unexpected* was the series of terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on 13 November 2015, killing and wounding hundreds of people. I conducted most of my interviews (17 out of 20) in the aftermath of the attacks, so the topic of terrorism was not only a naturally emerging topic (in relation to surveillance), but it was at the forefront of everyone's attention – including my own. Due to the link between surveillance and terrorism, interviewing participants immediately after the Paris attacks was certainly a strange experience. Nevertheless, this was the first time I started to consider the idea of potentially focusing more on terrorism in my research.

Transcribing the interviews verbatim took a lot longer than expected, especially given the magnitude of the interviews. As I was a novice to qualitative research, I conducted thematic analysis without any epistemological consideration or a proper understanding of how the analysis should be done. This resulted in the themes presented in the study being mapped onto the topic areas associated with the clusters of interview questions. Therefore, as a part of my post-viva amendments, the data of this study was reanalysed.

The data corpus included the answers of twenty interviewees to questions regarding surveillance, privacy online and on social networks sites and targeted advertising. However, for the purpose of reanalysis, the data corpus was narrowed to a data set of answers to questions regarding surveillance only. There are multiple reasons behind this decision. First, after multiple read-throughs of the original chapter, a part

from methodological missteps that were pointed out in my amendments which I was in agreement with, I also realised that the data set was too broad, and the original analysis was diluted amongst many different (although linked) topics and therefore nuance, and detail was lost. I felt that my 2015 self tried to spread herself too thin and do too much and the lack of focus resulted in a study that did not have a concise and meaningful narrative. Second, the aim of the research was to explore views on surveillance and gain an in-depth insight into their understandings. Therefore, the analysis of the entire data corpus was deemed unnecessary.

It took me a while to find my rhythm and carry out the analysis of the data set – and complete the remaining amendment – because i) the data was collected about five years ago, ii) I have not done qualitative research in over two years, iii) I changed my career and departed from academia to industry in a different line of work and iv) the challenges of working during the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020. In spite of these obstacles, the data set of Study 1 (*Chapter 3*) was reanalysed and as a result the whole chapter has been amended. In the light of the narrower focus (i.e. surveillance), the Introduction (*Section 3.2*) has been modified to include a shorter literature review which aimed to contextualise the study. A thematic analysis study does not have any specific requirements as to the literature review (Huxley, Clarke, & Halliwell, 2016) and in contrast to quantitative methods, a comprehensive summary of existing research is not necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

My research journey and narrative – and by extension, I – was largely shaped by the events unfolding during the course of my PhD, such as the series of terrorist attacks committed by Islamist extremists across Europe (e.g., Paris, Nice, Berlin, London), the 2016 US Presidential election and of course, Brexit. I have designed and collected data for various studies related to current events that eventually were not included in the thesis. The most influential occurrence was the peak in terrorist attacks, particularly the first one in Westminster, London. I was not only interested in how people viewed surveillance in the light of the attack(s), but I also developed an interest in how they viewed the attack itself. Not only due to my growing interest, but also due to terrorism becoming an emergent theme throughout my research, I

dedicated the last study of this thesis to the exploration of an unfortunately related phenomenon – Islamophobia – which I would not have thought of back in 2015.

Personal and financial difficulties – that are not unusual for other postgraduate researchers – and mental health struggles have certainly affected me throughout my journey which was further exacerbated by part-time employment and its related responsibilities. While doing my PhD I taught various lectures and seminars at three different universities, worked as a research assistant on various projects with differing research interests and even got a taste of working in industry as a research consultant. I travelled to various countries and presented research (not only my PhD) at different venues. All these experiences have shaped me and my thesis and I grew a lot as a researcher throughout my research journey. I gained confidence, became a better writer, gained a better understanding of research methodologies – mostly qualitative – and I believe that this thesis is a perfect reflection of that journey.

As mentioned above, all these ad-hoc activities not only had a huge impact on me personally and as a researcher but also on my thesis. In practical terms, this means that there was a large gap between the writing up the chapters. The first three studies (Study 1 – *Chapter 3*; Study 2 – *Chapter 4*; Study 3 – *Chapter 5*) were written up immediately after data collection and analysis, not only due to the lack of non-PhD related commitments but also because I felt fairly comfortable with quantitative analysis which Study 2 (*Chapter 4*) and 3 (*Chapter 5*) utilised. I experienced Study 4 (*Chapter 5*) and Study 5 (*Chapter 6*) to be significantly more challenging to do than the previous studies due to external commitments and because I used methods I was new to.

Lastly, it should be noted that this part of the thesis (*Section 2.6*) was borne as a result of my post-viva amendments, of which I am grateful to have had so that I had the opportunity to revisit and reflect on my work and help the reader to have a better understanding of my research journey. Other sections mostly related to the qualitative work of this thesis were also amended, e.g., in light of epistemological



considerations, the reflective chapters were updated. Prior to completing my amendments, I had not fully understood the analytical rigour, in-depth insights, and sensitivity to context that well-conducted qualitative research can provide. However, thanks to these amendments and the additional work I did on my thesis, I grew to fully appreciate and became an enthusiast of qualitative methods.

### **3. To Surveil or Not to Surveil? A Qualitative Exploration of British Young Adults' Views and Perceptions of Surveillance**

#### **3.1 Abstract**

Considering recent revelations regarding the extent of surveillance, and the UK being an endemic surveillance state, issues of privacy have come to the forefront of attention. Yet there remains a relative dearth of recent research, especially in the UK context, into lay perceptions of surveillance and their potential psychological underpinnings. Using inductive thematic analysis, the present study aimed to explore British young adults' views and perceptions of surveillance – government and corporate, online and offline, mass and targeted. Our findings show that surveillance perceptions are multi-faceted and complex with interweaving elements which weigh on each other and affect views, opinions and justifications – such as the belief that surveillance is for the protection of the public, trust in the agent of surveillance and concerns regarding surveillance practices. Future studies should focus on each of these aspects individually in relation to surveillance.

### **3.2 Introduction**

Surveillance, as defined by the dictionary is the ‘close observation, especially of a suspected person’, however it has been argued that this definition is too narrow and insufficient for surveillance in modern times (Marx, 2002). According to him, populations and whole groups are targeted through the ‘new surveillance’, often using techniques which can extract private information.

Surveillance and the issues surrounding privacy are increasingly prevalent in modern societies. The need for surveillance has been ever present, but due to the technological advancements beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mass surveillance has been more and more integrated into everyday life.

Surveillance is a top-down affair where someone hierarchically superior is watching the general and comparatively powerless population (Trottier, 2014). Orwell (1949) described a future vision based within the nation of Oceania led by a leader called ‘Big Brother’, where its own citizens are monitored via a telescreen with hidden microphones and cameras within their homes. This device can project images while also recording the behaviour of its subjects. The monitoring is managed and coordinated by the ‘Thought Police’, agents of the current totalitarian state which use this extensive surveillance as a method to maintain social order and ensure conformity among its citizens. In contemporary culture, the Orwellian vision of ‘Big Brother’ has become a synonym for the abuse of power by the Government, especially in relation to civil liberties via the use of mass surveillance. David Lyon (2015) considered the relationship between democracy and surveillance to be tense. He concluded that surveillance could constrain the freedom of society and in the worst case it can also lead to a totalitarian state, as Orwell predicted (Lyon, 2015).

The panoptic guard tower is another oft-used metaphor for understanding contemporary surveillance and control (Foucault, 1977). It was the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1995) who proposed the panopticon as a new architectural design functioning as a disciplinary tool to reform prisoners. It is a centrally placed tower where all inmates are visible to the guards in the tower and was designed to increase

the visibility of inmates who were held in solitary confinement in such a way that they were unaware if the central tower guards were observing them or not. This idea has been referenced in recent research in the interdisciplinary field of computer-mediated communication studies. Furthermore, CCTV is being described as an ‘electronic panopticon’ where people can be seen but are unable to observe (Lyon, 1994). Parallels also exist between the undesirable dystopias, such as Orwell’s Big Brother and CCTV. Therefore, CCTV is depicted as a technologically advanced form of the surveillance society (Lyon, 1994).

Surveillance occurs not only visually but it is undertaken in various ways using a range of technologies. Surveillance instruments include for example CCTV, wiretapping, heat-seeking and other sensing devices and movement tracking devices (House of Lords, 2009). Furthermore, surveillance can be passive whereby it is not targeted on a certain individual, but information is gathered for potential use in the future – this phenomenon is called *mass surveillance*. On the other hand, *targeted surveillance* – which can be carried out both overtly and covertly – is directed at certain individuals using specific powers authorised by public agencies.

In 2013, former CIA employee and contractor for the US Government, Edward Snowden revealed classified documents proving that western governments were involved in the large-scale surveillance and monitoring of their populations in one of the most significant intelligence leaks in history (MacAskill, Borger, Hopkins, Davies, & Ball, 2013). The Snowden surveillance revelations showed that agencies such as the National Security Agency (NSA) in the US and the British General Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) have developed and implemented technologies and systems which have rendered worldwide surveillance of internet users possible, infringing international laws of civil liberties and privacy in the process. These agencies intercept emails, document online behaviour, collect telephone and SMS data of millions of citizens and attempt to use this information to influence people’s behaviour (Lyon, 2015).

Privacy International (2007) labelled the United Kingdom as an ‘endemic surveillance society’ – being the only country in Europe to be labelled as such. The UK is the most surveilled country in Europe – the second most surveilled country in the world, after China – with one of the largest closed-circuit television (CCTV) networks (Armitage, 2002). According to a British Security Industry Authority (BSIA) report there are approximately 4–5.9 million CCTV cameras in the country (BBC News, 2015), meaning that a person being captured on about 300 cameras each day (McCahill & Norris, 2003; Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006).

The proliferation of CCTV systems stretches back to the late eighties and they are most commonly found in town and city centres, car parks, schools, hospitals, police stations, several workplaces and residential areas (Gill, 2003; Gill, Bryan, & Allen, 2007; Norris & Armstrong 1999, Webster, 2002) with approximately £500 million of public money invested by the British Government (Norris, 2006). Most often these systems have been introduced to combat criminality, in addition to functioning as a device to reduce the fear of crime (Armitage, 2002; Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006; Webster, 2009).

Public support for CCTV has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Brown, 1995; Ditton, 1998; Dixon, Levine, & McAuley, 2004; Honess & Charman, 1992). For example, in a public attitudes survey amongst the residents of Cambridge, UK, Bennett and Gelsthorpe (1996) found that people supported the installation of CCTV in public settings and thought that it was effective in crime detection and prevention.

Webster (2009) has argued that public support is generally based on the belief in the effectiveness of the systems in reducing crime. However, their effectiveness has been called into question by research and it has been showed that the efficacy of CCTV cameras has been exaggerated in systematic reviews of CCTV evaluations (Armitage, 2002; Ditton & Short, 1999; Gill & Turbin; Gill & Spriggs, 2005; Groombridge 2008; Welsh & Farrington, 2003). Therefore, regardless of whether surveillance systems are in fact effective or not, the perceived effectiveness and

benefits of such systems ultimately lead to more accepting attitudes towards them (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist, Mahy, & Morris, 2008; Webster, 2009).

In spite of the general support, CCTV surveillance has been shown to raise concerns about civil liberties and invasion of privacy (Dixon et al., 2004). For example, support for CCTV has been found to drop with around 40% if the questions relating to it are framed in the context of civil liberties instead of crime prevention (Ditton, 1998). Bennett and Gelsthorpe (1996) demonstrated that 59% of people were concerned about the CCTV installation due to the corresponding implications on civil liberties. However, the same people perceived CCTV to be either good, very good or had no strong opinion on this matter. Therefore, the authors concluded that public concerns about infringed civil rights were not strong enough to dissuade them from supporting the installation of CCTV. Furthermore, Gill and Spriggs (2005) showed that in the areas where support for CCTV cameras declined following implementation, was not a reflection of the public's increased worries about infringement upon their privacy and civil liberties, as this concern remained at a low-level following camera installation.

In summary, most research seemed to have investigated public perceptions of government surveillance from a limited perspective – CCTV only – often using attitude surveys, and the more in-depth views that can be gathered using qualitative methods remain unexplored. This exploratory study aimed to investigate perceptions of surveillance in the UK in a general sense, not exclusively of CCTV. A sample consisting of British young adults was chosen as they were born after the widespread implementation of surveillance measures – such as CCTV – and their views have developed in the social context of having been born and lived in a surveillance culture in which they willingly and actively engage themselves (Lyon, 2015). As a group that will only grow in cultural and political power over time, the views of young adults on surveillance have not been previously explored. As the implications of surveillance disseminate throughout society, the exploration of their views and perceptions is imperative. The present exploratory study was therefore

guided by the broad research question: how do British young adults perceive surveillance in the UK?

### **3.3 Methods**

The method of data collection was interview and a semi-structured interview guide was developed by the researcher. Interviews are ideal for exploring the experiences, views, perceptions and beliefs of individuals on specific matters (such as surveillance in the case of this study). Interviews allow for a ‘deeper’ understanding of the studied phenomenon than quantitative methods (Silverman, 2000), particularly when little is known about it or when participants might not want to discuss the topic in a focus group environment (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

In order to make sure participants were asked the same general questions as well as enabling them to discuss matters that had not been pre-planned by the researchers, a semi-structured interview approach was adopted. Semi-structured interviews include pre-written questions that help to demarcate the topics to be discussed, but allow for a degree of digression to further probe an idea or response. This lends semi-structured interviews a flexibility, permitting elaboration or discovery of pertinent information from the participant that may not have been deemed relevant from the researchers prior to the interview (Gill et al., 2008).

#### **3.3.1 Participants**

A snowball sample of participants ( $N = 20$ ; 8 females, 12 males) aged 19 to 32 ( $M = 24.25$ ,  $SD = 4.08$ ) were recruited from the researcher's circle of friends and acquaintances. There was only one inclusion criterion for participation, namely that participants were British citizens (defined as having, or qualifying for, a British passport) due to the fact that surveillance in the UK was discussed.

A sample size of twenty was chosen in accordance with the recommendation by Braun and Clarke (2013) suggesting that a sample of at least six should be selected when using interviews in thematic analysis in order to identify patterned rather than idiographic meaning across cases. Thus, the sample of twenty interviews is suitable for a thematic analysis interview study of a medium size.

All participants were highly educated to undergraduate degree level or higher and described themselves as White British (n = 18; the remaining two participants described themselves as British Asian).

### **3.3.2 Procedure**

Ethical approval for the study was given by the Departmental Ethics Committee. Signed consent was obtained from each participant after they were given information about the purpose of the study. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the Psychology Department of Royal Holloway, University of London in November and December, 2015. The interviews lasted between 22 and 62 minutes. Interviewees were given pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity. With their explicit permission, the interviews were digitally recorded using a recording device. Recordings were deleted after transcription, together with any identifying data of the participants. Participants were thanked and debriefed after their interviews.

### **3.3.3 Data analysis**

Voice recordings were fully transcribed verbatim by the researcher and some transcripts were revised by the researcher's supervisor and compared to the recordings.

Answers to all interview questions (see *Section 3.6.*) were transcribed, therefore the data corpus included the answers to each question. However, for the purposes of this analysis – informed by the research question –, the data corpus was narrowed to a data set of answers to questions regarding surveillance only. Therefore, data relevant to surveillance were compiled into a separate file.



Interview transcripts related to surveillance were analysed using inductive thematic analysis following the 6-phase step-by-step guide outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), within a critical realist framework or contextualist framework (Willig, 1999), focused on semantic meanings predominantly. This approach fitted well with the aims of the interview study to explore and understand the views and perceptions of British young adults on surveillance and its different domains in terms of their reality, while also acknowledging that these views are shaped within their social context.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyse and report patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although it has been described as a tool to be utilised by different methods rather than a particular method (Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that it is indeed a method in and of itself. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is its flexibility as it is not tied to any theoretical or epistemological position and can be applied across a range of approaches. Therefore, it provides a useful tool that can offer a detailed and rich take on the data.

The present study adopted a critical realist stance, whereby the existence of an objective (both environmental and physical) reality is recognised alongside an acknowledgement that our portrayal of reality is necessarily mediated and typified by social and political factors (Ussher, 1999). Therefore, as a result the answers provided by participants can be taken to be an accurate rendering of reality, albeit given through the lens of specific cultural, social and political elements.

Furthermore, an inductive – ‘bottom-up’ – approach was taken, meaning that the analysis was driven by the data, not by the researcher’s theoretical interest. Data was coded without the attempt to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame.

As mentioned above, thematic analysis was conducted using the six-phase step-by-step guide offered by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis started with the familiarisation of the data which was achieved through multiple read-throughs as

well as the creation of marginal notes (phase 1). Coding of the data set (phase 2) was performed manually in a systematic way whereby key analytic ideas relating to the research question were identified. The interview transcripts were coded in Microsoft Word and after a double round of coding, codes were combined to create overarching themes and sub-themes within them (phase 3). In the fourth phase of the analysis, the themes were reviewed and examined against the coded data relevant to each individual theme and against the entire data set, in order to make sure no aspect of the data was missed and that the analysis presented the data set in a meaningful way. Themes and subthemes were defined, refined and named, and data extracts for every theme were organised in a coherent way (phase 5). An example of coding and theming for this study can be found in *Section 3.6*. Through phases four and five, a thematic map was created that maps out the themes, subthemes and the relationship between them – both ‘horizontal’ which captures how themes fit together and ‘vertical’ that shows the relationships of themes and subthemes sitting within themes (Clarke & Braun, 2016). Finally, a written report (*Section 3.4*) was produced that offers a coherent account of the story, the data told within and across the themes and subthemes using data extracts to show their prevalence (phase 6).

It is imperative to highlight that surveillance is a complex phenomenon and this complexity requires the distinction of the agents of surveillance (government/public, corporate/private), the types of surveillance (offline and online) and forms of surveillance (mass and targeted). To visualise these differences, Table 3.1 was created.

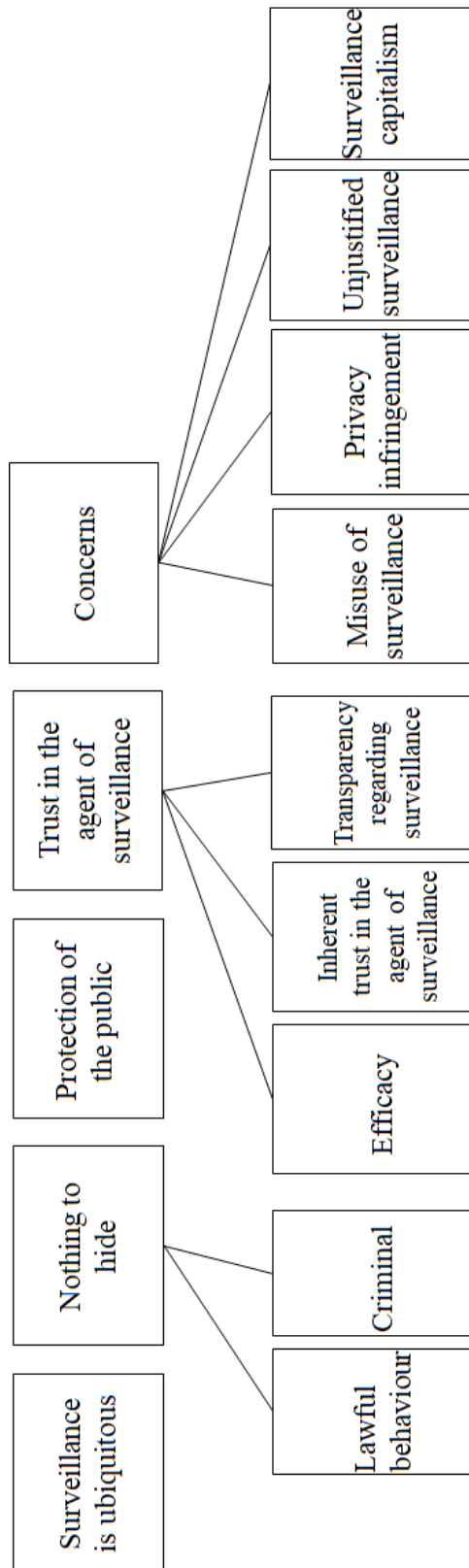
**Table 3.1.** Different agents, types and forms of surveillance.

<b>Agent</b>	Government		Corporate	
<b>Type</b>	Offline (CCTV)			
	Online (Metadata)			
<b>Form</b>	Mass	Targeted	Mass	Targeted

Due to its broad research question – ‘How do British young adults perceive surveillance?’ – this study presents a unique perspective whereby instead of focusing on a particular type or form of surveillance (as existing research had done), different domains of surveillance have been explored. When the distinction is relevant it will be specified in the related data extract.

### 3.4 Results

The analytic process identified five main themes in the interviews exploring perceptions and understandings of surveillance. The five main themes were ‘surveillance is ubiquitous’, ‘nothing to hide’ (which includes the subthemes ‘lawful behaviour’ and ‘ordinary personal information’), ‘protection of the public’, ‘trust in the agent of surveillance’ (which includes the subthemes ‘efficacy’, ‘inherent trust in the agent of surveillance’, and ‘transparency regarding surveillance’) and finally ‘concerns’ (including ‘misuse of surveillance’, ‘privacy infringement’, ‘unjustified surveillance’, and ‘surveillance capitalism’ subthemes). A thematic map illustrating the main themes and subthemes and the relationship between them is presented in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1** Thematic map illustrating the identified themes and subthemes.

Themes and subthemes are illustrated with relevant data extracts. Each participant has been given a pseudonym, and data extracts are presented with the participant's pseudonym and age. Any editing of the data (for instance, the removal of unnecessary and irrelevant details) is indicated by [...]. Frequency counts are not provided when reporting the results, but as a general rule, 'majority' and 'most' refer to around two-thirds or more of the participants, 'some' to less than half and 'few' to less than a quarter.

### **3.4.1 Surveillance is ubiquitous**

The ubiquitous nature of surveillance was expressed amongst all interviewees, most often in regard to the presence of CCTV. For example:

*"They are pretty much everywhere in London."* (Albert, 24)

*"But wherever you go, you're on CCTV all the time. [...] I mean it seems to be everywhere. I think it's a bit excessive."* (Harry, 21)

The ubiquitous characteristic of surveillance was often linked to the realisation that they probably are more exposed to surveillance than they think.

*"You don't think you're being watched. [...] I don't really think about it, but I guess when you do think about it is probably quite a lot."* (Ava, 22)

*"I think probably more than I think I am. I think I'm quite naïve in how surveilled I am because I try to stay quite private but [...] I definitely think I'm more surveilled than I think I am."* (Sophia, 20)

Surveillance is often perceived to be ubiquitous due to its portrayal in the media, in shows such as *Crimewatch*. Participants usually highlighted the frequent use of CCTV on television, in the news and on shows. This may suggest that media representations of surveillance contribute to people's perceptions of it.

*“it [surveillance] is increasing. But in terms of my kind of day to day activities, I don’t really consider myself under surveillance but even if you watch a program like Crime watch and you see the amount of CCTV footage there is, it kind of makes you realise that actually probably every move is recorded, particularly in public place.” (Sharon, 32)*

*“I suppose it's more prevalent than I realize but I don’t know. I know it is weird it's almost like I think it's a good thing because whenever you watch police TV shows in the UK it's always done through people spotting something on CCTV footage. You sort of grow up thinking that it's there to stop crime and all that kind of stuff.” (Louisa, 32)*

The ubiquitous nature of both offline and online surveillance was voiced by the participants.

*“More than you probably think because if you think every time you go on the internet then like there are people who can like check what you are looking at and what you are saying, things like that. And also every time you leave the house I’d imagine like just walking up the street probably caught on some sort of surveillance.” (Bianca, 21)*

*“I remember an advert saying many years ago that you got caught on camera 300 times a day or something and I imagine it has gone up considerably since then. And internet use, I mean, you can track basically everything that someone does on the internet.” (Rupert, 23)*

Because surveillance is everywhere, its existence is normalised. People are used to it, grew up with it, it is a part of life, it is normal. They do not think about it, they do not question it. It is incessant and inevitable. These answers reflect the assertion that when people feel that something is inevitable, they are more likely to accept it. The inevitability of surveillance has been discussed in research previously (e.g., Monahan, 2015). It has been argued that due to the abundance and normalisation

of surveillance, it is intrinsic to modern society, and that we therefore live in a surveillance society (Aas, Gundhus, & Lomell, 2008; Lyon 1994; 2001; 2007; Monahan, 2006).

*“I’m under surveillance so much, I don’t even think about it anymore.”*  
(Phoebe, 22)

*“I think in some ways it is a good thing because we grew in this generation where we are just used to it, we wouldn’t question it.”* (Ava, 22)

*“I’ve grown up in a generation where CCTV is just there. CCTV for me is just something that’s just there, it’s just a presence, I just don’t even pick up on. I don’t attend to it because it’s just there, it’s everywhere.”* (James, 32)

Surveillance is ever present which is well-reflected upon in Phoebe’s (22) definition of it, according to whom surveillance is *“So people are watching you all the time”* and further states that *“all my life spent is being watched by cameras”*.

An interesting insight was offered by Louisa (32) comparing surveillance to being watched by someone guarding lives, like God. The comparison of surveillance to the eye of God is not uncommon in literature (Lyon, 2014).

*“I suppose if you are religiously inclined I suppose you can say that perhaps there is some kind of religious element to surveillance because you are sort of under the watch of the life guard of something.”* (Louisa, 32)

Some said the extent of offline surveillance – particularly getting caught on CCTV – is intimidating but they still have positive views about it because it is for the safety and protection of the public.

*“I think it’s almost like scary in the sense that they say like ‘you got caught on a CCTV camera x number of times in a day’ and it’s quite large. But I*

*think in terms of safety and in terms of identifying criminals and I think missing people, sort of things like this, I think it can be a very very good thing.” (Ava, 22)*

The ubiquitousness of surveillance is also reflected in the views regarding corporate surveillance – especially with respect to Google. Although concerns were expressed about the amount of information corporations gather and monitor, overall, it was still often perceived favourably. For example, Ralph’s (26) appreciation of the impressive technology mitigated against his objections to the “freaky” nature of surveillance. This may suggest that a cost-benefit analysis was employed.

*“That is bad as well, you can find out, know where someone is all the time, google, google stalk you on your phone, it tells you where you have been, I’ll show you after the interview, I think it’s quite cool, that’s why I kept it on, but it knows what building I work in, it know I’m there from 8.30 to 6, it knows my travel time, it’s quite freaky. But it’s amazing, impressive.” (Ralph, 26)*

The panoptic tower metaphor, though not explicitly named, was often used in definitions and explanations of surveillance given by participants. For example:

*“[...]people watching you on the TV somewhere and you can’t see them but they can see you.” (Ralph, 26)*

Foucault’s ‘panopticon’ and Orwell’s ‘Big Brother’ are metaphors that predominate in academic discourses regarding recent developments in surveillance (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000).

Some felt that the fact that surveillance is everywhere makes them feel that they are protected because they are always being watched.

*“It just really makes you feel protected, someone is always watching, you are not by yourself. There is always someone there.” (Sophia, 20)*



### **3.4.2 Nothing to hide**

The ‘Nothing to hide’ theme encapsulates the interviewees’ general acceptance of surveillance, specifically the surveillance imposed on them, mainly in the context of online surveillance, i.e., the monitoring of online information shared in cyberspace. The frequently presented arguments in support of surveillance posit the infamous argument ‘If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear’.

It should be highlighted that this argument had been frequently employed by the British Government in their justification for the introduction of various surveillance measures, for example in the installation of millions of public-surveillance CCTV cameras (Solove, 2011). It is possible that this argument has been used by participants frequently due to their exposure to the news, and media representations of surveillance – which are often underpinned by the argument – impacting their understanding of it.

The ‘Nothing to hide’ argument has been well documented in privacy literature (e.g., Crossman, 2008; Solove, 2007; Solove, 2011; Spears & Erete, 2014). For example, in a study exploring individuals’ reactions when questioned on online privacy and the effect it has upon their experience online, Viseu, Clement and Aspinall (2004) found that participants often had a ‘nothing to hide, nothing to fear’ attitude and approach to privacy. The authors argued that approach to surveillance accentuates short-termism and individualism in lieu of a longer term, broader, societal-centric perspective. They proposed an analogy between privacy and environmental concerns as a device to understand the attitude underlying the ‘Nothing to hide, nothing to fear’ statement. Both sets of concerns encompass risks which are remote, abstract and diffuse, contrasting with benefits which are personal, immediate and straightforward. For example, just as recreational air travel elicits immediate benefits, so does the relinquishing of personal information when using the internet (e.g., social media sites). In the present study we found that most participants felt comfortable in the knowledge that they were being surveilled as they have nothing to hide.

*“I don’t have anything to hide from them so if they required it I’d like to know why but I’d be happy to hand it over.” (Justin, 25)*

*“I’m OK with them looking at what I do because I’m not doing because I don’t have anything to hide.” (Phoebe, 22)*

Some people initially had ambivalent views about surveillance, acknowledged privacy concerns and understood why others would have such concerns. Yet when weighing privacy concerns against the security provided by surveillance, they favoured surveillance because they have ‘nothing to hide’. This is more prevalent when a threat to safety is perceived to be present. The threat to safety is perceived to be higher than the threat to privacy caused by surveillance.

*“Obviously in terms of security it’s important. To some extent I’m in agreement with people who say that if you haven’t done anything wrong you’ve got nothing to be worried about. I’m on the fence with this because I can see the point of people who are arguing against you know... our freedom... to be carrying out surveillance with people’s day to day lives. I think I probably fall more on the side of, you know, I’m not doing anything I wouldn’t be happy for people to know about so you know I’d rather particularly in a time when there is a lot of threat around, I’d rather feel there is as much done about it as could be done.” (Sharon, 32)*

Being protected from threats is perceived to be important and as they have nothing to hide, they are willing to accept surveillance.

*“I think I sort of accept it [surveillance] because I feel like and I’d like to think that that’s the way I’m being protected. And I think there’s nothing really on there that I’m ashamed about or I don’t want them knowing. So I don’t mind them doing it, it makes me feel more protected through surveillance.” (Sophia, 20)*

To provide a more nuanced understanding of the ‘Nothing to hide’ theme, we felt that it was important to distinguish the two different ways in which the argument is underpinned. Therefore, two subthemes were identified based on the different reasonings behind participants’ ‘nothing to hide’ argument – ‘lawful behaviour’ and ‘ordinary personal information’.

#### **3.4.2.1 Lawful behaviour**

Some participants expressed that because they felt that they did not engage in any illegal criminal activity either offline or online, surveillance is not an issue for them. They have not done and are not doing anything they should not have been doing.

*“I don't really mind. But I guess it's because I'm not doing anything illegal, then presumably I would mind. No, it's not something that bothers me.”*  
(Louisa, 32)

Some even argued that the general public should feel similarly to themselves about surveillance. If they did not engage in illegal activity and are innocent, surveillance should not be their concern.

*“Again, if you're not doing anything you shouldn't be doing it wouldn't matter to your life. So you know those who are mostly concerned about it, I would wonder what they are doing.”* (Caleb, 25)

In the context of online corporate surveillance, Caleb (25) had similar views – those abiding the law should not be worried about it.

*“I mean I think my personal opinion is that you know if you are a law abiding citizen you don't really have much to worry about. [...] I think for an everyday sort of working individual, there is nothing to be concerned about apart from the few emails you get from time to time for marketing campaigns. If that really bothers you then I would suggest you need to, you know, kind of relax*

*a little bit, I don't think that's an issue, marketing emails and so forth.”*  
(Caleb, 25)

In some cases, surveillance was acknowledged to be an invasion of privacy or at least something which others may consider to be an invasion. But surveillance still does not concern them, as they do not engage in illegal activities, so they have nothing to hide. Only the guilty need fear surveillance.

*“And so I always just feel like I don't talk about anything that I shouldn't and so it doesn't affect me. And I know it is an invasion of privacy but then again they are only interested in things that are going to be harmful potentially. So it wouldn't bother me.”* (Bianca, 21)

*“I think it's a good thing, obviously I know there is cons with it, like people think there is too much surveillance and they feel it's a bit too interfering. But if you have got nothing to hide I don't see why it's an issue.”* (Meghan, 26)

#### **3.4.2.2 Ordinary personal information**

Often people expressed positive or ambivalent views about surveillance – mostly that taking place online – which they justified by stating that their information is not worth surveilling anyway. They expressed the opinion that their online shopping habits and information is not of interest to the agents of surveillance. This viewpoint underpins the ‘Nothing to hide, nothing to fear’ argument, by which the participants are implying that because their online activity is ordinary, it would be of no interest to those undertaking the surveillance. Their response places the focus upon themselves and the ordinary nature of their surveilled information, while those in the lawfulness subtheme extend their answers to others and the presumption that crimes are being committed.

*“you can look at on my surveillance and there is nothing really interesting to see unless they want to see what shops I'm shopping”* (Ava, 22)

*“I don’t ever feel like my privacy has been invaded by the government or anything. Even if they did go through all my emails and phone calls, they are just really boring, there is nothing interesting. So no, I don’t feel under scrutiny from public surveillance.” (Louisa, 22)*

Bianca (21) even feels more secure knowing that she is being surveilled. She feels as if there is no downside to being surveilled as her online activity is “boring”, though the upside is that she feels more secure.

*“[...]if they read my text messages like it wouldn’t really bother me. If anything, it actually makes me feel more secure that they are doing that. Actually I don’t think it would bother me if they want to check my Facebook or anything. Like they will have a really boring time.” (Bianca, 21)*

Both subthemes are reflected in James’ (32) response that indicates no concern about surveillance because he i) does not engage in criminal activity and ii) his metadata is not interesting.

*“I don’t indulge in any terrorist things so I wouldn’t imagine that I’m particularly being surveilled. So yeah apart from the information that I freely give probably a lot of metadata coming out from my phone and what I watch on TV and what I browse. If GCHQ are storing that they are going to find that I’m an incredibly boring person. But yeah I can’t imagine that I’m under surveillance.”*

### **3.4.3 Protection of the public**

The third main theme identified in the analysis is ‘Protection of the public’. This theme encompassed various views, feelings and thoughts expressed by participants that surveillance is for the protection and safety of the populace, often from a variety of threats, such as criminals and terrorists.

Most of the participants felt that surveillance generally is for the protection of the public. These views seem to be predicated on an assumption of a paternalistic state that has the best interest of its citizens at heart, suggesting trust in the state. Sophia (20) for example felt that being watched makes her feel protected.

*“I think it’s a good thing I think it can be very helpful when... I like being protected, someone watching over you and protecting.”*

Surveillance was perceived to be good because it helps the Government keep its citizens safe. It is for preventing crimes and prosecuting criminals.

*“So I think it’s a good thing all in all in terms of preventing crime and in terms of catching criminals, missing people, general stuff like that. Car crashes either, attacks.”* (Ava, 22)

*“I think it is used as a deterrent to stop people from committing crimes because they know that their faces can be caught on camera and they can be caught afterwards. It is useful in prosecuting criminals because it’s video evidence of identification which is more reliable than eyewitness testimony sometimes.”* (Stephen, 26)

*“I think it’s a good thing because it helps so if you’re attacked it really helps finding that person.”* (Sophia, 20)

Some – for example, Ralph (26) – felt that it was safe and comforting to know that they are being watched and surveillance implemented because if crime is committed against someone it helps to catch the criminals.

*“It’s reassuring for me. If anything happens you know, you’re stabbed, they can trace it back. I think it’s reassuring most of the time. [...] I think it’s quite safe.”*

The aim of surveillance is to make people feel safe. The gathering of information is useful against crime so as to keep people safe.

*“I suppose it meant to make people feel safer, if someone feels like there is someone watching over them all the time. I suppose that’s the main reason, I imagine to have like video evidence of something happening, to make people feel safe” (Harry, 21)*

The effectiveness of surveillance – specifically CCTV – has been demonstrated previously in crime detection, for example when people were wrongly charged for crimes they did not commit. Catherine (20) felt that this example illustrates that surveillance is for the protection of the public.

*“I think it’s good to an extent, when it is protecting people, when it’s for safety, makes court cases a lot easier. There are people who have been wrongly charged with things and they have been cleared because of the CCTV.”*

Most interviewees were aware of the efficacy of surveillance – mostly CCTV – via the news where successful cases of criminal identification and detection due to the use of CCTV are often reported. These media representations of surveillance potentially contribute to its positive perception among the interviewees. Studies have previously shown that representations of CCTV in the media are often portrayed in a positive way (Armstrong, 1999; McCahill, 2002, McCahill & Norris, 2002; Hempel & Töpfer, 2009; Kroener, 2013). This positive representation is reflected in Louisa’s (32) comment:

*“I read a story the other day where they captured a man trying to grab a woman on the street and they got him right on CCTV, so they got his face and everything and obviously it wouldn’t have happened if they didn’t have CCTV. I think it’s OK, I sort of assume it’s there for the public good really. There is no sort of malignant deed behind it or anything.”*

Supportive attitudes towards offline surveillance – particularly in the context of CCTV cameras – have been demonstrated in numerous studies (Brown, 1995; Ditton, 1998; Dixon, Levine, & McAuley, 2004; Honess & Charman, 1992) as well as the perceived effectiveness of such measures (Bennett & Gelsthorpe, 1996).

In some cases, even when CCTV has been shown to be ineffective people still perceived it to be useful and were in support of it. Though it often did not lead to the successful apprehension of criminals, Catherine (20) for instance thought that it was reassuring that the victims were later able to observe the crime caught by surveillance cameras.

*My brother had his bike stolen in London a couple of months ago. He never got it back but he was able to see how it was taken and everything because of the CCTV outside McDonald's nearby. So it's good that you can have that. It should be used for that reason."*

Sharon (32) expressed similar views. In a crime committed against her, CCTV was not able to help in the apprehension of the offender, yet she felt that the presence of surveillance was still useful and reassuring.

*"I've had my bike stolen from somewhere where there was a security camera and although it was nice to know that the security camera was there. Unfortunately it didn't pick them up because it was in the wrong place. But you know in that circumstance it is nice to know that you can go back and try at least."*

The need of surveillance for safety and protection was often expressed in an online context as well. People – for instance, Ralph (26) – talked about the need for government monitoring of the 'Dark web'. It has been shown that more than half of content hosted on the 'Dark web' is illegal, including but not limited to illicit drugs, human, weapon and sex trafficking and terrorist communication (Moore &



Rid, 2016; Weimann, 2016). It remains largely unregulated and better monitoring and policing is needed.

*“Yeah, I mean it's always good that the police are monitoring the silent web, you know, obviously those websites where people can talk to each other anonymously, but you want to monitor that as well because it's scary what they could organise. Obviously it can prevent fraud, prevent terrorism, it can prevent anything,”*

The majority of people talked about terrorism in relation to surveillance. Terrorism relies upon the use of psychological mechanisms which underpin our perception of threats (Breckenridge & Zimbardo, 2007). Most of the participants felt that surveillance is definitely needed in times of crisis when the threat of terrorism is high. The recent terrorist attack in Paris was a frequently cited example.

*“Yes. I think generally it's a good thing, especially everything that is happening right now you know, terrorism and things like that. I think it is a good thing because it can kind of track people's online access when potentially they are looking at things or showing worrying signs whether that's kind of like in terms of terrorism or in terms of I don't know like child pornography and things like that. I think it can be good for picking up the smaller symptoms before they act up this behaviour. For example if it is the fact that someone is looking every day how to make a bomb that is something quite worrying that we should be sort of keeping track of.” (Ava, 22)*

*“Particularly at the moment they need to be quite, looking quite closely at what people are doing in order to kind of pick up any terrorist threats.” (Sharon, 32)*

A commonly observed emotional response to a perceived threat is an effort to reduce the distress by increasing levels of security, potentially resulting in increased support for government surveillance strategies targeting the threat (David & Silver,

2004). Support for surveillance under the threat of terrorism has been demonstrated in existing quantitative research (Cohrs et al., 2005; Davis & Silver, 2004; Malhotra & Popp, 2012). Furthermore, the agenda-setting theory from the field of sociology and media studies provides an explanation for the frequent mention of terrorism, according to which, the media influences the public agenda by giving more exposure to certain topics (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002), with the public then tending to feel these topics are more important. Thus, it is relevant for the present study because most of the interviews were conducted immediately after the Paris attacks on the 13th of November 2015 and news about terrorism were given more exposure in the media.

Stephen (26) argued that mass surveillance by the Government is warranted in times of crisis when there is threat but not during periods of low threat. This suggests that support for surveillance is largely dependent on the context. This is in line with existing literature suggesting that in the light of terrorism when there is a high perceived threat, surveillance is tolerated where once it may have been regarded as unacceptable (Levi & Wall, 2004).

*“So maybe surveillance with the intention of protecting people is more of a good thing than surveillance generally. So in times of crisis maybe surveillance might be warranted, extra surveillance, but then times when there is not so much danger or whatever maybe just continuing surveillance and collecting everyone’s data isn’t a good thing.”* (Stephen, 26)

On the other hand, some participants had different views and felt that the threat of terrorism had been overestimated. It has been suggested that fears of terrorism are disproportionately high due to the availability heuristic – a bias caused by differing retrievability of instance affecting evaluations (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) – often originating from media exposure (Kunreuther, 2002; Sunstein, 2003).

Rupert (23) talked about traffic accidents in the UK as an example, stating that:

*“we lose thousands of people in traffic accidents. So when people say that terrorism is the greatest threat to national security it is completely absurd. I think drowning in your bath is greater threat to national security than terrorism.”*

Brian (24) also felt that terrorism should not be the reason for the extent of surveillance the Government wishes to use.

*“I think they are more scared of what could happen than actually using precedence, I mean even though there have been terrorist attacks I don't think it probably warrants as much surveillance as they seem to want to use.”*

These assertions suggest that some had a more ambivalent sense of trust when it comes to their perceptions of the state which suggests that there may be some ulterior motive for the state wishing to monitor its populace.

#### **3.4.4 Trust in the agent of surveillance**

Another main theme identified in the discussions about surveillance was trust. Three subthemes of trust were generated to differentiate between the types of trust in the agent of surveillance, (i) one that stems from the perception that surveillance has been (or has not been) performed efficiently by the agent previously, (ii) one that describes an inherent trust (or lack of it) in the agent with surveillance, and (iii) one that is conditional on transparency provided by the agent regarding the surveillance. These are explored below.

##### **3.4.4.1 Efficacy**

For some participants, there seemed to be a connection between their views on the efficacy of surveillance measures implemented by the British Government and their trust in the Government. They placed trust in the Government when they felt that they had performed well, and that surveillance was conducted efficiently and effectively.

*“I trust them in the sense that like they do catch criminals, the security services do keep us safe. For example, you know like the 7/7 bombings in London, there have actually been lots of similar sort of planned attacks that have been stopped by the security services and obviously surveillance played a role in that. So I think that surveillance has kept the public safe and I think they do a very good job.” (Albert, 24)*

*“[...] but I think they do their job well. And so if there was a problem that they would help through the surveillance doing it, I wouldn't mind them doing it either.” (Sophia, 20)*

This notion is reflected in ‘Performance theory’ which states that trust in the Government is nourished by increased government performance (Yang & Holzer, 2006). However, this relationship between trust and performance of government is not conclusive as there exists an element of reverse causality; trust in the Government can influence the perception of government performance (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003).

On the other hand, as asserted by ‘Performance theory’, people hold negative attitudes towards the Government in the case of unsatisfactory performance (Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2001). Marcus (21) explained that his lack of trust in the Government was due to their past ineffective use of surveillance – the failure in using gathered surveillance data efficiently in the context of the Paris attacks.

*“It has been proven before that although they kept this information they are not effective in using the information. Paris is the most recent example. I don't have a problem with using information if it actually does protect but if it doesn't protect then you have to question why they are collecting it.”*

#### 3.4.4.2 Inherent trust in the agent of surveillance

The second subtheme nesting under ‘Trust in the agent of surveillance’ represents the inherent trust (or distrust) people place in the Government in their use of surveillance. Although some, for example, Meghan (26) trusted the Government with their surveillance powers “*completely*” because “*I have no reason to think that they would use it inappropriately*”. Caleb (25) feels that the Government has good intentions and is motivated to help the public therefore their surveillance powers are justified.

*“But if you say do I trust the Government in general, yeah, I would probably say that you know the Government clearly has the interest of myself and the general public at heart.”*

Political trust has been found to positively relate to increasing levels of support for policies targeting terrorism and fostering support for anti-terrorism policies (Denemark, 2012). In the US and in Canada it has been demonstrated that those who trust the government tend to support security and surveillance policies (Nakhaie & de Lint, 2013).

An interesting justification was provided by Stephen (26) as to why he trusts the Government with their use of surveillance. It is his belief that people are inherently good and therefore should be trusted. Stephen even argued that there are good intentions behind abuses of power, exemplifying the expression ‘the road to hell is paved with good intentions’.

*“I believe that people are fundamentally good people and that misuses of power aren’t usually malevolent like evil, just people with good intentions but going about achieving them in the wrong way. I trust people more than I don’t trust them in general.”*

In the context of targeted surveillance, Rupert (23) expressed disapproval because of his lack of trust in the Government. He further states that he would even be

willing to accept targeted surveillance against groups based on stereotypes – in this case, religious profiling of Muslims – if it was conducted by a government he trusts. This suggests that surveillance (even if it is conducted within a grey area, such as for religious profiling) is perceived to be more acceptable when the surveilled trusts the surveiller and arguably when surveillance is used for the protection of the in-group from the out-group.

*“Again, I don’t in principle object to it, I would object to it because I don’t trust the Government. But if I did trust the Government I don’t think there is anything... if you are using your surveillance resources for the good then you have got to use them in the most efficient way possible. One of the most efficient ways possible is to dispense them on targets that are statistically more likely to need to be subject to surveillance. And if one of the things that tells you that the person should be surveilled is their ethnicity or religion or whatever it is then I don’t think there is anything wrong in principle with that.”*

In the context of corporate surveillance, different views were expressed. Most people did not trust corporations with collecting their personal information. For example, Louisa (32) said that:

*“I don’t trust people in large positions of power who want to consolidate their power by collecting information. I don’t think that it’s good for example that a company has increased advertising power. So surveillance is obviously the tool to use to direct marketing most effectively so I don’t think it’s good.”*

Research suggests that trust can be constructed from a shared identity (Calnan & Rowe, 2006) and that a shared identity can build trust within a group (Foddy, Platow & Yamagishi, 2009; Stroebe, Lodewijkx & Spears, 2005; Tanis & Postmes, 2005). O’Donnell, Jetten and Ryan, (2010) demonstrated that sharing identity with those who introduce the surveillance can have an effect on the acceptance of the surveillance. They found that surveillance is less likely to be seen as an

infringement of privacy if the people identified more strongly with their city. Thus, they stated that sharing the same group membership as the source of surveillance increases the acceptance of surveillance. This is because shared identity allows surveillance to be perceived as a benefit to the in-group (i.e. safety). It also implies that a lack of shared identity results in people perceiving surveillance to be an invasion of privacy (as it is not being used for their safety). In line with previous research, the findings of this study suggest that surveillance is perceived to be more/less acceptable when there is/is not trust between the agent of surveillance and the surveilled. Additionally, according to self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), shared social identity between leaders and followers can form a foundation for influence (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Turner, 2005; Turner & Haslam, 2001; Turner, Reynolds, & Subašić, 2008) which can help governments increase acceptance of their policies and practices including surveillance measures.

#### **3.4.4.3 Transparency regarding surveillance**

Most of the participants felt that more transparency is needed from the Government regarding surveillance and the extent to which it has been carried out, as the unknown and secretive nature of surveillance is perceived to be a disadvantage. The desire for transparency is reflected in these data extracts:

*“I think they should be clear. If they’re going to collect everything, they should be clear on what they are going to collect and for what purpose. For me it’s not the fact that they were collecting it, it’s the fact that you don’t know what it’s for, why do they need to know that? And that’s what is missing.”*  
(Marcus, 21)

*“I think it’s bad that you don’t actually know the extent to which you are personally being watched, I think there should be more about that. Because it is very secretive, I think that’s probably the disadvantage of it.”* (Catherine, 20)

Catherine (20) further stated that she felt that *“it is weird”* how surveillance is *“quite a taboo subject and we don’t really know how much just normal people are being watched”*. This lack of transparency regarding surveillance was given as a reason for the lack of trust in the Government. This assertion has been evidenced in literature, operational transparency for example has been shown to increase people’s trust in the Government (Buell, Porter, & Norton, 2016). This is further reflected in the comments below:

*“I don’t think anyone can fully say that they trust the Government or the surveillance people or the police or whatever because like you can never fully know. Because we are not given that knowledge. It’s never talked about. And it’s always just assumed. We all know we’re watched, we all know that it’s for security reasons, we just accept it, but I don’t think we should trust it.”*  
(Catherine, 20)

*“That’s a disadvantage in fact that people don’t know what’s happening. So if you are getting information that way you are deceiving huge amounts of people, individuals, violating their rights in some way, so that is a disadvantage. It doesn’t build any trust. [...] Yeah, I think it should be more transparent. You should really know what your government is doing, I suppose.”* (Victor, 19)

Participants who felt that the Government should provide more transparency regarding its surveillance practices often mentioned Edward Snowden and his revelations to support and justify their views. Due to past misuses of surveillance powers without the knowledge of the public – which was brought to the public’s attention by Snowden – transparency is needed to elicit trust in the Government and their use of surveillance. It has been suggested that as a result of the revelations, the public started to question government mass surveillance activities (Murphy, 2014). For example, Catherine (20) felt that leaks about the extent of surveillance carried out on the general public led to questioning of the effect on people’s privacy:



*“Because there are certain times, when things are leaked, we find out a little bit more about something but you do end up thinking ‘this is very bad’ and we just don’t know how fully it is affecting our privacy.”*

Justin (25) felt that Snowden leaking classified information about the extent of surveillance was the right thing to do because *“when it comes to national security and freedom of information that should be already there”*. Sophia (20) thought that due to the Government lying about surveillance activities in the past, the public might feel that they cannot be trusted.

*“Lying to the public about what they have done and what they haven't done. You meant to trust them with your privacy and you feel like you can't trust them.”*

Furthermore, Rupert (23) also explained that he would be more supportive of surveillance if he had trust in the Government which was doing the surveilling. He felt that more transparency and less secrecy is needed from the agent of surveillance.

*“If I trusted the Government doing the right thing then I wouldn’t mind doing surveillance and things in secret but given they are not I think it's very important that we have people [Snowden] who are able divulge important information about what's going on so that we can at least try to hold people in power accountable.”*

An important distinction was made between online and offline surveillance – implemented by the Government – in relation to the interviewee’s trust in them. This was reflected in Sharon’s (32) statement:

*“Certainly I'd like to think that I do [trust the British Government]. I mean I would struggle to think for what other purpose they might use CCTV footage. I could kind of see more for the online things kind of a more of a big unknown.*

*But in terms of CCTV footage, I'm not sure what else they would use it for realistically.”*

Often in the case of online surveillance – linked to its unknown extent and lack of transparency – mistrust was expressed. On the other hand, in relation to offline surveillance, trust was conveyed perhaps due to the ‘known’ nature of offline surveillance. People are well aware of CCTV for instance, due to its ubiquitous characteristic, and of course the crime deterrent aspect of CCTV relies on it being conspicuous. Cameras are everywhere and people are not only constantly exposed to it but also reminded often of surveillance. Furthermore, the use of CCTV is often portrayed in movies, TV shows (The Wire, Black Mirror) and news that almost all of our participants described exposure to.

Interestingly, in the face of uncertain information, people can be encouraged into conspiratorial thinking, influenced by their perception of the morality of the agent in question (Van Prooijen & Jostman, 2013).

### **3.4.5 Concerns**

When discussing their understanding of and views on surveillance, various concerns were raised by the participants which can be distinguished into (i) misuse of surveillance (ii) privacy infringement, (iii) unjustified surveillance (iv) surveillance capitalism. When discussing surveillance, even those who had favourable views on it, considered it to have some disadvantages.

#### **3.4.5.1 Misuse of surveillance**

Concerns about the possible misuse of surveillance powers by the British Government were also expressed in the interviews. For example, Caleb (25) believed that there are always people who want to abuse their powers.

*“I think when you go down to the specific individual, there is always going to be individuals in the Government or police or anywhere that will abuse*

*their powers. I wouldn't say that would apply to everybody who is in government you know, but there is always going to be one or two people who are going to abuse their power and use it for things they shouldn't be doing."*

Stephen (26) stated that there is potential for misuse of the information. He felt that people in the Government are also prone to human error and can be influenced by emotions. He further explained that the abuse of surveillance powers – for instance, incorrectly targeted surveillance – has a higher probability of occurring in scenarios when there is a threat – for example, after the terrorist attacks in Paris – and the Government is pressured to produce results.

*"I think there is too much potential for misuse of the information. I don't think that people in government and security agency are immune to human failure and human emotion and I think that sometimes in like historical situations or like incident and scenarios where people want to catch people or you know maybe let what they think is right or let what they think happened get the better of them over the facts and then they can end up causing more harm than good. If they get some shit on innocent people and use that wrongly and stuff. So for like Paris and stuff and the moment, maybe it's like really acute situations, tensions are really high and people have lots of pressure to catch people and produce results. I think in those situations there is more chance that information collecting will be abused."*

Albert (24) felt similarly towards both government and corporate surveillance, he felt that increased surveillance powers would increase the potential for abuse.

*"Well, I think the more you increase the kind of online surveillance powers and give those powers to I don't know like organisations or people, it increases their scope for abuse."*

The majority of participants felt that surveillance should be more targeted at criminals instead of being used as a tool for mass surveillance. They explained that

surveillance targeted towards specific people (e.g., criminals) can be beneficial, however blanket surveillance of the public was considered to be negative.

*“Good in some ways the fact that if surveillance is being conducted if it's for a you know, it's specific surveillance on specific things, specific groups, specific people, I think that's absolutely, and there is a legal framework for that, I should think that wouldn't be too much of a problem. But as just like a general overall thing I don't think that's a great thing.” (James, 32)*

*“It seems intuitively bad because you don't want your stuff tracked but a lot of stuff happens on the internet that I'm unaware of, so I don't know how bad some stuff is so like child pornography and stuff like that. If you could track people who put those stuff online, then I think that's a good thing. But then tracking just everyone's stuff is probably a bad thing.” (Stephen, 26)*

Ava (22) further explained the problem with mass surveillance by saying that surveilling everyone (like herself) could be a waste of resources resulting in other more important things being overlooked or missed.

*“It's more that I don't trust them in a sense that they are not picking up and then missing things or they are potentially focusing too much on people like me who you know, you can look at on my surveillance and there is nothing really interesting to see unless they want to see what shops I'm shopping at whereas they may be missing big hidden stuff which may be really important.”*

Marcus (21) had similar thoughts and stated that it is important for the right amount of people to be surveilled, only those who in fact should be. He used the attacks in Paris as an example as to why mass surveillance is ineffective. He claimed that the terrorist attacks in Paris could have been prevented if the security services focused on the right people, not the masses. This suggests that terrorist events can have a paradoxical effect on beliefs about and support for surveillance – some draw upon

such attacks to justify existing surveillance or even support calls for extensions of its coverage, while others use the same terrorist event to support arguments that surveillance is effective at preventing terrorism and should not be supported or extended.

*“A bad thing is whether you are surveilling the right people or you have enough intelligence to basically assume that you're focusing on the right people. I think it's the differentiation between how many people you have surveillance of and whether it is the right amount of people. I think you can have surveillance over too many people and then it becomes ineffective. In the sense that if you look at the Paris attacks all those people were surveilled as such, they were all known to people, but they still couldn't stop them. [...] They could have acted on the surveillance better because they sort of didn't have too many people to look at.”*

Indeed, published speculation regarding mass surveillance has doubted its efficacy in identifying terrorists and claimed it to be a statistical impossibility (Rudmin, 2006).

Furthermore, an account of perceived misuse of surveillance was described by Catherine (20) who reported a personal experience in the context of surveillance conducted by a private company. Catherine felt that she was inappropriately surveilled by the company she worked for and therefore had her privacy invaded, as she felt the purpose of the installed camera was not to observe her but to protect her, whereas the authority responsible for the CCTV potentially had a different view.

*“We got a phone call, they watched it up in the office, they were cashing up, they were watching me on the CCTV doing this other thing and they called down, they rang down to the kitchen and they were like ‘why are you doing that?’, I can't exactly remember what it was, it was really weird. [...] So they used to have all these cameras everywhere. In a way it was good because if*

*there was a fight or something happened, they could see ... or vandalism. But they shouldn't be using it at 2 o'clock in the morning to watch the workers when they are clearing up after a 7-hour shift."*

### **3.4.5.2 Privacy infringement**

When discussing the characteristics of surveillance, people often raised privacy infringements as a disadvantage. Concerns regarding privacy infringement, stemming from stronger surveillance measures leading to a surveillance society have been demonstrated previously (David Lyon, 2003; Lyon, 1994; Mitchener-Nissen, 2014; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009). For example, Rupert (23) began his definition of surveillance with *"I guess the main thing is government intrusion on people's lives"*. Moreover, in the context of government surveillance, Ralph (26) felt uncomfortable with the extent of personal information the Government has access to.

*"I don't think the Government should be knowing what I'm doing every day. Obviously they know where I work for insurance purposes but no, definitely I don't want them knowing exactly who I'm meeting, all sorts of privacy, you don't want them knowing too much about you."*

Catherine (20) also felt that the Government *"knows too much"* and did not agree with mass surveillance. She expressed concerns about the surveillance of non-illegal activities and claimed that it adversely affects privacy.

*"The Government kind of knows too much about you. I think there are definitely disadvantages, it does affect privacy basically. And if you're not doing anything wrong to be watched that closely that's a bit strange. [...] I think it's bad that people just generally get watched."*

Victor (19) argued that surveillance is *"an instrument of state oppression and control, usually forms of political control"* and specifically talking about online surveillance, he comments that *"the common excuse which is used is that we need*

*to accept a limitation in our freedoms to prevent radicalism” and “I don’t think that surveillance actually prevents terror or prevents attacks in any way. And I think most commonly to use this as an excuse to attack left-wing anti-government movements.”* This latter argument also fits into our ‘Efficacy’ subtheme (nested under ‘Trust in the agent of surveillance’) due to the fact it states that surveillance is ineffective and cites the attacks in Paris as an example. It is just an excuse used by the Government to exert more control over its citizens in order to attack opposing political movements. Lastly, he argues that *“limitation of individual privacy, individual autonomy, state and corporate control”* are all disadvantages of surveillance.

Privacy infringements were also acknowledged in the context of corporate surveillance. For example, Ava (22) provided Apple as an example of a corporation she felt violates privacy via tracking location through its operating system.

*“[...] when the IOS thing came up with the tracking and it could tell exactly where you have been, everywhere, I think people kind of thought that was an invasion of privacy.”*

Interestingly though, most of the participants who felt that surveillance was an invasion of privacy also felt happy to sacrifice it for protection. The relationship between civil liberties and security are often expressed as a trade-off, whereby any gain in security via implementation of surveillance measures results in a proportional loss of citizen’s privacy (Friedewald et al., 2015; Lewis, 2005; Pavone, & Esposti, 2012). Sharon (32) felt that online surveillance is there to prevent crime and even if it is an invasion of privacy, she was willing to sacrifice it for increased safety. This statement also fits into the ‘Nothing to hide’ theme.

*“Yeah, but personally I don’t think I do anything online that I would be particularly worried about. I kind of yeah, it’s more my details than actually the content of the websites I use or my emails and things like that. Obviously it’s a bit of invasion of privacy but at the same time as I said before I would*

*be willing to sacrifice a bit of that in order to, you know, know that these strategies are placed to prevent crime.” (Sharon, 32)*

Similar to our participants’ views, it has been argued previously that people are more willing to sacrifice privacy for both convenience and security (Chesterman, 2011). Accepting surveillance in spite of its infringement on privacy reflects Festinger’s (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance reduction. According to cognitive dissonance theory, when people have beliefs, ideas or attitudes that do not correspond, a state of discomfort (dissonance) is formed. However, people seek consistency among their attitudes and try to reduce this dissonance. A good example for this was a study carried out by Brehm (1959) where he gave 8<sup>th</sup> grade children a vegetable they disliked and half of them were told that they would be given that vegetable in the future. He demonstrated that those children who believed that eating the vegetable again was inevitable rated the vegetable more positively. Thus, to reduce the dissonance caused by a dislike of the vegetable and the knowledge they would face eating it again, the children started liking the vegetable they previously disliked. We believe that because people perceive surveillance as inevitable, in order to reduce their dissonance, they are more likely to accept it over time.

### **3.4.5.3 Unjustified surveillance**

A lot of participants discussed worries and concerns about the extent of surveillance of the masses and the unjustified use of targeted surveillance. Most of these worries were expressed about the unjustified targeted surveillance of Muslims especially as a possible consequence of the attacks in Paris perpetrated by Islamic extremists. The religious profiling of Muslims was a frequently identified pattern in the data set.

*“I think because there is still like, as bad as it is, there is still like prejudice against certain groups. Particularly like at the moment I can see it quite a big deal with like because there is a lot of like Islamophobia and stuff so I can imagine – even that I completely disagree with it – that someone who is a*



*Muslim would probably be target more than I would. But that's not right.*"  
(Bianca, 21)

*"Obviously there is always this ongoing case with terrorism and so forth and whether we should you be surveilling. I mean there is stuff in the media for example about how ISIS or just the Islamic State now sort of using online media to recruit for example. Obviously if it's people who are purposely linked to the Islamic State then it's fine, but we're applying that more to just Muslim background, then I have an issue. It has to be again this sort of individualistic criteria that goes beyond just somebody's religious status. [...] But you know, if we're going to say, anybody who is a Muslim should have higher levels of surveillance then I think that's obviously incorrect and real infringement on people's freedom."* (Caleb, 25)

Bianca (21) and Caleb (25) – amongst many – did not approve of religious profiling and unjustified targeted surveillance of Muslims.

In line with our findings, the alienation of Muslims as a result of counter-terrorism laws and policies has been raised as a concern previously (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). For example, it has been demonstrated that an increased frequency of Muslims being stopped by police has contributed to feelings of alienation, and opaqueness regarding CCTV camera installation in areas with large Muslim populations has undermined their trust in police. Furthermore, research has shown that particular counter-terrorism policies and practices, especially ones considered to increase repression or stigmatisation of certain groups, work to foment sympathy and encourage silence among these groups (Silke, 2005).

Others however, felt differently. For example, Rupert (23) felt that the problem with targeted surveillance was that it was implemented by a government he did not trust.

*"I think they usually call this [the idea that surveillance might be targeted at some groups in societies more than others] racial profiling. I don't in*

*principle object to it, I would object to it because I don't trust the Government. But if I did trust the Government, I don't think there is anything... if you are using your surveillance resources for the good then you have got to use them in the most efficient way possible.” (Rupert, 23)*

Some recognised that religious profiling and therefore targeted surveillance of Muslims is discrimination which should not happen but also felt that it was understandable, especially in the light of the recent terrorist attacks. This notion also shows that when the realistic threat of terrorism is perceived to be high, people are more likely to overlook infringements on basic human rights. Discrimination seems to be more accepted when the realistic threat of terrorism is present.

*“Because obviously you want everybody to feel like a valid citizen, you don't want to discriminate against people by surveilling some more than others. But then it's almost understandable because if you're looking at for example and Islamic terror threat then it would make more sense to look within the Muslim community than it would within the Romanian community.” (Louisa, 32)*

Research has previously suggested that – beginning with the September 11 attack – an increasing negative social perception of Islam is a response to the perceived realistic and symbolic threats caused by terrorism in the Western world (for example Ciftci, 2012; Croucher, 2013; Hitlan, Carrillo, Aikman, Zárate, 2007). For example, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia found that Muslims living in Western Europe had experienced an increase in hostility and physical attacks since September 11 (Allen, & Nielsen, 2002). Post 9/11 a growth of prejudice against Muslims has been reported in the United Kingdom (Sheridan & Gillett, 2005), and evidence for the rise of both covert (implicit, e.g., being treated with suspicion) and overt discrimination (explicit, e.g., violent experiences) experienced amongst British Muslims was found (Sheridan, 2006). Furthermore, as mentioned previously, terrorism was at the forefront of attention due to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and news about terrorism were given more exposure in the

media (agenda-setting theory; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). This finding is also compatible with Cinnirella's IRM model of Islamophobia (Cinnirella, 2012), in which it is argued that Muslims are positioned by negative media representations, fear of terrorism and strong British identity, as dangerous outsiders who threaten the British in-group.

Similar views regarding unjustified targeted surveillance were expressed in a non-Muslim related context too. People recognised that just as sometimes people are wrongly convicted, they are also sometimes wrongly surveilled. A lot of the participants felt that the end justifies the means and surveillance still should be implemented – the pros outweigh the cons. This thinking may be explained by a cost-benefit analysis. According to Roman and Farrell (2002), all crime prevention measures – including CCTV – are evaluated using cost-benefit analysis.

*“I mean, yes, it is a concern, but it is probably in some ways an accepted, you know, a negative outcome for some people. Some people get wrongly convicted; some people get wrongly surveilled. But it's obviously for the best interest of the general public to monitor certain people's behaviour, whether it's online or not. And if that occasionally leads to incorrect outcomes, you know, unfortunately it's just something we have to live with in a way [...] so you know there are some people incorrectly surveilled but I mean it's about weighing the pros and cons and I think it's likely that the pros are in this case outweighing the cons.” (Caleb, 25)*

Some felt that unjustified targeted surveillance is understandable due to the lack of time and resources to surveil the entire population, prejudices have to be relied upon to expedite the process.

*“whether I agree with it or not, I assume that it would happen at some point that they would potentially target groups that they would consider dangerous or if they have good reason to do so and the people are hiding anything than they have to somewhat degree even if it's again one of those slightly grey*

*areas of targeting a specific group rather than everybody but I guess you only have so much time to filter through this information.” (Justin, 25)*

To summarise, in their arguments against targeted surveillance, people often raised concerns about its improper use leading to religious profiling of specific groups (i.e. Muslims), although they argued that its use was understandable because of the lack of time to surveil everyone. In arguments against mass surveillance people often raised concerns about its extent and magnitude and suggested that it should be more targeted.

#### **3.4.5.4 Surveillance capitalism**

Surveillance capitalism has been defined as the capture of information so as to predict and alter human behaviour in order to generate revenue and increase market control (Zuboff, 2015).

This subtheme comprises views from interviewees that describe their distaste for targeted advertising whose sole purpose is to further the agenda of the agent of surveillance. An example commonly cited is the surveillance undertaken by corporations, often via the means of targeted advertising, that are implemented to increase the corporations' own wealth or power.

Out of all the different types of surveillance – targeted vs corporate, online vs offline – the majority of people expressed concerns about online corporate surveillance the most, specifically about targeted advertising and spam emails. Catherine (20) for example, described online corporate surveillance as a “sinister element” of surveillance.

Often people accepted mass surveillance by the Government because it is for protection, but not the mass corporate surveillance of internet users or targeted advertising for marketing purposes, as they felt it unnecessary and concerning.

*“I think it’s a good thing that we’re being protected and there are people who can stop terrorist plots, stop on plots and stop people generally. But I don’t think that things like checking what type of jumpers you like and what sort of programs you like to watch, I don’t think that’s necessary, I think that’s too far.” (Catherine, 20)*

*“It’s just tricking people into buying something they don’t necessarily want, but they are convinced they need. So it’s not good. I suppose most people won’t realise that. It’s just a sneaky way to make money.” (Harry, 21)*

Previous studies have found that the privacy concerns of consumers are said to be related to the following aspects of data collection and the use of it: unauthorized collection and access to personal data, errors in integrity of the databases, secondary use without authorization (Smith, Milberg, & Burke, 1996; Stewart & Segars, 2002). Furthermore, Paine, Reips, Stieger, Joinson and Buchanan (2007), demonstrated that viruses, spam, hackers and spyware seemed to be the main concerns of consumers regarding online privacy. In the context of social network sites, Allmer, Fuchs, Kreiling and Sevignani (2014) showed surveillance to be the most common concern amongst SNS users, resulting from data abuse, data forwarding or lack of data protection measures.

James (32) opposed the every-day online metadata gathering mass surveillance from both the Government and corporations.

*“Maybe sometimes surveillance is good for you know you can say for the greater good, for protecting the nation, protecting the populous, maybe that’s ok, but if it’s something that happens on a day-to-day basis I don’t think it would be a good or acceptable thing for governments or tech companies or you know to be constantly looking at what we are consuming, doing and things like that.”*

A few of the participants recognised that aspects of online corporate surveillance are 'irritating' and rely on personal information but accepted it due to its benefits, such as free service and tailored product marketing. This corresponds with the assertions that privacy is traded in exchange for products, improved services or other specialized deals, meaning that people often give their personal data to certain companies in exchange for something in return, for instance rewards or a more personalized service (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000).

*"I mean when it comes to things as simple as cookies, it can be a bit annoying. But at the end of its kind of for your benefit and some of the things that happen because of it, you get free access to content that would usually be paid for, you get things that are better targeted towards you. [...] The same with things like Youtube, Facebook, the surveillance side of it is you agreeing in some small way to give the information over in exchange for the free service of access to talking to thousands of people online or access to the latest news."*  
(Justin, 25)

Rupert's (23) disapproval and opposition to online corporate surveillance stem from his general dislike for and distrust in large corporations.

*"It's not just targeted advertising, that's just a part of it. I mean you can use information for lots of things. And information is very useful and the people that is going to be useful to are large corporations and I'm generally against everything that works for them. Even if they use it to improve the quality of their website, that itself is not such a bad thing but given that most profitable corporations in general their success is sort of comes at the expense of pretty much everyone else's success. I just wouldn't approve anything that helps them. There would be exceptions but as a general rule I'm not a fan. Because essentially in Europe and America you see a situation where people who have lots of power, wealth and influence have been using it to increase their power at the expense of everyone else."*

Trust has been found to be a critical factor in the sharing of information and the development of relationships in the offline world and it is also considered vital for successful online interactions (Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2004; Lewis, Weigert, & Dame, 1985).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This qualitative study explored British young adults' understandings and perceptions of surveillance using inductive thematic analysis. The five themes identified in this study underpin their perceptions of surveillance. First of all, surveillance in general is perceived to be ubiquitous, ever-present and inevitable. The findings suggest that their positive (acceptance, support) or negative (rejection, opposition) views towards surveillance were discussed and evaluated in several aspects relating to surveillance, as captured by the other four themes.

Although concerns were expressed amongst participants regarding surveillance, such concerns often were not expressed in a binary fashion, but were discussed alongside various rationalisations and justifications, such as the 'nothing to hide' argument – which is well documented in privacy literature (e.g., Crossman, 2008; Solove, 2007; Solove, 2011; Spears & Erete, 2014) – and the belief in surveillance as a protective measure. For example, surveillance and privacy concerns were often weighed against one another, often resulting in a 'nothing to hide' justification for surveillance. This was frequently coupled with the perception that surveillance is for the greater good, especially when the threat to safety was perceived to be high, for example threat of terrorism. A commonly observed emotional response to a perceived threat is an effort to reduce the distress by increasing levels of security, such as that provided by surveillance (David & Silver, 2004). Support for surveillance under the threat of terrorism has been demonstrated in existing literature (Cohrs et al., 2005; Davis & Silver, 2004; Levi & Wall, 2004; Malhotra & Popp, 2012). In regard to terrorism, concerns about the unjustified targeted surveillance of specific groups (Muslims) were raised and although for some this

was deemed unacceptable, for others it was considered justified for protection and reduction in threat. Research has previously suggested that – beginning with the September 11 attack – an increasing negative social perception of Islam is a response to the perceived realistic and symbolic threats caused by terrorism in the Western world (for example Ciftci, 2012; Croucher, 2013; Hitlan, Carrillo, Aikman, Zárate, 2007).

Governmental trust seemed to be closely linked to the threat perceptions of terrorism, often being associated with more positive views on surveillance. This has been demonstrated in research showing that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the level of trust citizens had in the Government increased to heights not seen since the 1960's (Chanley, 2002; Cook & Gronke, 2005; Westin, 2003) along with the public approval of new government surveillance powers (Harris Interactive & Westin, 2001). Davis and Silver (2004) concluded that individuals who felt a greater sense of threat from terrorism were more willing to support surveillance and to trade off civil liberties in exchange for security, with one's trust in the government interacting with this effect. It has been found that political trust positively relates to support for policies targeting terrorism (Denemark, 2012). Furthermore, it is imperative to further distinguish trust – so as to better understand it – which is influenced by its other subthemes, which are people's evaluations on the transparency of surveillance measures and the perceived efficacy of the government implementing such measures. When the government was perceived to be effective with their use of surveillance, people seemed to be more trusting of them. This is reflected in 'Performance theory' stating that trust in the Government is nourished by increased government performance (Yang & Holzer, 2006). Moreover, lack of transparency in regard to surveillance measures was often provided as a reason for the lack of trust in the Government. It has been shown that operational transparency increases people's trust in the Government (Buell et al., 2016). These views were often accentuated by the example of Snowden and his revelations regarding extensive global surveillance programs. Additionally, often in the context of online surveillance – linked to its unknown extent and lack of transparency – mistrust was



expressed. On the contrary, in relation to offline surveillance, trust was conveyed perhaps due to the ‘known’ nature of offline surveillance (e.g., CCTV).

The relationship between civil liberties and security are often expressed as a trade-off, whereby any gain in security via implementation of surveillance measures results in a proportional loss of citizen’s privacy (Friedewald et al., 2015; Lewis, 2005; Pavone, & Esposti, 2012) and trust impacts upon the balance between privacy and security (Pavone & Esposti, 2012). In this study, trust in the agent of surveillance seemed to be an important element in surveillance evaluations, when trust was present between the surveilled and surveiller, surveillance appeared to be more acceptable and less intrusive. This is in line with findings showing the acceptance of surveillance increases when the surveiller and surveilled share the same group membership (O’Donnell et al., 2010). Furthermore, shared social identity between leaders and followers can form a foundation for influence (Reicher et al., 2005, Turner, 2005, Turner and Haslam, 2001, Turner et al., 2008) which can help governments increase acceptance of their policies and practices including surveillance measures. Additionally, the role of trust in accepting privacy invading measures has been demonstrated previously (van den Broek, Ooms, Friedewald, van Lieshout, & Rung, 2017; Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018).

People generally believed that surveillance was for the protection of the public, perhaps founded upon an assumption of a paternalistic state having the best interest of its citizens at heart, suggesting trust in the state. Offline government surveillance was often considered to be beneficial even if it lacked efficacy. These positive perceptions of offline government surveillance may have been influenced by positive media representations of CCTV (Armstrong, 1999; McCahill, 2002, McCahill & Norris, 2002; Hempel & Töpfer, 2009; Kroener, 2013).

However, concerns were expressed regarding the misuse of surveillance in the form of mass surveillance by the Government which participants often felt should be more targeted. Focusing on the masses instead of specific individuals – according to our participants – could lead to ineffective surveillance, the attacks in Paris being

cited as an example. This suggests that terrorist events can have a paradoxical effect on perceptions of surveillance. Some draw upon such attacks to justify existing surveillance, while others use the same terrorist event to support arguments that surveillance is effective at preventing terrorism and should not be supported.

Most concerns about surveillance were expressed in the context of online corporate mass surveillance, especially about targeted advertising and spam emails. It was often considered to be unnecessary, irritating and an invasion of privacy. This sentiment is in line with previous research (Paine et al., 2007; Stewart & Segars, 2002). In spite of that, some accepted it due to its benefits, such as free service and tailored product marketing. This corresponds with the assertions that privacy is traded in exchange for services, products or deals, meaning that people often give their personal data to certain companies in exchange for something in return (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000).

Privacy infringement was also often raised as a concern about surveillance, which has been demonstrated previously (David Lyon, 2003; Lyon, 1994; Mitchener-Nissen, 2014; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009). However, people often felt happy to sacrifice privacy for protection provided by surveillance. The relationship between civil liberties and security are often expressed as a trade-off, whereby any gain in security via implementation of surveillance measures results in a proportional loss of citizen's privacy (Friedewald et al., 2015; Lewis, 2005; Pavone, & Esposti, 2012).

It is imperative to emphasise that the majority of the interviews (17 out of 20) were conducted almost immediately after a terrorist attack. Therefore, this could have influenced their responses due to terrorism being at the forefront of attention. Participants raised concerns regarding the unjustified targeted surveillance of Muslims – racial profiling – and while some were opposed to such practices, some also seemed to be in support of it as they thought it was understandable, given the circumstances. The agenda-setting theory from the field of sociology and media studies provides an explanation for this phenomenon, according to which, the media

influences the public agenda by giving more exposure to certain topics (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002), with the public then tending to feel these topics are more important.

It is also important to highlight that participants were recruited from the researcher's circle of friends and acquaintances, so it was easier to build rapport in interviews if compared to a group of strangers, allowing for a more open, honest and forthright discussion in this complex, often sensitive topic.

A limitation of this study is that during the interview, sometimes participants only offered short answers without further elaboration, even after being prompted. Due to the questions being quite specialised and specific many people had not given much prior thought to the answers they were required to provide. People had to process the questions and formulate answers in interview conditions which may have hampered their ability to speak freely and fluently about the issue at hand.

Furthermore, a qualitative approach does not seek to survey attitudes and beliefs in a comprehensive manner that could be called generalisable or representative of a population. It is therefore imperative to realise that the study does not provide, nor did it seek to provide, insight into the prevalence of the beliefs that we identified within the wider population of the UK. Additionally, we must accept, as is the nature of thematic analysis, that the interpretation presented here is a unique product of the specific researcher, and as such represents one possible lens to make sense of the data, the value of which should be judged based on the degree to which the analysis appears to be coherent and insightful (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999).

This study provided an in-depth overview of British young adults' views on surveillance and future studies should focus on each aspect individually in relation to surveillance. This study is unique in a sense that the topic of surveillance was not limited to a certain type of it but instead both government and corporate, online and offline, and mass and targeted surveillance practices were discussed. Based on the thorough answers and implications provided by the study, future quantitative

research should be conducted to further elaborate on people's views on the aforementioned topics on an individual basis.

In summary, views on surveillance are multi-faceted and complex with interweaving elements which weigh on each other and affect views, opinions and justifications. These discussions revolve around culturally important topics that have disseminated throughout the lives of British young adults. These topics come together within discussions around surveillance and help shape the perceptions of what surveillance is.

### **3.6 Supplemental Material**

#### **Semi-structured interview guide:**

What comes to your mind when you hear the word surveillance?

Have you read anything about surveillance?

Who do you think is doing the surveilling?

Do you think surveillance is a good or a bad thing?

Thinking specifically about online surveillance, do you think that this can be a good or necessary thing?

Are there any disadvantages of online surveillance?

What do you think about CCTV in public settings?

Why do you think CCTV is used?

What do you think about the idea that surveillance might be targeted at some groups in societies more than others?

Do you think it is OK for this to happen?

What groups or kinds of people do you think might be targeted?

What comes to your mind when you think about privacy?

What areas of life do you think privacy is relevant to?

How important is privacy to you?

Have you been the victim of what you felt was improper invasion of privacy?

Is privacy an important issue for you in the online context?

Do you have any concerns about privacy when using the Internet? If yes, what are they?

Do you take any action to protect your privacy while you are using the Internet?

Who do you allow to view your Facebook profile?

Do you include a picture of yourself/email address/phone/home address/age/information about your interests on your profile/information about your personality on your profile?

How often do you edit the privacy settings on your profile?

Do you ever worry about what someone could learn about you from your Facebook profile?

What do you think about targeted advertising based on your browsing history?

Do you have any concerns about online shopping sites collecting and storing personal information about you?

Do you trust that online companies keep your best interest in mind when dealing with your personal information?

Or do you think it is risky to give personal information to online companies?

Do you think online companies misuse personal information?

**Table 3.2** Example of coding and theming.

Data extract (example)	Codes	Themes
<p>Suzie: Thinking specifically about online surveillance, do you think that this can be a good or necessary thing?</p>		
<p>Catherine (20): Definitely, I think, because this is how people communicate nowadays. Primarily, obviously after face-to-face communication or like telephones, that is one of the main forms of communication and with things like terror plots and horrible things that can go on the internet, sort of abuse and things like that, I think that's good that there is surveillance. People do know about what goes on. I think that's good.</p>	<p>Positive view on online surveillance</p>	<p>Protection of the public</p>
<p>Suzie: Do you think it has any disadvantages?</p>		
<p>Catherine (20): Yeah, I think, I haven't really thought enough into it really, but I think there are definitely disadvantages. The government kind of knowing too much about you. I think there are definitely disadvantages, it does affect privacy basically. And if</p>	<p>Government 'knows too much' Government</p>	<p>Concern – privacy</p>

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<p>you're not doing anything wrong to be watched that closely that's a bit strange. I can see why they do it to people who have sort of like criminal past or have done something wrong or they are being suspected of plotting something like terrorism and part of groups like ISIS, they need to be stopped. So yeah it's good that they do that, but I think it's bad that people just generally get watched. And I think it's bad that you don't actually know the extent to which you are personally being watched, I think there should be more about that. Because it is very secretive, I think that's probably the disadvantage of it.</p>	<p>surveillance infringes on privacy</p> <p>Criminals should be monitored</p> <p>Mention of terrorism</p> <p>Negative views on mass surveillance</p> <p>Unknown extent of surveillance</p>	<p>infringement</p> <p>Concern – unjustified mass surveillance</p> <p>Trust in the agent of surveillance (govt) – transparency</p>
<p>Suzie: So what would you do about that? You said that it's bad that people don't know the extent to which they are being surveilled.</p>		
<p>Catherine (20): I don't really know if I was in that position, I would inform them, but I think I wouldn't in some cases because it needs to be secret. I think it's weird how it is quite a taboo subject and we don't really know how much just normal people are being watched. So I don't really know.</p>	<p>Unknown extent of surveillance</p>	<p>Trust in the agent of surveillance (govt) – transparency</p>

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## **4. Predictors of Information Privacy Concerns on Facebook**

### **4.1 Abstract**

Previous research on the influence of personality dispositions has focused on predicting privacy attitudes, concerns for information privacy, privacy concerns using location-based services, concerns regarding online information transmission security, information security management, health information disclosure online, personal information disclosure on Facebook as well as information control on Facebook. However, there is a gap in the literature investigating whether personality factors relate to or predict individuals' concerns about their personal information on Facebook. The present study was intended to address this gap and was also aimed at discovering whether individuals' trust has an association with their concerns about personal information privacy on Facebook ( $N = 246$ ). The results showed that individuals' Facebook privacy concerns tend to be influenced by their differing personality traits. For example, agreeable and conscientious individuals, as well as those who are open to new experiences, tend to display more concerns about the privacy of their information on Facebook as opposed to individuals who have the tendency to be open in sharing information about themselves. While people's general propensity to trust positively related to privacy concerns, their trust in Facebook related negatively to such concerns. This study also demonstrated that neuroticism is a positive predictor, whilst self-esteem and attitude towards openness are negative predictors of Facebook privacy concerns. The results of this study extend the literature on information privacy concerns by showing that certain personality dimensions and trust should be considered when exploring individuals' information privacy concerns on Facebook.



## **4.2 Introduction**

### **4.2.1 Facebook and privacy**

Social network sites (SNS) attract millions of users worldwide, many of whom use these sites on a daily basis. There are multiple SNS supporting a wide demographic. The majority of these sites help maintain pre-existing social networks although a minority allows strangers to connect based on their common interests or activities. SNS can either appeal to a diverse audience, or a more specific one, perhaps based on race, sexuality, language or nationality. SNS can also incorporate communication tools such as blogging or photo sharing and often vary in the extent to which these tools are incorporated on to the sites (boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Facebook, founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, is the largest and most popular SNS in the world with over 2.38 billion active users per month (Zephoria, 2019). It allows its members to create an online profile and connect with people around the world. Facebook users can share posts, photos, videos and links with their friends, they can view each other's profiles and also comment on each other's Facebook profiles. It is also possible for the users to join online groups based on common interests (Ellison et al., 2007).

With the growing popularity of online social networks, the amount of personal information available on websites is continuously increasing. Privacy settings on Facebook allow its users to control the sharing of information on their profile, who can search for them and how, as well as the information people are able to see. Even though Facebook provides a privacy policy for its members, the vast majority of users have not read this policy (Acquisti & Gross, 2006). Prior research on social networking sites (SNS) found a paradoxical relationship between privacy concerns and actual privacy settings. For instance, Barnes (2006) suggested that adults in the USA are concerned about the invasion of their privacy and their personal data being collected and stored by the Government and associated companies. Meanwhile teenagers freely disclose personal and private information in order to join online SNS and write online blogs. Another empirical example for the privacy paradox is

a study which assessed privacy concerns and behaviours of 468 American students by Campbell et al. (2001). They concluded that while the students are aware of Internet privacy and even concerned about it, they still tend to participate in risky activities online, such as sharing personal information.

Previous research conducting analyses of Facebook user profiles revealed that a lot of personal information is disclosed on public profiles. For example, an analysis of more than 4000 students' Facebook profiles indicated that only a small fraction of had changed any of the default privacy settings (Gross & Acquisti, 2005). Moreover, based on the review of all members of an American university class Lewis et al. (2008) concluded that merely one third was set to private. Govani and Pashley (2005) investigated student knowledge of online privacy issues and privacy protection options available on Facebook. They found that most of the students were aware that they are able to limit the amount of information provided to other Facebook users, however most of them did not take any steps to protect their information. Even though students claimed stalking and identity theft to be their main privacy concerns, they still provided personally identifiable information (e.g., phone number, home address). The study also demonstrated that even after the users had been told about the possible consequences of sharing identifiable personal information, only minimal changes had been made to their Facebook profiles. Students were comfortable sharing their personal information because they claimed they did not have anything to hide and did not mind if their information could be seen by others. The authors concluded that only in the case of an unfortunate incident, for instance stalking or identity theft, Facebook users would become more selective with sharing their personal information (Govani & Pashley, 2005).

In a study by Jones and Soltren (2005), 74 percent of the participants were familiar with the privacy options provided by Facebook, nevertheless only 62 percent used them. The results indicated that those who actively decided not to use the privacy options on Facebook believed that sharing personal information and allowing other users to see it is beneficial for them. The findings of a study by Tufekci (2008) showed that online privacy concerns were not of much relevance to students

regarding their decision to disclose information. Facebook users' understanding of privacy issues, the perceived benefits and observed risks of online social networking was investigated by Debatin and colleagues (2009) using mixed methods. They found results consistent with the aforementioned studies; even though Facebook users were familiar with the privacy settings on Facebook, they still uploaded a large amount of personal information. The results also indicated that until people have been a victim of an invasion of privacy they tend to view the risks regarding their privacy in terms of a third-person effect, according to which the risk to others' privacy is perceived to be larger than the perceived risk to one's own privacy. The results showed that the perceived benefits and the gratification of using Facebook tended to override the risks of sharing personal data and the threats to privacy. Ellison et al. (2007) argued that the greatest benefit of using Facebook is possibly the social capital ensuing from the creation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships, and as such the sharing of personal information could be perceived by users as an integral aspect of social networks, rather than as a problem.

#### **4.2.2 Personality and SNS use**

According to the Five-Factor Model, personality is divided into a series of five dimensional traits; neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The first trait, neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience psychological distress. Neurotic individuals tend to be anxious, tense, unstable, worrying and self-pitying. The second dimension, extraversion, represents the individual's tendency to be assertive, sociable, talkative and enthusiastic, as well as the capability to experience positive emotions. Openness to experience reflects a tendency to be intellectually curious, imaginative, artistic and behaviourally flexible. Individuals who are high on the trait agreeableness are trusting, appreciative, sympathetic, generous and cooperative. Finally, the fifth trait, conscientiousness represents the extent to which a person is reliable, responsible, organised, foresighted, scrupulous and thorough.

The association between these five personality traits and online behaviour has been studied extensively. Emotionally unstable, anxious, neurotic individuals prefer to use means of communications which do not require face-to-face contact, such as online communication or mobile phone text messaging (Butt & Phillips, 2008). Research has shown that neurotic people tend to use the internet to substitute real-world social interactions as well as to avoid feelings of loneliness (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Butt & Phillips, 2008). A positive association was found between neuroticism and the quantity of time spent on Facebook (Ryan & Xenos, 2011). Another study showed that neurotic students in Zurich tend to use SNS for longer periods of time and with a higher frequency (Wehrli, 2008). It has been argued that neurotic individuals tend to use Facebook for social reasons (Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee, 2012). Furthermore, in a study conducted amongst Chinese university students Wang, Jackson, Zhang and Su (2012) found that neuroticism was positively associated with status updates on a Chinese SNS called Renren. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H1:** There will be a positive relationship between neuroticism and different Facebook use measures (i.e. daily frequency and duration of Facebook use, Facebook intensity).

Contrary to neurotic individuals, extraverted people do not use the internet as a replacement for real-world social interactions, but rather as an extension of them (Amiel & Sargent, 2004; Ross et al., 2009). According to the Social Enhancement hypothesis – also called ‘Rich Get Richer’ hypothesis – those individuals who are highly sociable and have well-developed offline social networks try to enhance it by creating extensive online social networks, therefore the internet confers the greatest benefits to individuals who are extraverted (Kraut et al., 2002; P. Sheldon, 2008; Zywicki & Danowski, 2008). Extraversion has been shown to be related to greater Facebook use (Seidman, 2013; Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010). Extraverts were also found to make more comments and status updates on SNS (Wang et al., 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**H2:** There will be a positive relationship between extraversion and different Facebook use measures.

There is little existing research on the association between conscientiousness and Facebook use. Conscientiousness has been shown to be negatively related to mobile use – writing and receiving messages (Butt & Phillips, 2008). Conscientiousness has been found to be correlated negatively with time spent on Facebook (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Wilson et al., 2010) and with the social use of Twitter (Hughes et al., 2012). Furthermore, a study demonstrated that students scoring high on the trait conscientiousness visited StudiVZ (a German SNS) less frequently and for shorter periods of time (Wehrli, 2008). These findings can be explained by individuals scoring high on conscientiousness displaying more responsibility and dutifulness in their tasks and henceforth avoiding sources of distraction and procrastination such as computer-mediated communication tools. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H3:** There will be a negative correlation between conscientiousness and different Facebook use measures.

Previous studies have shown that social anxiety tends to be one of the factors which influence people's concern about privacy. Socially anxious individuals tend to be cautious and reticent with respect to the information they share (Liu, Ang, & Lwin, 2013) and they are less prone to disclose personal information about themselves online (Marcus, Machilek, & Schütz, 2006). This is thought to be because people with social anxiety fear being negatively evaluated by others on the information they reveal about themselves (Kashdan, 2002) and this fear of negative evaluation is associated with the tendency to protect their privacy (Chen, Chen, Lo, & Yang, 2008). Neuroticism has been found to be associated with social anxiety (Norton, Cox, Hewitt, & McLeod, 1997). Emotional instability – which refers to neuroticism – has been shown to positively impact on Internet users' information transmission security concerns (Bansal, 2011). Furthermore, individuals high on the trait of neuroticism have a high tendency to control the information they share (Ross et al., 2009). Liu et al. (2013) found consistent results according to which social anxiety

increased concerns about privacy. Sumner, Byers and Shearing (2011) showed that neurotic people are more likely to be concerned about privacy issues.

**H4:** There will be a positive correlation between neuroticism and Facebook information privacy concerns on Facebook.

**H5:** Neuroticism will be a positive predictor of Facebook information privacy concerns.

Introverted individuals – who are low on the trait extraversion – tend to display increased concern in regard to the privacy of their personal information and prefer to exert more control over it (Stone, 1986). In a study by Chen and Marcus (2012) it was shown that individuals who were low on extraversion were less prone to disclose information online. Egelman and Peer (2015) found that extraversion negatively predicted the control (control over personal information) dimension of people’s information privacy concerns, although it only had a low predictive ability. Furthermore, a negative association was found between extraversion and concern about privacy issues (Sumner et al., 2011). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H6:** There will be a negative correlation between extraversion and Facebook information privacy concerns.

Conscientious people tend to have a heightened awareness of those around them, extending to the actions that these individuals may undertake (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This concern for the actions of other people increases their attentiveness to the possible negative consequences of misuse of their personal data (Junglas, Johnson, & Spitzmüller, 2008). The increased concern about their privacy is due to their foresightedness, which may allow them to accurately foresee the consequences of any possible privacy breach. A positive association was found between conscientiousness and people’s security concerns (Bansal, 2011). In a study investigating the predictors of privacy and security attitudes, Egelman and Peer (2015) found that conscientiousness predicted internet users’ information

privacy concerns, especially awareness of privacy practices and concerns about data collection. As Junglas and colleagues (2008) have demonstrated, individuals high on the trait conscientiousness tend to have higher concerns for privacy in the context of location-based services. Furthermore, conscientiousness was positively correlated with privacy concerns amongst Facebook users (Stieger, Burger, Bohn, & Voracek, 2013) and attitude towards the technical and organizational activities of information security (Uffen, Guhr, & Breitner, 2012). Therefore, we predict that:

**H7:** There will be a positive correlation between conscientiousness and Facebook information privacy concerns.

**H8:** Conscientiousness will be a significant positive predictor of Facebook information privacy concerns.

Individuals high on the trait agreeableness are not only concerned for their own information privacy but also the information privacy of others, as they are not only trusted by others, but generally also exhibit a high degree of trust in others. An individual with high agreeableness would feel a similar level of unease with the possibility of the misuse of another's information as they would feel with the misuse of their own. Korzaan and Boswell (2008) showed a significant positive influence of agreeableness on concerns for information privacy. Bansal, Zahedi and Gefen, (2010) investigated the influence of personality traits in sharing health information online and indicated that agreeableness positively affects privacy concerns mediated by health information sensitivity. Moreover, agreeableness positively predicted Internet users' concerns about situations where their personal information might be misused (Egelman & Peer, 2015). However, Junglas et al., (2008) found inconsistent results according to which people high on the trait agreeableness tend to have lower concerns for privacy towards location-based services than those low on agreeableness. They suggested that is because highly agreeable individuals aim for consonance in their social relationships and are therefore more likely to place trust in their surroundings. Moreover, Sumner et al. (2011) also showed evidence for a negative relationship between agreeableness and

privacy concerns. Based on the inconsistent results emerged from previous research, we hypothesize that:

**H9:** There will be a correlation between agreeableness and Facebook information privacy concerns.

**H10:** Agreeableness will be a significant predictor of Facebook information privacy concerns.

The personality trait openness to experience represents people's tendency to experience novel situations as well as to try new things and it has been also found to influence individuals' privacy concerns. Junglas et al. (2008) reported that open individuals had higher levels of concerns for privacy towards location-based services than their non-open counterparts. This is due to the fact that open individuals tend to have a wide variety of life experiences and thus have acquired a broader and more profound sense of awareness in comparison to others. Due to their higher levels of awareness they tend to display an increased sensitivity to threats. Furthermore, Egelman and Peer (2015) demonstrated openness to experience to be the strongest predictor of information privacy concerns of Internet users throughout all the Big 5 personality traits.

**H11:** There will be a positive correlation between openness to experience and Facebook information privacy concerns.

We intended to explore the relationship between people's attitude towards being open in sharing personal information with others in their social circles and their privacy concerns. A study by Acquisti and Gross (2006) found a discrepancy between Facebook users' privacy concerns and their actual personal information disclosure; although participants were concerned about their information privacy, they still provided personal information – a phenomenon referred to as the privacy paradox. They demonstrated that even though participants were slightly concerned with the accessibility of their personal information and its possible misuse, there



was no such concern for the information itself due to the control of that information lying with the participants. They also stated that the participants knew that the basis of social networks was the sharing of information.

**H12:** There will be a correlation between attitude towards openness and Facebook information privacy concerns.

**H13:** Attitude towards openness will be a significant predictor of Facebook information privacy concerns.

Self-esteem is defined as one's overall feeling of self-worth; the extent to which one values oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). The role of self-esteem in Facebook use has been studied extensively, however the amount of research investigating self-esteem in relation to privacy concerns is limited. Christofides, Muise and Desmarais (2009) investigated whether certain personality factors may have an impact on people's information disclosure and control on Facebook. They found that self-esteem positively predicted information control and individuals with higher self-esteem were more likely to use privacy settings on Facebook.

**H14:** There will be a positive correlation between self-esteem and Facebook information privacy concerns.

**H15:** Self-esteem will be a significant positive predictor of Facebook information privacy concerns.

#### **4.2.3 Trust and SNS use**

Acquisti and Gross (2006) provided a few different explanations for the dichotomy between people's privacy concerns and information sharing behaviour (privacy paradox) and they believed that participants' trust was one of them. They found that people generally trusted Facebook itself and what is more, they trusted other Facebook members more than members of other SNS. In an online survey by Dwyer et al. (2007) peoples' perceptions of trust and privacy concerns of Facebook

and MySpace were compared. They demonstrated that even though Facebook and MySpace users displayed comparable levels of concern about internet privacy, members of Facebook held higher levels of trust in Facebook and its users and were more likely to share personal information. Metzger (2004) also found consistent results, according to which trust predicted online information disclosure to a commercial website amongst university students. Moreover, they also found that trust was positively predicted by the perceived privacy protection of the website and negatively predicted by online privacy concerns. In a study by Krasnova, Spiekermann, Koroleva and Hildebrand (2010) the results showed that people's trust in the online social network provider reduced their perception of privacy risks regarding information disclosure.

The effect of trust on self-disclosure has been explained by the social exchange theory (Roloff, 1981), according to which social interactions are formed based on a cost-benefit analysis. People are likely to enter into an exchange relationship if the benefits are perceived to outweigh the costs. It is believed that trust is essential to this process because it would lead to a reduced perception of costs. While the majority of studies investigated trust and self-disclosure in terms of interpersonal relationships, similar dynamics exist online (Culnan & Armstrong, 1999). These dynamics consist of weighing the benefits of sharing personal information online against the risks of providing said information and therefore trust is an essential component in the decision to disclose information both interpersonally and online. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H16:** There will be a negative correlation between propensity to trust and Facebook information privacy concerns.

**H17:** There will be a negative correlation between trust in Facebook and information privacy concerns on Facebook.

**H18:** Trust in Facebook will be a significant negative predictor of information privacy concerns on Facebook.

#### **4.2.4 The present study**

The present study intended to investigate whether certain factors (Big 5 personality traits, self-esteem, attitudes towards openness in sharing information, propensity to trust, trust in Facebook) have an association with or predict information privacy concerns on Facebook. The influence of personality dispositions has been explored in terms of predicting privacy attitudes (Egelman & Peer, 2015) concerns for information privacy (Korzaan, & Boswell, 2008), privacy concerns using location-based services (Junglas et al., 2008), concerns regarding online information transmission security (Bansal, 2011), information security management (Uffen et al., 2012), health information disclosure online (Bansal et al., 2010), personal information disclosure on Facebook (Chen & Marcus, 2012; Liu et al., 2013) as well as information control on Facebook (Christofides et al., 2009). Sumner et al. (2011) investigated the association between the Big Five personality traits and level of concern about privacy with measuring Facebook activity, however they measured privacy concern with a single item which was not Facebook specific. Thus, there appears to be a gap in the literature investigating whether personality factors relate to or predict individuals' concerns about their personal information on Facebook. Therefore, we intended to address this gap by conducting an online attitude survey including a large and diverse sample. We also aimed to discover whether individuals' general inclination to trust and their trust in Facebook as an organization has an association with their concerns about personal information privacy on Facebook.

### **4.3 Methods**

#### **4.3.1 Participants**

Participants ( $N = 246$ ) were recruited through the researcher's acquaintances by snowball sampling as well as from a paid online crowdsourcing service named CrowdFlower. The sample consisted of 135 males (55%) and 111 females (45%) ranging in age from 18 to 65 ( $M = 28.88$ ;  $SD = 7.93$ ). The sample was diverse in terms of ethnicity with White/Caucasian representing the largest proportion of the

sample ( $n = 193$ , 79%). The most frequently occurring nationalities were British ( $n = 52$ , 21%), Hungarian ( $n = 41$ , 17%) and Serbian ( $n = 16$ , 7%). In terms of education, the most commonly held qualification was an undergraduate degree ( $n = 103$ , 42%), followed by a postgraduate degree ( $n = 96$ , 39%). This study was given ethical approval by the College Ethics Committee.

#### **4.3.2 Stimuli and materials**

The study was an online attitude survey constructed using Qualtrics Survey Software (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). All data were held securely and confidentially on the researchers' computers. The online attitude survey contained eleven sections which are described below. Scale reliability was analysed by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient, representing the internal consistency for sets of items.

##### *Informed consent*

It described the study, the purpose of the study and informed participants of the approximate expected participation time. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

##### *Demographics*

This section contained questions about the participants' age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and their highest qualification attained.

##### *General Facebook use*

In this section participants were asked 6 questions about their Facebook use, friendship and profile, such as '*How often do you browse your Facebook page per day?*'. They were also asked 9 questions regarding their privacy settings on Facebook, such as '*Who can see your email address on your Facebook profile?*'.

##### *Facebook intensity*

This 6-item questionnaire was designed by Ellison et al. (2007) to assess one's emotional connectedness to Facebook and the extent to which it is integrated to

one's everyday activities. Items were scored from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). A sample item from the scale is *'Facebook is part of my everyday life'*. Higher scores in this questionnaire indicate a more intense use of Facebook. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .875.

#### *Propensity to trust*

These 11 questions measured the degree to which one is inclined to trust other people using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Inaccurate (1) to Strongly Accurate (6). The questions were taken from the Propensity to Trust Survey (PTS) designed by Evans and Revelle (2008). A sample item from the scale is *'I can get along with most people'*. Higher scores suggest higher propensity to trust others. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .741.

#### *Trust in Facebook*

These 6 questions were taken from a questionnaire used by Shu and Chuang (2011) measuring SNS perceptions, people's trust in websites more specifically. For the purpose of the present study, items were changed to assess people's trust in Facebook instead of general websites, for example *'I trust Facebook in general'*. Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). Higher scores show higher levels of trust in Facebook. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .935.

#### *Information privacy concerns on Facebook*

The 'Information privacy concerns on Facebook' questionnaire contained 11 questions originally designed by Malhotra, Kim, & Agarwal (2004) – Internet Users' Information Privacy Concerns (IUIPC) scale – but items were modified regarding specifically to Facebook, such as *'I'm concerned that Facebook is collecting too much personal information about me'*. Items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). Higher scores in this questionnaire show higher levels of information privacy concerns on Facebook. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .879.

### *Personality*

This section included the Mini International Personality Item Pool (Mini-IPIP) which is a 20-item measure of the Big Five personality dimensions (Donnellan et al., 2006); extraversion ( $\alpha = .727$ ), agreeableness ( $\alpha = .759$ ), conscientiousness ( $\alpha = .603$ ), neuroticism ( $\alpha = .605$ ) and openness to experience ( $\alpha = .773$ ). Due to conscientiousness and neuroticism scores having questionable reliability, any relationship between these and other variables should be interpreted with caution. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores indicate higher degrees of a certain trait.

### *Sense of self-esteem*

Subjective perceptions of self-esteem were measured using the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Answers to the items were on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). A sample item from the scale is *'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself'*. Higher scores demonstrate higher self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .859.

### *Attitude towards openness*

In this section the degree to which one is open in sharing information with others in their social circles on Facebook was measured using a 10-item questionnaire originally developed by Mckinney, Kelly and Duran (2012). Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores in the questionnaire imply higher levels of openness in sharing information with others in one's social circles. A sample item from the scale is *'I don't hide much about myself with a wide circle of friends'*. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .807.

### *Debriefing form*

After completing the questionnaires, participants were debriefed fully as to the purposes of the study, thanked and provided with the email addresses of the researchers.

### **4.3.3 Design and statistical analysis**

Correlational and regression statistics were computed using IBM SPSS Statistics 21 Software. In the Pearson's correlational design, the variables included were daily duration of Facebook use, daily frequency of Facebook use, Facebook intensity, propensity to trust, trust in Facebook, information privacy concerns on Facebook, the Big Five personality traits, self-esteem and attitude towards being open.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted with information privacy concerns on Facebook as the dependent variable (outcome variables). Items entered as predictor variables included: Facebook intensity, propensity to trust, trust in Facebook, the Big Five personality traits, self-esteem and attitude towards being open.

The expectation maximization algorithm was used to account for missing data (Little & Rubin, 1987).

## **4.4 Results**

### **4.4.1 General Facebook use**

Although not associated with any hypotheses, participants were also surveyed in regard to their Facebook use habits for exploratory purposes and in order to better understand the Facebook behaviours of our participants. As Table 4.1 shows, most of the participants ( $n = 89$ , 36%) use Facebook for less than an hour on a daily basis. Only 8% of the participants ( $n = 20$ ) reported to use Facebook for more than four hours per day.

**Table 4.1** Daily duration of Facebook use.

	Number of participants ( <i>N</i> = 243)	Percent of sample (%)
< 1 hour	89	36.2
1-2 hours	77	31.7
2-3 hours	45	18.5
3-4 hours	13	5.3
> 4 hours	20	7.7

Note. *N*=243 due to three missing cases.

The responses provided to the question ‘*How often do you browse your Facebook page per day*’ are included in Table 4.2. The majority of participants (*n* = 98, 39.8%) frequent their Facebook page 0-5 times in a day. As the frequency of Facebook visits increases, the number of participants decreases, although 19.7% of the participants (*n* = 48) reported going onto their Facebook pages more than 15 times per day.

**Table 4.2** Daily frequency of Facebook use.

	Number of participants ( <i>N</i> = 244)	Percent of sample (%)
0-5 times	98	39.8
6-10 times	66	27
11-15 times	32	13.1
>15 times	48	19.7

Note. *N* = 244 due to two missing cases.

Table 4.3 includes the correlations of three personality traits and Facebook use measures. As table 4.3 shows, the daily frequency of Facebook use was found to be correlated positively with extraversion ( $r(246) = .163, p = .005$ ) and negatively with conscientiousness ( $r(246) = -.133, p = .036$ ), but not with neuroticism. Furthermore, the daily duration of Facebook use correlated positively with neuroticism ( $r(246) = .124, p = .027$ ) and with extraversion ( $r(246) = .110, p = .043$ ). On the other hand, it correlated negatively with conscientiousness ( $r(246) = -.134, p = .019$ ). Facebook intensity showed a significant positive correlation with extraversion,  $r(246) = .233, p < .001$ . However, it was not significantly correlated with conscientiousness or neuroticism.



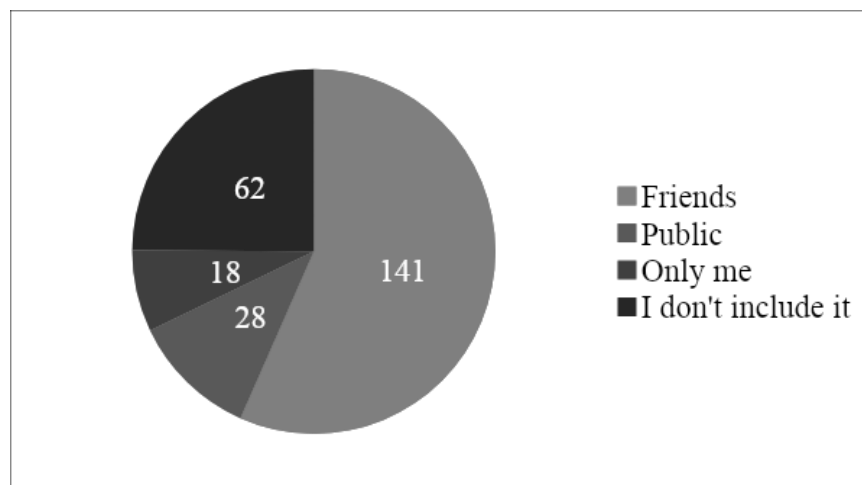
**Table 4.3** Pearson's correlations between different personality traits and Facebook use measures.

	Daily Frequency of Facebook Use	Daily Duration of Facebook Use	Facebook Intensity
Conscientiousness	-.133 *	-.134 *	-.006
Neuroticism	.068	.124 *	.090
Extraversion	.163 *	.110 *	.233 **

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

#### 4.4.2 Privacy settings

Participants were categorised into four different 'privacy settings groups' based on the responses they gave for the nine questions relating to their privacy settings used on Facebook. As figure 4.1 shows the majority of the participants ( $n = 141, 57\%$ ) chose to share most of their information (photos, email address, date of birth etc.) with their Facebook friends. 62 people (25%) were categorised into the 'I don't include it on my profile' group suggesting that their Facebook profile did not contain a lot of personal information. Furthermore, 28 participants (11%) decided to share their information provided on Facebook with the public and the rest of the participants ( $n = 18, 7\%$ ) used the 'only me' privacy settings function suggesting that their personal information on Facebook is available only for them. These results clearly show that the vast majority of participants limit in some way the information they disclose on Facebook.



**Figure 4.1** Privacy settings preferences of participants ( $N = 249$ ) on Facebook

### 4.4.3 Information privacy concerns on Facebook

Regarding the Big Five personality dimensions, agreeableness ( $r(246) = .213, p < .001$ ), conscientiousness ( $r(246) = .206, p = .001$ ) and openness to experience ( $r(246) = .117, p = .033$ ) were found to be positively correlated with information privacy concerns on Facebook. However, none of the other personality traits were found to be significant. Self-esteem ( $r(246) = -.193, p = .003$ ) and attitude towards openness ( $r(246) = -.341, p < .001$ ) were found to be negatively correlated with information privacy concerns on Facebook. In terms of trust, interestingly propensity to trust ( $r(246) = .149, p = .010$ ) positively correlated with information privacy concerns on Facebook, whilst a significant negative correlation was found between trust in Facebook ( $r(246) = -.105, p = .050$ ) and information privacy concerns on Facebook (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4** Descriptive statistics for the personality and trust variables and Pearson's coefficients for their correlations with information privacy concerns on Facebook.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Pearson's <i>r</i> for Information privacy concerns on Facebook
Extraversion <sup>I</sup>	11.99	3.11	-.030
Agreeableness <sup>I</sup>	14.60	2.83	.213**
Conscientiousness <sup>I</sup>	13.04	2.63	.206**
Neuroticism <sup>I</sup>	11.69	2.72	.051
Openness to experience <sup>I</sup>	14.59	2.93	.117*
Self-esteem <sup>I</sup>	21.65	4.88	-.193**
Propensity to trust <sup>II</sup>	42.08	6.9	.149*
Attitude towards openness <sup>II</sup>	26.13	5.74	-.341***
Trust in Facebook <sup>I</sup>	21.20	8.19	-.105*

Note. <sup>I</sup> One-tailed, <sup>II</sup> Two-tailed \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Multiple regression analysis was employed to explore what factors predict one's information privacy concerns on Facebook (the criterion variable). Using the enter method it was found that the overall model was significant ( $F(9, 236) = 7.204, p < .001, R^2 = .216, R^2_{Adjusted} = .186$ ). Thus, self-esteem, propensity to trust, trust in Facebook, attitude towards openness and the Big Five personality traits explained 18.5% of variance in peoples' information privacy concerns on Facebook. Within the model, it was found that neuroticism (standardised  $\beta = .149, t = 2, p = .046$ ) significantly predicted higher levels of information privacy concerns on Facebook.

Self-esteem ( $\beta = -.184$ ,  $t = -2.6$ ,  $p = .010$ ) and attitude towards openness ( $\beta = -.321$ ,  $t = -4.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of lower levels of information privacy concerns on Facebook. The rest of the predictors were found to be non-significant. The unstandardised and standardised coefficients for information privacy concerns on Facebook as the outcome variable and different predictor variables are included in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5** Multiple regression analyses on Information privacy concerns on Facebook with all predictors. Both standardised ( $\beta$ ) and unstandardised (B) coefficients are reported.

Predictors	$\beta$	t	B	Std. Error
Openness to experience	-.029	-.453	-.096	.212
Conscientiousness	.092	1.438	.337	.234
Extraversion	-.004	-.058	-.012	.208
Agreeableness	.112	1.569	.382	.243
Neuroticism	.149*	2.007	.526	.262
Self-esteem	-.184*	-2.599	-.363	.140
Attitude towards openness	-.321*	-4.838	-.537	.111
Propensity to trust	.120	1.54	.166	.108
Trust in Facebook	-.053	-.852	-.062	.072

Note. \* $p < .05$

## 4.5 Discussion

The present study investigated the extent to which certain personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, attitude towards openness and self-esteem) and trust (general propensity to trust and trust in Facebook) were associated with information privacy concerns on Facebook. We were also interested in whether and how these factors predict peoples' concerns about the privacy of their information.

First, we intended to explore how much time our participants generally spend on Facebook. As the results showed, the majority of participants (67%) use Facebook for less than two hours a day, which is in line with findings from previous research (Child & Starcher, 2016; Stieger et al., 2013). Also 67% of them browse their Facebook page less than ten times per day.

We had three hypotheses regarding personality traits and their relation to people's Facebook use. The findings indicated that neuroticism and extraversion positively, and conscientiousness negatively, related to different Facebook use measures, supporting **H1**, **H2** and **H3**. Different Facebook use measures included daily frequency and daily duration of Facebook use as well as the intensity of one's Facebook use. According to our results, neurotic individuals tend to spend more time on Facebook (**H1**), which is consistent with previous findings which reported that neuroticism was positively linked to internet and SNS use in order for neurotic people to avoid feelings of loneliness (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Butt & Phillips, 2008; Hughes et al., 2012).

The results also showed that extraverted people spent more time on Facebook, and logged in to Facebook more frequently, as well as being more intense Facebook users (**H2**), which is in line with previous research (Seidman, 2013; Wilson et al., 2010) and supports the 'rich get richer' or Social Enhancement Hypothesis about people with good social skills and established offline friendship networks making good use of social networks like Facebook to further extend and maintain their social networks (unlike neurotic people, who tend to be heavy internet and social media users to substitute or compensate for diminished offline social interactions).

As previous studies have demonstrated (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Wilson et al., 2010), we also found that conscientious individuals tend to spend less time on Facebook (**H3**). Due to conscientious people being organized, responsible and dutiful in their daily tasks, they have the tendency to avoid sources of distractions and thus refrain more from the use of social media.

Our next fifteen hypotheses were related to personality dimensions and privacy concerns on Facebook. Seven of our hypotheses were supported, six of them were not and for two hypotheses we found significant results but in the opposite direction to what was expected. The results showed that the vast majority of participants tended to control their privacy settings on Facebook, most of them used the 'friends only' option and only a minority of them had a public profile. This supports the

notion of Facebook as a largely ‘anonymous’ social network in which users are known to their Facebook friends and in which interaction with complete strangers is less common than on some rival social networks.

The results did not show support for **H4** regarding the positive relationship between neuroticism and privacy concerns on Facebook. Previous research has shown that people with social anxiety – which has been found to be associated with neuroticism (Norton, Cox, Hewitt, & McLeod, 1997) – have increased privacy concerns (Liu et al., 2013), although the authors also posited that even though socially anxious people tend to use SNS more and to be more concerned about their privacy, they are also very careful and reserved with regard to the content they disclose. Although support was shown for **H5**, where, interestingly, neuroticism was found to be a significant positive predictor of information privacy concerns on Facebook. It is unusual for a bivariate Pearson correlation to be non-significant but that same independent variable be a significant predictor of the dependent variable in a multiple regression, as is the case here. This can be due, for example, to issues around shared variance, and this finding requires further investigation before any firm conclusions can be made about the relationship between neuroticism and Facebook privacy concerns.

Contrary to **H6**, we did not find a significant association between extraversion and privacy concerns on Facebook. **H6** was based on previous studies that demonstrated that introverted people tend to disclose less personal information on SNS (Chen & Marcus, 2012) and they need more privacy (Stone, 1986). However, Junglas et al. (2008) also failed to find support for their hypothesis according to which extraversion would be negatively associated with concerns for privacy in the context of location-based services.

Our findings indicated that conscientiousness is positively related to privacy concerns on Facebook (**H7**). The role of conscientiousness in regard to privacy concerns has been demonstrated in the literature; conscientious individuals are more likely to have higher concerns for privacy in the context of location-based

services (Junglas et al., 2008), to have higher concerns for security (Bansal, 2011) and to quit Facebook because of their heightened concerns about privacy (Stieger et al., 2013). However, information privacy concerns on Facebook were not found to be predicted by conscientiousness, therefore **H8** was not supported. We believe this result might be explained by the negative correlation between conscientiousness and Facebook use also found in this study. Conscientious people tend not to use Facebook very often and thus they might not be too concerned about their personal information being on it.

We found both agreeableness and openness to experience to be positively associated with privacy concerns on Facebook (**H9** & **H11**). These findings are consistent with research showing the positive effect of agreeableness on concerns for information privacy (Korzaan & Boswell, 2016) and for health information sensitivity (Bansal et al., 2010), as well as research showing openness to experience is related to higher levels of concern for privacy around location-based services (Junglas et al., 2008). There is also previous work showing that agreeableness predicts general online privacy concerns (Egelman & Peer, 2015). This is due to the fact that open individuals tend to have a wide variety of life experiences and thus have acquired a broader and more profound sense of awareness in comparison to others. Due to their higher levels of awareness they tend to display an increased sensitivity to threats. However, agreeableness was not shown to be a significant predictor of overall privacy concerns (**H10**) in our study.

Attitude towards openness was found not only to be negatively related to (**H12**) but also to be a negative predictor of privacy concerns on Facebook (**H13**). These results suggest that individuals who are open in sharing personal information tend to be less concerned about the privacy of their information. This finding is consistent with previous research which showed that privacy concerns reduced information disclosure (Joinson, Reips, Buchanan, & Schofield, 2010; Liu et al., 2013).

Contrary to our hypotheses (**H14 & H15**) whereby we predicted self-esteem to be positively correlated with and positively predict Facebook privacy concerns, we found the opposite results; a significant negative correlation and a negative prediction. These results suggest that not only lower self-esteem is related to but also predicts privacy concerns on Facebook. At first, we were puzzled by the unexpected results, however an alternative interpretation offers a feasible explanation. People with low self-esteem have relatively low liking for themselves and they also tend to be more anxious and shyer than those with higher self-esteem (Leary & MacDonald, 2003). Self-esteem has been also shown to be one of the lower order indicators of neuroticism (Eysenck, 1990; Watson, 2000). Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoresen (2002) suggested that self-esteem and neuroticism (together with locus of control and self-efficacy) might possibly be indicators of the same higher order construct. As described earlier, the results of the present study showed a prediction between privacy concerns and neuroticism which are in line with the results related to self-esteem and privacy concerns. Due to their proneness to feel socially anxious and their fear of being negatively evaluated, they tend to be cautious about self-disclosing and thus they also tend to have increased privacy concerns. Furthermore, Forest & Wood (2012) showed that individuals with low self-esteem view Facebook as a safe, appealing platform that offers the opportunity to disclose oneself. This ability of self-disclosure, while still being isolated, results in people with low self-esteem spending more time being active on Facebook, as opposed to their counterparts with a higher level of self-esteem. Therefore, after considering the existing research evidence we believe that the negative relationship between self-esteem and privacy concerns is understandable.

Predictions about different aspects of trust and their relationship to Facebook privacy concerns were made (**H16-H18**). Contrary to our hypothesis (**H16**), instead of a negative correlation, we found a positive correlation between propensity to trust and information privacy concerns on Facebook. This suggests that individuals who are likely to trust others tend to be more concerned about their information privacy on Facebook. The results can be explained by the possible difference between trust as a personality trait and trust in social networks. While one's

propensity to trust leads to a generalised expectation about the trustworthiness of others, one's trust in Facebook refers to the amount of trust one puts in Facebook, the company, and therefore they are unrelated. Another plausible explanation for this positive relationship is that in the Big Five personality framework propensity to trust is considered to be a facet of the Agreeableness dimension. Similarly to propensity to trust, the present study found agreeableness to be positively related to and predict privacy concerns on Facebook.

**H17** predicted that people's trust in Facebook will be negatively correlated with their information privacy concerns on Facebook, which was supported. This means that with increasing levels of trust in Facebook comes decreasing privacy concerns on Facebook. However, trust in Facebook was not found to be a negative predictor of privacy concerns (**H18**). Our predictions regarding trust and privacy concerns were based on the results of Dwyer et al. (2007), according to which people trusted Facebook more than MySpace and were therefore more likely to share personal information on Facebook. We believed that with higher trust, resulting in higher likelihood of personal information disclosure, people would have less concerns about their privacy, as previous studies have shown (Joinson et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2013).

The present study revealed some new insights on different personality dimensions and information privacy concerns, such as how certain traits are associated with, and predict, privacy concerns. The present study is unique because it attempted to discover how the Big 5 personality traits, self-esteem, attitude towards openness and trust relate to online information privacy concerns on Facebook. Previous research has explored the role of personality traits relating to one's attitude towards information security (Uffen et al., 2012), information privacy concerns (Korzaan, & Boswell, 2008) in case of location-based services (Junglas et al., 2008), online health information disclosure (Bansal et al., 2010) and in predicting privacy attitudes (Egelman & Peer, 2015). The influence of personality dispositions on Facebook were studied in regard to personal information disclosure (Chen & Marcus, 2012; Liu et al., 2013) together with information control (Christofides et



al., 2009). In our understanding, no previous studies attempted to reveal the relationship between one's personality and their information privacy concerns on Facebook, or how one's trust as a personality dimension or in the company relates to those concerns.

One of the strengths of the present study is that it utilised a fairly diverse sample. The participants of the study represented a diverse range of nationalities (British, Hungarian, Serbian, etc.). There were similar numbers of male and female participants, therefore gender could not be an influencing factor in terms of Facebook use and privacy concerns in our study. It is argued that women are more active on Facebook (Feng & Xie, 2014; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011), are more likely to be concerned about privacy (Acquisti & Gross; Fogel & Nehmad, 2009) and compared to men are more prone to have private profiles (Lewis et al., 2008). Another strength is that this study included a wide age range of participants (18-65). However, the sample mainly consisted of people who held an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification, raising the possibility that the sample may be better qualified than a fully representative sample of all Facebook users.

One limitation of this study, as is the case with a great deal of previous research on SNS (Abell & Brewer, 2014; Bergman, Fearrington, Davenport, & Bergman, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Mehdizadeh, 2010), is that it relied on self-reports captured via a survey, which requires reliance on the participants' understanding, memory and honesty. Furthermore, the present study relied on correlational design, therefore it is unable to make inferences regarding the causal direction of the predicted relationships. As is often the case with correlational designs, there could be other variables which were not considered in this study that may influence the relationship. Further – including experimental studies – are needed to clarify the relationship between the variables which were measured in the present study.

The influence cultural memory may have had upon the study should also be considered, due to the range of countries and cultures the participants originated

from. Cultural memory is a type of collective memory that moves beyond the individual and is shared by a group of people (Dessí, 2008). It is specific to these groups of people, is formed by past cultural experiences and informs upon an individual's identity, beliefs and actions. In the context of this study, participants hailed from at least 10 different countries, so it should be acknowledged that the divergent cultural memories the participants hold may have influenced their answers to the survey questions. As an example, the cultural memory of participants from post-communist countries (Hungary, Serbia, Poland etc.) may have an influence on their attitudes towards privacy, just as it does towards surveillance (Svenonius & Björklund, 2018).

Furthermore, the replication crisis that was unfolding around the time this study was conducted revealed the importance of power analysis in designing and conducting empirical experiments. As a result, we performed a post-hoc power analysis on our data which suggested that a larger sample size should have been used in order to show a medium effect ( $\alpha = 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.3$ ,  $N = 257$ ). This happened after the Facebook data breach in 2018 (Wong, 2018), which presumably affected people's privacy concerns, thus supplemental data collection was not deemed to be appropriate. Although samples of an equivalent size to the one used in the present study were typical in social psychology and it has been suggested that low-power studies are common (Button et al., 2013; Szucs & Ioannidis, 2017), we believe the lack of a priori power analysis somewhat limits the reliability of the study.

In conclusion, the present research investigated whether certain factors (Big 5 personality traits, self-esteem, attitudes towards openness in sharing information, propensity to trust, trust in Facebook) have an association with and/or predict privacy concerns regarding Facebook. The results of this study extend the literature on information privacy concerns by showing that certain personality dimensions and trust should be considered when exploring individuals' information privacy concerns online and on Facebook. As was discovered in the present research, individuals' Facebook privacy concerns tend to be influenced by their differing

personality traits. Agreeable, open and conscientious individuals (as measured by the Big Five) tend to display higher privacy concerns and individuals who have the tendency to be open in sharing information about themselves are less likely to be concerned about their information privacy on Facebook. Furthermore, people with low self-esteem and those who put lower levels of trust in Facebook tend to have higher concerns about the privacy of their personal information on Facebook. This study also demonstrated that neuroticism, general attitude towards being open to share personal information and self-esteem are significant predictors of information privacy concerns on Facebook.

## **5. British National Identity and Perceptions of Government Surveillance**

### **5.1 Abstract**

Many have suggested that surveillance has been normalised in the UK and has transformed the country into a surveillance society. Public views on government surveillance have been hugely diverse and mostly affected by modern socio-political events, such as recent terrorist events and the 2013 Snowden revelations. The role of social identity in surveillance acceptance has been explored previously, however no previous research took identity approaches a step further and investigated the effect of national identity. As national identity serves a national security function – a reason by which surveillance is often framed and justified by governments – we believe the investigation of its effect on different surveillance perceptions is timely. The present study ( $N = 214$ ) measured the effect of British national identity on different perceptions of government surveillance (need, benefit and concern) using a national identity priming manipulation and measured the relationship between them. Even though the priming manipulation had no effect, significant positive associations were found between British national identity and perceived need and perceived benefits of government surveillance. Furthermore, the study also showed that people with stronger feelings of British national identity tended to be less concerned about surveillance imposed by the Government. This study presents evidence that the various surveillance perceptions that ultimately impact upon one's positive or negative attitudes towards government surveillance are significantly related to British national identity.

## **5.2 Introduction**

### **5.2.1 Surveillance in the UK**

The abundance and normalisation of global surveillance make it intrinsic to modern society and it has therefore been argued that we live in a surveillance society (Aas, Gundhus, & Lomell, 2008; Lyon 1994; 2001; 2007; Monahan, 2006). A surveillance society structures and organises itself using surveillance as a means to electronically gather data on the populace, which organisations or the Government can analyse and use to manipulate the individual or society as a whole. The decisions which are made based on the collected data are pervasive and may affect criminal justice, access to benefits, health/well-being, products and services or movements in private and public arenas (Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006). Examples of increased levels of surveillance within a surveillance society may include extensive use of video cameras to potentially identify faces and number plates, analysis and sale of data related to spending habits to banks, insurance providers or advertisers and the monitoring of telephones, emails and internet usage by intelligence services. Additionally, work performance and productivity may be more closely monitored, and attitude and lifestyle choices may be put under increased scrutiny by employers (Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006).

It has been argued that the UK has normalised surveillance to a higher degree than elsewhere, and so is often considered to be a model to aspire to by security professionals. Due to this the threat of the UK being a bad example to other European countries is tangible (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009). The UK is one of the most surveilled countries in the world; according to a report from the British Security Industry Authority there are approximately 4 – 5.9 million CCTV cameras in the country (BBC News, 2015), which is equivalent to one camera for every fourteen people, with a person being captured on about 300 cameras each day (McCahill & Norris, 2003; Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006). The proliferation of CCTV systems stretches back to the late eighties in town and city centres as well as in public service and residential settings (Gill, 2003; Norris & Armstrong 1999,

Webster, 2002) with approximately £500 million of public money invested by the British Government (Norris, 2006). Most often these systems have been introduced to combat criminality, as a deterrence and detector of crime/antisocial behaviour, in addition to functioning as a device to reduce the fear of crime and terrorism (Armitage, 2002; Murakami Wood & Ball, 2006; Webster, 2009).

Surveillance systems have generally been popular, and they have enjoyed widespread support amongst the public, politicians and policymakers resulting in the installation of ever more cameras. Their popularity in conjunction with their perceived effectiveness is further reinforced by increased financial assistance and political rhetoric from governmental institutions, principally the Home Office (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Webster, 2009).

Even though public support has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Brown, 1995; Ditton, 1998; Dixon, Levine, & McAuley, 2004; Honess & Charman, 1992) it has been argued that such support was based on the fact that the public believed in the effectiveness of the systems in reducing crime (Webster, 2009). In fact, it has been suggested that the swift proliferation of CCTV has been so rapid due to its perception as a 'silver bullet' for crime prevention (Bannister et al., 1998). However, their effectiveness has been called into question by research and it has been demonstrated that the efficacy of CCTV cameras has been exaggerated in systematic reviews of CCTV evaluations (Armitage, 2002; Ditton & Short, 1999; Gill & Turbin; Welsh & Farrington, 2003). A study funded by the Home Office assessed 13 CCTV systems and found only two of them to have a statistically significant effect on crime reduction and the authors explained one of those reductions with other confounding factors (Gill & Spriggs, 2005). Furthermore, Groombridge (2008) argues that the lack of thorough, consistent evidence for the efficacy of CCTV suggests that they are not a cost-effective tool for crime prevention.

Another explanation for the public's enthusiasm was also offered by Murakami Wood and Webster (2009), who suggested that the reasons for implementing

surveillance, in this case CCTV, are more related to what they represent rather than what they do. They argued that CCTV cameras are an overt display of the Government's concern regarding security and crime and they demonstrate the Government's willingness to 'do something'. In a society where fear predominates, and we are encircled by numerous potential dangers, this 'security theatre' (Murakami Wood & Coaffee, 2006), or 'stage-set security' (Schneier, 2008) provides the populace with symbols of safety. David Lyon (2001) argued that surveillance is as much about care as about control, and while the presence of CCTV means that you are being watched, for some it also means that you are being watched out for. Furthermore, it has also been suggested that CCTV is now part of Britain's current zeitgeist, a permanent artefact of the cultural landscape; an example being their frequent portrayal in TV shows (Groombridge, 2002).

All in all, regardless of whether surveillance systems are in fact effective or not, the perceived effectiveness and benefits of such systems ultimately lead to more accepting attitudes towards them (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist, Mahy, & Morris, 2008; Webster, 2009).

### **5.2.2 Perceptions of government surveillance**

As described above, public views on CCTV have previously been examined, however research exploring people's broader attitudes and thoughts concerning surveillance is still an under-researched area, especially when it comes to perceptions of government surveillance in the UK.

However, the 2013 Edward Snowden revelations about the extraordinary scope of mass surveillance by the NSA and GCHQ prompted researchers to conduct studies and public opinion polls to explore people's views on the leaks, privacy, mass surveillance and national security. The Digital Citizenship and Surveillance Society Project (DCSS) concluded that the issue of state surveillance was important to British people, through the analysis of in-depth focus groups and opinion polls in England and Wales (Bakir et al., 2015).

Based on the analysis of public opinion polls – mainly conducted by YouGov – it was shown that there was more support for increased surveillance at the cost of privacy amongst those who were aged 60 and above. All other age demographics showed greater concern regarding surveillance’s impingement upon privacy and voiced concern over the Government’s surveillance of digital communications. Furthermore, the analysis of focus group interviews highlighted the concern regarding online data collection by various entities, tied in with a lack of understanding or capability in preventing it. The focus group results therefore imply that governmental surveillance is undertaken by reason of public resignation, rather than by approval or indifference (Bakir et al., 2015) . The Surveillance, Privacy and Security (SurPRISE) project also explored public views on privacy and surveillance and a part of it focused on public concern in the UK (Strauss, 2015). They demonstrated that the majority of British participants were concerned about privacy yet believed that the Government should use surveillance technologies and that they improve national security.

On the other hand, more recent public opinion polls conducted by YouGov in 2016 as a response to Theresa May’s proposal to provide Britain’s police and intelligence services with additional surveillance powers showed that approximately half of those polled approved of the Government’s decision to provide the security services with increased powers (YouGov, 2016). British views seem unchanged; the results of public opinion polls between January 2015 and February 2019 suggest that the majority of Britons surveyed believe that additional help should be provided to the security services to fight terrorism, regardless of the cost to people’s privacy and civil rights (de Waal, 2019).

Studies conducted in the USA also presented a varied picture. A survey consisting of mostly US participants showed that the overall acceptance of online government surveillance was at an intermediate level and negative attitudes were significantly greater than positive attitudes (Bayerl & Akhgar, 2015). Moreover, survey respondents were particularly concerned regarding threats to freedom of speech and online surveillance resulting in a subsequent loss of trust in the Government. Claims



the Government frequently use, that surveilling online behaviour safeguards the internet and ensures the safety of society, found minimal agreement from participants. However, they also showed a significant positive correlation between the perceived benefits of surveillance and acceptance of government surveillance.

Moreover, a study conducted in the USA investigated the relationships between views of government surveillance and Internet privacy concerns and showed that those who believed the Government needs increased online surveillance powers to ensure security and the safety of online transactions were less likely to have privacy concerns. They also found that concerns vis-à-vis privacy were positively correlated with concerns of government intrusion and negatively correlated with perceived need for surveillance (Dinev et al., 2008).

Another US based study, utilising two experiments embedded in a nationally representative survey, assessed the degree to which perceptions of online government surveillance are influenced by politically associated conflicts (Best & Krueger, 2008). Those who hold a poor opinion of the President are more likely to perceive government surveillance and are more likely to view monitoring techniques as being comparatively more invasive.

Furthermore, Budak, Anić and Rajh (2013) carried out a study in Croatia exploring people's attitudes towards privacy and government surveillance. They discovered that Croatian citizens who demonstrated the most concern about the manipulation of personal data tended to be more cautious regarding the efficacy of and need for government surveillance.

### **5.2.3 The role of shared identity**

The social identity approach comprises social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) and self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner et al., 1987). One's social identity stems from a person's identification with a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) and while SIT explores how the group aspect of identity can impact intergroup relations, SCT is broader in scope, and depicts the circumstances and

consequences of an individual perceiving collections of people as groups (Turner et al., 1987). Within the scope of social identity theory, those identifying themselves as part of a group are more likely to look to other groups' members as a model for thinking and behaving. For example, previous research has shown that when participants are anchored to the concept of group membership, they were more liable to be persuaded by an in-group, as opposed to an out-group member (McGarty, Haslam, Hutchinson, & Turner, 1994). Other studies have shown that attempts at influencing a person are more effective when coming from an in-group member rather than an out-group member (Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & Turner, 1990; McGarty, Turner, Hogg, David, & Wetherell, 1992).

In the context of surveillance perceptions, it has been suggested that the social identity approach offers a lens through which to understand the potential impact that the surveillance source has upon surveillance acceptance (Alder, 2001; Oz, Glass, & Behling, 1999). O'Donnell et al. (2010) investigated the role of social identity in surveillance acceptance and demonstrated that sharing group identity with those who introduce the surveillance has an effect on the acceptance of the surveillance. They argued that one's perception of surveillance's infringement upon privacy is dependent on the perceived social relationship with the source of the surveillance; when group identity is shared with the perpetrator of surveillance it is deemed more acceptable. The explanation for this is that shared identity allows surveillance to be perceived as a benefit to the in-group (i.e. safety).

Moreover, we believe our previous study (*Chapter 3*) exploring young British adults' views on surveillance supported the social identity approach in explaining government surveillance perceptions – and their trust in them – to an extent. In said qualitative study, we observed that individuals having positive views of the British Government and thus shared group identity also had more supportive views towards surveillance and vice versa. In Study 1 we suggested that trust and perceived legitimacy of authority also contribute to explanations of surveillance acceptance, but the present research solely focuses on feelings of British national identity. We

believe that shared national identity with the source of surveillance affects perceptions of surveillance.

A person's national identity reflects one's sense of belonging to a nation as a cohesive whole and is embodied by its distinctive language, symbols, customs and traditions (Smith, 1991). Theoretical literature suggests that there is a difference between ethnic and civil forms of national identity (Cederman, 2001; Lijphart, 1977; Scharpf, 1999). Civic national identity puts the emphasis on a civic culture, a historical territory with a legal political community, while ethnic national identity emphasises the community of descent and birth (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2010). There exists no mutual exclusivity or clear borders between ethnic or civil national identity. Although varying levels of ethnic and civil national identities may exist between countries, a country's collective national identity cannot be characterized by only ethnic or civic national identities (Berg & Hjerm, 2010).

While some theories argued that ethnic homogeneity (ethnic version of national identity) is essential in order for societies and institutions to be legitimate and functional, which has been supported by research (Citrin, Green, Muste, & Wong, 1997; Sears & Citrin, 1985), others have argued the opposing position. The importance of civic national identity in binding together societies with the honouring of mutually beneficial agreements has been highlighted and supported by research that found that some states possess a strong sense of community not based on an ethnic national identity (Føllesdal, 2001; 2002).

Since the enlightenment, Britain has adopted a longstanding liberal tradition based on secularism, individualism and a free market economy, and with this in mind it has been argued that contemporary British national identity emphasizes civic rather than ethnic aspects (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2010), although it should be noted that there are competing conceptualisations of the nation, with, for example, extreme right wing political entities typically preferring a more ethnic kind of national identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Even though the association between national identity and governmental trust is a relatively under-researched area, a cross-national European survey study (ESSII) demonstrated that civic national identity positively correlates with trust in political institutions (Berg & Hjerm, 2010). Extrapolating from these findings, we assume that – as current mainstream constructions of Britishness tend to emphasise civic national identity – strong British national identity is linked to political trust, which is essential in the context of government surveillance.

Furthermore, another reason why we believe that British national identity positively associates with perceptions of government surveillance is because research has previously posited that surveillance is often framed and communicated to the public in terms of national identity for reasons of national security. For example, a study was conducted examining [www.lifeandliberty.gov](http://www.lifeandliberty.gov), a US Government website created to educate the public on the USA PATRIOT Act and found that rhetorical strategies utilising authority, security, efficacy, responsibility, and efficiency were overused (Simone, 2009). Furthermore, the discourse analysis revealed that surveillance is positioned as if it is carried out ‘for the good of a government’s citizens’. The portrayal of the Government’s role as a paternalistic protector, framing citizens as innocent victims and terrorists as foreign threats, was deployed so as to link national identity to national security, a finding similar to previous studies (Iacovetta, 2000; McCormick, 1997). This links to a variety of theories around national identity, which emphasise how one of the important motivations it serves is a security function (see, for example, the review of relevant work in Druckman, 1994). Moreover, in the context of surveillance, security is often depicted as a collective, societal right, while privacy is viewed as an individual right (Solove, 2009).

In our understanding, no previous research has yet attempted to explore the relationship between national identity and surveillance perceptions. Extrapolating from findings of studies on social identity and surveillance attitudes, we believe that the relationship between surveillance perceptions and shared national identity with the source of surveillance is worth exploring. Strong feelings of national

identity mean stronger identification with one's nation, therefore the protection and safety of this group is of great importance.

#### **5.2.4 The present study**

Given the ubiquitous nature of surveillance in modern societies, especially in the United Kingdom, assessment of these technologies and how the public responds to them is timely. There is a lack of research investigating whether one's national identity is associated with one's attitudes towards surveillance. The present study aimed to fill this gap in the literature by exploring whether the national identity of British citizens affects and is related to different government surveillance perceptions.

The studies and public opinion polls described above depicted a varied cross-cultural picture of attitudes towards government surveillance. British citizens were supportive and accepting towards CCTV (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Webster, 2009) but concerns were expressed after the 2013 Snowden revelations (Bakir et al., 2015; Ball, 2002). However, recent public support was discovered for the implementation of stricter surveillance measures by the Government in response to terrorist attacks (Bennett, 2016). This suggests that perceptions of government surveillance can vary across time and aspects of these perceptions are context dependent, however we suggest that national identity is likely to be associated with these perceptions, despite this contextual variation. This is in keeping with the idea that social identities such as national identity themselves vary in salience, and can be drawn upon in discourses and rhetoric by persuaders in an attempt to manipulate perceptions through leveraging the desire to conform to the norms of a social identity (see examples of this in relation to national identity in Billig's work on banal nationalism and Reicher and Hopkins writing on national identity; Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

In the present study instead of assessing whether people thought surveillance was a 'good' or a 'bad' thing, we decided to measure three different facets of one's perception of surveillance; need, benefit and concern. The role of social identity in

surveillance acceptance has been explored previously, and O'Donnell and colleagues (2010) suggest that sharing group identity with the source of surveillance positively influences acceptance. Based on the findings of our previous qualitative study (*Chapter 3*) we believe that sharing national identity with the source of surveillance will have an effect on different facets of surveillance perceptions, especially when national identity is primed. Social priming refers to the activation of knowledge constructions in response to exposure to a prior stimulus and evidence for priming effects has been found previously in the field of social psychology (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Warner, Kent, & Kiddoo, 2016; Wyer, & Srull, 1989). To test this idea, we decided to employ a national identity priming manipulation, whereby people's feelings of Britishness are made salient. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H1:** Increased British national identity will have an effect on perceived need, perceived benefit and concerns about government surveillance.

As mentioned previously, instead of measuring surveillance acceptance and rejection, we decide to assess three different perceptions that relate to acceptance or rejection. Previous studies have shown that when surveillance systems are perceived to be effective and beneficial (Bayerl & Akhgar, 2015; Budak et al., 2013; Dinev et al., 2008; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist et al., 2008; Webster, 2009) people are more likely to have supportive attitudes towards surveillance. We believe that those who have stronger feelings of Britishness are more likely to perceive that there is a need for surveillance imposed by the British government as well as perceive such measures to be beneficial. Therefore, we hypothesised that:

**H2:** There will be a positive correlation between British national identity and perceived need for government surveillance.

**H3:** There will be a positive correlation between British national identity and perceived benefits of online surveillance.

It has also been demonstrated that concern about privacy, mainly stemming from a fear of loss of privacy and civil liberties, leads to negative attitudes towards surveillance. We believe that when people's British national identification is lower, they are more likely to perceive surveillance by the British Government as an infringement on their privacy, and therefore more likely to be concerned about such measures. Thus, we hypothesised that:

**H4:** There will be a negative relationship between British national identity and concerns about government surveillance.

## 5.3 Methods

### 5.3.1 Participants

In order to detect a small to medium effect size ( $f^2 = .10$ ), an a-priori power analysis (error probability  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .95) was conducted using G\*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) determining that a sample of 191 participants would be needed for a MANOVA with four dependent variables (British national identity, perceived need for government surveillance, perceived benefits of government surveillance, concern about government surveillance).

Participants ( $N = 214$ ) were recruited through the researcher's acquaintances by means of snowball sampling as well as from a pool of psychology students enrolled at Royal Holloway, University of London who received course credit for their participation. Due to the nature of the study the sample consisted of British participants only. 163 participants were female (76%) and 51 were male (24%) ranging in age from 18 to 66 ( $M = 22.10$ ,  $SD = 7.93$ ). In terms of education the most commonly held qualification was an undergraduate degree ( $n = 163$ , 76%), followed by a postgraduate degree ( $n = 46$ , 22%). This study was given ethical approval by the College Ethics Committee.

### 5.3.2 Measures

The study took the form of an online attitude survey constructed using Qualtrics Survey Software (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). All data were held securely and confidentially on the researchers' computers. The online attitude survey contained seven sections which are described below. Scale reliability was analysed by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient, representing the internal consistency for sets of items.

#### *Informed consent*

It described the study, the purpose of the study and informed participants of the approximate expected participation time. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

#### *Demographics*

This section contained questions about the participants' nationality, age, gender and their highest qualification attained.

#### *British national identity*

British national identity was assessed using a 7-item questionnaire developed by Cinnirella and Hamilton (2007) and aimed at capturing the key elements of social identity as defined by social identity theory and self-categorisation theory, including importance, salience, self-stereotyping and affect. A sample item from the scale is *'To what extent do you feel strong ties with other British people?'*. Items were scored from Not at all (1) to Extremely (7). Higher scores on this scale indicated stronger identification with being British. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .872, indicating high internal reliability.

#### *Perceived need for government surveillance*

This section included 4 questions measuring belief that the Government needs to be able to monitor people's personal activities to a greater extent (Dinev et al., 2008). A sample question is *'The Government needs to have greater access to personal information'*. Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from



Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7) and the scores were recoded prior to analyses. Higher scores suggest increased perceived need for government surveillance. Cronbach's alpha obtained was .873.

#### *Potential benefits of surveillance*

These 6 questions – originally designed by Bayerl and Akhgar (2015) – were changed to assess people's attitudes toward the benefits of government surveillance, for example '*Governmental monitoring of the web can prevent offline crimes*'. Items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7) which were recoded before the analyses. Higher scores indicate stronger beliefs that online surveillance conducted by the Government is beneficial. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .870.

#### *Concerns about government surveillance*

Participants' concerns about governmental monitoring of online activity was measured with 6 items scored from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (7) and the scores were recoded prior to analyses. The first three questions were developed by Dinev et al. (2008) and a sample item was '*I'm concerned about the Government's ability to monitor internet activities*'. The last three questions were taken from a study by Bayerl and Akhgar (2015) and were modified to assess people's concerns about online surveillance conducted by the Government, such as '*I am concerned that governmental online surveillance threatens our freedom of expression and speech*'. Higher scores show higher levels of concerns regarding governmental online surveillance. The Cronbach's alpha obtained was .880.

#### *Debriefing form*

After completing the questionnaires, participants were debriefed fully as to the purposes of the study, thanked and provided with the email addresses of the researchers.

### **5.3.3 Procedure**

Data collection for the study took approximately four months, between September 2016 and January 2017. Participants first completed the demographics questions then they were randomly allocated into two conditions. Participants in the first condition received a British national identity prime where they were asked to think about reasons why the United Kingdom is unique in comparison to other countries and to list 5 of them. This manipulation procedure was applied in previous research where perceptions of collective continuity were manipulated by reading about different national values, attitudes and beliefs (Warner et al., 2016), and has been a well-used procedure in social identity research for making a national identity salient prior to an experiment or survey. Participants in the second condition received no prime, and instead were asked to think about reasons why the telephone was an important innovation and to list 5 of them, a task expected to be neutral in terms of national identity or affect. After national identity priming, the participants completed the rest of the questionnaire.

### **5.3.4 Design and statistical analysis**

The study used an experimental and correlational design (essentially a survey experiment), and analyses were computed using IBM SPSS Statistics 21 Software. The independent variable was national identity priming with two levels: British identity primed versus not primed. The dependent variables were British national identity, need for government surveillance, benefits of government surveillance and concerns about government surveillance. Data were analysed using an independent multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). In Pearson's correlational design, the variables included were British national identity, need for government surveillance, benefits of government surveillance and concerns about government surveillance. The expectation maximization algorithm was used to account for missing data (Little, & Rubin, 1987).

## 5.4 Results

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was not significant so the assumption of equality of covariance matrices has been met ( $F(10, 210146.904) = .869, p = .562$ ).

Descriptive statistics for the variables were the following: British national identity  $M = 31.03$  ( $SD = 7.6$ ), perceived need for government surveillance  $M = 12.24$  ( $SD = 5.28$ ), perceived benefit of government surveillance  $M = 29.66$  ( $SD = 6.1$ ) and concerns about government surveillance  $M = 26.85$  ( $SD = 6.727$ ).

### 5.4.1 Multiple analysis of variance

We tested whether British national identity priming caused an effect on participants' attitudes towards the need for government surveillance, benefits of government surveillance, government intrusion concerns and threat of government surveillance. Multivariate analysis of variance revealed that British national identity priming did not significantly influence the composite dependent variable ( $F(4, 207) = .726, p = .575, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .014$ ). In addition, there was no effect of prime on any of the dependent variables in the univariate analyses ( $p > .10$ ).

### 5.4.2 Correlations

British national identity was found to be positively correlated with perceived need for government surveillance ( $r(214) = .248, p < .001$ ), and benefits of government surveillance ( $r(214) = .191, p = .005$ ). Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was found between British national identity and concern about government surveillance ( $r(214) = -.141, p = .039$ ).

## 5.5 Discussion

The present study investigated the associations between British national identity and three different facets of attitudes toward surveillance imposed by the British

Government; perceived need for surveillance, perceived benefits of surveillance and concern about surveillance.

We predicted that a national identity priming manipulation – whereby participants’ feelings of Britishness were made salient – will affect participants’ perceptions of surveillance (**H1**), although we did not find a significant priming effect, therefore our first hypothesis was not supported. The lack of significant priming effect may be explained by the recent denunciation of priming techniques because of the ‘replication crisis’, where a large number of social psychological studies using priming techniques were not able to be replicated (Cesario, 2014; Klein, 2014; Shanks et al., 2015). The replication crisis has fundamentally changed the field of social psychology over the last few years (Świątkowski & Dompnier, 2017), but when this study was designed and conducted, priming techniques were still widely used. Revisions of the priming literature after the replication crisis now suggest that social psychological priming effects may be much less powerful than once thought, and potentially extremely short-lived (just a few seconds). In the case of our study, it is therefore possible that priming may have made national identity more salient, but for just a few fleeting seconds. Alternatively, it may be that the priming manipulation failed to influence British identity because this social identity is robust and well-developed within our participants, and because of this, resistant to being primed by relatively mundane tasks such as the one used in the manipulation, perhaps only fluctuating in response to more meaningful real-world events such as reporting of terror attacks, sporting or military events.

Although our national identity priming manipulation showed no effect, all of our correlational hypotheses were supported. We predicted that British national identity is in a positive relationship with perceived need (**H2**) and perceived benefits (**H3**) of government surveillance and the results supported both our hypotheses. Therefore, we suggest that those participants who have stronger feelings and identification of Britishness are more likely to perceive governmental surveillance to be needed and to be beneficial. Although our study did not explore the causal direction of this relationship between British identity and support for surveillance,

the previous literature on social identity and attitudes towards surveillance allows us to suggest that it is from higher British national identity to more positive attitudes towards surveillance, and not in the other direction. As need and benefit of surveillance are both perceptions that are ultimately linked to supportive attitudes towards surveillance (Budak et al., 2013; Dinev et al., 2008; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist et al., 2008; Webster, 2009), we propose that our findings are in line with those of O'Donnell and colleagues' (2010) who showed that shared social identity with the source of surveillance increases its acceptance, and we have extended the literature by demonstrating that this works for national identity and surveillance attitudes in a UK context.

Our fourth hypothesis (**H4**) was also supported, whereby a negative relationship between British national identity and concerns about government surveillance was found. Again, due to the correlational design this result can be interpreted in two ways when it comes to causality, however the interpretation that is most in keeping with previous research is one in which increasing British national identification reduces concern about government surveillance. This finding is in line with previous research which showed that when identity is not shared between surveilled and the source of surveillance, then it is more likely that the monitoring will be viewed as an infringement of privacy (O'Donnell et al., 2010).

Overall, our findings revealed that British national identity has a significant role in explaining perceptions of government surveillance. When individuals strongly identify as British, they are more likely to feel that there is a need for surveillance and that such measures imposed by the Government are effective in protecting its citizens. On the other hand, lower national identification is related to the perceptions/feelings of concern regarding government surveillance. As outlined in the literature review to this chapter, it is likely that the link between British national identity and acceptance of government surveillance is linked to arguments that position surveillance as in the national interest and as linked to national security. These kinds of social constructions of government surveillance thus put pressure on those who see themselves as British to accept surveillance as a way of adhering

to group norms (as described in Self-Categorisation Theory's notion of 'self-stereotyping'; see Turner, 1991) and demonstrating their 'loyalty' to the in-group. The construction of government surveillance as necessary for national security also plays on the function that national identity serves for protecting the individual (Bloom, 1990). To our knowledge, no previous study has been designed to explore the relationship between national identity and surveillance perceptions, and by providing a unique perspective, the results of this study expand the literature on the understanding of public perceptions of surveillance. The current study presents evidence that the various surveillance perceptions that ultimately impact upon one's positive or negative attitudes towards government surveillance are significantly related to British national identity.

The present study suffers from a number of limitations, primarily the lack of consideration of other constructs that might have impacted upon perceptions of government surveillance. For example, even though correlational results supported our hypotheses, the relationships between British national identity and perceptions of surveillance imposed by the British Government might be mediated by one's political orientation, certain personality dimensions, and trust in the current government. Future research could therefore seek a more nuanced appreciation and operationalisation of British national identity and trust in the Government. Moreover, it has been suggested that Right-Wing Authoritarianism had a contributing role in the Brexit vote (Kaufmann, 2016). It has been argued that RWA should be thought of in the context of order vs openness, as an emerging political divide by which those who prefer order are more likely to support Brexit. Therefore, we believe that the RWA personality variable would be worth exploring in the context of surveillance attitudes. Future studies should explore and measure the effects of political orientation, governmental trust and RWA on surveillance perceptions.

Furthermore, it is possible that other variables affected our results, such as the recent terrorist attacks or political changes in the UK. Our study was conducted between September 2016 and January 2017. Prior to and during the data collection

phases of the study, three major terrorist attacks happened across Europe in 2016; the Brussels bombing in Belgium in March, the Nice truck attack in France in July and the Berlin Christmas market attack in Germany in December. Moreover, in October 2016 a college student left an unattended bag of explosives on the Jubilee Line in London which failed to go off but would have caused casualties. Even though his motivations were not fully known, he admitted to having an interest in Islam and posed next to an image of an Islamist extremist. The event received a lot of media attention and possibly caused fear and a perception of increased terrorism threat amongst Britons. It has been suggested that terrorist events increase national identification, for example after the attacks on September 11th led to a significant increase in expressions containing sentiments of national identification or unity in the US (Li & Brewer, 2008).

Therefore, we believe that the recent terrorist attacks across Europe could have affected our participants by impacting perceptions of the threat of terrorism, national identification and ultimately their perceptions of government surveillance. Studies have also shown that in the case of national emergencies, people are more likely to trust the Government and are more willing to sacrifice their civil liberties for increased security by giving the Government additional surveillance powers (Gould, 2002; Westin, 2003). Furthermore, as a response to the recent attack in November 2016 the British Government started pushing for the implementation of stricter surveillance measures (Investigatory Powers Act) and so the topic of government surveillance was at the forefront of attention at the time the study was conducted, and the British media carried frequent stories about surveillance that used the previously mentioned discourses around national security.

Moreover, in June 2016 the British Referendum on European Union membership was held, where the majority of Britons voted to leave the EU. The negotiations regarding the exact circumstances and dates are still ongoing but nevertheless this historic event has hugely impacted British national identity. We believe that Brexit had an influence on people's perceptions of Britishness and national self-evaluations. It is possible that Remain voters' feelings of Britishness and national

identification have already been altered as a result of Brexit and what it means to be British is not so clear-cut anymore.

Finally, from a methodological point of view, we would again note that the correlational design implemented does not allow inferences about the causal direction of effects, although as previously discussed there is good reason to have some confidence in the likely direction of relationships based on previous research. Nevertheless, we believe that future research would benefit from mixed methods – experimental studies could attempt to tease out some of the additional factors that impact support for surveillance that may be sensitive to contextual effects. Additionally, qualitative work could seek to map some of the societal discourses (e.g., in the mainstream media) around surveillance and how these discourses draw upon themes linked to national identity and terrorism.



## **6. Exploring Views on the Acceptance or Rejection of Increased Surveillance in the UK in the Aftermath of a Terrorist Attack**

### **6.1 Abstract**

The public is often reluctant to accept the implementation of new surveillance technologies, and the issue is likely to evoke strong emotions, particularly when two undesirable outcomes are pitted against each other; infringement of civil liberties and terrorist attacks. As a response to the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, in November 2016 the British Government proposed the implementation of stricter surveillance measures. As public perceptions of surveillance have not been thoroughly explored, particularly not in this context, this qualitative study applied thematic analysis in order to identify themes in an online forum discussion vis-à-vis the implementation of stricter surveillance measures. Several theoretical perspectives and constructs from psychology were used to explain people's constructions of surveillance; intergroup threat theory, black sheep effect and perceived collective continuity. We posit that the acceptance or rejection of surveillance is at least partly dependent on one's evaluation of the symbolic threat to privacy posed by surveillance and the realistic threat posed by terrorism resulting in the need for security. These perceptions are impacted by the perceived effectiveness of surveillance and trust in the institution imposing it, and seem to intertwine with discourses surrounding British national identity.

## **6.2 Introduction**

### **6.2.1 Post 9/11 surveillance**

Surveillance practices and thus the views regarding surveillance and privacy have changed substantially in recent times mainly due to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. While Americans have been dealing with the external threat to their democratic and personal freedoms posed by terrorism, conversely, in response to the attacks, in an effort to provide security for their citizens the US Government have placed restrictions on their freedom and privacy (Davis & Silver, 2004; Haggerty & Gazso, 2005a). In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the US Government expanded their powers by the passing of the USA PATRIOT Act which allowed for extensive and intensive surveillance (Levi & Wall, 2004) ultimately resulting in the restriction of civil liberties (Cohrs, Kielmann, Maes, & Moschner, 2005). The Act grants the Government powers to surveil and intercept a wide range of oral, wire and electronic communications and to gather data electronically from platforms and databases, including but not limited to emails, personal records, internet usage, GPS tracking data and profiling/data-matching databases (Gellman, 2002; Mitchener-Nissen, 2014). The Act received criticism for allowing the infringement of privacy by law enforcement sans judicial oversight (Nelson, 2002).

As well as in the USA, several Western European governments have enacted new policies after 9/11, which principally depend on surveillance technologies (such as CCTV, biometrics, eavesdropping, automatic face recognition, number plate recognition systems etc.) to stimulate a proactive and preventative approach to terrorism (Bassett, 2007; Pavone & Esposti, 2012; Ramraj, Hor, & Roach, 2009; Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018).

All in all, the policies enacted led to increased governmental surveillance powers at the cost of civil liberties (Dragu, 2011; Posner, 2006). It is argued that a consequence of post 9/11 surveillance is the subsequent increase in scrutiny of everyday, ordinary conversations and transactions. Although the new laws may not

affect the efficacy in apprehending terrorists, the lives of ordinary citizens could be complicated and intruded upon with increased monitoring, classification and evaluation (Lyon, 2003).

While those advocating increased surveillance and security argue that for protection these measures are essential, advocates of civil liberties and privacy express concern regarding the increased use of formerly protected information (Bowyer, 2004; Casella, 2003). Public concern has been well illustrated by polling data which suggests that worry exists over the benefits proffered by homeland security technologies being outweighed by potential infringement of privacy and civil liberties (Davis & Silver, 2004). Moreover, fears of the development of an Orwellian society have been illuminated by a focus group report from the League of Woman Voters (2005) which highlights people's concerns regarding the specific risks inherent with homeland security technologies.

### **6.2.2 The trade-off model**

The relationship between civil liberties and security are often expressed as a trade-off, whereby any gain in security via implementation of surveillance measures results in a proportional loss of citizen's privacy (Friedewald et al., 2015; Lewis, 2005; Pavone, & Esposti, 2012).

It has been posited that during national emergencies, US citizens are more willing to sacrifice their civil liberties for increased security by giving the Government additional surveillance powers (Gould, 2002). In the context of terrorism for instance, it has been shown that in the wake of 9/11 the sacrifice of civil liberties in order to limit terrorism was regarded as necessary by the majority of survey respondents (Lewis, 2005). Moreover, another public opinion poll found that around two thirds of the respondents favoured the investigation of possible terrorist threats by the FBI, even if privacy is intruded upon, while only a quarter of people preferred the FBI not to be able to investigate possible terrorist threats at the expense of personal privacy (Lewis, 2005). In the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing, a poll found that 78% of people supported the implementation of

surveillance cameras as they believed them to be beneficial in minimizing the threat of terrorism. Moreover, only 16% of people were against the installation of said technology on the grounds of privacy infringement (The New York Times, 2013).

A manifestation of the trade-off model often leads to the following, oft quoted argument: ‘If you have got nothing to hide you have got nothing to fear’ (Friedewald et al., 2015; Solove, 2007). However, the model has been criticised from a multitude of angles; the terms privacy and security are abstracted and viewed within the context of a zero-sum game where surveillance technologies increase security but harm privacy (Friedewald et al., 2015; Pavone & Esposti, 2012; Solove, 2007). For example, it has been asserted that privacy and security are not exchangeable goods, but are factors influenced by trust and concern; socially embedded, contextually-dependent, fluid attitudes (Pavone & Esposti, 2012).

Moreover, it has been argued that by framing questions comparing the relative importance of privacy versus security concerns, the debate is inevitably tilted in favour of security (Dragu, 2011). There is a presupposition that security is the more important of the two and so the burden lies upon those wishing to argue that privacy rights hold higher societal value than security does (Mitchener-Nissen, 2014). Interestingly, a Belgian study demonstrated the importance of framing the presentation of surveillance technologies in influencing people’s acceptance of such technologies (Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018). Those presented with a security frame tended to support the use of security-oriented technologies, as opposed to those who were presented with a privacy frame. This suggests that people may be malleable when forming their attitudes towards surveillance and the efficacy of framing surveillance debates in a security frame of reference (which also links to the issues around national identity serving security motivations discussed in an earlier chapter).

Additionally, privacy is often depicted as an individual right while security is perceived as a collective, societal right. This results in a biased conceptualisation whereby the importance of individuals’ privacy rights is overshadowed by the

security needs of the many (Solove, 2009). The by-product of such conceptualisation is the disregard of the social value of privacy (Mitchener-Nissen, 2014).

While some see privacy and security as fundamentally interweaved conditions whereby the increase of one is followed by the subsequent decrease in the other (trade-off model), other views also exist. For instance, scepticism regarding the benefits offered by the implementation of surveillance. This can be extended to those who view surveillance not only as ineffective, but also harmful due to infringement on privacy. Finally, there are those who consider surveillance to be beneficial, and do not view it as detrimental to privacy (Kreissl et al., 2015).

### **6.2.3 Threat**

One of the results of 9/11 was the considerable, significant and widespread anxiety amongst Americans it caused. An often-observed emotional response to threat is an attempt to reduce the distress by increasing levels of personal security; this can lead to increased support for government efforts which target threats to personal security, such as strategies designed to prevent future terrorist attacks (Davis & Silver, 2004). The current climate in which the threat of terrorism has been heightened has led people to value safety and security over privacy, and so surveillance is tolerated where once it may have been regarded as unacceptable (Levi & Wall, 2004). Thus, it can be argued that surveillance is considered to be necessary during times when threat is perceived to be high.

To support this, it has been found that people's perception of threat significantly affects levels of support for policies targeted at reducing terrorism and if the perceived threat is abated, then support for these policies significantly decreases (Malhotra & Popp, 2012). Individual differences have also been shown to affect how the threat of terrorism links to support for surveillance - e.g., authoritarian personality (Cohrs et al., 2005).

It has been argued that the threat posed by terrorism provides political leverage for the implementation of measures that erode civil liberties (Neocleous, 2007; Waldron, 2003). The passing of the USA Patriot Act by the US Government following 9/11 is a notable example. For instance, a study conducting critical discourse analysis of [www.lifeandliberty.gov](http://www.lifeandliberty.gov) – a website created to educate the public on the USA PATRIOT Act – showed that rhetorical strategies utilising authority, security, efficacy and responsibility were overused (Simone, 2009). The portrayal of the Government's role as a paternalistic protector, with citizens as innocent victims and terrorists as foreign threats was deployed, so as to link national identity to national security and suggest both are served by government surveillance. As discussed in previous chapters, this takes advantage of a well-established link between national identity and concepts of security (see, for example, Bloom, 1990).

By the very nature of terrorism, prevention requires pre-emptive action providing potential justification for implementing new policies and security technologies without having to provide evidence of real threats (Dinh, 2002). Absent of a threat, governments can deliberately construct a climate of fear within the populace to justify the implementation of new security measures thereby introducing technologies more proficient at controlling and manipulating citizens (Mitchener-Nissen, 2014; Pavone & Pereira, 2009; Waldron, 2003). The citizen, depicted as an innocent victim of potential security threats (e.g., terrorist attacks), and dependent on the Government to provide security becomes an individual more malleable, obsequious and self-sacrificial (Mitchener-Nissen, 2014).

#### **6.2.4 Trust**

The role of trust in accepting surveillance has been investigated previously by research, generally concluding that trust in institutions has a positive correlation with an individual's acceptance of intrusive, privacy invading measures (van den Broek, Ooms, Friedewald, van Lieshout, & Rung, 2017; Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018). As previously mentioned, trust impacts upon the balance between privacy and security (Pavone & Esposti, 2012). Political trust has been found to positively

relate to people's acceptance of surveillance in Germany (Trüdingera & Steckermeierb, 2017) as well as increasing levels of support for policies targeting terrorism and fostering support for anti-terrorism policies in six other countries (Denemark, 2012). Furthermore, in the US and in Canada it has been demonstrated that those who trust the Government tend to support security and surveillance policies (Nakhaie & de Lint, 2013). Interestingly, a study showed that trust is a better predictor of support for surveillance in those who are privacy orientated compared to those who are security orientated (Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018). Furthermore, based on focus group interviews conducted amongst Spanish citizens, Pavone and Esposti (2012) posited that those with lower levels of trust in institutions implementing surveillance-oriented security technologies tended to be more concerned about their misuse and consider privacy a priority. On the other hand, people placing more trust in said institutions were less likely to be concerned about privacy and instead prioritised security. All in all, trusting people believed that in addition to privacy not being affected by the implementation of surveillance technologies, they also asserted these technologies to be effective at preventing crime (Pavone & Esposti, 2012).

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the level of trust citizens had in the Government increased to heights not seen since the 1960's (Chanley, 2002; Cook & Gronke, 2005; Westin, 2003) along with the public approval of new government surveillance powers (Harris Interactive & Westin, 2001). Furthermore, a poll conducted after the Boston Marathon Bombings by The New York Times and CBS News found that 70% of respondents had confidence in the Government to protect its citizens from possible future attacks (The New York Times, 2003).

In a study conducted in the aftermath of 9/11, Davis and Silver (2004) concluded that individuals who felt a greater sense of threat from terrorism were more willing to support surveillance and to trade off civil liberties in exchange for security, with one's trust in the Government interacting with this effect. They concluded that those with higher levels of trust in the Government and with a greater sense of threat had lower support for civil liberties, while people with lower levels of trust in the

Government had higher levels of support for civil liberties regardless of their concern about a possible terrorist attack.

On the other hand, a multi-method research study conducting a logistic regression of a public opinion survey and a Twitter discourse analysis demonstrated the presence of consistent, and mostly negative sentiments directed towards NSA surveillance programs. Analysis of #nsa tweets revealed that the top ten most active tweeters using #nsa have shown a tendency to distrust the Government and to hold beliefs that NSA surveillance programs infringe upon the rights of citizens (Reddick, Chatfield, & Jaramillo, 2015).

### **6.2.5 Perceived effectiveness**

Even though there is a lack of research evidence demonstrating that the reduction of civil liberties correlates with increased effectiveness of terrorism prevention, counterterrorism policies post 9/11 tend to rely on the presumption that it does (Dragu, 2011).

Regardless of whether surveillance is in fact effective or not, previous research has suggested that surveillance is evaluated more positively when it is perceived to be effective (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist et al., 2008; Webster, 2009). For example, with homeland security technologies, acceptance is contingent upon a balancing of the benefits (perceived effectiveness) against the risks (perceived intrusiveness). This results in those technologies viewed as more intrusive being deemed less effective, and those considered to be more effective being perceived to be less intrusive (Sanquist et al., 2008).

The data supports the theory that acceptance of surveillance technology is predicated on the outcome of a cost-benefit analysis, where the perceived advantages (benefits) are weighted against the disadvantages (risks). For example, people may tolerate increased invasion of their privacy (cost) in exchange for increased effectiveness in the prevention of terrorism (benefit) (Fischhoff, Slovic, Lichtenstein, Read, & Combs, 1978).



As described above, studies have previously asserted that perceptions of threat (Cohrs et al., 2005; Davis & Silver, 2004; Levi & Wall, 2004; Malhotra & Popp, 2012), governmental trust (Davis & Silver, 2004; Denmark, 2012; Nakhaie & de Lint, 2013; Pavone & Esposti, 2012; Trüdingera & Steckermeierb, 2017; van den Broek et al., 2017; Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018) and effectiveness of surveillance measures (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist et al., 2008; Webster, 2009) contributed to people's evaluations and attitudes towards surveillance. It has also been shown that terrorist attacks had a great impact on such perceptions; when the threat of terrorism is heightened people are more inclined to value security and safety over privacy and therefore tolerate surveillance laws that might normally be seen as unacceptable (Gould, 2002; Lewis, 2005). In order to explore whether these perceptions and constructions of surveillance are present in a prominent social media platform, we took advantage of the then current socio-political events, which provided us with the ideal setting to conduct our study.

### **6.2.6 The present study**

#### *The November 2015 Paris Attacks*

A series of coordinated terrorist attacks took place in Paris on 13 November 2015 killing 130 people and wounding 494. Six different locations were targeted, starting with three explosions outside the Stade de France during a football match, followed by a series of shootings and a suicide bombing at various restaurants and cafés. Another mass shooting was carried out in the Bataclan concert hall at an Eagles of Death Metal concert. The Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for the attacks (CNN Library, 2015).

#### *Investigatory Powers Act*

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, the British Government (mainly Conservative politicians such as David Cameron and Boris Johnson) started to fast-track the passing of the surveillance law called the Investigatory Powers Act (nicknamed the

Snoopers' Charter) whereby internet companies are forced to retain data pertaining to their customer's browsing habits for up to a year. Additionally, rules would be included which would give the Government the right to force companies to break their encryption, potentially resulting in the prohibition of iMessage and WhatsApp in their current form (Griffin, 2015).

Research focused on the investigation of public attitudes towards government surveillance has been very limited. For example, most studies so far were conducted in the US or Canada, and to our knowledge there are as yet no studies with British participants. Furthermore, the majority of studies were carried out after 9/11, principally due to the lack of major recent terrorist attacks prior to that event. In terms of their applications of theoretical models, most studies applied the trade-off approach to understand the public's views, though with some exceptions. Moreover, most research has relied on attitude surveys and public opinion polls – with some exceptions utilising focus group interviews – but it would seem that studies focused on understanding the perceptions manifested in an organic natural environment (e.g., cyberspace) have been neglected. We aimed to address this gap in the literature by exploring the public's constructions of surveillance in general, in the light of the unfortunate recent terror attacks and to attempt to examine their views on the proposed implementation of stricter surveillance measures by the UK Government.

Moreover, in our previous quantitative study (*Chapter 5*) we investigated the association between British national identity and different perceptions of government surveillance. We found that those with strong British identification are more likely to perceive government surveillance to be both necessary and beneficial, while those with weaker feelings of Britishness tended to be more concerned about it. We were interested to see whether any manifestation of British national identity will be apparent in the present study, and if these patterns between national identity and support for surveillance are also manifested in the naturally occurring discourses of an internet discussion forum. Furthermore, we wished to move beyond the quantitative approach we previously adopted and embark upon a

qualitative approach that will allow a more in-depth understanding of the way arguments around identity, surveillance and terrorism are constructed and defended by British citizens.

In our understanding, one's trust (in the institution carrying out surveillance, i.e. the Government), perception of threat and perception of how effective the measures are, relate to one's acceptance of surveillance. We were interested in investigating and evaluating these notions in an organic setting instead of an experimentally manipulated environment. Thus, we conducted an exploratory qualitative study by analysing data from a discussion forum in the aftermath of the Paris attacks following the proposal made by the UK Government for increased surveillance powers. We believed that a qualitative approach exploring views of British citizens on surveillance and more specifically, the proposed implementation of stricter measures, might provide us with a richer, more in-depth analysis than a quantitative approach. The broad research question of the study was: 'How do people in an online forum environment view and discuss the proposed increase of surveillance measures in the UK?'

## **6.3 Methods**

### **6.3.1 Data collection and participants**

In the present study we were interested in people's views on surveillance as a response to the attack, more specifically their attitudes towards the British Government's initiative to increase surveillance measures in the UK as a result of the Investigatory Powers Act in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris attacks.

It has been suggested that those who are distrustful of surveillance, and among them, the ones who are the most knowledgeable about the topic, are underrepresented in opinion polls, while those who may be considered pro-surveillance are over-represented (Haggerty & Gazso, 2005b). Underrepresentation of those who are anti-surveillance could be due to the adoption of behaviours likely

to predispose them to exclusion from studies. These factors may therefore skew the findings, and subsequently the conclusions derived by such studies. Thus, we decided to discard the idea of any quantitative methodologies and instead adopt a qualitative approach.

The feasibility of electronic data collection methods has been attested to by studies appropriating such methodologies which have stated that this is due to a decrease in human errors, swift and informative responses from participants and the richness of electronically collected data (Fawcett & Buhle, 1995; Robinson & Curl, 1994; Stanton, 1998). As an electronic data collection method, online forums provide a plentiful amount of asynchronous interactions, whereby individuals participate in conversations at their leisure, disparate to other methods requiring synchronous interactions. Asynchronous online forums are described as being accessible, secure, uncomplicated and easily observable (Anderson & Kanuka, 1997; Im & Chee, 2006). Confidentiality of data can be guaranteed as online forums require registration and the creation of a password. In comparison with other Internet data collection methods that are publicly accessible without passwords, online forums are more secure.

Taking the above described concerns into consideration regarding the underrepresentation of anti-surveillance views in studies with sample recruitment, we decided to carry out a secondary data analysis of naturalistic data in the form of an online forum discussion. We believe that due to the secondary analysis of a discussion, the underrepresentation of individuals with anti-surveillance views should not be an issue because recruitment did not take place as such, thus negating the risk of a self-selecting sample. Furthermore, since the internet forum we scraped for data was not explicitly focused on political issues, it was likely that the posters to the forum would vary in political beliefs. These assumptions are, we would argue, borne out by the fact that there were indeed anti-surveillance views expressed in the data set. Furthermore, we believed that due to the richness and earnestness of the range of attitudes and views expressed in an online forum discussion (Beretta, Maccagnola, Cribbin, & Messina, 2015; Seale, Ziebland, &

Charteris-Black, 2006), the analysis of such provides us with the ideal platform to conduct this study. As we were interested in layperson's views on surveillance, we chose to avoid a discussion forum that was specifically tailored for people concerned by these and similar issues, and instead we chose to analyse relevant discussions on a forum that was likely to be used by a range of people from different backgrounds and with varied political views. Furthermore, due to the fact that the online forum discussion is naturally occurring – and not driven by the researcher – the likelihood of response bias reduced (Smith et al., 2017; Smedley & Coulson, 2018).

Football365 (F365, <https://www.football365.com>) is a Leeds-based website – launched in 1997 – that primarily focuses on the English Premier League, in addition to other European football leagues and cups. The approach is often informal and humorous, with the use of witticisms and satire directed at individuals connected to the sport being widespread. F365 also provides its users with a Forum to discuss mainly football, however a range of other topics are also conversed about including current events, politics, television, food etc. F365 can be considered quite popular, having 4268 predominantly British members.

As F365 is a well-known discussion forum and we had knowledge that conversations often arise regarding current events, we decided to use it to collect data. Registration on the forum as a member was required.

The conversation we decided to analyse occurred on the night of the 13 November 2015 Paris attacks and lasted for one full week. The discussion thread was downloaded, archived and dialogues between forum members ( $n = 94$ ) discussing surveillance in the aftermath of the attack were selected for analysis. As stated in the Terms and Conditions of the website (Football365, n.d.), users have the right to utilise content and contributions posted by other users.

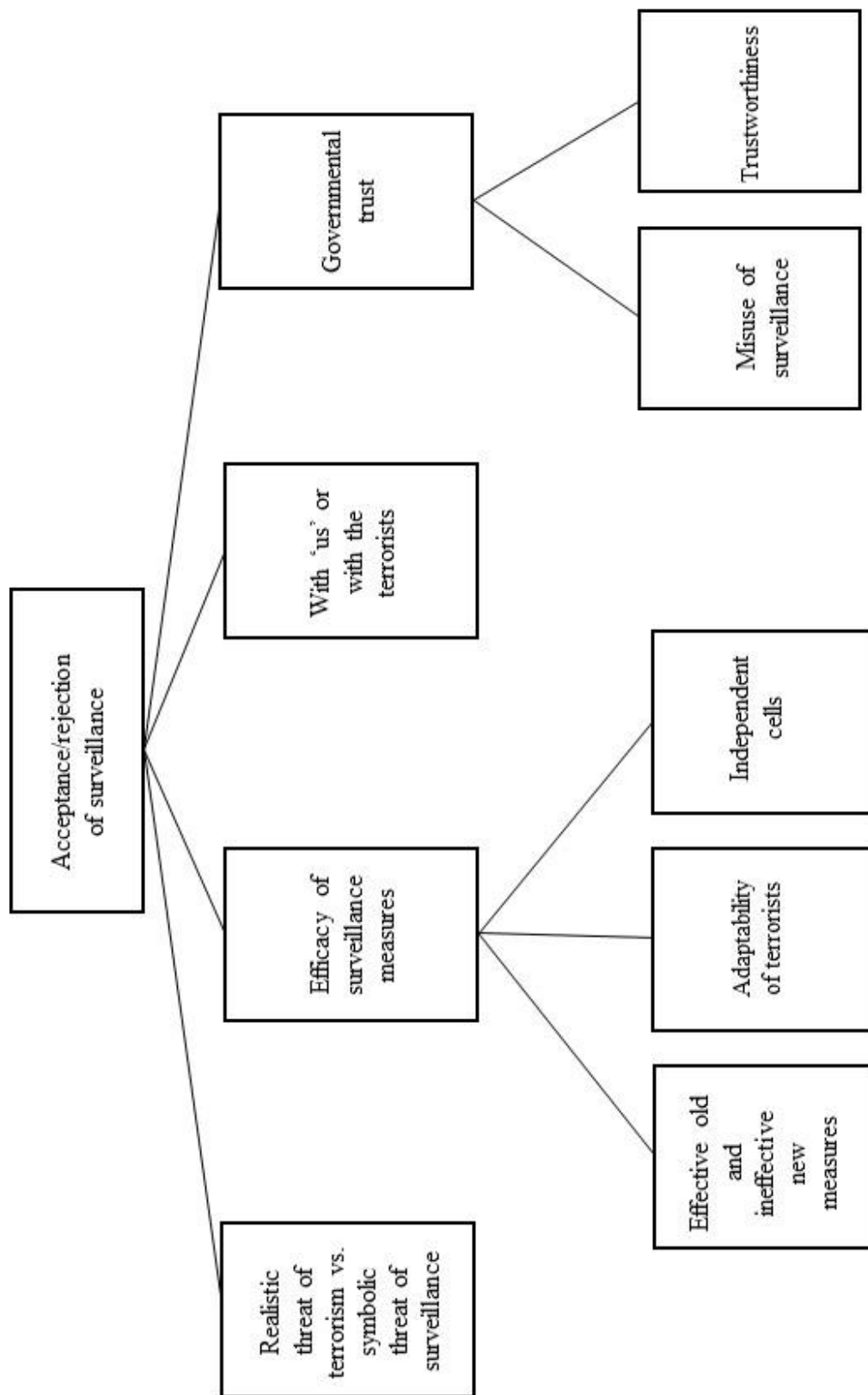
### **6.3.2 Data analysis**

Through the phases of thematic analysis, the six-phase step-by-step guide offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) was utilised. The analysis started with the familiarisation of the data which was achieved through multiple read-throughs as well as the creation of marginal notes (phase 1). Coding of the data set (phase 2) was performed manually in a systematic way whereby key analytic ideas relating to the research question were identified. At this point in the analysis, through the coding process, the broad research question was After a double round of coding, codes were combined to create overarching themes and sub-themes within them (phase 3). In the fourth phase of the analysis, the themes were reviewed and examined against the coded data relevant to each individual theme and against the entire data set, in order to make sure no aspect of the data was missed and that the analysis presented the data set in a meaningful way. At this stage, a thematic map (Figure 6.1) was created to map out the themes and subthemes.

## **6.4 Results**

Through the process of thematic analysis four major themes were identified; ‘realistic threat of terrorism versus symbolic threat of surveillance’, ‘with ‘us’ or with the terrorists’, ‘efficacy of surveillance’ (which included ‘effective old and ineffective new surveillance measures’, ‘adaptability of terrorists’ and ‘independent cells’) and finally ‘governmental trust’ (which included ‘misuse of surveillance’). These themes can be construed as different factors that are discussed when considering the acceptance or rejection of the implementation of new surveillance measures. The themes and subthemes identified in response to how people construct their views (either acceptance or rejection) on the proposed increase of surveillance measures in the UK are presented in a thematic map in Figure 6.1. The thematic map maps out the themes, subthemes and the relationship between them – both ‘horizontal’ which captures how themes fit together and ‘vertical’ shows the relationships of themes and subthemes sitting within themes (Clarke & Braun, 2016).

Themes and subthemes are illustrated with relevant data extracts. Each participant has been given a pseudonym, and data extracts are presented with the participant's pseudonym and age. Any editing of the data (for instance, the removal of unnecessary and irrelevant details) is indicated by [...]. Frequency counts are not provided when reporting the results, but as a general rule, 'majority' and 'most' refer to around two-thirds or more of the participants, 'some' to less than half and 'few' to less than a quarter.



**Figure 6.1** Thematic map of the different themes and subthemes identified in the forum discussion.



In order to exemplify a given view, original content from the forum discussion is employed using quotation marks. These quotations are used with original spelling without the username to protect the anonymity of the user. It is important to note that there is an interaction between the themes and thus quotations can illustrate more than one theme.

#### **6.4.1 Realistic threat of terrorism versus symbolic threat of surveillance**

The first theme we identified was the association between the perception of the realistic threat of terrorism and the symbolic threat of surveillance to freedom/privacy.

The notion of realistic and symbolic threat first appeared as components of the Integrated Threat Theory proposed by Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996) which we believe can offer a plausible explanatory framework for making sense of people's views towards the acceptance or rejection of surveillance.

Terrorism is perceived to present a realistic threat and is associated with supportive views towards surveillance, whilst the symbolic threat posed by surveillance stems from a fear of loss to an individual's freedom and privacy. Those most concerned about the threat of terrorism believed the loss of personal freedom imposed by increased surveillance to be necessary in order to safeguard against this threat. They posited that security, safety and self-defence are more important than the right to privacy. In other words, those who perceived the realistic threat of terrorism to be more important than the symbolic threat to privacy imposed by surveillance tended to have more supportive attitudes towards increased surveillance measures.

We identified three different ways the symbolic threat of surveillance was perceived, and subsequently with the addition of perceived importance of realistic threat of terrorism, contributed to people's support for surveillance; (a) those who acknowledged the symbolic threat to privacy as a result of surveillance, did not like it but still supported the implementation of it, (b) those who acknowledged the loss of privacy imposed by surveillance but did not care, thus supported the

implementation of it and (c) those who did not even acknowledge the symbolic threat of surveillance and supported the implementation of new measures in the light of the terrorist threat.

(a) Acknowledgement, dislike

In spite of acknowledging the potential issues with increased surveillance, some users still supported the implementation of it. Users advocated that extra measures are needed even if ‘some lines have to be crossed’. Thus, even though the loss of privacy – resulting from the symbolic threat of surveillance – is acknowledged, the realistic threat of terrorism and therefore the need for security are perceived as more important, leading to support for implementation of new measures.

*“We are living in extraordinary dangerous times, therefore such measures are necessary. I don't like it, but I would accept it if it helped security forces to prevent such attacks.”*

*“I wasn't advocating a police state and better ways of intelligence gathering need to be developed. But unfortunately to catch these bastards some lines may have to be crossed.”*

*“I don't want a police state but sometimes the state will have to do bad stuff to catch evil cunts like last night.”*

(b) Acknowledgement, indifferent

There were members who did acknowledge that surveillance comes with privacy infringement, but they were indifferent about it. Thus, in the light of the realistic threat posed by terrorism and the need for security, they supported the implementation of new surveillance measures.

*“I value my life and those of others more than someone reading my emails tbf. Wouldn't trade a another London bombing for more privacy”*

*“It's got to the stage where our primary focus must be on self-defence, and fuck the PC brigade. Somebody offended it better than somebody dead.”*

*“I have no problem whatsoever if my phone is tapped, my emails read - some poor sap is going to bore himself silly reading my texts to the wife asking her if she wants anything in M&S on my way home for work, but for the greater good, not a problem.”*

(c) No acknowledgement

Evidence was found for individuals expressing their lack of understanding as to why anyone else would be disturbed by additional surveillance and the added loss of privacy that comes with it. For some, the threat of terrorism was perceived to be so prevalent that the support for surveillance was automatic and unquestioned.

*“I just don't care about extra surveillance, if they want to watch me, the big dog, getting on with my day then they can. Doesn't bother me in the slightest if they have access to my emails, texts etc. I can't understand why anyone would be bothered but that's just me.”*

*“Give the security services everything they need to catch these higher level fuckers - be it surveillance or whatever.”*

*“So how many attacks and lives lost on our soil before you'd be happy to have your emails looked through?”*

Individuals opposed to further surveillance protested against the alleged erosion of civil liberties such as freedom and privacy. For these individuals, the perceived symbolic threat of surveillance resulting in a loss of freedom and privacy is of larger

concern than the realistic threat of terrorism which could be countered by increased surveillance. In other words, it seemed that those attributing higher importance to the perceived symbolic threat of surveillance than to the perceived realistic threat of terrorism tended to have more negative views on the implementation of new surveillance measures.

We identified two ways in which the realistic threat of terrorism was perceived, and with the added importance of the loss of privacy imposed by the symbolic threat of surveillance, affected people's support for surveillance; (a) those who acknowledged the risk of the attack but still perceived the erosion of civil liberties as a larger threat, therefore rejecting the new measures (b) those who did not perceive the threat of terrorism to be significant enough to sacrifice privacy and thus rejected increased surveillance. These argument constructions are illustrated in Figure 6.5. Examples for each attitude are described below.

(a) Acknowledgement, indifferent

As described previously, some individuals acknowledged the realistic threat posed by terrorism, yet felt that the alleged security provided by surveillance is not worth the sacrifice of civil liberties. This notion is expressed in the example quotations presented below.

*"I'd rather be at risk of attacks like these than let the police/security services have access to all communications. Freedom > 1984, even if it does come with perils."*

*"To those proposing increased surveillance and phone tapping, fuck off. That bill put forward by the Government would do fuck all to stop this. The terrorists would have been using secured and anonymous communications otherwise the security services would had picked them up already. I do not want my right to privacy being taken away due to the actions of some terrorists, because what happens when the new measures don't work to stop terrorism - further eroding of our civil liberties? National ID card which must*

*be carried at all times? Anyone entering the UK has to have a GPS chip and microphone inserted in them so they can be tracked? Babies being born having their DNA taken and secretly recorded (oh that one happens already 🤖)? National curfews and if you want to go anywhere having to obtain relevant travel documents approved by the Government? Your DNA taken and analysed to see if you have the terrorist gene and then you are put into concentration/containment camps?"*

*"Would I sacrifice the freedoms my grandfather fought to maintain because some goat fuckers have managed to take advantage of our culture of freedom and civil rights? No, absolutely not."*

(b) No acknowledgement

In addition to the symbolic threat of surveillance being perceived as more important than the realistic threat of terrorism and therefore resulting in negative attitudes towards surveillance, not acknowledging the realistic threat posed by terrorism also led to negative views on surveillance. In other words, some individuals believed that terrorism does not impose a threat significant enough to sacrifice privacy, thus the need for surveillance is not supported.

*"Why do you support great swathes of imposing legislation to reduce the incidence of something that happened once?"*

*"More people have died from Bees than terrorists in the UK in the last 10 years. So a bit of perspective please."*

*"If you want those freedoms taken away from you, then good for you, but don't expect me to consent to them for the one in a million chance you'll be caught in a terrorist attack."*

#### 6.4.2 With 'us' or with the terrorists

As described above, the main debate amongst the forum members was whether to support, or not support new increased surveillance implementations as a pre-emptive measure against possible future terrorist attacks. Thus, the majority of members could be divided into two groups, pro- and anti-surveillance. Interestingly, we identified a second theme within the forum members' debates in which the opposing arguments presented by both groups tended to arrive at the same, extreme conclusion, that the 'other' was supporting or giving in to terrorism through their attitudes. Pro-surveillance members tended to believe that those opposing surveillance due to privacy concerns, are supporting terrorism by preventing the implementation of new surveillance measures.

*"I know the chances of being involved in a terror attack is minute, but I believe that something has to be done to stop innocent people getting murdered. You are happy for people to be murdered as long as no one can read your Gmail."*

Meanwhile, anti-surveillance members argue that by surrendering their freedom and privacy in support of further surveillance measures, it is the pro-surveillance individuals who are therefore supporting terrorists. This is premised on the belief that terrorists want us to fear them, thus forcing us to alter our core values (e.g., freedom) and way of life.

*"My opinion is if we have to change our way of life or give up any of our hard won freedoms then the terrorists have already won."*

*"Terrorism thrives on fear, the clue is in the title. You have already thrown the towel in and help realise the terrorists ambition."*

*"And big clampdowns on civil liberties - freedom to protest, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, privacy etc is playing directly into terrorist"*

*hands. If you want to live in fear and have authoritarians watching your every move, go and resurrect the Taliban”*

*“In a roundabout way you might as well cheer the terrorists on - "Go on lads! Erode my civil liberties! GET IN"”*

The exchange described below provides a neat example for this theme.

*Person A: “And you're helping fight the terrorists battle for them by making the job of catching them harder for our government”*

*Person B: “No, you're doing their job for them by wanting less freedom, ffs”*

These examples show how members of both pro- and anti-surveillance camps ultimately arrive at the same conclusion; the ‘other’ group assists terrorists by either supporting, or not supporting surveillance. This reasoning is dichotomous, suggesting an ‘either you are with us, or you are abetting terrorism’ attitude. This discourse results in and can be explained by the black sheep effect (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988) whereby members of the ingroup who ‘let the side down’ are perceived as negatively as members of the outgroup are; anti-surveillance individuals are perceived to be assisting terrorists by pro-surveillance individuals and pro-surveillance members are perceived to aid terrorists in the eyes of anti-surveillance members.

We detected clear expressions of national identity within these arguments. We argue that the opposing sides disagree about the interpretations of core national values and present different narratives of what British values are and how to interpret them. This leads to both sides positioning the ‘other’s’ argument as incompatible or disloyal to the past, which ultimately leads to a discrediting of the ‘other’s’ view. Furthermore, the notion of perceived collective continuity was mainly crystallised (Sani et al., 2007) within the anti-surveillance arguments - a

construct that represents the idea that social groups value a sense of continuity between past, present and future. They argue that giving up freedom and civil liberties would be incompatible with what the nation had stood for through time, incompatible with core values associated with national identity and a potential threat to the perceived collective continuity of the nation.

### **6.4.3 Efficacy of surveillance strategies**

Although some individuals admitted to the necessity of surveillance in the fight against terrorism, those who were against increased surveillance measures argued that the effectiveness of these measures were uncertain. Three subthemes were identified here, all of which posited the ineffectiveness of new surveillance measures and therefore rejected their implementation: ‘effective old and ineffective new surveillance measure’s, ‘adaptability of terrorists’, ‘independent cells’.

#### **6.4.3.1 Effective old and ineffective new surveillance measures**

Some believed that the proposed increase in surveillance measures were unnecessary as the already existing measures were already sufficient. Not only are the new surveillance measures unnecessary, they are in fact detrimental due to the impingement on civil liberties.

*“Perhaps most importantly, do you know that our police and intelligence forces are already lawfully able to hack/examine internet activity of anyone they see fit, after simply obtaining a warrant? Do you therefore see why the proposed new surveillance powers are something of an irrelevance, and as an intrusion on the civil liberties of the general population, can be seen to represent a victory for terrorists who seek to limit the freedoms of civilians in the countries they attack?”*

Several forum members posited that the enactment of new, invasive surveillance measures would be ineffective, partly based on past events, i.e. the Paris attacks



occurred in spite of the rigorous surveillance measures in place in France. Thus, this view led to doubt regarding the necessity of the new measures.

*“so what you're saying is that passing draconian and invasive surveillance legislation achieves the square root of fuck all regarding terrorism? [...] many attacks have been prevented without the need for draconian new legislation because it doesn't actually exist here yet. in fact, the one place that has introduced it suffered the worst terrorist attack mainland Europe has ever seen last night. it doesn't work, and it's not about terrorism.”*

#### **6.4.3.2 Adaptability of terrorists**

Several forum members highlighted how the adaptability of terrorists, and the sheer number of platforms available for interpersonal communication renders implementation of new measures unnecessary. If one form of communication is surveilled, then terrorists are able to quickly adapt and switch to alternative platforms.

*“The surveillance bill will do nothing to stop well organised attacks like this, they will just adapt their communication methods. Ill thought out legislation is a victory for the terrorists.”*

*“I don't know how they communicated, but communication monitoring won't stop these events any more than giving everyone a gun would stop events like this.”*

*“Have you heard of TOR? Do you know that it is freely available to install on any computer? Do you know that any prospective terrorist could do this within minutes and make themselves untraceable under the proposed surveillance powers?”*

*“The main point is terrorists will no longer be using things like Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter as they are all monitored, there is an almost never ending list of platforms that are not monitored that will be used instead.”*

*“Well in theory if you were a terrorist and kept seeing plots foiled you'd be looking for new ways to avoid detection. Like with the drugs cartels and smuggling - if all your boats are getting seized you'll find another mode of transport/find new routes/pay different people off - government have gotta then change their approach to catching them.”*

The example below suggests that terrorists may be able to use new and creative platforms to communicate on, such as various applications, video games etc.

*“It has been suggested for example terrorists could spell out an attack plan in Super Mario Maker's coins and share it privately with a friend, or two Call of Duty players could write messages to each other on a wall in a disappearing spray of bullets. Probably bollocks, but it does go to show just how easily it will be to get around this surveillance bill.”*

*“Telegraph feed, citing a Forbes article. Thing is, they're not wrong are they? Ok, those are merely two examples (and the Mario thing will inevitably raise chuckles and sceptism), but what about one of those "Draw Something" (?) games on Tablets? Or say, a custom car design in Forza. Hell, you could do a teamviewer/remote desktop session, type everything out in notepad and you'd never even need to send it. Fuck knows how you would extract that from the data stream. It would need data collection on an unprecedented scale.”*

*“Aparrently, it looks like the terrorists might have been communicating via PlayStation. <http://qz.com/550365/belgian-home-affairs-minister-says-isil-communicates-over-playstation-4/>”*

Some argue that the new, stricter surveillance measures would be redundant, because of the systems being bypassed with the use of red herrings and therefore still permitting communication between terrorists.

*“Also, no doubt terrorists could just flood all channels with red herrings to make things practically impossible to follow”*

*“Terrorists now are semi-autonomous. There isn't necessarily a plan being handed down from a mastermind. All they need to do is send one person with a message. And flood the internet with a whole load of shit they aren't going to do.”*

It was also mentioned that the IRA was successful prior to the development of electronic modes of communication (such as WhatsApp), therefore supporting the view that new surveillance measures are redundant. Terrorism existed before the advent of electronic communication.

*“The IRA did ok without WhatsApp.”*

Additionally, some also believed that new increased measures could lead to the evolution of communication methods utilised by terrorists.

*“They will get better at deception, only communicating via untraceable means. It's very possible that increasing our pressure on them will improve their methods (think selection pressures and Evolution).”*

The above described examples suggest that the perceived adaptability of terrorists' methods of communication in response to increased surveillance measures contributed to people's beliefs regarding the effectiveness (and therefore the acceptance) of the proposed measures.

### **6.4.3.3 Independent cells**

Some members held the belief that the proposed surveillance measures are less effective at mitigating the risk of attacks when perpetrated by independent cells or lone wolves in comparison to larger scale, organised terrorists. Thus, the effectiveness of surveillance measures in mitigating against a terrorist threat diminishes when fewer terrorists are involved in coordinating an attack.

*“[...] nobody can stop small independent cells, or lone attackers. Co-ordinated attacks should be easier to stop though as it only takes one person who knows something to fuck up, or become an informant.”*

*“i would imagine, as has been said, it was the nature of these attacks i.e. small individual cells in a co-ordinated attack, which are probably a lot harder to intercept than big large plots like those of 9/11 and 7/7”*

Some claim that even though the intelligence and security services in the UK are good, there is not much that can be done to combat independent terrorist cells.

*“Our intelligence service is one of the best, if not the best, in the world...however if someone completely off the grid, no history if radicalisation, unknown to police were to commit a similar atrocity then there would be very little we could do to defend ourselves...”*

*“Absolute madness, it's questionable how we can even fight this war. You can't effectively fight rogue individuals, it's just not possible with technology as it is today (you'd need mind reading or some shit).”*

### **6.4.4 Governmental trust**

The fourth theme we identified from the forum discussion was governmental trust. People's trust in the Government was recognised as contributing to their views towards the acceptance or rejection of new surveillance measures. We suggest that their trust in the Government was underpinned by these two subthemes we

identified, namely ‘misuse of surveillance and ‘trustworthiness’. These subthemes, in our view, provide explanations as to why individuals do or do not trust the Government.

#### **6.4.4.1 Misuse of surveillance**

Because some forum members regarded the proposed implementation of new surveillance laws to be unnecessary, some scepticism was evident in the discourse as to the reason why the Government wished to implement these increased measures. Several members felt surveillance will be misused because there was a sinister reason behind the implementation of the new surveillance measures, namely that instead of combatting terrorism, the purpose behind the implementation of new measures is public monitoring and data collection.

*“it's not pointless, it just doesn't do anything to help tackle terrorism really. but it does mean that the govt has more control over it's population. yay!”*

*“Okay, can I ask if people truthfully believe that the Government (not just Tory either, New Labour were at this as well so lets keep parties out of it) really just want access to people's internet history purely to prevent terrorist attacks? That they have either no other reason for this or won't abuse this trust?”*

*“The people who are going to be monitored aren't the ones that we need to keep an eye on.”*

Several users advocated that the Government used the attacks in Paris as an excuse to justify the implementation of stricter surveillance laws that they already wanted to enforce.

*“Politicians in this country must secretly be loving this. I'm not going all tin hat here, but something tells me the new security measures will breeze*

*through now. And that's not directed just at the Tories, Labour are just as dangerous."*

*"I'm not suggesting it's some false flag bollocks at all, merely that those who want these measures to go through are going to be a lot more confident of it going through now. Any politician who points out that it's overboard (despite the measures we have working very well a couple of days ago) is going to get slaughtered in the press."*

Some members also claimed that the Government has already been misusing their powers and conducting surveillance that is not for counter terrorism purposes.

*"it's [the anti-terror legislation] been used for anything from half the councils in the UK using secret cameras to spy on residents putting their bins out to more sinister stuff like attempting to smear journalists reporting on political scandal by covertly monitoring their e-mails. it does not help fight terrorism, but it does help fight the more un-cooperative members of the electorate that governments all over the world find to be a bit of a pain in the arse."*

*"Powers designed to combat terrorism and serious crime have been used to catch dog owners whose pets fouled the streets and to investigate breaches of the smoking ban, according to a report. Local councils have carried out more than 9,000 surveillance operations over a three-year period, campaign group Big Brother Watch said. It said details obtained from 345 local authorities across the UK under the Freedom of Information Act showed they conducted operations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (Ripa) on 9,607 occasions between 2008 and 2011 - more than eight a day. Among the cases highlighted in the report was Suffolk County Council, which was said to have used Ripa to make test purchases of a puppy, dating agency services and at a house of horrors. Stockton Borough Council was said to have used Ripa powers for investigations into a fraudulent escort agency and the*

*movement of pigs while councils used Ripa on 550 occasions to try to catch fly-tippers.”*

*“[...]its been demonstrated that the Government regularly abuses these powers.”*

*“A government (and I'm not limiting this just to Tories) who have have been found to allow sensitive personal information such as medical records to be brought by the private sector?”*

Some offer support for this view by stating that the intelligence services in the UK already have the ability to conduct surveillance on potential terror suspects, therefore the implementation of new measures can only serve to aid the Government in eroding the civil liberties of the public.

*“Our intelligence services already have the ability to observe whoever they want, whenever they need to. The new proposed powers are an irrelevance to counterterrorism and serve only to limit the privacy of the general population.”*

*“Let me just remind you the authorities have the powers to look at peoples emails already. They just have to demonstrate there's a reason to”*

On the other hand – as described previously – one's trust in the Government was associated with two factors as well; (a) inherent trustworthiness and (b) proven trustworthiness.

#### **6.4.4.2 Trustworthiness**

We found evidence of some members placing their trust in the Government to use their powers and make decisions correctly, and so if legislation for additional measures was requested, it should be granted. We believe this attitude reflects an inherent trust in the Government.

*“Nonsense, the Government and the security forces want these powers, I think given what's happened we can see why and put our trust in them, rather than listen to deluded types who think it's all a conspiracy”*

*“I would like to think the new surveillance bill now gets passed with 100% commons support and immediate ratification by the Lords. As it's now clear they want it because of real security concerns.”*

It was also stated that the Government has been effective in countering terrorism in the past so if they need more powers they should have them. Thus, people's trust in the Government either comes from, or is reinforced by, positive past experience – when the Government has previously used their surveillance powers effectively.

*“Ultimately it comes down to the fact that since 7/7 the Government/anti terror police have a good handle on preventing any more attacks - if they say they need more powers to keep that up then I'm willing to accept that, for now at least.”*

*“I'm not fearful because the Government seem to be doing a good job of preventing further attacks post 7/7 - why the need for increased surveillance? Because the people who are doing a good job of preventing attacks post 7/7 say they need it and I imagine they know what they're doing (lack of attacks since 7/7)”*

*“With regards to complete faith - the Government are the body who are fighting our corner in this mess, they're the ones who have to protect the country and the population, we have to defer to them otherwise who is going to protect the country?”*

It is important to highlight that throughout the analysis many instances were found for the metaphor of a war/fight regarding the constructions of government



surveillance. The metaphor of war has been widely used by politicians mainly in the US and the UK, the positioning of military and intelligence efforts against ISIS and certain regimes as a ‘war on terror’ being the most notable example. Metaphors can be very powerful in terms of their influence on the way people think, through the way they can suggest preferred frames for interpreting events (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Using a metaphor of war suggests that there is a serious threat to the state, with an identifiable and tangible enemy; thus, the use of such a metaphor positions anyone against government surveillance as an unpatriotic ‘traitor’ or ‘enemy within’, unwilling to rally behind the nation at its time of need. In the context of increased surveillance measures, this kind of powerful language makes it harder to oppose the British Government because opposing can be perceived as siding with the ‘enemy’ and used by pro-surveillance citizens to question one’s patriotism. The power of this metaphor is increased by the fact that national identity is often associated with a security function, as discussed in previous chapters.

## **6.5 Discussion**

The present study investigated people’s attitudes towards surveillance in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. As opposed to statistical analysis of attitudes using representative sample data, we attempted an exploratory, qualitative approach to researching this issue, aimed at gaining insight into the meaning construction around surveillance in a way that only qualitative methodologies can facilitate.

Using thematic analysis on data acquired from a forum discussion we identified four master themes that contributed to our understanding of different factors that might influence one’s stand on surveillance. The unfortunate historical event (i.e. 2015 Paris attacks) and the consequent proposal of strengthened surveillance laws by the UK Government provided us with a unique opportunity to capture discourses around surveillance in the aftermath of a real-world event that was likely to impact British people’s meaning making around nation, surveillance and terrorism.

First of all, the findings of the present study suggest that those valuing their security more than their privacy tended to have more favourable views on the implementation of new surveillance measures (imposed by the Investigatory Powers Act) than those allocating more importance to privacy, freedom and civil liberties. We offered an ITT explanation of this phenomenon, whereby attitudes towards surveillance can be explained by one's perception of realistic threat of terrorism versus symbolic threat of surveillance. Thus, it seemed that higher realistic threat perception was associated with more favourable views on surveillance, implying that perhaps that the heightened sense of threat imposed by terrorism resulted in people valuing security over privacy. This can be explained by the too common emotional reaction to a threat, where an effort is made to increase levels of personal security so as to reduce the distress. This finding is in line with previous research in the area where the threat of terrorism was found to positively affect people's acceptance and support for surveillance (Cohrs et al., 2005; Davis & Silver, 2004; Levi & Wall, 2004; Malhotra & Popp, 2012). Furthermore, similar attitudes were observed in the aftermath of terrorist events such as 9/11 and the Boston Marathon Bombings (Gould, 2002; Haggerty & Gazso, 2005a; Lewis, 2005).

On the other hand, as elaborated upon previously, for some people the symbolic threat of surveillance was perceived to be more important than the realistic threat of terrorism. These individuals tended to be more concerned about their loss of privacy, freedom and individual liberties as a result of the increased surveillance measures. Concerns regarding privacy infringement, stemming from stronger surveillance measures leading to a surveillance society have been well documented previously by researchers (David Lyon, 2003; Lyon, 1994; Mitchener-Nissen, 2014; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009).

We argue that the realistic threat of terrorism versus the symbolic threat of surveillance theme we highlighted is essentially the security versus privacy debate, most commonly explained by the trade-off model, whereby surveillance is evaluated in terms of a trade-off between privacy and security. We believe that even

though the attitudes we discovered reflected trade-off thinking to some extent, one's evaluation of privacy and security is multi-faceted.

One does not just simply prefer security over privacy (or the other way around) but instead the less valued factor is carefully evaluated. When the realistic threat is perceived to be more important than the symbolic threat, we observed three different ways the symbolic threat perceptions were evaluated. Some individuals acknowledged that surveillance leads to the infringement of civil liberties and disliked it, some acknowledged the loss of civil liberties but were not perturbed by it and finally, there were those who did not even acknowledge the symbolic threat to privacy imposed by surveillance. Eventually, all three perceptions seemed to be associated with the view that privacy is less important than security. Consequently, when terrorism threat was perceived to be more important than the threat to privacy, attitudes and support for surveillance seemed to increase.

On the contrary, when it comes to one's assessment of the realistic threat of terrorism and need for security, we witnessed two different perceptions. Some individuals acknowledge the threat of terrorism but are indifferent about it and believe that the proposed security gained from surveillance is not worth the sacrifice of civil liberties. Some people do not acknowledge the realistic threat of terrorism by claiming that the threat is not significant enough to sacrifice their privacy for. Both perceptions of the realistic threat of terrorism end up being evaluated as less important than one's right to privacy which seems to be associated with less favourable attitudes towards surveillance.

Furthermore, while we agree that one's perception of privacy and security are part of a finely tuned balance, we also believe that the relationship is hugely affected by mostly trust in the institution that carries out surveillance (the UK Government in the case of this study) and the perceived effectiveness of surveillance. Regarding one's trust in the Government, two different types of trustworthiness were detected in the discussion; inherent and proven. Some people inherently trusted the Government to make the correct decision, and to use their powers justly and thus

believed that if implementation of additional security measures were asked for, they should be given. Proven trustworthiness was manifested in beliefs where positive past experience with the Government (i.e. surveillance powers have been used effectively in countering terrorism) seemed to be related to trust. Both inherent and proven trust in government increases the perceived need for surveillance – whereby their evaluation of privacy and security led to security being deemed more necessary – and the support for the implementation of stricter measures.

Consequently, one's lack of trust in the Government seemed associated with negative views on surveillance. We determined four different manifestations of people's distrust, all of which expressed scepticism about the Government's intention to conduct surveillance. Some believed the measures were not designated for combatting terrorism but for public monitoring, some claimed the attacks served as a reason to justify/as a justification for stricter measures, some believed the Government already possesses surveillance capabilities and some claimed that these powers are already misused. Conclusively, people's lack of trust in the Government seemed to influence their evaluations of privacy and security resulting in the view that surveillance is privacy infringing, which in turn led to the rejection of new surveillance measures.

Similarly to our study, Pavone and Esposti (2012) suggested that trust impacts on the balance between privacy and security. Moreover, trust has been found to positively relate to surveillance acceptance (Denemark, 2012; Nakhaie & de Lint, 2013; Trüdingera & Steckermeierb, 2017; van den Broek et al., 2017; Vermeersch & Pauw, 2018) especially in the aftermath of a terrorist attack (Davis & Silver, 2004) when people's level of trust has been observed to increase (Chanley, 2002; Cook & Gronke, 2005). Consequently, distrust in the Government has been found to be associated with surveillance being viewed as privacy infringing (Reddick et al., 2015).

As described previously, whether people perceived surveillance measures to be effective or not also influenced their support. Evaluations of effectiveness were also

multi-faceted and were expressed in four different ways, all of which seemed to influence the perceived ineffectiveness of surveillance and seemed to be associated with the rejection of the new measures. Some believed that the old surveillance measures are effective enough not to support the new ones, some claimed that stricter measures would not be efficacious, some feared that the adaptability of terrorists render any surveillance ineffective and some believed that there is no effective surveillance measure against independent terrorist cells. In line with our observations, previous research has also found that when surveillance is perceived to be efficacious it is assessed more positively (Sanquist et al., 2008).

Another interesting theme we discovered in our data was the dichotomous reasoning whereby both pro- and anti-surveillance individuals ultimately arrived at the same conclusion; the ‘other’ group assists terrorists by either supporting, or not supporting surveillance. Pro-surveillance individuals believed that the anti-surveillance camp supports terrorism by preventing the implementation of new surveillance measures, while anti-surveillance members argued that by surrendering their freedom and privacy in support of further surveillance measures, the pro-surveillance individuals support terrorists. We explained this phenomenon using the opposing sides’ competing narratives of nation whereby core British values are interpreted differently, ultimately leading to a black sheep effect.

Interestingly, comparing the findings of this study to those of Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) we discovered different effects of national identity on surveillance perceptions between the two studies. While in our previous study we found a significant negative correlation between British national identity and concerns about government surveillance, suggesting that anti-surveillance positions are associated with lower British identity, in the present study we discovered a more nuanced reality, where national identity can be levied in arguments as a justification for both pro and anti-surveillance stances. We suggest that people construct and interpret British national identity and values differently, and in doing so argue about differing versions of national identity - for some, surveillance reinforces the safety and security of the nation, while for others it is seen to challenge national values of

freedom and the civil liberties that the nation had fought for in the World Wars. These observations are in keeping with a social constructionist view of national identity that emphasises how different social representations of the nation are the subject of debate and can be levied by different interest groups in order to bolster their political arguments (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

The present study is unique in investigating public perceptions of surveillance and the implementation of stricter surveillance measures in the light of recent terrorist attacks. More specifically, as described beforehand, the 2015 Paris attacks and the proposed fast-tracking of the Investigatory Powers Act – allowing the British Government to use more invasive surveillance measures – provided a uniquely suitable climate to conduct the present study in. Research investigating public understanding of surveillance has been very limited and has mostly used quantitative analysis. Utilising a qualitative approach allowed us to gain a richer, more detailed insight into the beliefs that lie behind people’s perceptions of surveillance, more specifically the factors affecting one’s support, or opposition to it. The study is also novel in how it deploys ITT as a theoretical lens to explore the public understanding of surveillance in a UK context.

As with all research, the present study has some limitations that should be addressed. By its very nature, a qualitative approach does not seek to survey attitudes and beliefs in a comprehensive manner that could be called generalisable or representative of a population. As such, it is important to recognise that the study does not provide, nor did it seek to provide, insight into the prevalence of the beliefs that we identified within the wider population of the UK. With this in mind we have no specific demographic information about our sample, since the contributors to the internet forum that we used for data collection remain anonymous. At best, given the focus on the British Premier League and the fact that it is a UK based website, we can assume that most forum posters are likely to be British citizens. Moreover, given the nature of football fandom, that male posters are likely to outnumber female posters. We can therefore make no claims that the extracts we pulled from forum discussions are representative, in a sampling sense, of the views held by the

UK population. Additionally, we must accept, as is the nature of thematic analysis, that the interpretation presented here is a unique product of the specific researcher, and as such represents one possible lens to make sense of the data, the value of which should be judged based on the degree to which the analysis appears to be coherent and insightful (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999).

Instead, the benefit of our qualitative approach is in delving deep into the construction of arguments and justifications for either pro- or anti-surveillance views, something which quantitative attitude surveys are not well placed to explore. As such we are able to map different ways in which pro- or anti-surveillance views are bolstered, and in doing so provide ideas that could be explored more quantitatively in experiments and attitude surveys if desired. For example, our observations about the role of realistic and symbolic threat perceptions could be more formally tested using survey methodologies, given that there already exists a body of work within the ITT framework exploring these constructs using quantitative techniques.

It should be highlighted that various factors can influence the interactions between people in an online environment (such as this forum from where data was gathered) compared to an offline setting. For a more in-depth discussion on computer-mediated communication and its psychological implications, please see *Section 1*.

We must also acknowledge the possibility that the discussion forum ecosystem itself may play a role in impacting the nature of discussion and argumentation. As research in the SIDE model has shown (Social Identity and Deindividuation; see Postmes, Spears, & Lea (1998)) cyberspace can enhance the impact of social identity on individuals, leading, for example, to enhanced levels of group polarisation (the strengthening of entrenched attitudes/beliefs) and greater levels of intergroup conflict and stereotyping. It indeed appeared that social identities were at play in the forum discussions regarding surveillance. On the one hand, British national identity was leveraged by both pro and anti-surveillance posters to support their respective positions. The arguments forwarded by pro-surveillance posters

alluded to discourses around (national) security and loyalty to the state and security services. In contrast, anti-surveillance supporters sometimes wove British national identity into their discourses by positioning support for more surveillance as incompatible with British values around freedom and liberty (the symbolic threat argument). In both cases, pro and anti-surveillance posters often seemed to stereotype the 'other', perhaps partly, as the SIDE model suggests, because the semi-anonymous discussion forum environment facilitates enhanced social identity maintenance and makes intergroup differences more evident and easier to express. It is therefore possible that the arguments constructed within the forum discussions that we explored may be more oppositional and based around 'othering' those who take the opposite view than would be observed outside of the online environment, however these arguments are no less interesting or valid, in terms of exploring lay beliefs about surveillance, since online behaviour is now an integral element of most citizens lives.



## **7. Exploring Manifestations of People's Attitudes Towards Islam on Twitter After the Westminster attack**

### **7.1 Abstract**

The manifestation of Islamophobia and negative attitudes towards Islam have been increasingly widespread in Western nations post 9/11, and the expression of such attitudes both online and offline have been investigated previously. However, a majority of the existing qualitative and quantitative social science research on Islamophobia explores negative thinking about Muslims and Islam, neglecting the fact that there are counter-discourses which seek to defend Islam. As there is a lack of research that explores both pro- and anti-Islamic tweets in the wake of a terrorist attack, in this exploratory study we aimed to address this gap in the literature using mixed methods to better understand the manifestation of people's attitudes towards Islam on Twitter after a terrorist attack carried out by a Muslim perpetrator. Tweets were classified in terms of their sentiment regarding Islam, and an in-depth content analysis of such tweets was performed to identify themes, arguments and constructions of nation, Islam, Muslims and terrorism. Twitter has been shown to be an excellent platform to study the expression of social identity and social processes on a large-scale network. Therefore, as a compliment to qualitative analyses, a quantitative network analysis was also conducted to gain insight into ingroup following, the social identities of the groups and their following behaviour.

## **7.2 Introduction**

### **7.2.1 Islamophobia**

The term Islamophobia is still highly controversial amongst academics due to the lack of a universally agreed upon definition, although the present study is going to rely on the eight components – closed views, as defined by the Runnymede Trust (1997) – that constitute Islamophobia: (1) Islam is considered to be an unchanging, dogmatic monolith insensitive to new and current realities. (2) The aims and values of Islam are viewed as have nothing in common with other cultures and is (therefore) unable to affect or be affected by them. (3) Islamic culture is considered inferior to that of the West, nonsensical, misogynistic, primitive and cruel. (4) Islam is seen as a vicious, aggressive, terrorism supporting religion at war with the West. (5) Islam is considered to be a political ideology. (6) Islamic critiques of the West are rejected forthright. (7) Discriminatory behaviour and prohibition of Muslims from mainstream society justified by an ideological hostility towards Islam. (8) Hostility against Muslims is normalised and seen as acceptable. In summation, Islamophobia is the discrimination against or prejudice towards Muslims for reasons of nationality, ethnicity or religion as they relate to Islam.

Theories in the field of social psychology, and particularly intergroup relations, can provide a useful lens through which Islamophobia can be understood. Within integrated threat theory (ITT, also called intergroup threat theory), Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996) contend that defensive, prejudicial responses are probable when individuals feel that their beliefs, values and social groups are threatened. According to ITT, there are four types of threat that can lead to prejudice: realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotyping and intergroup anxiety. A perceived threat can lead to a prejudicial response, regardless of the threat's validity. Realistic threats tend to be political, economic or physical. Competition with outsiders for scarce resources within a zero sum-game can often be perceived as a legitimate reason for individuals to exhibit prejudicial and discriminatory behaviour. Symbolic threats tend to be due to perceived differences between groups; in values, beliefs and norms. The difference in beliefs and worldviews between the dominant

group and the outside group is considered a deviation and counter from the norm. Negative stereotypes of out-group members begin to materialise based on the perceived behaviours of a typical individual within that group. Intergroup anxiety may occur upon interaction with out-group members. Research has previously suggested that Islamophobia is a response to perceived realistic and symbolic threats (for example Ciftci, 2012; Croucher, 2013; Hitlan, Carrillo, Aikman, Zárate, 2007; Uenal, 2016; Velasco-González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008).

On the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> of September four fuel-loaded airplanes were hijacked and crashed into the North and South World Trade Center towers in New York City, into the Pentagon in Washington and into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing 2996 people. The Islamist terrorist group al-Qaeda took responsibility for the attacks (CNN Library, 2018).

Beginning with the September 11 attack, the recent terrorist incidents have led to a shift towards a more negative social perception of Islam and a subsequent increase in anti-Islamic sentiment and rhetoric throughout the Western world. Research demonstrated that discrimination and Islamophobic attitudes continued to worsen in the wake of 9/11, not only in the US (Cainkar, 2004) but also in Europe. For example, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia found that Muslims living in Western Europe had experienced an increase in hostility and physical attacks since September 11 (Allen, & Nielsen, 2002). Post 9/11 a growth of prejudice against Muslims has been reported in the United Kingdom (Sheridan & Gillett, 2005), and evidence for the rise of both covert (implicit, e.g., being treated with suspicion) and overt discrimination (explicit, e.g., violent experiences) experienced amongst British Muslims was found (Sheridan, 2006). Muslims were victims of prejudice more often than other immigrants were, both in Western and Eastern Europe (Strabac, & Listhaug, 2007). Moreover, a recent study conducted ten years after 9/11 reported a lessening in positive attitudes towards Muslims after viewing footage of the attack (Choma, Charlesford, Dalling, & Smith, 2014).

The rise of Islamophobic sentiment is largely reinforced by the negative media representations of Muslims (e.g., Poole, 2006; Richardson, 2004, 2009). For instance, Moore, Mason, and Lewis (2008) analysed British newspaper articles about British Muslims between 2000 and 2008 and found they are often associated with threat, problems or as an enemy to Britain and its values. A meta-analysis of 345 studies on the media representation of Muslims demonstrated that not only did most of them report portrayals of Muslims negatively and in association with themes of terrorism, but Islam was also strongly linked to violence (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) argued that the British press often portray Muslims as a group presenting a hybridisation of both realistic (from terrorism) and symbolic (from cultural incompatibility) threats.

Even though terrorist events, mainly 9/11, have negatively affected the perception of Muslims across the West, occurrences of Islamophobia have been reported as far back as several centuries ago, and it has been argued that this is often due to the Arab world being viewed through the scope of 'Orientalism' (Said, 1978). Edward Said's writings on 'Orientalism' contend that entrenched ideas about Islam result in the formation of an 'us' vs 'them' relationship with the West. Thus, it has been suggested that 9/11 acted as a catalyst for an alteration in discourse within Western media to Said's (1978) 'Orientalist' approach, whereby Muslims were seen as 'others' (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). Saeed (2007) also believed that the construction of Muslims as an 'alien other' to the 'British way of life' has foundations in 'Orientalist' ideology and is manifested as Islamophobia. Furthermore, Kumar (2010) describes the rebirth of Orientalist and Islamophobic rhetoric during Bush's Presidency in the US, and emphasises five predominant frames; Islam is a monolithic religion, Islam is misogynistic, Muslims are averse to science and rationality, Islam is violent, and the West is democratic while Islam gives birth to terrorism. Additionally, Samuel Huntington's (1993) 'clash of civilizations' thesis positions the Christian West and the Islamic East on opposing, irreconcilable sides, and this gross oversimplification only acts to accentuate both emerging anti-American sentiment and increasing Orientalism. These sociological, historical and political writings about rising Islamophobia seem to support Jaspal and Cinnirella's

(2010) ITT-influenced analysis and suggest that Islam and Muslims are often constructed as both symbolic-cultural and realistic-security threats to ‘mainstream’ society and/or the nation.

Furthermore, there has been a change in the recent political climate both in Europe and in the US – an upsurge of right-wing movements often deploying anti-immigrant rhetoric that typically focuses particularly on the portrayal of a threat from Islam and Muslims (Rydgren, 2008, 2011). Two salient examples are the recent election of US President Donald Trump, and the UK’s decision to leave the European Union. These movements form part of a pattern becoming ever more present in the West, whereby politicians utilise anti-immigration rhetoric to play on current anti-Muslim sentiment simmering within the public sphere, sentiment partly fueled by recent Islamic-related terror incidents. Kazi (2017) suggested that the trademark of the 2016 U.S. elections was Islamophobia, and the Trump campaign was the embodiment of this sentiment. Although it would be disingenuous to attribute the success of these campaigns solely to the rhetoric employed, there is little doubt that it played a large role in their victories. Anti-immigration sentiment was not isolated to the campaign trail; one of Donald Trump’s first acts of his Presidency was the enactment of the highly controversial ‘Muslim travel ban’. Regarding Brexit, the campaign rhetoric of the Leave EU position was centred around the preservation of British values and culture and thus aimed to prevent Muslims from entering the United Kingdom. Analysis of Brexit tweets revealed that one of the primary themes evoked by Brexit supporters was immigration, while migrant/migration related discussion increased during the day the Brexit results were announced (Miller, Krasodonski-jones, & Dale, 2016). Swami, Barron, Weis, and Furnham (2018) suggested the intention to vote to leave was heavily influenced by voters’ perceptions of realistic and symbolic threats, mediated by Islamophobia and Islamophobic conspiracy theories. In addition, racist and xenophobic sentiment during the Leave campaign may have resulted in the significant increase of hate crimes against Muslims post-Brexit (Bulman, 2017).

### **7.2.2 Westminster attack**

On 22 March 2017 a British lone offender named Khalid Masood (born Adrian Elms) drove his car into pedestrians on the pavement of Westminster bridge and stabbed an unarmed police officer. The attack only lasted for 82 seconds but five people died and over fifty people were injured. The attacker was shot dead by a police officer (Warrell, 2017). Even though the Islamic State claimed responsibility following the attack, there was no evidence found that he was in alliance with them (Dearden, 2018). This attack was the first Islamic related attack committed in the United Kingdom since the 7 July 2005 London bombings.

A number of studies have been published after and in relation to the Westminster attack, including some exploring the microsocial explanations of Homegrown Violent Extremists' violence (McCleery & Edwards, 2019) and investigating how crisis-related information is being published by municipalities and emergency service agencies by analysing posts on Facebook (Ross, Potthoff, Majchrzak, Chakraborty, Lazreg, & Stieglitz, 2018).

Sadique, Tangen and Perowne (2018) collaborated with Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) in order to ascertain the patterns of hate incidents after 'trigger events', such as the Westminster attack. They conducted semi-structured interviews with hate crime and journalism professionals as well as analysed reports of hate incidents and concluded that post 'trigger event', hate incidents undergo a sharp increase, most often occurring between 24-48 hours online and 48-72 hours offline. Governmental, media and police responses to 'trigger events' impact the severity and prevalence of hate incidents, both of which are significantly affected by the chosen target, in cases when the 'trigger event' is a terrorist attack.

Using data from Twitter and Facebook Innes, Dobreva and Innes (2019) examined how the communication of misinformation and disinformation are used on social media to influence the public's understanding of four terrorist attacks (one of which was the Westminster attack). Amongst other findings, they described the appearance of some highly active and influential Russian state operated puppet

accounts dispersing rumours regarding the identity of the attacker as well as extreme far-right anti-Islamic messages with the ultimate aim of disseminating divisive sentiments among their readers.

### **7.2.3 Twitter and online Islamophobia**

Since the establishment of the Twitter online microblogging platform, it has become popular amongst researchers as a resource for gathering freely and publicly available real-world data. The expression of Islamophobic sentiment online, especially on Twitter has already been the focus of some academic research.

The first study that utilised data from Twitter to explore online Islamophobia was conducted by Awan (2014). Using #Woolwich, #Muslim and #Islam the author collected and analysed 500 tweets from 100 different users to identify patterns arising about Muslims especially by those committing online abuse. He found that more than 75% of the tweets expressed a derogatory and strong Islamophobic sentiment, such as ‘Muslim pigs’, ‘Muzrats’, ‘Muslim terrorists’, ‘Pisslam’ etc. Furthermore, several accounts denigrated Muslims and portrayed them as paedophiles via the distribution of anti-Muslim images and literature.

Magdy, Darwish and Abokhodair (2015) carried out quantitative and qualitative analyses on 900K tweets relating to Muslims and Islam after the 2015 Paris attacks. They found that Muslims were defended and not held accountable for the attacks in the majority of tweets. Regardless, there remained a substantial number of tweets laying the blame on Muslims, most of which were posted by those within Western countries. They also identified the top negative and positive hashtags towards Muslims, such as #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists, #NotInMyName, #MuslimsStandWithParis and #ThisIsNotIslam representing the positive and #IslamIsTheProblem, #RadicalIslam, #IslamIsTheProblem and #BanIslam reflecting the negative attitudes.

In order to examine the different features of online Islamophobia, Evolvi (2018) conducted a qualitative analysis of 1329 tweets after the 2016 British referendum

on European Union membership. The in-depth analysis of Brexit-associated Islamophobic tweets revealed that online Islamophobia amplifies offline Islamophobic discourse, denying the religious sincerity of Islam and denouncing it as a manipulative, violent, anachronistic ideology unsuited to Western values. Muslims are portrayed as the 'other' and should be removed from society according to the tweeters and Brexit is believed to be the bulwark against the reputed invasion by Muslim migrants and refugees. Furthermore, Donald Trump was often praised and associated with Brexit in the tweets, specifically expressed through the use of #MAGA (Make America Great Again) showing that Brexit became intertwined with U.S. politics and right-wing discourses around Islam. It has been suggested that Twitter can act as an 'echo chamber', a networking platform by which populist views can be shared, reverberated and disseminated thereby reinforcing and legitimising anti-Islamic discourse, as transpired when the perspectives of Trump and Brexit supporters intermingled (Evolvi, 2018).

In the aftermath of the 2016 Brussels bombings carried out by the Islamic State, tweets with Islamophobic sentiment were explored and identified as being derogatory, angry and openly Islamophobic (Miller et al., 2016). A significant increase in the number of anti-Islamic tweets sent out by users was also observed subsequent to the attack. On the basis of a sample of 100 tweets Miller et al. (2016) also concluded that Islam was often characterised as violent and the enemy of the West, portrayals of Muslims relied on generalisations such as them being terrorist and paedophiles as well as some tweets calling for an online action against them. In addition, derogatory Islamophobic comments were found to be sent to other accounts, some of whom were the intended targets of this abuse.

#### **7.2.4 The present study**

As previous studies have demonstrated, the manifestation of Islamophobia and negative attitudes towards Islam are increasingly widespread in Western nations post 9/11. Moreover, Twitter has been shown to become a popular platform for online hate and Islamophobia. In our understanding, there exists only one study that explored positive and defending attitudes towards Islam on Twitter in the aftermath



of a terrorist event. Additionally, a majority of the existing qualitative and quantitative social science research on Islamophobia explores negative thinking about Muslims and Islam, as one might expect, neglecting the fact that there are counter-discourses which seek to defend Islam. These pro-Muslim/Islam discourses are not commonly present in the mainstream media, but are easy to find on social media. There is a lack of research that explores both pro- and anti-Islamic tweets in the wake of the Westminster attack, and we aim to address this gap in the literature. Thus, the focus of the present study was to explore people's views and perceptions of Islam after a terrorist attack committed by a Muslim perpetrator, as manifested on social media. In order to gain an insight into the perceptions that were expressed on Twitter, qualitative analysis was applied to the tweets posted in the aftermath of the event. First, we decided to classify the tweets in terms of their sentiment regarding Islam, and we aimed to address the following research questions.

**RQ1:** With what sentiment do people tweet about Islam in the aftermath of the Westminster attack? Are there examples of Islamophobic and anti-Islamophobic (pro- and anti-Islam) sentiments?

In order to gain a more diverse understanding of people's perceptions of and views on Islam, we decided to perform a more in-depth qualitative analysis of the tweets.

**RQ2:** What themes and arguments are being strategically deployed within pro and anti-Islam Tweets? How do these strategies rely upon different constructions of nation, Islam, Muslims and terrorism?

As described earlier, Twitter provides us with a wide-reaching platform to examine human behaviour and is a rich resource for access to organically occurring public conversations (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al., 2011). Large networks allow for substantial statistical power during analyses and the detection of patterns not able to be seen in traditional, smaller network studies. Using computational methods, Twitter has been shown to be an excellent platform to study the expression of social identity and social processes on a large-scale network. For example, Tamburrini,

Cinnirella, Jansen and Bryden (2015) after identifying social groups within a Twitter network, showed how linguistic behaviour is altered depending on the group membership of the conversation actors. Therefore, we decided to extend the focus of the present study by combining a qualitative analysis of tweet content with the tools of quantitative analysis, more specifically, to conduct a network analysis to gain an insight into ingroup following, and to discover which group social identities are presented, and whether attitudes towards Islam are represented in the social identities of the groups.

**RQ3:** Considering Twitter accounts which discuss Islam in response to a terrorist attack, are they members of groups and what kinds of social identities are found in those groups?

**RQ4:** Are attitudes, views and perceptions of Islam represented in the social identities of the groups?

Moreover, once groups were identified and we allocated sentiments to them, we were interested to further explore their following behaviour; if accounts which used Islamophobic or anti-Islamophobic sentiments follow one another and whether they were more likely to follow each other than other members.

**RQ5:** To what extent do accounts which used Islamophobic or anti-Islamophobic sentiments tend to follow one another compared to other members?

The present study thus aimed to offer a novel perspective on public perceptions of Islam and following behaviour on Twitter post-terror events, by the application of both quantitative and qualitative analyses and the theoretical lens of social psychology.

## **7.3 Methods**

### **7.3.1 Data collection**

Twitter is a free, public social networking and microblogging platform with user generated content. It was established in July 2006 and as of 2019 Twitter has 275 million monthly active users globally (Statista, 2019). Since the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 Twitter allows its users to post messages – tweets – in 280 characters, although the maximum length was 140 characters at the time of data collection and analysis. Users can follow each other without reciprocity, retweet each other's tweets – i.e. reposting and therefore circulating other users' messages – as well as directing posts, questions and answers to each other using the @ symbol followed by the username. The symbol # followed by a word is called a hashtag and by clicking on one, users can explore tweets that share the same hashtag. When certain hashtags are written and retweeted frequently in a given period and therefore reaching visibility, they become 'trending'. As the present study is exploring attitudes in relation to the Westminster attack we are focusing on #westminster which became a trending hashtag after the attack.

The Westminster attack happened on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2017. Tweets written in English using #westminster ( $n = 88844$ ) were retrieved from Twitter between 15/03/17 and 14/04/17 and saved into an Excel document. The data were retrieved using the Twitter REST API which gives historical tweets up to two weeks previously to the current date. A script was repeatedly run which searched for all historical tweets which used the term #westminster and any new tweets were added to the database. Each tweet contained the following identifying features: username, number of followers, time, number of retweets, text (the tweet itself), Twitter's internal ID and group number (which will be described shortly, as it was assigned later).

### **7.3.2 Analyses**

Retweets, duplicates and tweets that were unrelated to the event but used #westminster due to its 'trending' nature were excluded from the data set (for

example as spam and unrelated advertising tweets). Moreover, several Russian state operated sock puppet accounts were identified (Innes, Dobрева, & Innes, 2019) that were purposefully created to disseminate either rumours about the attack (@TEN\_GOP) or to share anti-Islamic messages (@SouthLoneStar). Tweets from both accounts were also excluded from the analyses. In order to explore people's online attitudes towards Islam, we chose the keyword 'islam' and conducted the analysis on a subset of #westminster tweets that included 'islam' ( $n = 3623$ ). Those tweets were posted between 22/03/2017 and 13/04/2017.

### 7.3.2.1 Quantitative social network analysis

Methods from network theory and statistical physics were used to identify groups in the network structure. This was done by building a network of accounts where a link between two accounts is generated if those accounts had mutually followed each other. We then used a mathematical technique (Blondel, Guillaume, Lambiotte, & Lefebvre, 2008) which generates community groups in the network where members of each community are more linked to each other than to members of other communities. The groups found were characterised by generating word frequencies for every word and pairs of words (unigrams and bigrams) used in the biographies of the Twitter accounts for each group. Words were converted to lower case and stripped of punctuation.

Using a method developed in a study by Bryden, Funk and Jansen (2013) we established which words or word pairs characterise each group, we compared the fraction of users that use each word within a group with the fraction of users that used the word globally. We then assessed how unlikely it was that the difference between these two fractions could have happened by random chance. This is given by the standardised Z-score which, for each word/word pair used in community  $c$ , is

$$Z = \frac{\mu_c - \mu_g}{\sigma_g / \sqrt{N_c}}$$

where  $\mu_c$  is the fraction of users in community  $c$  which have used the word,  $\mu_g$  is the fraction of all users that have used it,  $N_c$  is the number of users in community  $c$ , and  $\sigma_g$  is the standard deviation of usage of the word amongst all users

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma_g^2 &= \frac{1}{N} \left( \mu_g N (1 - \mu_g)^2 + (1 - \mu_g) N \mu_g^2 \right) \\ &= \mu_g (1 - \mu_g)\end{aligned}$$

### 7.3.2.2 Qualitative analyses

Sentiment and content analyses (described below in *Section 6.4.2*) were conducted on those 3623 tweets in order to ascertain the sentiment in which people tweet about Islam and/or Muslims after the attack and to identify patterns (themes) across the data set. Both analyses were carried out in Microsoft Excel.

#### *Inter-coder reliability*

One of the analysis methods deployed to explore tweet content here was traditional (or ‘Functionalist’) content analysis. Epistemologically, this is a departure from the more social constructionist kinds of qualitative analysis, as it attempts to bridge qualitative and quantitative analysis methods by summarising large amounts of qualitative data through the application of themes and quantifying the appearance of each theme within a body of data (Weber, 1990). Traditional content analysis is particularly suited to handling large amounts of data (Weber, 1990), as was the case here with 1000s of tweets, which would be cumbersome to analyse using in-depth social constructionist qualitative techniques such as discourse analysis.

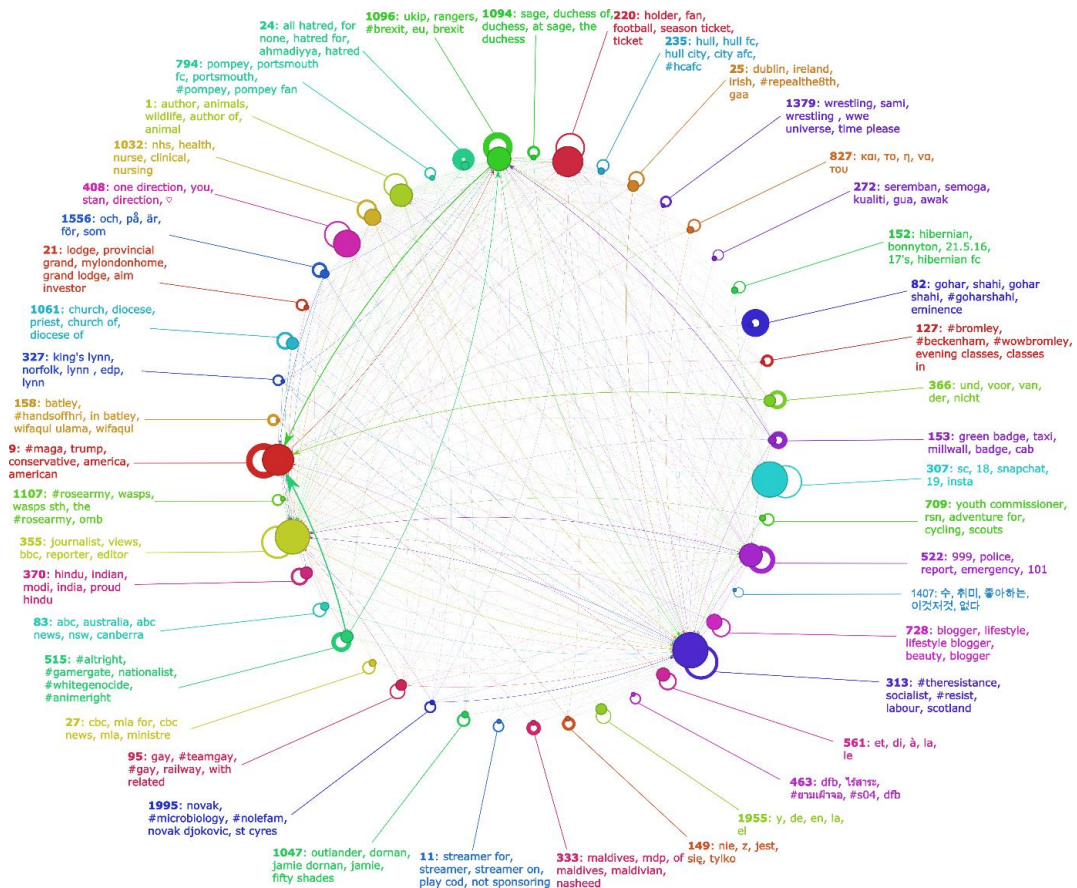
Conclusions drawn from large-scale content analysis of qualitative data need to demonstrate reliability prior to being deemed trustworthy (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). Krippendorff’s alpha has been proposed to be the standard reliability measure when comparing inter-coder reliability because of its general-purpose use and flexibility; any number of observers, levels of measurement or sample sizes can be used, while the presence or absence of missing data has no effect. Therefore, while the lead researcher undertook the bulk of the content analysis, as a check on

the reliability of coding, 10% of the tweets ( $n = 363$ ) were randomly selected and coded independently by two coders. Each identified code was represented in the reliability analysis. In order to determine inter-coder reliability, the judgements of the coders were compared and Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  (Kalpha) was computed using Hayes' (2005) SPSS macro. Alphas were above .83 which is considered good reliability. The list of Krippendorff's alphas for each code can be found in the Supplemental material (*Section 7.6.2*).

## **7.4 Results**

### **7.4.1 Quantitative social network analysis**

A social network analysis was conducted to explore which groups on Twitter took an interest and tweeted about the Westminster attack. Social network analysis is a 'big data' technique that attempts to find potentially meaningful networks in massive social media data sets, and is somewhat unusual in the social psychology literature, but is gaining popularity amongst researchers exploring social media. The analyses were performed using custom-written code designed for this project. Firstly, our analysis looked to form groups based on accounts that followed each other. Each group was characterised according to the words they used in their profile descriptions and were allocated random numbers as identifiers. Consequently, Figure 7.1 shows all the groups (using #westminster, >250 members) that were formed after the attack based on their followers and followings. Groups are differentiated by colour for the purpose of clarity. Based on each group's most unusual words we are able to get a picture of their social identity (Bryden et al., 2013). The notion that unique use of language and 'codes' within tweets and Twitter profile text helps identify groups of twitter users is forwarded in Bryden's previous work. For example, groups represent members with different geographical, religious and political identities, interests, vocations and sexuality.

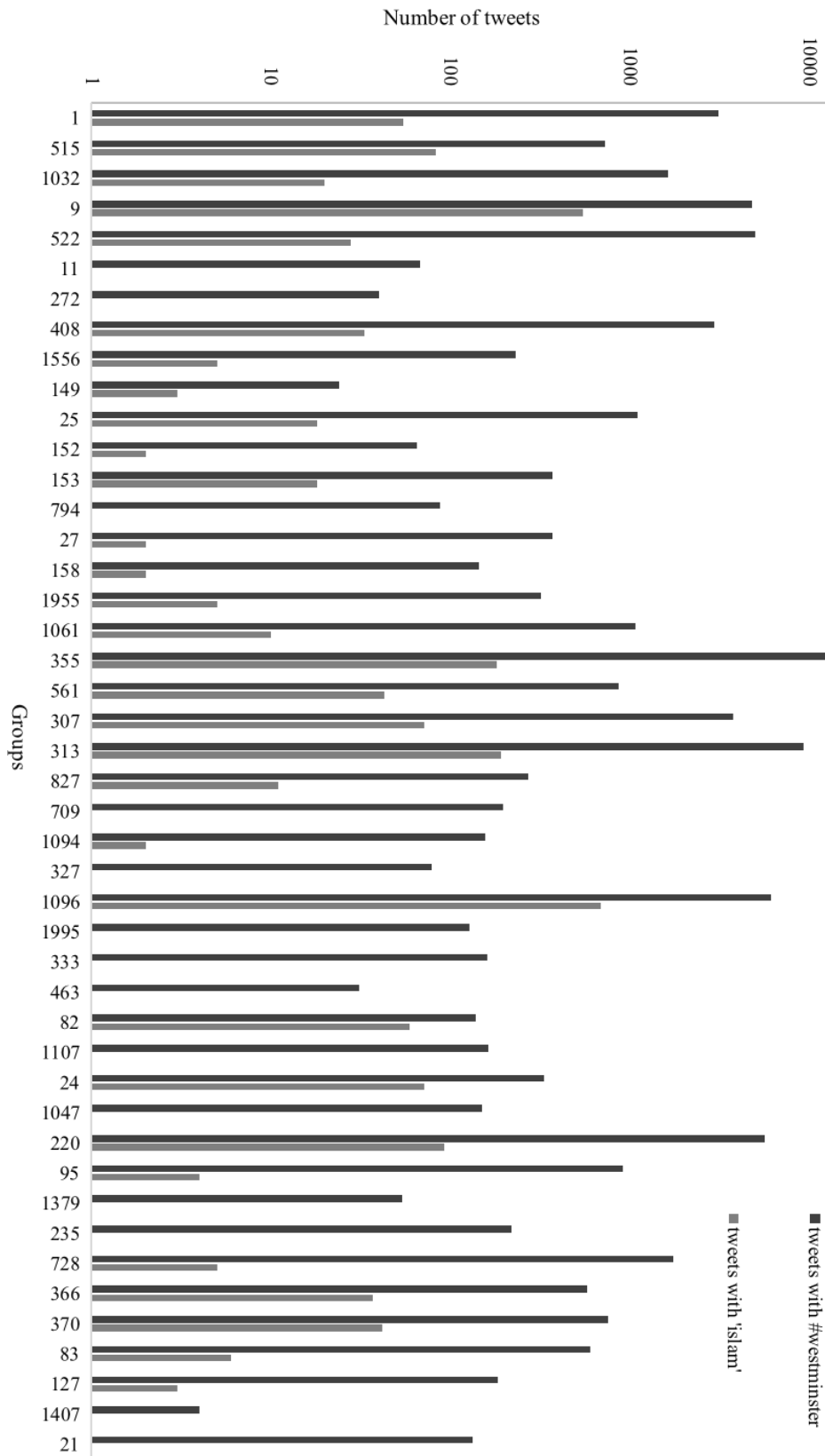


**Figure 7.1** Groups using #westminster formed after the attack. Circles represent groups, with the size of the circle being in proportion to the number of users within the group (>250 shown). The thickness of inter-group links represent how commonly accounts are followed within the target-group. Rings around the circles are for intra-group links and their widths represent how commonly accounts are followed in the same group. The inter- and intra-group widths were calculated by recording, for each member of the focal-group, the proportion of accounts which were followed in the target-group. Words identifying each group are the most unusual words within the group compared to the other groups.

As described previously, for the purpose of the current study, we put emphasis only on the tweets that included the word ‘islam’. In order to visualise the magnitude of tweets collected and subsequently analysed, Figure 7.2 was created that illustrates all groups shown in Figure 7.1 (tweets using #westminster) and the proportion of tweets that included the word ‘islam’. Due to the magnitude of tweets a logarithmic scale was used. Groups with a high number of tweets regarding the attack also had a high number of tweets that included the word ‘islam’, such as Group 355 (#westminster  $n = 13302$ ; ‘islam’  $n = 181$ ), Group 313 (#westminster  $n = 9329$ ; ‘islam’  $n = 191$ ) and Group 1096 (#westminster  $n = 6125$ ; ‘islam’  $n = 694$ ).

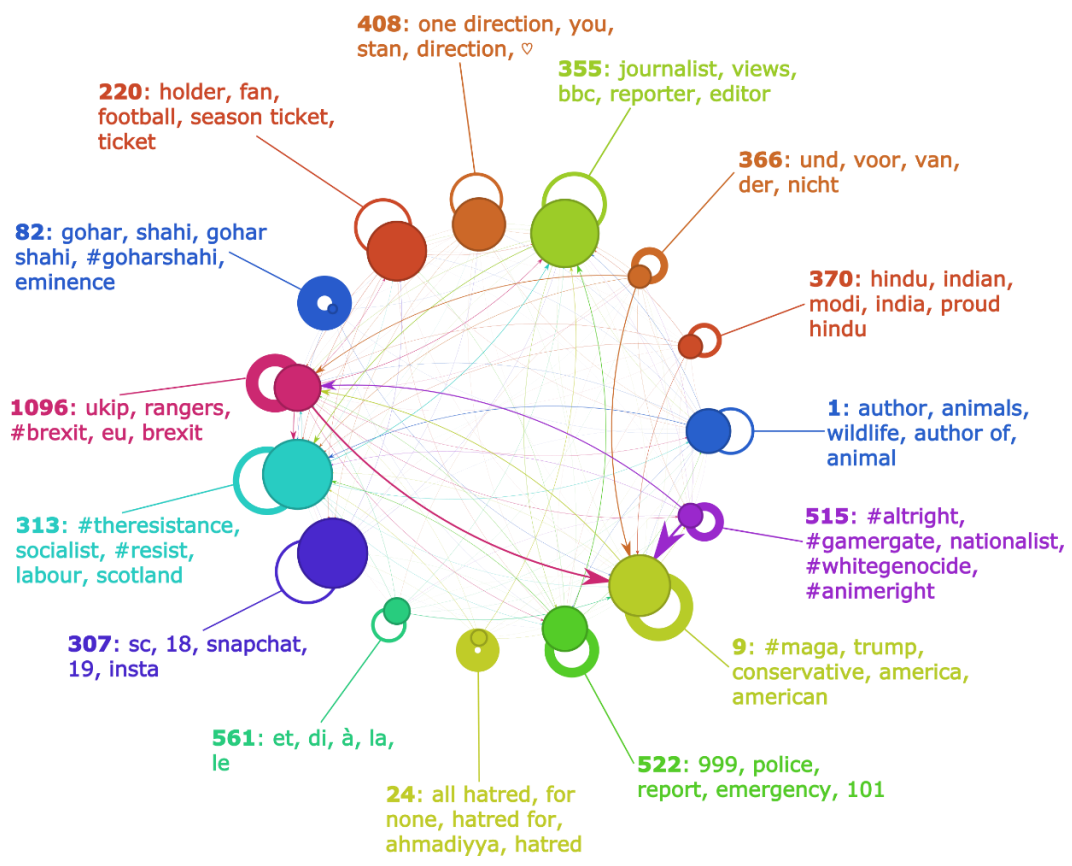
We decided to statistically test this relationship between #westminster and 'islam' tweets. As the data are not linear or normally-distributed, a non-parametric correlation test (Spearman's Rank) was applied. Spearman correlation analysis ( $r_s(45) = .818, p < .001$ ) confirmed a positive association between the number of #Westminster tweets and the number of 'islam' tweets. Therefore, this result shows that the more a group tweeted about the Westminster attack, the more likely it was that those tweets included the word 'islam'. This suggests that the more interested a group was in the attack the more likely they were to tweet about the attack in relation to Islam.





**Figure 7.2** Logarithmic scale illustrating the amount of the tweets using #westminster in comparison to tweets including 'islam'. Group numbers are the same as in Figure 7.1.

To get an insight into the groups that used the word 'islam' more frequently, a network analysis graph was created (Figure 7.3) excluding groups that had less than 20 tweets using the word 'islam'. We now have a picture of which groups were interested in Islam in relation to the attack, which provides an answer to **RQ3** whereby we are able to show what identifying features groups possess. The graph suggests that these groups tended to be mainly political, for example, Group 9 consists of members that can be identified as conservative Trump supporters, while Group 313 contains those of socialist and labour supporters.



**Figure 7.3** Groups that used the word 'islam' in their tweets and had more than 20 tweets, based on tweets retrieved between 22/03/2017 and 13/04/2017. The description of the characteristics of the graph is the same as in Figure 7.1.

## 7.4.2 Qualitative analyses

### 7.4.2.1 Sentiment analysis

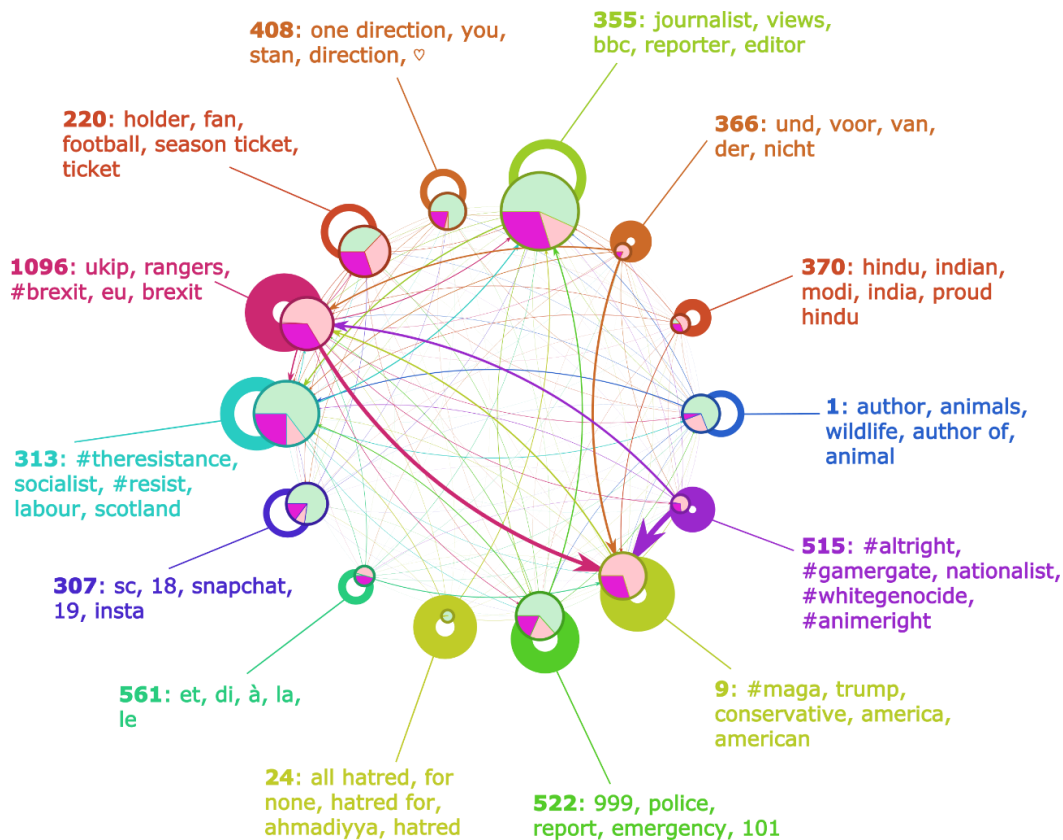
We were able to identify the groups that were tweeting about Islam, and so were interested to explore whether different groups have different views on Islam and what the sentiment of the tweets were (**RQ4**). Therefore, we carried out a sentiment analysis with the aim of providing an answer to **RQ1**. Even though manual analysis is time consuming and labour intensive (Philander, & Zhong, 2016), both the sentiment and the subsequent content analyses were carried out manually for a number of reasons. Not only do tweets tend to utilise abbreviations (because of the length – only 140 characters) but users often employ irony and sarcasm which would have been impossible to detect using an automated machine-based analysis. Furthermore, tweets are regularly accompanied by a photo or a link to a certain website that can change or give a different meaning and polarity to a tweet. Thus, we decided that the expertise of a human coder was required to carry out an in-depth qualitative analysis of the tweets and to detect the aforementioned nuances.

In the sentiment analysis each tweet received a code based on attitude, sentiment and emotion in relation to Islam and/or Muslims. Tweets that were defending Islam and/or Muslims after the attack were considered *positive*, while tweets that were attacking Islam and/or Muslims were classified as *negative*, and those tweets that were just general reports of the attack without defending or attacking Islam and/or Muslims were coded as *general*. Tweets that were difficult to allocate valence to were marked as *ambiguous*. The results of the sentiment analysis demonstrate that 31% ( $n = 1134$ ) of the tweets were classified as *negative*, 16% ( $n = 575$ ) were *positive*, 12% ( $n = 575$ ) were coded as general and 41% ( $n = 1476$ ) were considered ambiguous.

As mentioned previously, ambiguous tweets were impossible to allocate sentiment to, for a number of reasons. Sarcasm and irony are often hard to detect even by manual coding and in most cases the judgement of the coder was aided by some accompanying photo or by looking at the users' profiles, their followers and their

followings etc. However, in some cases the use of irony and/or sarcasm was not that clear-cut, thus we decided to employ the ambiguous sentiment code. Furthermore, the attack was reported as an act of Islamic terrorism by Prime Minister Theresa May and the following morning after Conservative MP Michael Tomlinson highlighted this, she issued an apology and rebranded the incident as 'Islamist terrorism' (Stone, 2017). However, we believe that not all Twitter users were aware of the difference and even if they meant 'Islamist' they might have accidentally used the 'Islamic' term. Thus, in those cases where the users' background information did not offer sufficient insight into the sentiment of the tweets, it was classified as ambiguous.

To portray the sentiment of the tweets within each group, a new network analysis graph was created (Figure 7.4) using the same group as in Figure 7.3, except with the addition of coloured pie chart that illustrate group sentiment (red = negative, green = positive, magenta = ambiguous). The figure shows that different groups talked about Islam using different sentiments (**RQ4**). For example, most of the tweets of Group 1, 313, 355 and 522 consisted of tweets with *positive* sentiment and Groups 9, 515 and 1096 tweeted tweets with mostly *negative* sentiment. The graph also indicates that political identity may be linked to attitudes towards Islam. For example, Group 1096 can be classified as having a UKIP, Brexit social identity and most of their tweets are of negative sentiment. Meanwhile, Group 313 represents a group holding a social, labour identity that mostly tweets using positive sentiment.



**Figure 7.4** Sentiments within groups that used the word 'islam'. The colours within the pie charts indicate the sentiments of the tweets within the group; red colour indicates negative, green colour indicates positive and magenta indicates ambiguous sentiment. The description of the characteristics of the graph is the same as in Figure 1. *It should be noted that there was a distortion in the figure due to multiple retweets of an advertising tweet from a single account (@PeterTownsend), therefore 716 tweets coded ambiguous were removed.*

The graph shows strong intra-group following (represented by the rings around the circles) which addresses **RQ5** and for the rest of the thesis we are going to refer to this behaviour as *ingroup insularity*. As a part of **RQ5** we were also interested in whether accounts which used positive and negative sentiment were more likely to follow each other (ingroup insularity) than members of other groups. In order to investigate this, a quantitative analysis was conducted. First, we assigned a score to each tweet (+1 for *positive*, -1 for *negative* and 0 for *neutral* and *ambiguous* tweets). Then we took the average score for each tweet of the group and used the absolute value of this average to measure how extreme the group's tweets are on Islam (either positive or negative). Using Spearman's Rank correlation, we found that this extremity measure positively correlated with the insularity of the group ( $r_s = 0.59$   $p = 0.02$ ). This finding suggests that those groups with more ingroup following

were more likely to tweet in a more extreme way vis-à-vis Islam and provides an answer to **RQ5**.

In relation to the sentiment of the tweet, we were interested to see the most frequent hashtags as well as identifying the most frequent retweets. Table 7.1 shows the top five most frequently used hashtags accompanying tweets that were *positive* – supporting and defending – and *negative* – blaming and attacking – regarding Islam and/or Muslims. As shown, the positive hashtags reflect unity and solidarity as well as disassociation of the religion Islam and terrorism. The negative tweets clearly associate Islam with the attack and indicate that it should be banned. Additionally, a number of tweets involve politics in the discussion about the event using #Brexit suggesting that immigration should be stopped, and Muslims should not be allowed to enter Western countries. The tweet counts demonstrate that the individual positive hashtags were more popular and were more likely to be used which suggest a more united and homogenous nature of those tweeting in a positive sentiment. However, the negative tweeters were more creative in coming up with new hashtags to express their hatred of Islam. The list of total hashtags accompanying the positive and negative tweets can be found in the Supplemental material (Table 7.6 and Table 7.7).

**Table 7.1** Examples of the most frequently used hashtags accompanying tweets with positive and negative sentiment. The number of hashtags is presented in brackets.

Positive	Negative
#WeStandTogether (76)	#BanIslam (54)
#TrueIslam (47)	#StopIslam (35)
#TheyShallNotDivideUs (11)	#Brexit (26)
#LoveForAllHatredForNone (7)	#IslamIsTheProblem (16)
#NotInMyName (3)	#MuslimBan (13)

The five most frequently retweeted tweets are shown in Table 7.2. The tweet that was retweeted the most ( $n = 1494$ ) was given a negative sentiment. The tweet echoes the theme noted in the literature review of ‘othering’ Islam, by positioning it in conflict with values of liberalism, and using ‘our’ to promote in-group versus

outgroup thinking. This speaks to earlier discussions of Islam being positioning as a symbolic threat via perceived cultural incompatibilities. The portrayal of Islam as laughing at ‘our liberalism’ also suggests that Muslims show contempt for Western values. It is not clear if there is also a critique of liberalism implied within the tweet, since this is sometimes a theme in Islamophobic tweets and was noted in the previous study we conducted on discussion forum content, where some Islamophobes criticise liberals for being too forgiving of Islam in their eyes. So, it could be that the tweet not only attacks Muslims, but also liberals.

The second most often retweeted tweet ( $n = 880$ ) expressed positive sentiment. The tweet defends Islam and disassociates it from the attack by claiming that the Islamic State does not represent the religion. The employed hashtags also reflect the positive, defensive sentiment. The third tweet ( $n = 777$ ) was also categorised as a negative one and brought politics into the discussion. The tweet is sarcastic and opposes London Mayor Sadiq Khan (unnecessarily demarcated as a Muslim) and US President Donald Trump. The tweet implies that the Mayor should not have blamed Trump for alienating Muslims, who has now been vindicated due to the perpetration of this attack by a Muslim. The fourth most retweeted tweet ( $n = 663$ ) was a neutral one from Sky News reporting that the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. Finally, the fifth tweet that was retweeted ( $n = 584$ ) most frequently was also categorised as carrying a negative sentiment. Interestingly, the message was posted by a Russian state operated spoofed identity account ‘SouthLoneStar’ which was excluded from the analyses, but we felt that even though the tweet itself does not represent the manifestation of a real user’s attitude, the responses to the tweets – and retweets do qualify as such. The tweet was purposefully tailored to pursue an anti-Islamic agenda and the high number of retweets reflects the success of the message.

**Table 7.2** The first five tweets with the highest number of retweets and their sentiment.

Tweet	Number of Retweets	Sentiment
“Tomorrow there will flowers and vigils and candles and tears. And Islam will continue to laugh at our liberalism. #Westminster”	1494	Negative
“Islamic State Doesn't represent ISLAM #WeStandTogether #WeAreNotAfraid #LondonIsOpen #Westminster #PrayForLondon”	880	Positive
Flashback: London Muslim Mayor Lectures Trump on Islam - Blames Him for Alienating Muslims. #Westminster	777	Negative
Islamic State claims responsibility for terror attack outside Parliament in London #Westminster. Latest on Sky New	663	Neutral
In 1952 ISLAM WAS NOT ALLOWED IN AMERICA because immigration WITHOUT assimilation IS INVASION.	584	Negative

#### 7.4.2.2 Content analysis

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of people’s perceptions of, and views on Islam. Therefore, answering **RQ2**, we conducted content analysis on the tweets that were previously identified as having positive and negative sentiment ( $n = 1709$ ). We believe that the attitudes, views and perceptions of Twitter users on a given topic can be usefully explored and represented using content analysis. We applied inductive content analysis – which is a data-driven approach – as our identified themes were linked to the data and the coding process was not performed using a predetermined structure or coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Even though this approach is more time-consuming it is also more comprehensive and current research on analogous data sets is lacking.

After familiarisation with the data (reading and re-reading multiple times) and identifying certain patterns, the initial codes were created by the researcher. In the process of multiple read-throughs, codes were revisited, refined and some were












collated. After the coding process was finalised, the researcher created a guideline set of definitions for the codes, as well as an example tweet for each code. As described previously, 10% of the data ( $n = 363$ ) was coded by a second independent coder. Each tweet received up to four codes – together with the initial sentiment codes – and they were marked by colour. The colours, names and meanings of all identified positive (Table 7.3) and negative codes (Table 7.4) are described below. After the reliability analyses (see *Section 7.3.2.2*) the long list of codes were sorted into themes which were then reviewed and refined and eventually four themes (two positive and two negative) were identified in the data set.

#### 7.4.2.2.1 Positive themes

Nine codes were identified that described the outstanding features of the positive tweets which were then grouped into broader themes. It is worth noting that even though we distinguished two themes in our data set, they are very closely linked, and many tweets fit into both. The two themes we identified are *Unity* and *Defence*. Tweets employed as examples to portray a theme are used with original spelling without the username to protect the anonymity of the tweeter.

**Table 7.3** Colours, names and description of positive codes.

Colour	Code	Meaning
	Negative reactions	Sorry to see the negative Islamophobic reactions
	Together	Do not let the attack drive us apart, #WeStandTogether
	Not a real Muslim	The perpetrator is not a real Muslim
	Not Islam	Islam is not terrorism, ‘this is true Islam’
	Real victims	Muslims are the real victims of the attack
	Islam = peace	Islam is the religion of peace
	No religion	Terrorism does not have a religion/depends on person, not religion
	Justification	People use the attack as a justification against Islam/Muslims
	RW	Opportunity for right wing people to blame the attack on Islam

## Unity

One of the themes that emerged from our data we named *unity*. Tweets within this theme urge people to stand together in this difficult time and to not let the hatred spread. Several tweets in this theme were posted during and after the Westminster vigil that was held a week after the attack where #LoveForAllHatredForNone became popular. Tweets were frequently accompanied with #WeStandTogether which was mainly used to show solidarity and defiance towards those who would sow division. The overarching aim is to inspire the population to unite as one, to celebrate diversity and differences and together construct a securer, stronger United Kingdom.

*“NO to hatred, NO to killing, NO to divided. #WeStandTogether #peace #Westminster #trueislam”*

The message is that people should be unified against Islamophobia, hatred and extremism. Many tweets in this theme express concern and discontent as a response to all the Islamophobic reactions following the attack. The tweets reflect the users’ encouragement to fight Islamophobia and the acceptance of all nationalities and religions.

*“Horried by Islamophic tweets after #Westminster attack. Stand against the hate #PrayForLondon “*

*“The incidents in London today have encouraged me to stand up against Islamophobia more than ever. #PrayForLondon #Westminster’*

*“Please treat this incident with compassion and love. Let's not resort to islamophobia, xenophobia and bigotry. Love you all #Westminster”*

*“Remember, the horror that happened at #Westminster was bad enough so don't give the #racists & #islamaphobes oxygen to spread as propaganda”*

*“It makes me sick to see the events of today being used as a springboard for islamophobia and hate speech! #WeAreNotAfraid #Westminster”*

Tweets in this theme also suggest that the attack will play into the anti-Islam agenda of right-wing political parties, leaders and supporters and will be used as a justification to propagate their hate. According to a large number of tweets their aim is to divide us, and we should not let that happen. A lot of users tweeted about their anticipation of Donald Trump (45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States) and his supporters blaming the attack on Muslims and utilising anti-immigration rhetoric.

*“It sickens me how right-wing politicians immediately began using the #westminster attack as a means to promote their own anti-islamic agenda”*

*“I see the Trumpets are all over #Westminster as justification for their Islamophobia. I hope we're better than to give in to hate that way.”*

*“Expecting Trump tweet blaming Islam/Immigration in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.....exploiting a truly horrific incident.#Westminster”*

*“Afraid of future #islamophobia/hatred/nationalism.Our London is better than this #WeStandTogether #Westminster”*

It is suggested that Muslims are also the victims of the attack because of the rising Islamophobia and hate crimes directed towards them.

*“The attack on #Westminster will fuel #Islamophobia and #HateCrime against #Muslims.”*

*“RIP to those in Westminster Attack but also thoughts to the ordinary Islam community who now, once again, must suffer backlash #Westminster”*

Tweets also suggest that the ultimate aim of terrorists is to divide Western nations and people should not let that happen.

*“The people making political capital out of #Westminster are extremists the far right and islamists, both can fuck off. #theyshallnotdivideus”*

*The only people who want a Britain in a state of violent crisis are the far-right & Islamists. #Westminster #WeStandTogether*

*Never forget that Islamophobes and ISIS share one goal: an apocalyptic civilizational war. The rest of us must stand together. #Westminster*

## **Defence**

The other theme identified from the positive valence tweets we called *defence*. These tweets are in defence of Islam and disassociate the religion and its followers from the attack. They express that Islam and its teachings have nothing to do with terrorism but the exact opposite – it is the religion of peace. Some of these tweets also ask others not to blame the attack on Muslims.

*“@toneloque @TerrorEvents this is not islam. I am sorry that it is associated with it. Islam translates to peace not violence. #Westminster”*

*““Terrorism” and “Islam” should not be synonymous and we have a duty to dispel that link at times like this. #westminster”*

*“#Islam religion of #peace being maligned by a handful of perverts”*

*“Beautiful #London under attack,Plz don't blame Muslims,killing innocent ppl has nothing to do with Islam. prayers with victims #Westminster”*

It is also articulated in the tweets that the perpetrator is not a ‘real’ Muslim and not a representative of Islam because a Muslim would never commit a terrible crime like this in the name of Islam. Tweets also suggest that terrorism has no religion. The act is committed by an individual and it should not be associated with Islam.

*“Terrorism knows no religion, why must these acts of hate be associated with Islam. These people are not Muslims #Westminster #PrayForLondon”*

*“Khalid Masood had nothing to do with Islam, he was not a Muslim. He was a Terrorist. Terrorism has no Religion #Westminster”*

*“people who commit terror attacks in the name of islam are not muslims. how have you not sussed that yet. #Westminster”*

*“You can't blame Islam for one person's dumb actions. Islam does not condone terrorism, when will people understand #Westminster”*

#### **7.4.2.2.2 Negative themes**

A large number of codes were created that capture and describe salient features in the negative tweets. While all these codes essentially represent negative views and attitudes towards Islam, they were collated into two themes, *Islamophobia* and *Politics & liberal backlash*. As stated previously, even though we identified two themes from our data set, it is essential to acknowledge that there are tweets which co-inhabit both themes. As in the case of positive themes, tweets used as examples are written with original spelling without username. Some tweets that we felt were worth employing but have accompanying pictures can be found in the Supplemental Material (*Section 7.6*). They are written with original spelling without the username, similarly to the in-text tweets.

**Table 7.4** Colours, names and description of negative codes.

Colour	Code	Meaning
	Islamophobia	Any Islamophobic tweets
	Religion	Islam is not a religion of peace
	Threat	Islam/Muslims are a threat to the Western world
	Refugees	Refugees are the problem, immigration should be stopped
	Surprise	Sarcastic way of saying that it was surprising that the perpetrator was Muslim
	War	Islam/Muslims are the enemy, we/the West/Europe/GB is at war with them
	Same	All Muslims are the same, they are all terrorists or in some way helping each other
	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism/diversity/inclusion/integration is to blame for the attack
	Violence	Islam/Muslims are violent and barbaric
	Nothing	Sarcastic way of saying that terrorism has 'nothing to do with Islam'
	Politicians	Politicians let 'them' in, they should finally do something! e.g., ban Islam
	WW2	Comparing Islam/Muslims to Nazis/fascism
	Reform	Islam has to be reformed
	Ban	Muslims should be deported, Islam should be banned, mosques should be closed
	Apologists	Apologists defend Islam, put Islam before Brits
	Wake up	It is time for the West/left-wing politicians to wake up
	Trump	Tweets that tagged Trump or used #MAGA to justify their negative views on Islam
	Mayor	Mention of Sadiq Khan in a negative way
	Cancer	Islam/Muslims are cancer or any derogative and degrading adjective
	Islam = terror	Islam means terrorism
	Liberals	Liberals/left are the ones to be blamed, they protect Muslims/Islam
	PC	PC is the problem; PC people protect Islam/Muslims

## **Islamophobia**

While all of the negative tweets expressed Islamophobic sentiment, we still felt it important to name a theme *Islamophobia* where tweets we collated were openly Islamophobic, and the fear and hatred towards Muslims were manifested in several ways.

Most of the negative codes described above collated into the *Islamophobia* theme. Most of the tweets are openly Islamophobic and the fear and hatred towards Muslims is manifested in several ways. One of the most prevalent is the view that Islam is a threat to Western culture (including Europe, Great Britain and the United Kingdom), incompatible with its values and has no place in it.

*“These exist because of Islam. These exist because Muslim fanatics are a continual, deadly threat, to us all. RUN”*

*“So now the whole “Islam is incompatible with western civilization” is totally relevant. #TrevorBrooks #Westminster”*

*“Islam and Western Civilization, a case were the software don’t match the hardware. Inevitably resulting in BSOD”*

Due to Muslims and Islam being a threat and having no place in Western societies, Tweeters claim that they should be banned, deported and removed from society. Tweeters also believe that mosques should be closed down.

*“Just another reason why #Islam needs to be banned in the west! Not compatible with modern society. #BanIslam #Westminster”*

*“The biggest problem we face is Islam. The only way we get out of this mess is mass deportation of all Muslims. Never forget. #Westminster”*

*“#Westminster The religion of peace strikes again. Ban Islam from the West now, I don't care where they were born, deport them all.”*

*“Islam is a problem. Muslims are a problem. We shouldn't just ban them, we should deport the existing population.”*

Muslims are also portrayed to be the enemy and ‘we’, the West are at war with ‘them’. Islam has to be stopped.

*“#westminster We are at war with Islam. Or at least, Islam is at war with us. Please wake up Britain. Before it's too late.”*

*“@TheHappyKipper @\_MikeBravo\_ As commanded by Allah. The pagan moon god is our greatest enemy. Death to Islam. Wipe it out. #Westminster”*

*“#westminsteR WE ARE AT WAR WITH ISLAM . MUSLIMS ARE THE ENEMY. ALL TERRORISTS R MUSLIM . POLICEMAN KILLED TODAY . WHAT NEXT”*

*“It's not about resources. It's about identifying the enemy and destroying them. #Westminster #StopIslam”*

Muslims are very often dehumanised not only by calls for deportation but also by being compared to illnesses, such as cancer, AIDS etc. Degrading tweets were also discovered claiming Muslims to be toxic, evil, disgusting, subhuman. They are often described as being violent, barbaric, aggressive, medieval, sexist and primitive. Some also suggested that Islam is a political ideology.

*“Islam is mental AIDS, we need to find a cure or, failing that, kill it with fire #Westminster #LondonAttacks #DroneStrikesFTW #NukeMecca”*



*“Reminder that Islam is not a religion of peace but rather a barbaric, inbred, expansionist political ideology. #London #westminster”*

*“#Westminster is the result of flooding countries with islamic refugee scum. #islam is a fucking joke and a cancer to the world. Fuck islam.”*

*“#Westminster Soon whole Europe will be Islamized (>50% Muslims), then slaughter of Christians men will start to enslave Christians Women.”*

*“#Westminster Inviting inbred Muslims to your country who openly want to subjugate & kill us has consequences. Ban Islam full stop!”*

*“#problemislam MSM talk abt moslem terrorism & forget #islam aspects: pedo rape FGM sharia halal misogyny fascism Ban islam #Westminster”*

WWII metaphors are also used to describe Islam. Multiple parallels were drawn between the religion and Nazi ideology, and Tweeters seemed to deploy hybrid new words to express the Nazi comparison such as ‘islamonazi’, ‘islamofascism’ and ‘islamofascists’.

*“#Westminster #parliament When you allow islamic nazi flags to be freely flown in #London islamic nazis follow”*

*“This, in Peckham y'day. The heartwarming truth of #BritishIslam, despite what Islamists/fascists would bid us believe”*

*“#islamofascism will not win. moslems not welcome in Europe & will be expelled AGAIN #Westminster”*

A lot of sarcastic Tweets appeared after the attack, twisting the claim that ‘Islam is a religion of peace’. Sarcasm also occurred in tweets as a response to tweets stating

that the attack has nothing to do with Islam. Users expressed the view that terrorism cannot be stopped until the role of Islam is acknowledged.

*“Islam is a religion of peace. And I am president of Jupiter. #Westminster”*

*“@GrrrGraphics But, Ben, Ben, "Allahu Akbar" is just Arabic for "Islam has nothing to do with terrorism." #londonattack #westminster”*

*“#Westminster #NothingtodowithIslam How many people have to die before we start saying #EverythingtodowithIslam”*

*“This will defiantly, 100% not be anything to do with #Islam allahu akbar #Westminster”*

Some suggest that the religion as a whole has to change and undergo reformation, as it has violent teachings, arguing that without Islam being reformed it cannot assimilate into Western societies.

*“@Channel4News Baroness Warsi cannot bring herself to say Islam needs a reformation. Its violent teachings need to go. #C4News #Westminster”*

*“#Westminster #westminsterbridge #WestminsterAttack Until #Islam has its #Reformation, they can't #coexist with the West. #Trump #MAGA #truth”*

*“Islam is a political and religious organisation. For any other organisation on the planet we would demand reform #westminster”*

*“#Islam needs to reform. Until it does. Terror and innocent killing will continue #Westminster #WestminsterAttack”*

More radical Tweeters identify Islam with terrorism and believe that all Muslims are the same.

*“@AliImdadBakes u all r same. All rich Muslims help radical islamic extremists financially from the backdoor & pretend like this. #Westminster”*

*“#Islam It's a choice, but not a free one. Not a race. Not pre-determined. Not inate. Terrorists the same. Islam ❤️ terrorism”*

*“@DefendEvropa deport the lot. islam is a terrorist cult #westminster”*

*“Lies. Islam is terrorism. Always has been, always will be. #londonattack #Westminster #WeStandTogether”*

*“@Trvmpepe Let's correct that: ALL #Muslims are terrorists. #Islam is a death cult that should be banned. #Westminster #BanIslam”*

Many believe that multiculturalism, diversity, immigration and refugees are the problem. Letting everyone into ‘our’ society led to the ‘islamisation’ of the country and some refer to London as ‘Londonistan’ in their tweets.

*“Multiculturalism and cultural relativism allowed fundamentalist Islam to grow and fester in Britain. #Westminster”*

*“This is diversity, this is Islam, this is fear - This doesn't have to be. Multiculturalism is White Genocide”*

*“#WorldHealthDay Stop attracting Muslims in to Europe would be better for your health #StopIslam #Westminster #Stockholm”*

*“Londonistan U wanted the islamisation of ur country now is too late and not finished nor in France Sweden Germany #London #Westminster”*

*“Welcome to #London under #Islam, #Londonistan. #Londres #Westminster #IslamHorsDEurope #IslamDehors #BanIslamâ€¦”*

## **Politics & liberal backlash**

The second theme identified from the analysis of Twitter data with the collation of negative codes is called *Politics & liberal backlash*. As described previously, an enormous amount of tweets were Islamophobic and blamed the attack on Islam. However, politics appeared a lot in the tweets too, as well as verbal attacks and hostility against those who protected Muslims in their tweets. For example, tweets appeared expressing anger and discontent against ‘Islam apologists’ who rush to defend Muslims and claim that the attack has no association with Islam. Tweeters claim that these ‘apologists’ should realise that Islam is the problem.

*“Islam is a 'Religion of Peace' ain't it Liberals & Refugee Apologists?  
#UKParliament #Westminster”*

*“Those who kept harping the tune about peace and Islam are terror  
apologists #westminster”*

*“Looking forward to the forthcoming bullshit articles about awful  
"islamophobia" & the rising tide of naughty name calling. #Westminster*

*“Cue the Islam sympathisers and the love not hate brigade... fuck off and pull  
your head out of your fucking arses #London #Westminster”*

*“#APOLOGISTS SHOULD #STOP #DENYING THAT #ISLAM IS  
#RESPONSIBLE #WESTMINSTER & EUROPE #TERRORISM in the name  
of ISLAM #FACE #UP DEAL WITH IT”*

*“#westminster how long before the apologistS will be paraded on TV news  
saying this's nothing to do with Islam! IT DOES! IT IS ISLAM #London”*

However, even more hatred is expressed towards left wing supporters and liberals. Not only because they are ‘Islam apologists’ but because they are also less concerned about the attack than about the Islamophobia that appeared afterwards.

Some even went as far as to state that the left is also responsible for the attack because they bring and let Islam in to England. They were often being referred to as ‘libtards’ which is derived from the words ‘liberal’ and ‘retard’ so as to condemn and degrade liberals.

*“Liberals forcefully bring Islam into our countries and Islam forcefully kills us. The blood is on Liberal hands. #Westminster”*

*“Liberals first response to #London terrorist attack: "Islam is a peaceful religion, Muslims are victims too". #Westminster #Parliament #MAGA”*

*“FOUR DEAD, thanks to the Islamic state and the radical left that enables terrorism is England #Westminster #PrayForLondon Abu Izzadeen”*

*“@PrisonPlanet A stupid hashtag will do fuck all against Islamist killers, Time for safe societies not Leftist societies. #Westminster”*

*“Left wing beg establishment to arrest anybody who criticizes their Islamist friends for "hate speech" #Westminster”*

*“the loony liberals are more bothered about angry people's comments on Islam, than the people affected in the tragedy #westminster #idiots”*

*“All you #lefties talking about #islamophobia & #Westminster should pay attention to what #Israel has to deal with on a daily basis.”*

*“The fucking retarded left-wing idiots will still ignore Islamic terrorism. Carry on and ignore facts and condemn Trump. #Westminster”*

*“#westminster this is entirely the fault of the hard left, who imported Islamism into our country to kill us.”*

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London since 2016, centre-left social democrat, member of the Labour party) was mentioned numerous times in the negative tweets as well. As well as other left wingers, he is also suggested to be an ‘Islam apologist’ who protects Muslims and therefore a traitor and so shares responsibility for the attack.

*“The fraudulently elected Islam loving Mayor #SadiqKhan & #Traitor to the #UK #Westminster #WestminsterAttack”*

*“@bluehand007 @SadiqKhan is mouthing Muslim apologist language of traitors. How long will fools pretend Islam isn't cancer? #westminster”*

*“#westminster let's see #SadiqKhan apologize and make excuses for the #muslimfilth and how it's got nothing to do with #Islam #liberalprick”*

*“#London when you choose a Muslim as mayor, you choose #Terror .... It's that simple.. #westminster #Islam”*

Not only the Mayor but all political leaders should realise that Islam is the problem. The attack is their fault too because they let ‘them’ in. Political correctness should be abandoned.

*“Make no mistake, this attack happened due to political correctness and sympathy towards violent Islam. #WestminsterAttack #Westminster”*

*“@KirklandBloke stop importing #muslims you sick blind politically-correct traitors.”*

*“#westminster WHAT WILL OUR POLITICIANS DO TO STOP CREEPING FORCED ISLAMIFICATION. NO GO AREAS IN BRADFORD LEEDS BIRMINGHAM ETC. THE FALLEN”*

*“All politicians who acquiesced to daily importation of Islamics share guilt with Islams Killers! #westminster #AlexJayMac @annemieke1949”*

*“#Westminster maybe our political leaders will now consider the rise of Islam a threat to Western way of life. And take steps to halt it”*

*“Enjoy the #islamic enrichment of the #european societies. Enjoy your new #EU. #Westminster #BrusselsAttacks #London”*

*“Europe will kill itself with political correctness. Not one media outlet calling it an Islamist attack. #westminster #parliament”*

*“They know that Islamism and PC bigotry are dangerous and hiding behind weasel words in armoured limos keeps THEM safe”*

Tweeters demand the West and the left wake up because Islam is trying to conquer ‘us’. They should do something about Islam, such as ban it, make it illegal, stop immigration, deport Muslims etc.

*“solution. Make islam illegal in this country. Government dont have the balls. Unlike putin hes nuts but he looks after his own #westminster”*

*“Wake Up! The goal of Islam is to conquer the world #Westminster”*

*“Wake up! Mass immigration and Islam is destroying Europe! #London #PrayForLondon #Westminster”*

*“So from #Westminster the trail of the #Muslim attacker quickly led back to the #IslamicCityofBirmingham. time for #UK to wake up ?”*

As opposed to all left-wing politicians they condemn, Donald Trump and his anti-immigration policies and Muslim ban are highly praised. People believe Trump can

offer a solution for the ‘Islam problem’. A large number of tweets included #MAGA (Make America Great Again) and #Trump.

*“WHAT HAS TRUMP BEEN SAYING ALL ALONG??? #WakeupAmerica #BanIslam #westminster #WakeupUK”*

*“Putin and trump should teach us how to deals with extremist islam..#Westminster #londonattack”*

*“@MayorofLondon President Trump Ignorant of Islam? Convert all to Islam or else. Mohammed a murderous child molester, rapist.”*

*“@RobbieSpacey #Westminster Im sick and tired of muslims getting away with this Time to stamp it out work with trump to destroy islam”*

*“Trump right about now #toldyouso #Westminster #Islam”*

*“Islamists strike again. Trump is right, we need a complete shut down #Westminster”*

*“@realDonaldTrump European leaders are to weak and scared to address the Islam problem. We need you to show the way #Westminster #Parliament”*

## **7.5 Discussion**

In this exploratory study we used different qualitative and quantitative techniques to better understand the manifestation of people’s attitudes towards Islam on Twitter after a terrorist attack carried out by a Muslim perpetrator. In order to identify said attitudes, tweets containing #westminster and the word ‘islam’ were collected and collated over a three-week period and then their sentimental and content were analysed. Furthermore, combining qualitative analyses with quantitative network analysis, the present study provides a unique approach to understanding how Islam-related views are expressed and social groups are bonded in cyberspace.



As a first step of the analysis, we identified a group structure that tweeted about the Westminster attack and showed that each group possessed different social identities; for example, various geographical, religious and political identities were represented (see Figure 7.1). As the focus of this study was the manifestation of Islam related attitudes, we identified a group structure consisting of only Twitter members who tweeted about Islam in relation to the attack (see Figure 7.3). Our findings showed a positive correlation between tweets about the attack and Islam-related tweets, which indicates that when people tweeted about the attacks, those tweets tended to be related to Islam. This finding suggests that the attack was perceived as being perpetrated through Islam.

By the adoption of our mixed methods approach we were able to identify social groups within our data and the sentiments with which they tweeted about Islam (see Figure 7.4). Most groups could be identified as either extremely negative (Islamophobic) or positive (anti-Islamophobic) and strong ingroup insularity was also evident from our network analysis graph. Furthermore, we found statistical evidence for a positive association between ingroup insularity and the extremity of the tweet's sentiment, indicating that groups with more ingroup following were more likely to tweet in a more extreme way about Islam (either positive or negative). We believe this finding presents potential evidence for group polarisation occurring in cyberspace. Evidence for group polarisation has been well documented (for example Bauer & Judd, 1996; Isenberg, 1986; Myers & Lamm, 1971) and the present study adds to the literature by showing that members of groups with more extreme views on Islam are more likely to follow each other than members of other groups on Twitter. The self-selecting nature of this following behaviour ensures twitter users are 'preaching to the converted' and most likely results in a polarisation of their views about Islam, pushing extreme views (either positive or negative) further towards the extreme. The work of Reicher, Spears and Postmes (e.g., 1995) suggests that computer-mediated communication can provide an environment for a more powerful impact of group processes and social identities,

and our observations support the idea that social identities are apparent in cyberspace.

Interestingly, the overall number of negative tweets toward Islam also exceeded the number of positive tweets and that is with the exclusion of retweets and tweets generated by bots. Moreover, three out of the top five most retweeted tweets were those of negative sentiment. These results indicate that negative information – in this case negative and mostly Islamophobic views of Islam – is more likely to be expressed and disseminated, and those who express these views are more likely to follow each other. Our data supports the view that Twitter serves as a platform for like-minded people to connect and share their views and interestingly those with anti-Islamic views are more likely to utilise it. Previous research has also shown evidence that tweets with negative sentiments are spread more frequently than positive ones (Salathé, Khandelwal, & Hunter, 2013; Tsugawa & Ohsaki, 2015).

In an analysis of online BBC forums it was also found that negative emotions increase the activity of users, e.g., posting rate (Chmiel, Sobkowicz, Sienkiewicz, Paltoglou, & Buckley, 2011). The magnitude of negative tweets and views could be explained by ‘negativity bias’ wherein people usually give more prominence to negative information over positive information in their judgements, feelings and information-processing tasks (Rozin, & Royzman, 2001). The elicitation of cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses is quicker and stronger in response to negative information compared to positive or neutral information and bad impressions and bad stereotypes are quicker to form (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Another explanation for this phenomenon could be the concept of hypercriticism (Amabile & Glazebrook, 1982) whereby negative statements are seen to be more erudite and intelligent in comparison to positive comments; one is more likely to assert a negative statement over a positive one if the aim is to impress others with our intelligence.

We conducted content analysis on the positive and negative valence tweets in order to explore the themes through which the users express their attitudes in relation to Islam and/or Muslims. A large number of salient codes were identified that aided

our analysis and in regard to the positive tweets we identified two themes; *unity* and *defence*. The most often employed tweets mirror both themes, for example #WeStandTogether, #TheyShallNotDivideUs, #LoveForAllHatredForNone, #TrueIslam etc. Although we identified two themes, there was a lot of overlap within the tweets.

Tweets in the *unity* theme tended to express solidarity not only towards the victims of the attack but also towards the Muslim community who are the sufferers of the subsequent Islamophobia evoked by the attack. Discontent and concern are often expressed in the tweets in a response to the anti-Islamic rhetoric. Many fear that the attack will be used by right-wing politicians (mainly Donald Trump) and supporters to disseminate and promote anti-Muslim sentiment in addition to the cultivation of anti-immigration views with the ultimate aim of dividing society. The tweets warn the other users about this and attempt to rally everyone against the hatred and division while praising unity and peace. The predominant goal is to promote the unification of a diverse and varied population, and as a collective build a safer, stronger and a more United Kingdom. This overarching aim supports a construction of British national identity that is multicultural and also tolerant. Tweeters also believe that the division of the West is the fundamental aim of terrorists and people should stand up against it.

The other theme we identified from the tweets that were positive in their sentiment in association to Islam, we named *defence*. These tweets showed support and defended Islam, while often disconnecting it and its followers from the attack. It was also signified that the perpetrator does not represent Islam and he is not a 'real' Muslim because the religion does not support, condone or sympathise with terrorism in any way. They claimed that the act of terrorism is committed by an individual and it has no religion. Furthermore, the tweets encourage the public not to associate the attack with Islam and remember that it is the religion of peace. In their analysis of tweets posted after the Paris attacks, Magdy et al. (2015) showed similar findings according to which the tweets expressing positive attitudes towards

Muslims after the attacks were also found to have defended them and emphasised the importance of differentiating between Islam and ISIS.

Furthermore, negative tweets tended to be multi-layered, utilising a lot of metaphor and hyperbole in order to express their anti-Islam rhetoric as well as creating new hybrid words and hashtags to strengthen said sentiment. We identified two themes; *Islamophobia* and *Politics & liberal backlash*.

The strongly Islamophobic attitudes in the tweets were expressed in several ways, one of the most prevailing views was Islam being a threat to the West, being incompatible with its values and having no place in it. Being incompatible with the Western world, Islam should be banned, and as Muslims are incapable of, and nevertheless should not be assimilating, they should be deported and removed from Western society. This attitude can be explained by the notion of symbolic threat identified by Stephan and Stephan (1993, 1996) in the Integrated Threat Theory. Perceived symbolic threats can arise when a divide is deemed to exist between the worldview and values of an ingroup and outgroup. This divide can invoke the ingroup to feel that their beliefs, attitudes and group morals are under threat from the outgroup. In the case of the negative Islamophobic tweets in the present study, Muslims are the outgroup who are perceived to pose/be a symbolic threat by their conflicting and incompatible values which subsequently leads to Islamophobia. Several researchers have also previously found evidence for this notion, for example perceived symbolic threat predicted prejudice towards Muslims amongst Dutch participants (Velasco-González et al., 2008) as well as predicted outgroup attitudes in Northern Ireland (Tausch, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2007). Thomsen et al. (2018) also showed that symbolic, and to a lesser degree, realistic threats were inextricably linked to anti-Muslim attitudes and behavioural intentions held by Westerners. These themes are an echo of existing mass media representations of Muslims and Islam (Driggs, Abraham, & Harris, 2018; Jaspal, & Cinnirella, 2010; Moore et al., 2008; Poole, 2006; Richardson, 2004).

Furthermore, using data from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France and Spain provided by the Pew Global Attitudes Survey (Ciftci, 2012) it was found that both perceived symbolic and realistic threats are the largest contributor to the Islamophobic attitudes held by Westerners. We believe that terrorism can be categorised as a realistic threat, and as Islam and all Muslims are allegedly associated with it they are therefore perceived as a realistic threat, as was noticeable in the tweets. Moreover, a large number of tweeters suggested that multiculturalism, diversity, immigration and refugees are problems, all of which are associated with Muslims and thus also contribute to them being perceived as a realistic threat. Research in the US, for example, showed some evidence for a rise in general anti-immigrant feelings post-9/11 (Hitlan, Carrillo, Zárate, & Aikman, 2007). Analysing data collected from the United Kingdom, France and Germany, Croucher (2012) demonstrated that there is a significantly negative relationship between the perceived real and symbolic threat, and the belief that Muslims are effectively assimilating, thus suggesting that when the ingroup perceives themselves to be under threat from Muslim immigrants, they are less prone to believe that Muslim immigrants want to assimilate. Thus, it can be concluded that the negative tweets posted in the aftermath of the Westminster attack portray Muslims as representing a hybridised threat – a term proposed by Jaspal and Cinnirella (2010) – that combines both symbolic and realistic threats. Muslims and Islam are perceived to be the enemy (some even claim that they are the greatest enemy) of the West and its values, and tweeters believe that the West is at war with them. The construction of this as a ‘war’ is important to highlight, as it adds perceived justification for the prejudice and dehumanisation, since wartime enemies have traditionally been vilified throughout history.

A large number of ‘us’ and ‘them’ differentiations are expressed in the tweets, which exemplifies the use of language associated with social identity (as well as national identity). This is reflected by the tweeters – who are the citizens of the West and mainly Great Britain – referring to themselves as ‘us’ (the ingroup) and Muslims as ‘them’ (the outgroup). Thus, tweeters claim that Islam and Muslims should be destroyed and killed, whose view is justified by the ongoing war that they

claim is happening. Consistent with our findings, Muslims were depicted as the enemy of the West in the tweets after the Brussels bombings (Miller et al., 2016) as well as after the 2016 E.U. referendum in the U.K. where Brexit was viewed as a stratagem to avert a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK (Evolvi, 2008). Media representations of Muslims also showed that they were frequently adjudged to be an enemy of Britain and its values (Driggs, Abraham, & Harris, 2018; Jaspal, & Cinnirella, 2010; Moore et al., 2008; Poole, 2006; Richardson, 2004)). In addition, this was also frequently utilised in right-wing political rhetoric (Khan et al., 2019; Nielson & Allen, 2002).

All anti-Islamic tweets implemented generalisations of Muslims, they are often said to be the same and are referred to as a homogeneous entity and are therefore all responsible for the attack. This shows evidence for the outgroup homogeneity effect (Quattrone & Jones, 1980) whereby members of the outgroup are perceived to be more similar, and thus more homogeneous than members of the ingroup. Subsequently, outgroup members are more likely to be stereotyped – as is observed in the negative tweets. Muslims are often dehumanised, said to be inferior and construed with derogatory characteristics – they are alleged to be barbaric, medieval, sexist, evil, primitive etc. – and are depicted to be inherently negative and immutable. The use of negative and degrading sentiment to portray all Muslims in the aftermath of a terrorist attack has been noted by previous studies, such as in the analysis of tweets following the Woolwich attack (Awan, 2014), Paris attack (Magdy et al., 2015) and after the Brussels bombings (Miller et al., 2016). Analysis of tweets in the aftermath of the British European Union membership Referendum also showed consistent findings (Evolvi, 2018). Moreover, fine-grained media analyses found that frequently, Muslim culture is portrayed as intrinsically negative and they are often described as possessing characteristics which are innate and indelible, and constitutive of all Muslims (Cinnirella, 2012; Jaspal, & Cinnirella, 2010).

Metaphors were also frequently used in the tweets to portray Muslims, examples such as ‘cockroach’, ‘subhuman’, ‘pig’, ‘pigshit’ and ‘scum’ were endemic. Islam

and Muslims are also depicted in metaphorical terms for illnesses, such as ‘cancer’, ‘Black Plague’, ‘sickness’, ‘mental AIDS’, ‘virus’ etc. They are depicted as similar to animals, perceived to be of lesser humanness which reflects dehumanisation so as to raise the ingroup above the outgroup. Haslam et al. (2008) proposed that outgroup ‘others’ are often excluded from full humanness in an animalistic sense, they are less than human because they have not yet evolved from their animalistic origins. This dehumanisation is typified by the belief that these others are devoid of cognitive sophistication, refinement, morality, civility and self-discipline. Research showed that blatant dehumanisation amongst British participants predicted endorsement of belligerent actions like torture and retributory violence against Muslims after the Woolwich attacks (Kteily, Kteily, & Bruneau, Waytz, & Cotterill, 2015). Furthermore, several tweets implemented WWII metaphors to describe Islam. These metaphors were utilised in order to draw parallels between Nazi ideology/Nazis/fascism and Islam. Tweeters even created and deployed new hybrid hashtags to express the views, such as ‘islamonazi’, ‘islamofascism’ and ‘islamofascists’.

It is also worth noting that the previously described eight closed views that constitute Islamophobia – defined by the Runnymede Trust (1997) – were reflected/mirrored/echoed in negative Islamophobic tweets analysed in the present. Islam was portrayed as (1) immutable, (2) incompatible with the West, (3) inferior and barbaric, (4) violent and aggressive, (5) a political ideology. Although no two-way communication (i.e. a discourse between a Muslim and non-Muslim) was analysed, (6) the West was portrayed to be superior and tweets by Muslims were attacked or reused in a sarcastic manner, such as ‘religion of peace’, (7) the claim that Muslims should be banned and excluded from society justified by an ideological hostility, (8) derogatory and hostile tweets were seen as acceptable. The hashtags created by users to accompany their messages also reflected their strongly anti-Islam attitude, for example #IslamIsCancer, #Rapefugees, #StopIslam, #CloseBorders, #NoIslam, #UnitedAgainstIslam, #NukeMekka, #StopMakingExcusesForIslam etc.

The content analysis of the negative tweets yielded another theme that we categorised as *Politics & liberal backlash*. While most of the negative tweets were characterised as Islamophobic, politics were integrated into the tweets and a differing hostility emerged. Verbal attacks, anger, discontent and hostile tweets were directed against those who defended Muslims – ‘Islam apologists’ as they were often referred to as – and those who claimed that the attack has no association with Islam. Tweeters demanded these ‘apologists’ stop denying the responsibility of Islam and realise that Islam is the problem. Hatred was directed against liberals, left-wing politicians and left-wing supporters for defending Islam and for being more concerned about the emerging Islamophobia than the attack itself. In addition, London Mayor Sadiq Khan was often negatively referred to – or being tweeted to – for protecting Muslims and thus sharing responsibility for the attack. He was identified as a traitor, which positions him as an ingroup black sheep. This exemplifies the so-called black sheep effect whereby the ingroup derogate those ingroupers deemed socially undesirable and attempt to deny their membership of the in-group (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988). Some tweeters suggested that the left is also responsible for the attack because they brought and let Islam in to England. They believe political correctness should be abandoned and they demand that the West and the left wake up because Islam is trying to conquer ‘us’. They should do something about Islam, they should ban it, make it illegal, stop immigration, deport Muslims etc. We observed similar findings in Study 4 (*Chapter 6*) where we looked at people’s views on the implementation of stricter surveillance measures by the UK Government in the aftermath of the Paris attacks. An interesting theme we identified was the dichotomous reasoning whereby both pro- and anti-surveillance individuals ultimately arrived at the same conclusion; the ‘other’ group assists terrorists by either supporting, or not supporting surveillance. We explained this phenomenon using the opposing sides’ competing narratives of nation, whereby core British values are interpreted differently, ultimately leading to a black sheep effect. The same explanation stands in its place within this context – right-wing Islamophobic groups position liberals as the ingroup black sheep, due to their different interpretations of British values.



As a stark contrast to the condemning views they hold on liberals and left-wing politicians, Donald Trump, his anti-immigration policies and his Muslim ban are highly praised. People believe Trump can offer a solution to the ‘Islam problem’. This is also corroborated by the frequent use of some tweets accompanying hashtags, such as #MAGA, #Trump and #Brexit. The identification of left-wing politicians as ‘protectors’ or ‘allies’ of Muslims, and the applauding of right-wing politicians for their use of anti-Muslim rhetoric has been prevalent in Brexit related tweets too, as demonstrated by Evolvi (2017). Consistent findings were presented by Miller and colleagues (2016) in the tweets after the Brussels attacks, showing that tweets that related the terrorist attacks to broader issues, such as Islam, migration and assimilation often articulated their endorsement for Trump’s opinions regarding the cessation of Muslim immigration following the attacks. Our findings show the undeniable role Donald Trump played in the shaping of anti-Islamic sentiment amongst Twitter users whose tweets were analysed in the current study. The now President incessantly vocalised his anxiety and fear of Islam, and Muslims. Trump has presented Islam and Muslims as a grave threat, and his anti-Islamic ideology is offered to the public as Islamophobic rhetoric; rhetoric often directed towards the Muslim community. All discursive strategies that he utilised worked to polarize society by playing on us versus them sentiments, whereby the depiction of Muslims and Islam is built upon a foundation of them as an outgroup, with incongruous and aversive characteristics (Khan et al., 2019).

It should be highlighted that various factors can influence the interactions between people in an online environment (such as Twitter from where data was gathered) compared to an offline setting. For a more in-depth discussion on computer-mediated communication and its psychological implications, please see Section 1.

This study demonstrates the value of using a combination of methods to provide answers for insufficiently explored key research questions. The present study provided a unique perspective to understand views on Islam and following behaviour on Twitter in the aftermath of terrorist attacks by the application of both quantitative and qualitative research analyses. However, one of the possible

limitations of this research is the sole focus on tweets with ‘islam’ and the neglect of the key word ‘muslim’. Even though a large number of tweets were analysed, it is possible that with an extended focus more information could have been gained on expressions of attitudes and group behaviour. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that this study may not be representative of the populace, as individuals using hashtags attract those members who are interested in the topics that the hashtags signify which can account for self-selection bias – as previous research has suggested (Reddick et al., 2015).

In conclusion, using the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, the present study provided a unique approach to understanding how Islam-related views are expressed by social groups on Twitter after the Westminster attack. The study identified Islamophobic and anti-Islamophobic attitudes (**RQ1**) and the expression of such attitudes within the group structure (**RQ3 & RQ4**), explored in-depth manifestations of such attitudes (**RQ2**) and evaluated how those relate to online group processes (**RQ5**). To our knowledge, no previous research has attempted to use mixed methods to provide an in-depth analysis of such a magnitude of tweets and online group behaviour, especially in the aftermath of a terrorist event.

## 7.6 Supplemental Material

### 7.6.1 Section one

This section contains images of tweets that were accompanied with pictures and we felt worth employing as examples of negative tweets.

Image 1



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic* and *liberals* codes.

Image 2



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic*, *same* and *Islam = terror* codes.

Image 3



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic* and *same* codes.

Image 4



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *PC* and *apologists* codes.

Image 5



This tweet was coded with *negative, Islamophobic, mayor, violence* and *same* codes.

Image 6



This tweet was coded with *negative, Islamophobic, refugees, multiculturalism* and *same* codes.

Image 7



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic*, *Trump*, *liberals*, *religion of peace* codes.

Image 8



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic*, *PC* and *Trump* codes.

Image 9





This tweet was coded with *negative* and *liberals* codes.

Image 10



This tweet was coded with *negative*, *Islamophobic*, *PC*, *nothing to with Islam*, *threat* and *multiculturalism* codes.

## 7.6.2 Section two

**Table 7.5** Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  reliability estimate for each code. All Kalphas represent good reliability.

Code name	Krippendorff's $\alpha$
General	Kalpha = 0.94
Positive	Kalpha = 1.00
Negative	Kalpha = 0.94
Ambiguous	Kalpha = 0.97
Apologists	Kalpha = 0.80
Ban	Kalpha = 0.77
Cancer	Kalpha = 0.87
Politicians	Kalpha = 1.00
Islam = peace	Kalpha = 1.00
Islam = terror	Kalpha = 0.89
Islamophobia	Kalpha = 0.95
Justification	Kalpha = 1.00
Liberals	Kalpha = 0.93
Mayor	Kalpha = 1.00
Multiculturalism	Kalpha = 0.80
Negative reactions	Kalpha = 0.96
No religion	Kalpha = 0.86
Not a real Muslim	Kalpha = 1.00
Not Islam	Kalpha = 0.82
Nothing	Kalpha = 1.00
PC	Kalpha = 1.00
Politicians	Kalpha = 1.00
Real victims	Kalpha = 1.00
Reform	Kalpha = 1.00
Refugees	Kalpha = 0.92
Religion	Kalpha = 1.00
RW	Kalpha = 1.00
Same	Kalpha = 0.86
Surprise	Kalpha = 0.80
Threat	Kalpha = 0.80
Together	Kalpha = 0.83
Trump	Kalpha = 0.83
Violence	Kalpha = 0.89
Wake up	Kalpha = 1.00
War	Kalpha = 1.00
WW2	Kalpha = 1.00

*Note. Mean Kalpha = 0.94*



**Table 7.6.** Hashtags accompanying negative tweets within tweets including #westminster.

Hashtags that were used with negative Islamophobic tweets		
#IslamIsCancer	#AllahIsAnEvilSpirit	#ReligionOfDeath
#IslamIsSickness	#BanMosques	#StopTheBarbarians
#IslamOutOfUK	#NoRefugees	#ProtectEurope
#YesAllMuslims	#Islamofauxbia	#ThankYouIslam
#StopMakingExcusesForIslam	#Eurabia	#ReformIslam
#IslamAgain	#BanAssaultMuslims	#EverythingToDoWithIslam
#CloseAllMosques	#TrumpWasRight	#UnitedAgainstIslam
#StopIslamTerrorism	#BuildThatWall	#DefendEurope
#StopMuslimTerrorists	#GetOffOurIsland	#islamofascism
#StopIslam	#MuslimBan	#muslimterrorattack
#NoIslam	#TravelBan	#TheyHaveToGoBack
#ShutAllMosques	#BlackBanners	#Fuckoffislam
#BanIslam	#cultofdeath	#WakeUpUK
#ImpeachmentMerkel	#IslamHorsDEurope	#Praymuslimban
#NukeMekka	#Brexit	#moslemsaretheproblem
#FuckIslam	#LeaveEU	#AllahuAkbarMyArse
#IslamIsTheProblem	#LiberalTerrorism	#HandsInSand
#ThisIsIslam	#DeportAll	#NoCrimmigrants
#DeportMuslims	#RidIslam	#MuslimViolence
#IslamIsNotAReligion	#MuslimScum	#NoMoreRefugees
#Rapefugees	#MuslimFilth	#LiberalLogic
#CloseBorders	#WhiteGenocide	#LiberalPrick
#SecureHomeland	#IslamDehors	

**Table 7.7** Hashtags accompanying positive tweets within tweets including #westminster.

Hashtags that were used with positive Muslim defending tweets	
#NotAllMuslimsAreTerrorists	#DontBlameIslam
#UnitetoStopHate	#StopIslamophobia
#BanHater	#PrayForIslam
#TrueIslam	#IslamHasBeenHijacked
#WeStandTogether	#TheyShallNotDivideUs
#LoveForAllHatredForNone	#HateTheIndividualNotTheReligion
#TogetherWeStand	#TerrorismAintMyReligion
#NotInMyName	#NothingIslamic
#StrongerTogether	#MuslimsUnitedForLondon
#LoveForAll	#NotInOurName
#HopeNotHate	#MuslimsAgainstViolence
#UnitedAgainstExtremism	#IslamPromotesPeace

## 8. General Discussion

This thesis presented an investigation of how people perceive, understand and evaluate some of the most pressing issues in modern societies; surveillance, privacy, trust, threat of terrorism and Islamophobia. This investigation comprised of five empirical studies utilising a mixed method approach. The thesis started off with a wide focus where I explored people's perceptions of surveillance (government and corporate; online and offline; mass and targeted) and identified five themes that underpin such perceptions. As discussion about privacy in the context of social media (online corporate surveillance) was a reoccurring theme in Study 1 (*Chapter 3*), Study 2 (*Chapter 4*) concentrated solely on information privacy concerns on Facebook, and I tested whether these are associated with certain personality dispositions that previous research has suggested could be relevant. In the following two studies I shifted focus, examining perceptions of government surveillance – a decision based on the results of Study 1 (*Chapter 3*) and also influenced by current events unfolding at the time of the research. As people's surveillance evaluations appeared to be related to their feelings of Britishness, Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) investigated the relationship between people's British national identity and three facets of surveillance perceptions (need, benefit, concern), and utilised a priming manipulation to test whether increased national identity has an effect on them. Building on current events, in Study 4 (*Chapter 6*) I explored how people's beliefs ultimately led to either the acceptance or rejection of increased surveillance measures proposed by the British Government in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. The basis of these investigations was somewhat similar, guided by research on perceived need, benefit and effectiveness of surveillance, concerns about such measures, trust in the Government and perceived threat of terrorism. As a result of terrorism emerging as a reoccurring theme throughout the studies, and the occurrence of the first recent terrorist attack in the UK since 7/7, I dedicated the last study (*Chapter 7*) to the exploration of a prevalent phenomenon – Islamophobia. I utilised a mixed method approach to examine how Islam-related views are manifested by social groups on Twitter after the Westminster terrorist attack, and explored the manifestation of group processes on

Twitter. In the remainder of this discussion, a summary of findings will be provided and those findings critically evaluated, and then possible directions for future research will be considered.

In Study 1 (*Chapter 3*), I conducted and analysed twenty face-to-face interviews where three main topical and interconnected areas were discussed; surveillance, privacy, trust. Regarding surveillance, participants tended to perceive it to be ubiquitous and inevitable and constructed it through metaphors such as security cameras and the Orwellian principle of Big Brother. Most of them admitted to holding a naïve view on surveillance and believed that if employed by the Government, it must be for protection, safety and out of necessity. While most of them had supportive attitudes towards both online and offline surveillance, those who did not, reasoned it was due to their lack of trust in the Government. The language of social identity was observed in many responses, and British national identity often discussed or implied ('us', 'we' etc.). The phenomenon of surveillance was often anchored into the safety and protection of the group (and nation) by the Government. Every participant was aware of targeted surveillance of certain groups and most thought that this was justifiable. Most of these interviews were held after the 2015 Paris terrorist attack, and hence surveillance and especially terrorism was in the forefront of participants' minds, which we believe impacted their surveillance perceptions.

Regarding privacy, we observed that participants tended to anchor their social representation of the term into representations of safety – similar to how they perceived surveillance. Everyone viewed privacy as important, if not essential. However, when asked about privacy protection techniques/measures they might implement, the majority revealed that they took no specific measures/precautions when online. In terms of their information privacy on the largest social network, Facebook, most of them admitted to having never or not very often edited their privacy settings. These findings reflect the privacy paradox phenomenon showing the dichotomy between privacy concerns and actual privacy behaviour.

Trust in the British Government and trust in online companies were both discussed in the context of both offline and online surveillance and data monitoring. An interesting paradoxical set of beliefs was uncovered here - even though almost every participant believed that the Government might misuse their surveillance powers for illegitimate reasons, they tended to be rather apathetic about this, and half of them still trusted them with such powers. When trust in online companies (e.g., Facebook, Google) was explored, the majority of people expressed mistrust mainly due to privacy concerns, data misuse and targeted advertising, but again, this did not particularly lead to any action to regain privacy.

I proffered a general conclusion, that surveillance is seen as inevitable, thus people tend to accept it over time to reduce distress. However, surveillance perceptions are also heavily influenced by perceptions of threat and need (which are both heightened in the aftermath of a terrorist event) which are intertwined with inherent trust in the Government. In a state when people feel a heightened threat of terrorism, surveillance is perceived to be needed for protection and safety. Trust in the Government leads to surveillance acceptance – although trust in the Government tends to increase during a period of heightened threat.

The findings of this study allow for useful insights into the social constructions of surveillance, privacy and trust (online and offline, government and corporation related) but due to its qualitative nature, causal relationships are not empirically tested. Future studies could explore these relationships further by building on themes discovered in this exploratory study and investigating, for example, how malleable to situational factors some of these factors are.

In the second study (*Chapter 4*) I presented evidence that certain personality traits and trust correlate with and are predictive of information privacy concerns on Facebook. The results showed that conscientious and agreeable individuals, as well as those who were open to new experiences, tended to display higher concerns about information privacy. Conscientious people tend to be careful, diligent, foresighted, have heightened sense of awareness, increased attentiveness and a

number of studies have previously showed evidence for its relation to privacy and security concerns (Bansal, 2011; Junglas et al., 2008; Stieger et al., 2013; Uffen et al., 2012). Consistent with our results, studies have previously demonstrated the positive association between agreeableness and information privacy concerns, as agreeable individuals tend to display heightened apprehensions as regards the privacy of themselves and others (Bansal et al., 2010; Egelman & Peer, 2015; Korzaan & Boswell, 2008). Those scoring high on the trait openness to experience have a tendency to experience novel situations, try new things and acquire a broad sense of awareness and tend to be more concerned about the privacy of their information, as shown previously (Egelman & Peer, 2015; Junglas et al., 2008). Furthermore, neuroticism was found to be a positive predictor of Facebook privacy concerns, confirming the results of previous studies showing that individuals high on the trait of neuroticism have a tendency to control the information they share (Liu et al., 2013; Ross et al., 2009; Sumner et al., 2011).

Interestingly, contrary to our hypothesis, people's general propensity to trust was found to be positively related to Facebook privacy concerns, suggesting that individuals who are likely to trust others tend to be more concerned about their information on Facebook. I explained this unexpected relationship by the difference between trust as a personality trait (considered to be a facet of agreeableness) and trust in social networks. As propensity to trust relates to the generalised expectations about the trustworthiness of others, it is unrelated to the trust one puts in Facebook.

Findings from Study 2 (Chapter 4) also showed that people who are generally open in sharing information with others in their social circles on Facebook tended to be less concerned about their information privacy on Facebook and so were those who placed more trust in Facebook. Regarding self-esteem, the findings were contrary to our hypothesis, indicating a negative relationship between self-esteem and Facebook privacy concerns. We provided a possible post-hoc interpretation of this finding. People with low self-esteem tend to be anxious and shy and due to their proneness to feel socially anxious and their fear of being negatively evaluated, they

tend to be cautious and distinctive about self-disclosing, and thus they also tend to have increased privacy concerns. Self-esteem has also been shown to be one of the lower order indicators of neuroticism (Eysenck, 1990; Watson, 2000), a personality trait which I found to negatively predict privacy concerns on Facebook.

The study two results therefore demonstrated the importance of personality traits, self-esteem and trust in contributing to privacy concerns on Facebook, although it should be noted that there is a high degree of unexplained variance in the analyses, since the correlations were rather weak and the sample size lower than ideal (in terms of statistical power). Future studies could investigate these relationships with a larger sample size utilising an a priori power analysis tailored to the predicted effect sizes.

In Study 3 (*Chapter 5*) I found a significant positive association between British national identity and perceived need and perceived benefits of government surveillance. The finding also showed that those with stronger feelings of national identity tended to be less concerned about surveillance imposed by the Government. However, the British national identity priming manipulation had no effect on any of those surveillance perceptions. I explained this lack of significance by the recent denunciation of priming techniques as a result of the ‘replication crisis’ suggesting that social priming effects may be much less powerful than once thought, and potentially extremely short-lived (Cesario, 2014; Klein, 2014; Shanks et al., 2015). It is therefore possible that priming may have made national identity more salient, but for just a few fleeting seconds. Alternatively, it may be that the priming manipulation failed to influence British identity because this social identity is robust and well-developed within our participants, and because of this, resistant to being primed by relatively mundane tasks such as the one used in the manipulation, perhaps only fluctuating in response to more meaningful real-world events such as reportings of terror attacks, sporting or military events.

As beliefs around the need for and benefits of surveillance are both perceptions that are ultimately linked to supportive attitudes towards surveillance (Budak et al.,

2013; Dinev et al., 2008; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Sanquist et al., 2008; Webster, 2009), we propose that our findings are in line with those of O'Donnell and colleagues' (2010) who showed that shared social identity with the source of surveillance increases its acceptance and that when identity is not shared between the surveilled and the source of surveillance, then it is more likely that the monitoring will be viewed as an infringement of privacy. These findings suggested that British national identity and acceptance of government surveillance is linked to arguments that position surveillance within the national interest and as linked to national security. These kinds of social constructions of government surveillance thus put pressure on those who see themselves as British to accept surveillance as a way of adhering to group norms ('self-stereotyping'; see Turner, 1991) and demonstrating their 'loyalty' to the in-group. The construction of government surveillance as necessary for national security also plays on the function that national identity serves for protecting the individual (Bloom, 1990). The quantitative results of this study are also in line the qualitative findings of Study 1 (*Chapter 3*), highlighting the importance of shared identity in perceptions of government surveillance.

Future research in this area would benefit from a mixed methods approach – experimental studies could attempt to tease out some of the additional factors that impact support for surveillance that may be sensitive to contextual effects and are as yet, under-researched, such as political orientation, certain personality dimensions (e.g., RWA) and trust in the current Government. Additionally, qualitative work could seek to map some of the societal discourses (e.g., in the mainstream media) around surveillance and how these discourses draw upon themes linked to national identity and terrorism. It would be interesting, for example, to explore how lay discourses around surveillance are impacted by the discourses present in mass media and disseminated by 'opinion leaders' such as politicians.

In Study 4 (*Chapter 6*) I identified themes from a forum discussion that contributed to people's acceptance or rejection of the proposed implementation of stricter

surveillance measures by the British Government as a response to a terrorist attack. Building on an ITT explanation, I posited that the acceptance or rejection of surveillance is at least partly dependent on one's evaluation of the symbolic threat to privacy posed by surveillance and the realistic threat posed by terrorism resulting in the need for security. Higher realistic threat perceptions led to more favourable views on surveillance, showing that the heightened sense of threat imposed by terrorism resulted in people valuing security over privacy. This can be explained by the all too common emotional reaction to a threat, where an effort is made to increase levels of personal security so as to reduce the distress. This finding is in line with previous research, where the threat of terrorism was found to positively affect people's acceptance and support for surveillance (Cohrs et al., 2005; Davis & Silver, 2004; Levi & Wall, 2004; Malhotra & Popp, 2012). On the other hand, when symbolic threat of surveillance (resulting in the loss of privacy, freedom and individual liberties) was perceived to be more important than the realistic threat of terrorism, less favourable views on surveillance were formed. Concerns regarding privacy infringement, stemming from stronger surveillance measures leading to a surveillance society have been well documented previously by researchers (Lyon, 2003; Lyon, 1994; Mitchener-Nissen, 2014; Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009). Furthermore, while one's perception of privacy and security are part of a finely tuned balance, the findings of this study also suggested that the relationship is hugely affected by trust in the institution that carries out the surveillance (the UK Government in the case of this study) and the perceived effectiveness of surveillance – as also evidenced in findings of my previous studies.

Furthermore, I also reported an interesting theme, the dichotomous reasoning whereby both pro- and anti-surveillance individuals ultimately arrived at the same conclusion; the 'other' group assists terrorists by either supporting, or not supporting surveillance. Pro-surveillance individuals believed that the anti-surveillance camp supports terrorism by preventing the implementation of new surveillance measures, while anti-surveillance members argued that by surrendering their freedom and privacy in support of further surveillance measures, the pro-surveillance individuals support terrorists. I explained this phenomenon



using the opposing sides' competing narratives of nation whereby core British values are interpreted differently, ultimately leading to a black sheep effect that positions the other side as traitors to the ingroup and consequently the target of negative perceptions.

I believe this study benefited greatly from a qualitative design in being able to map different ways in which pro- and anti-surveillance beliefs are constructed. The nuanced way in which symbolic and realistic threats intertwine with narratives of national identity and national values would have been difficult, if not impossible to capture using quantitative methods. This is not to say that future studies could not move forwards in a multi method manner. The bulk of the social identity and ITT literatures within social psychology remain quantitative, and it would be possible to explore quantitatively (e.g., via survey experiments) the role of realistic and symbolic threat perceptions, perhaps exploring which situational factors impact them. Nevertheless, qualitative analysis remains very well suited to research such as that reported in this study, which focuses on naturally occurring interactions in social media, and the themes identified in this study could also be explored by further qualitative work on, for example, more politically oriented discussion forums.

As I elaborated on previously, the threat of terrorism and how it affects perceptions seemed to be a reoccurring theme across my studies (except for Study 2, *Chapter 4*) and while designing my last study, a terrorist attack occurred in London, raising the possibility of tailoring a final piece of work to take account of a current event. The use of network analysis on Twitter was always within the scope of this thesis and this attack – however unfortunate – provided the climate to mix methods and explore social construction in cyberspace. However, instead of tailoring this study around surveillance, I decided to focus on Islam-related tweets and the behaviour of groups tweeting them. This was, as indicated above, essentially because my previous studies had suggested that in some ways, 'all roads lead to Islamophobia and perceptions of Islamic terrorism'. In exploring the manifestation of social media activity around the terror event, we had an opportunity to observe naturally

occurring communication around the event and deploy some methodologies as yet not utilised within the thesis, and which remain rare within social psychology.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, Study 5 (*Chapter 7*) provided a unique approach to understanding how Islam-related views are expressed by social groups on Twitter after the Westminster terrorist attack. The study identified Islamophobic and anti-Islamophobic attitudes, the expression of such attitudes within a group structure, explored in-depth manifestations of such attitudes and evaluated how those relate to online group processes. The study showed that when people tweeted about the attack, the tweets were likely to be related to content about Islam, suggesting that Twitter users wished to express views about Islam in response to the attack, confirming perhaps Cinnirella's observations that societal social representations in the UK have bound the theme of terrorism inextricably to Islam (Cinnirella, 2012). Furthermore, the study found evidence for a positive association between ingroup insularity and the extremity of the tweet's sentiment, indicating that groups with more ingroup following were more likely to tweet in a more extreme way about Islam (either positive or negative). This finding presented potential evidence for group polarisation and in-group solidarity occurring in cyberspace; members of groups with more extreme views on Islam are more likely to follow each other than members of other groups on Twitter. The self-selecting nature of this following behaviour ensures twitter users are 'preaching to the converted' and most likely results in a polarisation of their views about Islam, pushing extreme views (either positive or negative) further towards the extreme. It has previously been suggested (Reicher et al., 1995) in the SIDE model (Social Identity and DE-individuation) that computer-mediated communication can provide an environment which amplifies the impact of group processes and social identities, and this study seemed to support the idea that social identities are apparent in cyberspace.

Overall, I identified two main themes within the positive Islam sentiment tweets (*Unity and Defence*), and I classified negative tweets into themes of *Islamophobia* and *Politics & liberal backlash*. Due to the length and depth of such expressions,

as well as to avoid repetition, the themes will not be described in this section – for more information please see *Sections 7.4.2.2.1* and *7.4.2.2.2*. In conclusion, positive tweets tended to be supportive and defensive of Islam, expressed solidarity towards the victims and the Muslim community as well as concern in response to the anti-Islamic rhetoric. The predominant goal reflected in these tweets seemed to be to promote the unification of a diverse and varied population, in a way compliant with notions of multiculturalism, as well as to build a safer, stronger and a more United Kingdom. This overarching aim supports a construction of a multicultural civic-based British national identity with an emphasis on the value of tolerance. The difference between Islam and ISIS was also made salient. It is interesting to note how, once again, as was observed in some of my previous studies, lay beliefs differed partly due to the deployment of competing constructions of British national identity.

On the other hand, negative Islamophobic tweets tended to be multi-layered, utilising a lot of metaphor and hyperbole in order to express their anti-Islam rhetoric as well as creating new hybrid words and hashtags to strengthen said sentiment. The strongly Islamophobic attitudes in the tweets were expressed in several ways (for a detailed description, see *Section 7.4.2.2.2*) mapping onto the 'closed' views that constitute Islamophobia (defined by the Runnymede Trust (1997)) and most of which I explained with ITT. Perceived symbolic threats can arise when a divide is deemed to exist between the worldview and values of an ingroup and outgroup. This divide can provoke the ingroup into feeling that their beliefs, attitudes and group morals are under threat from the outgroup. In this study, Muslims are the outgroup who are perceived to pose/be a symbolic threat by their conflicting and incompatible values which subsequently leads to Islamophobia. Furthermore, terrorism can be categorised as a realistic threat, and as Islam and all Muslims are allegedly associated with it, they are therefore perceived as a realistic threat. However, not only Muslims were perceived to be the outgroup and the enemy, but also those who defended them; 'Islam apologists' (as defined in the tweets), such as liberals and left-wing politicians, were often being positioned as the 'ingroup black sheep'. I explained this phenomenon using the opposing sides' competing

narratives of nation, whereby core British values are interpreted differently; right-wing Islamophobic groups position liberals as the ingroup black sheep, due to their different interpretations of British values. This pattern was discovered in the context of surveillance perceptions in Study 4 (*Chapter 6*), where the pro- and anti-surveillance groups perceived the ‘other’ group to be assisting terrorists by either supporting, or not supporting surveillance. That the same observation could be made in this study, using twitter data, provides additional validity to the notion that the observation has validity.

This study was strong methodologically because it deployed a multi-method approach that remained sensitive to the varied content of the tweets investigated, but also used ‘big data’ analysis techniques to uncover patterns in follower behaviour that could not otherwise be identified using more traditional analysis techniques. The study is also unusual within social psychology for its adoption of methods and theoretical ideas from the area of research known as network analysis, and the exploration of group processes within social media using big data analytical techniques is very new within social psychology. Even within social media research and the field of internet psychology, it is unusual to see studies like this which combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. A further strength of this study is its focus on both Islamophobia and pro-Islam social media content – the latter has been largely ignored in previous research on perceptions of Islam. Taken as a whole, this study provides new theoretical insights into how arguments both pro and against Islam are expressed in social media following terrorist events. Like some of our previous studies, the data suggest an intertwining of perceptions of threat, terrorism, Islam and nation, and we provide novel evidence of how pro and anti-Islamic sentiments are constructed in cyberspace. Future research could seek to explore whether the themes we identified are present in other social media, as well as delve deeper into how many of the arguments rely on forwarding competing conceptions of British national identity.

## 9. Conclusion

Through deployment of a range of methodologies, the research reported in this thesis has expanded the understanding of lay beliefs around privacy, surveillance, terrorism and Islamophobia. The unfolding narrative of the work quickly establishes that in the current UK context, lay beliefs about these issues tend to intertwine in complex ways. The theoretical lenses offered by social representations theory, Intergroup Threat Theory, and Social Identity Theory in particular, offer key insights into the strategies that lay behind the construction of competing attitudes and beliefs around these main themes. The body of work shows that in both interviews, attitude surveys and naturally occurring online communication, discussion of surveillance and privacy is impacted by terrorist events, and there is a ‘battleground’ over rival constructions of British national identity and values that allows both pro and anti-surveillance, as well as pro and anti-Islam individuals, to claim that their position is driven by in-group loyalty to British national identity. The use of qualitative techniques was crucial in helping to capture these nuanced and complex beliefs and their underpinnings in different constructions of nation. However, the addition of quantitative techniques also allowed hypothesis testing about relationships between variables and in the final study provided an extremely novel way into capturing group dynamics in cyberspace using big data techniques. It is therefore hoped that the body of work reported herein will not only expand the understanding of lay beliefs about privacy, surveillance, terrorism and nation, but also provide encouragement for future researchers to appreciate the value offered by mixed methodological approaches and to appreciate the rich data available in cyberspace.

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