



Is anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination an
issue in the British Muslim community?

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Abstract

This thesis undertakes research into a field of British Muslim studies that has rarely been touched upon. This may be due to its potentially controversial or challenging nature, looking at a religious movement considered by many to not be part of Islam. This thesis, which has theoretically been 5 years in the making, aims to uncover whether anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Britain has become an issue. In using research on reported events, individual and group interviews with both Ahmadis, 'mainstream Muslims' and non-Muslim community leaders, it uncovers that anti-Ahmadi discrimination is indeed manifesting itself in Britain – with most cases being carried out within the Muslim community. It however takes into consideration the complexity of the issue in questions of religious freedom of 'mainstream Muslims' who do not consider Ahmadis as part of Islam. By using theoretical and legal considerations of religious discrimination, this paper looks at what defines 'anti-Ahmadism' in Britain, sheds light on the cases of discrimination and looks to the future in what is being done to counter the discrimination of Ahmadis in Britain. It must be noted that the purpose of this dissertation is not activism or 'lobbying', but merely to have an academic insight into a 'paradoxically hidden' case of sectarianism in Britain.

Abbreviations

MCB: Muslim Council of Britain

MCW: Muslim Council of Wales

Ahrar: Majlis-e-Ahrar-ul-Islam

KN: Khamte Nabuwwat

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It was in Summer 2014 that I believe I first heard of the Ahmadiyya community. At the time, I was a Sixth Form student who had for a year taken an interest in Islam and its complexities and position as a much discussed topic in Britain. I however had not recognised until this point the extent of its diversity, but also of its divisions. It was through derogatory tweets by a 'public Muslim figure' about Ahmadis that began what has been a five-year study into the community, five years of trying to understand why there is such contention in the British Muslim community about this group that appear to demonstrate such devotion to the country and towards peace. Why were there such strong feelings against these Ahmadis? Can Muslims be 'Islamophobic' and prejudiced themselves? Do the Ahmadis count as Muslim? Do these tweets count as hate speech or is this free speech? Why aren't others talking about this? These ruminations have led me to take on this dissertation's question – **is anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination an issue in the British Muslim community?** The intention of using the 'British Muslim community' is not to stir tensions but is to differentiate the general Islamophobic/racist attacks Ahmadis may face outside the Muslim community. Cases of specifically anti-Ahmadi discrimination have most often been from Muslims and have been motivated by the theology of the Ahmadis that set them apart from 'traditional Islam'.

In taking an academic and objective insight into whether the Ahmadiyya community are facing discrimination, this dissertation will focus on what defines anti-Ahmadi discrimination and what perceived cases of discrimination

do they face. It will conclude with an understanding of the prospects of this community and the wider Muslim population moving forward and assess whether this will become a wider issue in Britain in the years to come.

Who are the Ahmadis?

The Ahmadiyya consider themselves a sect of Islam, with the movement being founded in 1889 ‘aimed to revive and promote Islam in its pristine form as taught by the Prophet’ (Geaves 2018, p.37). It was established by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who claimed to be the promised Messiah ‘expected at the end of times’ – a figure that non-Ahmadi Muslims (of which I will refer to as ‘mainstream Muslims’ in this paper) believe has not come yet and therefore reject Ghulam Ahmad’s claim. His basis for being the promised Messiah was that he claimed to have testified divine signs and fulfilled the criteria of the promised Messiah, and that he was the “true and perfect image of the Holy Prophet, entrusted by God to renew a fallen Islam where Muslims were no longer living according to Revelation” in colonial India (Dard 2008, p.822). He then held a ceremony of initiation for those who were ‘seekers of the truth’ to join him in learning ‘true belief’ and thus the Ahmadiyya movement began (Friedmann 2003, p.5). Ghulam Ahmad also gave new interpretations of the texts, calling for the abolition of slavery and to exclude holy war from Jihad (Geaves 2018, p.35).

Ahmadis are adamant that Muhammad was indeed the final law-bearing prophet and that the Qur’an is the final revelation (Geaves 2018, p.48). Yet, to many ‘mainstream Muslims’, their idea that Ghulam Ahmad’s claims go against the ‘normative narratives’ of Jesus’ return (Geaves 2018, p.42) as well as belief that it challenges the idea of the finality of Muhammad’s prophethood – a

concept known as *Khatum un Nabiyeen* (Hardy 1972, p.172) may put Ahmadis outside the fold of Islam in their eyes as it touches upon the concept of what it means 'to be a Muslim'. It is largely for this reason – and for other socio-political factors that I will further explain – that Ahmadis have been constructed as a 'heretical other' which Qureshi (2016, p.10) believes has been utilised by preachers to call for violence or isolation of the community, thus spilling over into discrimination. Qureshi – a non-Ahmadi - is one of the few academics to have written on this phenomenon of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination from a British context. It must be noted that the above theological insight was from neither Ahmadi nor Sunni Muslim sources as both appeared to contradict each other in interpretation and thus an academic stance from a third party felt reasonable.

Today Ahmadis number roughly 15 million (MacLean 2010, p.72) and in 2001 had been 'the fastest growing sect of Islam for several decades' (Barrett 2001). However, the movement has effectively been declared criminal in Pakistan under 1984's Ordinance 20 – "a cross between legislating a thought crime and something reminiscent of apartheid" according to former Pakistan Director of Human Rights Watch, Ali Dayan Hasan (Brooks 2016). This led the movement to base its international headquarters in England, where it's current Caliph - Mirza Masroor Ahmad – lives. Under Ordinance 20, Ahmadis cannot call themselves Muslim, call their faith Islam nor propagate their faith (Malik 2011). It could be argued that these legislations have played a large role in legitimising discrimination against the Ahmadis for self-identifying as Muslim even within in the British diaspora (Qureshi 2016, p.8). However many 'mainstream Muslim' figures have argued that the rejection of the Ahmadis self-identification as Muslims is a consensus of the general Muslim population

(MCB 2016a). While evidence of persecution against Ahmadis (and other minorities) is more prominent in Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh, Ahmadis enjoy relative peace in Britain. However, certain cases of discrimination have manifested over the years, and are what has led me to analyse these cases and uncover whether anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is or isn't becoming an issue in Britain.

Motivations:

As referenced earlier, the motivations for choosing this research topic have originated from noticing the 'paradoxical hidden yet public manner' (Qureshi 2016, p.10) that this discrimination has been played out in that it is largely hidden from the British public - due to rhetoric against Ahmadis often being conveyed in Urdu with milder language used in English. Most lay people I spoke to about this dissertation didn't know who the Ahmadis were. It appears that the wider British public regards Muslims as a homogenous community, without understanding the ideological rifts and internal divisions within the community. It appears that the Ahmadis have been hidden from academia also, with Humayun Ansari (2009, p.38) noting that "settlement histories of those Muslim communities in Britain which subscribe to non-Sunni traditions" have been neglected – though whether he would include Ahmadis within the pale of Islam is another question. The academic gap and lack of public knowledge on Ahmadis could be due to their relatively small number of adherents in Britain (around 30,000 according to the Economist, 2016) and dominance of South Asian Sunni Islam in this country (MCB 2015).

From a personal level, I had been intrigued by the large minarets of the Ahmadi Morden mosque seen from my grandmother's loft as well as hearing

of her encounters with the community and oppression faced by them in Pakistan. Also, an ambition to understand societal divide has always been of interest - in my first encounter with an Ahmadi, I was shocked to learn of the social rejection he had faced in Britain by Muslims – leading me to realise that discrimination isn't always a case of 'black vs white' or 'Muslim vs non-Muslim'. Then in 2016, anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination reached the public consciousness – albeit briefly. The murder of Ahmadi shopkeeper Asad Shah in Glasgow and alleged discovery of leaflets calling for the deaths of Ahmadis in Stockwell Green Mosque hit the headlines. While these cases have complications of which will be addressed, the events of 2016 undoubtedly raised the question of whether the same violent sectarianism faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan was now manifesting itself in Britain

Aims:

In answering whether anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination has become an issue in the British Muslim community, three aims have been set out. The first aim is to understand **what defines and constitutes anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Britain**. To accomplish this, legal and theoretical concepts of discrimination will be analysed as well as participants being questioned on a range of beliefs on what they define as the line between free speech and discrimination. In line with how the recent initiatives for defining anti-Semitism (Torrance 2018) and Islamophobia (Brockenshire 2019) have been formulated by the community in questions' own perceptions, it will be important to ensure Ahmadis have a chance to define their own discrimination. However, acknowledging 'mainstream Muslims' potential desires to be able to legitimately question Ahmadiyya beliefs without being accused of discrimination is also essential – given that the MCB stated that "Muslims should not be forced to class

Ahmadis as Muslims if they do not wish to do so” (MCB 2016a). It should be noted that not believing the Ahmadis to be Muslim does not inherently constitute discrimination. In conclusion of this aim, I hope to potentially find a ‘working definition’ of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination and see what makes it unique as a phenomenon, as well as a general understanding on what does and doesn’t constitute discrimination. Given the recent campaigns and debates around state-endorsed definitions of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, this aim holds relevance in Britain today - does there need to be an anti-Ahmadiyya definition to combat it?

After gaining an understanding of what ‘anti-Ahmadism’ is, I will look at whether it is indeed an issue in Britain with the second aim - **how has anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination manifested itself in the past and present of Britain?** To answer this, I will research cases of discrimination reported in the media as well as asking Ahmadis themselves what their lived experiences in Britain have been. In conclusion of this aim, I will be able to lay out the various fields in which anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is being played out in Britain. This chapter will be useful to identify the ways in which the phenomenon is manifesting itself and the extent to which it is or isn’t an issue, as well as possibly touching upon wider questions around discrimination and sectarianism.

To pinpoint where the phenomenon is in modern Britain and in looking to the future, the final aim is **to what extent are Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya groups dealing with the manifestation of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination?** This aim is based around a questioning of whether action has been taken since the events of 2016 in which the phenomenon became publicly apparent. In

answering this, the initiatives (or lack thereof) of politicians, the Ahmadiyya community and 'mainstream Muslim community' in addressing the discrimination will help identify the prospects for the community in Britain. It will also address whether bridge-building between the Ahmadi and 'mainstream Muslim community' is the way forward.

This research faced many challenges, primarily the lack of literature on a relatively new phenomenon often hidden from the wider British public and academia – thus general literature on discrimination was used. Smart's (1973) theory of 'methodological agnosticism' also outlined my positionality in neither denying nor confirming the truths of Ahmadiyya or general Islamic theology, but merely studying it as a social construct for the sake of the paper's objectivity. An initial challenge was gaining the perspective of 'mainstream Muslims' (though later I was successful), potentially due to fears that I may have come with ulterior motives to 'attack the community'. It was therefore important to ensure this piece of academic literature is not intended as activism, but merely to gain an understanding from a variety of perspectives of what anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is and whether it is an issue in Britain or not.

Having completed four months of fieldwork, it was concluded that anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is indeed an issue in Britain, albeit a contested one. As with other forms of discrimination, there are conflicting ideas of what constitutes anti-Ahmadism and what measures it being 'an issue' or not. However empirically, cases of discrimination were found in the field of politics, universities and within Urdu-language media. The phenomenon throws up wider issues around blasphemy and the secular nature of Britain as well as

whether authorities in the UK have understood religious sectarianism enough. It appears that while action is being taken officially by the government, dialogue between the Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadi Muslim communities is lacking. While Qureshi looked at how this form of 'diasporic sectarianism' has come to manifest itself in Britain, I look at what is the present of what is happening and the future of what is being done about it.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A barrier faced in this paper has been a lack of prior academic research into anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination within a British context. Even Qureshi's 2016 work faced limitations, being written before the conclusions of investigations into the Asad Shah murder and the Stockwell Green Mosque – which also effected accessibility to participants. Therefore, this thesis has an advantage in being able to look at the situation from a more informed position and through its ability to shed light on a relatively unknown topic.

Regarding the structure of this chapter, a brief look at the **background of anti-Ahmadi discrimination** will first be introduced - brief as Qureshi's thesis largely explained how and why anti-Ahmadism is being manifested in Britain. Following that, **contemporary cases of Ahmadiyya discrimination abroad**, and how they may relate to Britain, will be explored. **General theories of discrimination** will then be outlined, for which the basis of anti-Ahmadism in Britain will be defined. It must be noted that some readings were articles or formatted in ways without page numbers to cite.

What is the background of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination?

As stated in the introduction, the Ahmadi belief in Ghulam Ahmad's claims of being the 'promised Messiah expected at the end of times and a non-law-bearing prophet' (Adamson 2009) has always been the main source of contention among orthodox Muslims, who regard his claim as blasphemous. This sort of contention can be commonly found among any religious group. Yet in the Ahmadi case it appears to have had far reaching consequences. While

there was inevitable opposition to Ghulam Ahmad's claims of divine revelation, it appeared that Ahmadis enjoyed relative calm as a sect in British India with Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, an Ahmadi, presiding over the 1931 Muslim League Conference, and later becoming the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan (Friedmann 2003). Yet, increased demands from Majilis-e Ahrar-e Islam (Ahrar) - an Islamist political party - to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslim (Awan 2010, p.30) and to remove Zafrullah Khan from his role, led towards direct actions against the government following their initial refusal. This pressure involved calling for boycotts against the Ahmadis and rioting (Friedmann 2003). The pressure tactics used by Ahrar included the use of religious rhetoric to rally Muslim public opinion, such as walking out of the National Assembly, chanting "long live the finality of the prophethood" after another refusal of Ahmadi excommunication by the government (Friedmann 2003). It would be interesting to observe whether a similar use of pressure tactics and religious rhetoric is used by anti-Ahmadi movements today such as Khatme Nabuwwat (KN), who have their origins in Ahrar and are cited by Qureshi (2016, p.51) as being the main source of bringing anti-Ahmadiyya intolerance to Britain.

Pakistan's 1974 constitutional amendments and 1984's Ordinance 20 bill are deemed as significant in 'legitimising' anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Pakistan. The motions demonstrate that the pressures led by Islamist movements to put their rejection of the Ahmadiyya into action were successful. The 1974 constitutional amendment implemented the theory into law that those who do not "believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad... or recognize such a claimant as a Prophet or a religious reformer, is [sic] not (a) Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution

or Law”¹. This clear reference to Ahmadis essentially excluded them from a Muslim status in Pakistan and would have implications under Ahrar/KN’s ambitions to ‘Islamise’ the state and society (Kamran 2015, p.56). Qureshi refers to this as the ‘politicization’ of theological differences that “implemented these differences in such a way that it embedded the Ahmadiyya as a non-Muslim minority in public discourse” (Qureshi 2016, p.73). This institutionalisation led to far-reaching consequences for the Ahmadiyya community in 1984 with the introduction of the Ordinance 20 bill which effectively made their faith as a self-identified Islamic movement illegal. Under this law, Ahmadis couldn’t call their place of worship a mosque, greet Muslims in the customary Islamic manner nor declare their faith publicly as Islam (Siddiq 1995). This state-sanctioned policing of the Ahmadis’ religious beliefs resulted in the fleeing of the Ahmadi caliph and global headquarters to London.

To this day, Pakistanis are made to “participate in the discrimination against the community” through signing a declaration that ‘I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an imposter nabi and also consider his followers... to be non-Muslim’ in order to gain Muslim-identified passports (Qureshi 2016, p.25). This conveys a state-sanctioned power-dynamic based on ‘Muslim citizenship’ in which the Ahmadis’ lack of this status has implications against the community under the nation’s blasphemy laws, and encourages the viewing of them as ‘heretical’ or ‘other’. While it could be argued that this statement perhaps reflects the Muslim consensus on what it means to be a Muslim, it will be interesting to explore whether this ideology is less present in British

¹ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, p 86 (article 260 [3]) Debates, 7.9.1974 – Cited in Friedmann 2003.

Muslims outside of South Asian traditions.

A trope identified within prior research on prejudice against the community has been that of the ‘British/foreign agent’. Geaves (2018, p.151) gives historical context of this in that a cardinal principle of the Ahmadis was obedience to the law of the land, – which at the time of the movement’s establishment was controlled by British India. Friedmann (2003) also notes that Ghulam Ahmad had “indicated acceptance of British rule”. Hostility arose against the community upon Ahrar’s declaration of India as dar al-Harb (a territory of war), calling the Ahmadi’s ‘loyalty’ towards the British as that of a “poisonous movement” that “cannot be tolerated”². However, it appears that Ahmadis had eventually stated their support for the independence movement of the Indian Congress³ -. Thus the British agent trope doesn’t appear to be fully validated. Another reason for the ‘British agent’ trope could be Ghulam Ahmad’s rejection of violent Jihad – leading some to view Ahmadiyya as a construct of the British to fracture the Muslim Ummah”⁴.

It will be useful to explore whether this idea of the Ahmadis as ‘British’ or ‘foreign agents’ manifests today, and whether it is still based on its historical connotations.

Persecution of Ahmadis abroad:

While the focus of this thesis is on anti-Ahmadi persecution in Britain it is still relevant to gain an understanding as to what tactics have been used to marginalise the community and how this may manifest itself in a UK diasporic setting. Malik (2011, p.71) reported Ahmadis in Pakistan being denied flood

² The Muslim Times 1, no. 14. (1935). 1 – Cited in Geaves 2018.

³ Ibid, 5.

⁴ Resarch participant cited in Qureshi 2016, p.17

relief as 'district administration had told lawmakers they were not eligible for support'. The article references the US Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2009 report that blasphemy laws in Pakistan were used to justify violence against minorities, especially Ahmadis. Malik however points to how the issue in Pakistan is a wider one of minorities, given that Christians and Sikhs also faced discrimination in flood relief and blasphemy allegations. It is evident that Ahmadis still face a uniquely high level of persecution in Pakistan, with massacres against the population (and other minority sects) common and the government accused of 'emboldening extremism through inaction' (Human Rights Watch 2010). Meanwhile in Bangladesh, it appears that anti-Ahmadi persecution was present in many public sectors often due to intimidation by 'anti-Ahmadis' (Khan & Samadder 2013). In education, schools wouldn't provide scholarships for Ahmadis due to fear of attacks; in transport, even after physical attacks, some Ahmadis couldn't get to hospital when denied local transportation; women also faced harassment and threats of being 'taken away' when their husbands were absent. It will be interesting to observe in the UK if intimidation by 'anti-Ahmadis' has had any influence on politicians dealing with discrimination, as in Bangladesh many politicians were reluctant to deal with Ahmadi issues for fear of losing votes in upcoming elections (p.378). What is also interesting about Khan and Samadder's work is how the persecution in Bangladesh is a relatively new(er) phenomenon for a faith over a hundred years old (Ahmadiyya). The first reported instance of attacks in the country was in 1977, and only since 2004, "anti-Ahmadiyya extremists have started demanding publicly that the government should pass legislation declaring Ahmadis to be non-Muslims"(Khan and Samadder, p.373). Interestingly, the Bangladeshi government has refused to abide by this, and has kept protesters away from Ahmadi infrastructures, unlike in Pakistan.

As is in other relevant literature, appears to be a correlation between hostility against the community following religious decrees by religious councils. In Indonesia, violence against the sect began in 2005 after the Indonesian Council of clerics declared Ahmadis as perpetrators of blasphemy (Kraince 2009). Since then, hundreds of Ahmadi homes and several mosques have been torched (Bouchard 2008). It is useful looking at these cases to assess how much influence scholars have exerted in anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination, It is also worth assessing what is preventing hostility against Ahmadis taking the same violent turns in Britain.

This need to explore the status of Ahmadis in Britain compared to abroad is furthered in that it appears anti-Ahmadi persecution in countries such as the above has been due to an absence of “full protection of the government to protect religious minority groups” (Indonesia – Irawan 2017, p.164) or a general “absence of justice and human rights” (Bangladesh – Khan and Samadder 2013, p.378). The Equality Act and other religious freedom legislations will support the exploration of this theory.

Ahmadis in Britain

Analysing the history of Ahmadis in Britain is useful as a means of assessing whether attitudes and actions against the community have developed over time. However, an issue is that most literature surrounding Muslims in Britain excludes Ahmadi-specific information. As stated in the introduction, literature on the history of Muslims in Britain is often Sunni-centric, therefore Shias, Salafis and Sufis may also be left out rather than it being solely an Ahmadi issue. The literature that does mention Ahmadis, doesn't often discuss their

discrimination, potentially as it's a relatively new phenomenon without much academic insight yet.

Interestingly, the reality for Ahmadis in Britain seemed positive prior to World War 2. As Ansari (2004) notes, Ahmadis such as Khawaja Kamaluddin were deemed as pioneers of British Islam, and both the Al-Fazl (the first purpose-built mosque in London) and Woking mosque (first purpose-built mosque in Britain) were in Ahmadi hands in the early 20th century under their proselytising campaign of Britain. It is said that sectarianism was downplayed and that Muslim unity was made paramount to attract converts and nurture a British Islam (Geaves 2018, p.161). Even a call within the Muslim Society of Great Britain in 1936 to disassociate from the Ahmadiyya was rejected for the 'collective interest of all Muslims in Britain' (Muslim Times 1936). However, the deaths of 'unifying' figures in British Islam, such as Kamal ud-Din and Abdullah Quilliam, led to British Muslims feeling at loss and later "polarizing into camps". It could however be argued that figures such as ud-Din and Quilliam don't hold much relevance to a lot of the British Muslim community today, given that most of today's British Muslims descend from those who arrived after the time of these figures. Even with this in mind, it seems clear that the relatively peaceful co-existence among Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi Muslims in Britain would be disrupted by the developing sectarian tensions in Pakistan mentioned previously, tensions that were to be brought in with the large-scale immigration from South Asia and which would create diasporic sectarianism and "become the norm... [changing] the landscape of Islam in Britain" (Basit 2012). Zafrullah Khan himself predicted that World War 2 and the partition of India would have "dramatic consequences" for the Ahmadiyya movement.⁵

⁵ Al-Fazl, 14 May 1941 – quoted in Geaves 2018.

Religious discrimination

Religious discrimination as a term itself, as well as concepts of religion and discrimination, are contested terms which have various meanings associated with them by various parties and academic disciplines – this is agreed in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) 2011 report on religious discrimination (Weller 2011, p.6). In fact, a lack of a generally accepted definition for religion may be the factors for why it might be impractical to evolve relevant law and policy (Hepple and Choudhury, 2001), given that their meanings often are and maybe always will be contested. What seems apparent is that scholars of religion tend to see a community's self-definition as the least problematic approach towards defining religion (Weller 2011, p.7). For Weller (2003), religion is "perhaps best understood as a way of living in which some form of identification is often to be found in conjunction with different forms of 'believing' [e.g. values] and can be expressed through 'practice' [e.g. rituals]." This is important to factor given that Ahmadis appear to stress their right to self-identify as Muslims.

Regarding discrimination, legal definitions of religious discrimination are system-specific (Hepple and Choudhury 2001, pp.67-69), in that the definitions of discrimination can differ and depend on contexts from race to sexuality. However, the government's Equality Act 2010 (gov.uk 2010) has integrated a common legal understanding and definition of what constitutes discrimination across all 'protected characteristics' - of which religion is one.

A useful working definition coined by Weller et al. (2000) and cited by the EHRC lays out six dimensions of unfair treatment on the basis of religion:

1. Religious prejudice:

Considered attitudinal and can form a basis for exclusion. This isn't necessarily illegal but creates a culture that influences other people's attitudes and actions towards a group.

2. Religious hatred:

This is fanned from 'religious prejudice', which can often result in violent behaviour and harassment on the grounds of religion.

3. Religious disadvantage:

Refers to privileged alignments existing between religious groups and various social institutions.

4. Direct religious discrimination:

Constitutes deliberately unfair action based on religion. A legal example of this is being dismissed from your job due to your faith (without good reason) (Citizen's Advice).

5. Indirect religious discrimination:

Listed as consequences of unexamined practices or procedure that disadvantage an individual due to their faith.

6. Institutional religionism:

Signifies a range of factors combined into a mutually reinforcing environment that marginalises another faith.

These dimensions provide valuable guidelines for what may constitute the 'red lines' between free speech and discrimination. It must be noted that in Citizen's Advice on religious discrimination as well as within the EHRC's, non-commercial religious organisations can discriminate when necessary for meeting the organisation's religious aims. This includes preventing others from becoming members or taking part in the organisation's activities.

In measuring the 'extent' of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination being an issue in Britain, Allport's (1954) scale of prejudice and discrimination is useful:

1. Verbal antagonism:

In which an in-group freely purports negative images of an out-group - varying from casual slurs and comments that aren't unlawful but which constitute clear hostility.

2. Avoidance:

The step in which members of the in-group actively isolate and avoid people in the out-group through lack of association.

3. Discrimination:

Where prejudices are put into action through active exclusion of a disadvantaged group from opportunities or services. Examples of this include the Jim Crow laws in the U.S and apartheid in South Africa.

4. Physical attacks:

Includes cases in which the in-group vandalizes or destroys out-group property and carries out violent attacks on individuals or groups. Historical cases include anti-Jewish pogroms in Europe and the lynching of black people in the U.S.

5. Extermination:

This final step constitutes the removal of the out-group following a socialization that accepts the elimination in part or in whole of the group. The Armenian genocide as well as the Final Solution are examples of this.

Within Allport's theory, to go higher in the steps, one must get social approval for the earlier steps.

In her research around discrimination faced by Coptic Christians in Egypt, Hyun Jeong Ha (2017, p.142) talks of '**righteous indignation**'. This refers to the negative emotional responses manifested by minorities as reactions to micro-aggressions. In some cases, they may assume something to be a micro-aggression against them due to their faith, even if it may not be. (For one Copt, it was around a Muslim professor being unresponsive to her emails). This is something to keep in mind when taking testimonies of discrimination – in that not all cases may legally fall under discrimination and in some regards, may not have ultimately been due to the individual's faith. However, it is agreeable that they may still be relevant in the wider picture of what Ahmadis may face day-to-day and their perceptions of life in Britain. This gap between legal-based and perspective-based declarations of discrimination falls under Weller's (2011, p.9) observation of the potentially problematic relationship between legal definitions/outcomes of religious discrimination and the socially articulated experience of it.

Another theory on discrimination useful to observe in the research is that of the **'passive network'** (Bayat 2010). According to Bayat, Copts in Egypt would often use phrases such as 'but it's okay' when talking of cases of discrimination against them, as a method of downplaying and emotionally distancing themselves from day-to-day persecution. In other words, this was normalizing their situations and protecting themselves as a means of 'getting by' through shutting negative emotions.

Milani's (2016) research on Baha'is corresponds to literature suggesting that theologically-inspired legislation against a faith group leads to suppression and vulnerability. Given that Baha'is aren't recognised as a religious minority in Iran's constitution, they are illegal and face injustice in the penal system. As of Feb 2016, more than eighty Baha'is have been imprisoned in Iran for publicly practising their faith (p.38), with others being denied access to education. As with Ahmadis, some of these measures have come from calls by clerics and fatwas by leaders encouraging social and economic boycotting of Baha'is, calling on public action against them. Like the 'foreign agent' trope of Ahmadis, Baha'is have been accused of being 'agents of Israel' due to their headquarters being in Haifa (Israel), after the Faith's founder was exiled to there during the Ottoman era (p.42).

There are plenty of parallels between the experiences of Bahai's and Ahmadis, much of it to do with preventing the minority from gaining positions of influence (e.g. Ahrar's demands for Zafrullah Khan's dismissal). How this relates to Britain can be how clerics' calls for social isolation and the 'public

legitimation' of religious laws may lead people to segregate from Baha'is or Ahmadis anywhere in the world.

Similarly, with Mormons, attempts to prevent them from gaining positions of power took place in the USA, in which during the presidency bid of Mitt Romney (a Mormon), an evangelical pastor proclaimed a rival "a genuine follower of Jesus Christ" (Oppel & Eckholm 2011), later calling Mormonism a cult and claiming Romney was "not a Christian". According to McGurn (2011), "Romney's Mormonism cost him among the evangelicals who flocked to Mr Huckabee", citing how a Pew survey discovered that 34% of white evangelicals were "less likely" to vote for a Mormon president. This demonstrates how the use of religious rhetoric in politics can indeed influence people to put into action the socio-political exclusion of 'the other'.

An additional understanding of where this may have manifested from is provided in Mathie's (2016) work on sectarianism within Judaism, she states that sectarianism is:

"...marked by competing claims of and to legitimacy and authenticity centred upon which religious interpretation is asserted as... being the true faith/religion. Actions are therefore promoted and legitimised in the name of possessing the true faith/religion"

[Mathie 2016]

To Mathie, sectarianism becomes violent when individuals feel threatened from the influences of an 'other' and deploy violence to resist or defend the group from those 'threatening ideas' (p.613).

Seeing anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination from a sectarian lens is useful for explaining the power dynamics and internal theological insecurities which may be behind the very legislators legitimising anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment globally, or preachers in Britain calling for the isolation of the community.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an explanation for the methods used to reach the results and conclusions in the following chapters. The chapter is divided in sections explaining the **social theory** underpinning the work, **the methodological approach** taken, **the methods of data collection** and **data analysis**.

Social theory

A significant theory underpinning the approach to this research is that of methodological agnosticism. Methodological agnosticism is a concept of Ninian Smart that forms a "method of looking at the objects of religious experience and belief which neither brings heaven down to earth nor takes a step into metaphysics and theology". Methodological agnosticism thus creates a more sensitive, scientific study of religion by trying to relate to a lived experience alternative to one's own. Smart's theory has elements of social constructionism in it, in that when beliefs (such viewing Ghulam Ahmad as the promised Messiah) are reflected in human projections and rituals (i.e. the Ahmadiyya belief), it thus becomes part of human experience and part of reality, even if it isn't necessarily 'human'.

To appropriately study the Ahmadiyya community, avoiding having a bias is essential, and there is a need to put aside whether the researcher believes a faith's beliefs are valid or not. This is the essence of Smart's methodological agnosticism approach. This means taking an approach neither confirming nor denying the belief that Ahmadis are Muslim – likewise taking a similarly agnostic approach to how Muslims may view Ahmadis. Taking a

methodological atheistic approach (denying any possibility of truth within either group's claim) would make an inefficient approach to this thesis. A general critique of Smart's work is that it can lead towards a 'slippery slope' moving away from human fact. It does throw potential concern on where to draw the line on what can constitute a 'legitimate religion' to give verification towards through the methodological agnostic approach.

Methodological approach

The main methodological approach in this research will be qualitative research through interviews. Caution and empathy are clearly needed when it comes to making conclusions around an inherently emotive and contentious topic such as discrimination, especially as British Ahmadis may have relatives in Pakistan facing difficult circumstances. There is a need to hear in detail the perspectives around this matter and not rely on 'half-baked statistics' that could be taken out of context and lead to harmful assumptions about communities. The choice of 1-1 interviews was prioritised, as both Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims may be afraid to voice their opinions in front of others. This was to prevent a feeling of constraint from disclosing sensitive experiences or 'unpopular opinions'. However, on some occasions and unexpectedly, Ahmadis I had anticipated to interview individually, ended up bringing other members of the community. This in turn worked well, as some of their experiences triggered the thoughts of others.

Ethnographic observations had been considered to view whether Ahmadis faced frequent hostilities in public, for example at faith stalls. However, from prior research as to where cases of discrimination took place, it appeared that most of these public events tended to go by without issues, and that cases of

discriminative actions or 'hateful rhetoric' were often subtler and in less accessible places (for example Urdu-language mosques). Given that I am an 'outsider' as a non-Muslim and previous work citing that this discrimination is indeed 'hidden from the wider public' – it seemed unlikely that any evidence would be visible from ethnographic observations.

Methods of data collection and selection:

Before formulating questions, the sample of participants had to be considered in accordance with who and how many would help achieve the aims set out in answering the thesis's question.

The dilemma of how many interviews 'is enough' came to mind when sourcing the sample, the answer to which is 'it depends' (Baker and Edwards 2012).

Often practical issues such as the time available and level of degree play a role.

This paper was useful in guiding me, in the sense of explaining that understanding how processes can operate under different sets of circumstances is essential towards assessing a phenomenon (p.29) – anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Britain in this case. This dissertation had a four-month period to be conducted in, yet for the sake of coding and analysing, the period of which collection could take place limited the potential reach of data collection. It was for this reason that quantitative data or surveys on Muslim opinion of Ahmadis was not pursued. In the end, fourteen participants took part in the research. The participants were a mixture of Ahmadis – largely within leadership positions as they would have a wider understanding of relations with authorities and 'mainstream Muslims', Sunni Muslims – also within leadership positions, and non-Muslim figures linked towards local and national politics – to give a perspective of the 'neutral' side.

Sourcing participants was undertaken through a mixture of methods which largely included e-mailing various communities, organisations or individuals who were linked towards articles or cases encountered in background research. Challenges were encountered in sourcing the sample. For Ahmadis, it was difficult initially in getting interviews, as the start of the research period coincided with Ramadan, and later, with preparations for the community's annual gathering, the Jalsa, meaning many were busy. A challenge was sourcing Muslim speakers. Despite multiple e-mails and telephone calls, the Muslim Council of Britain didn't respond to an interview request, despite responding to other requests in the meantime. A Sunni friend had also asked among scholars and other Muslim leaders, yet reported back that many 'didn't want to talk about it'. It seemed apparent that the topic is an uncomfortable one for 'mainstream Muslims' to address and that perhaps due to the media's scrutiny towards the MCB during 2016, some may have felt suspicious of this research's intention. As for speaking to non-Muslim figures in politics and authorities, this was the least problematic process. This group of participants was the quickest to respond and most enthusiastic to talk, perhaps due to their own experiences within the matter, and that it wasn't as emotive or as difficult to talk about, given that they weren't experiencing life as Ahmadis or 'mainstream Muslims'.

It was felt that the sample of participants was diverse and representative enough to cover a wide range of views around discrimination. Even within the Ahmadi sample, one participant was slightly more distant from the community, being critical of internal issues within it and mostly identified as atheist, yet still felt an affinity towards the Faith through volunteer work. In Mason's theory of

representative logic (Baker and Edwards 2012, p.29), a guiding question for selecting participants is: “Does the phenomenon... require that you factor in a number of different perspectives or sets of experiences before you can understand it fully?”. Given the complex nature of this topic, the sample of participants selected does indeed factor diverse perspectives and experiences, and was essential in being able to study debated cases such as the Asad Shah murder from a multi-faceted, nuanced perspective. While the number of Ahmadis interviewed outnumber non-Ahmadis, it seemed appropriate for the majority of the sample to include Ahmadis, given they would have first-hand experiences of discrimination.

In terms of compiling a list of questions, consistency was a priority in creating a comparable set of data for analysis. Twelve questions were asked to all participants, which were based around observations found in prior research. The questions were divided or categorised into the aims they referred to which made later coding easier. Questions were made as open as possible as a means of avoiding potential subjectivity (of which will be addressed later) from myself, and to allow the possibility of uncovering data that hadn't been considered before. This allowed a space for moderate 'rambling' (Measor 1985, p.67). This is where the interviewee has a space to 'ramble' and move away from the designated areas, often being an inevitable part of semi-structured interviews.

“The interviewee in rambling is moving onto areas which most interest him or her. The interviewer is losing some control over the interview, and yielding it to the client, but the pay-off is that the researcher reaches the data that is central to the client”
[Measor 1985]

I therefore allowed a degree of 'rambling' to allow participants to articulate themselves how they wished, as they might end up covering matters I had not considered or found in prior research. The interviews were mostly structured to ensure all questions laid out would be answered within the time. This again was to give some consistency to ensure all questions had comparable or diverse answers. This would enable me to monitor whether ideas on the topic were within consensus or not, and whether attributes such as age played a role. Most interviews ended up being from an hour to an hour and a half, as there appeared to be a lot to talk about, and participants appeared very engaged, perhaps as they were being given a chance to discuss something personal to them that they may feel strongly about, and rarely have had a chance to discuss outside of their respective communities.

It was important to ensure leniency in the data collection and to not stick to the initial structure. This touches upon Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) 'art of second questions' in which follow-up questions are asked, triggered from the rambling of interviewees or from the identification of common themes from previous interviews. This also benefits the relationship and trust between the interviewer and interviewee:

"It can be affirming for the interviewee to know they've been listened to and allows you to test your own interpretation to determine what you've learnt"
[Brinkmann and Kvale 2015]

In terms of logistics, the interviews were recorded on my mobile phone using the transcribing app 'Otter'. This app was incredibly useful in giving live transcriptions of what was being said, so that data analysis was a smoother, faster process.

Ethics is an element that cannot be avoided in research, and especially in a topic such as this which is contentious and delicate for many involved. Martyn Denscombe (2010, p.330) puts forward his key principles of research ethics, of which formed the basis of this thesis' ethical code:

1. Protect the interests of the participants

In Denscombe's own words, "people should not suffer as a consequence of their involvement with a piece of research". Some comments made by participants in interviews could be deemed by others as controversial. For that reason, anonymity through pseudonyms was ensured to avoid long term damage to the participants. For the sake of relevance and context of some findings, some ambiguous details about participants will be provided such as faith or job.

2. Participation should be voluntary, with informed consent

Not only is this ethical, but it is also legal. Complying with the data protection act is essential in the research process. This point highlights why consent forms were signed for each interview, formally recording the agreement to participate. Information sheet and background details of the research were also sent prior to interviews, which will emphasise that the research is voluntary with the option to withdraw available.

3. Avoid deception and operate with scientific integrity

Given that exploitation can be common in the media and academic world, participants "should be protected from researchers who might be tempted to use any means available to advance the state of knowledge on a given topic" (Denscombe 2010, p.329). Transparency about the nature of the investigation

and clarity as to what the purpose, aims and intentions are, is essential to all participants. This was provided in the information sheets sent prior, as well as a re-iteration at the start of the interview. The findings must also be fair and unbiased in their interpretations.

Regarding anonymity, further research was undertaken to understand how a balance can be achieved between protection of the sample and providing relevant, valid findings in Guenther's (2009) 'The politics of names'. Guenther addressed the dilemma faced in this balancing-act:

"Concealing names, especially those of organizations and places, often doesn't preserve external confidentiality unless all potentially identifying details are obscured, which in turn can undermine the importance of meanings in names and the significance of findings"

[Guenther, 2009. Page 418].

What Guenther was referring to was how at some points, organisations and places referred to by participants still can give away their identity. Yet if one completely obscures any connections the individual has, it makes the analysis and findings suffer. It is however a 'trade-off' that should be accepted to prevent damaging respondents in a way that can damage the wider academic world. The solution appears to be, either omitting data or disconnecting it from overly-identifiable characteristics. It was however decided that if information provided has already been published in the news and thus is in the public domain, then the name and identity of individuals involved can be used. To avoid potential issues altogether, pseudonyms are used for all interviewees in this paper.

Finally, regarding data collection, news articles and opinion pieces were included as part of the research process. This was due to a void in academic literature on the topic, articles in the media appear to be the greatest hub of knowledge on what cases of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination there have been in Britain, as well as what people are saying about it. It is, however, important to be aware that journalistic analysis can sometimes be problematic, less valid and based upon sensationalism. Therefore, valid and resource-backed news articles were occasionally cited in the findings chapter as testimonies for the reporting of events in question.

Methodological analysis

As Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) state - "Patterns, themes and categories do not emerge on their own. They are driven by what the inquirer wants to know and how the inquirer interprets what the data are telling her or him" (p.77). The data analysis is based upon the researcher's own conclusions of statements, observations in language and identification of common themes. Subjectivity and reflexivity however are made out to be inherent in data analysis from this statement, and must be minimised as much as possible.

Reflexivity is based on a concept that "all scholarship has an autobiographical aspect" (McCutcheon 1999) , and therefore a researcher can never be fully objective, and that their own ideas and beliefs may influence the outcome of their project somehow. Acknowledging my own "situatedness within the research" (p.9) was important and challenging – after all there is a personal motivation behind any choice of research. For myself, the feeling of empathy towards an Ahmadi friend, as well as the feeling in favour of the community's

public stance on peace and integration, were things to try and put aside as much as possible for the research. I would argue, however, that as someone who religiously is neither Ahmadi nor Sunni Muslim, perhaps I was ideally placed to take on this research in as objective a way as possible, given that the analysis wasn't as challenging of my own theological beliefs or was likely to expose myself towards attacks on my own identity. While perhaps the concept of 'objective study' doesn't exist, it was a given that being as fair as possible and open to listening to 'both sides' and simply reporting what was being said in the analysis, was essential for the validity of this research.

Having taken steps prior in ensuring a balanced research, bibliography and pool of participants, as much elimination as possible was made against subjectivity in the coding. In laying out the process of data coding, Strivastava and Hopwood (2009) raise three key questions to consider:

1. What is the data telling me?

Be clear in following the explicit words of participants and do not make assumptions. Quoting directly in the findings is good to showcase a lack of bias yet maintain a balance.

2. What do I want to know?

When coding, keep in mind the three main aims and how the evidence provided contributes in answering.

3. What is the dialectical relationship between what the data is telling me and what I want to know?

Admittedly, there were certain findings that came as a surprise and some resulted in making 'anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination' (become) a more contested term. Certain topics that had clear cut beforehand were revealed to be more complex and divisive of participants. It highlighted in the end that this topic deserves more academic insight than it currently gets.

The process of transcribing seemed quite simple, yet tedious at times. Otter only appeared to have a 70% accuracy for picking up what was said, with the accuracy lower for those with Pakistani accents. Therefore, considerable time had to be used in transcribing. After identifying what the data 'was telling me', the answers of questions were separated, based on what aim they corresponded to, and then sub-divided into whatever common theme they referenced. For example, within aim C of how various groups are tackling anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination, answers about what the 'Muslim community' should do were put into one sub-heading whilst answers on the government's action were put into another. A similar process was used in the discussions chapter, in which the chapter was divided based on the common themes found among the findings around wider issues.

In discourse analysis, looking at the communication of participants gave greater detail towards findings. Noting the way in which some participants may laugh or seem visibly upset spoke a lot about attitudes and will be noted within findings. Furthermore, certain attitudes manifested while discussions discrimination linked towards theories found in the literature review – such as with Bayat's passive network (2010). General observations during the

interview period are noteworthy, such as the sight of metal detectors and security measures at an Ahmadi mosque.

One drawback faced in the research was timing, given that the window for interviews was slightly shorter after some late concerns about the feasibility or substance of the project before pursuing it. It felt this was overall compensated due to a hard push and success in gaining a variety of interviewers.

Therefore, sensitive consideration has been given towards all processes of conducting the research, from a broad literature review onto the matter, a variety of legal and theoretical ideas of religious discrimination to apply to my findings, and extensive research on elements of the qualitative methodology from selecting the sample to prioritising ethical considerations moving forward. One thing to note in the rest of the essay is that the use of single quotation marks refer to statements made by participants while double quotation marks refers to literal sayings of participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

Having undertaken qualitative research with interviews based on insight found in academic literature, the findings of this thesis are divided into three sections that constitute the aims set out to uncover if anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is an issue in the British Muslim community:

1. What constitutes and defines anti-Ahmadi discrimination?
2. How has anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination manifested itself in the past and present of Britain?
3. To what extent are Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya groups dealing with the manifestations of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination?

In this chapter, the findings from both media articles around the topic and interviews are put forward alongside general observations. It should be noted that media articles should be understood as being part of journalistic language which at times can sensationalise, nevertheless it appeared that articles cited here were backed up with resources or simply quoted interviews. Within each aim/sub-chapter, common themes identified form sub-headings to divide the topics related to answering the aim. The term anti-Ahmadism will now be used.

Aim A: What constitutes and defines anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination?

In conducting prior research, it was evident that differences of opinions do exist in what constitutes anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination. Through asking participants where the lines were 'between legitimate criticism and

discrimination', the aim of defining what makes anti-Ahmadism unique was answered.

The term Qadiani

One element of debate in defining anti-Ahmadi discrimination was language and rhetoric. According to Hamza (Sunni), it is possible to criticise religious acts deemed inappropriate, yet where this transcends from free speech into discrimination is when 'dehumanising language or language intended to invoke humiliation, scorn or abuse' is used. He referred to Boris Johnson's recent comments on the burqa as an analogical example. (Press Association 2018)

In Qureshi's work, the term 'Qadiani' (named after the birthplace of Ghulam Ahmad) was deemed as a derogatory slur (p.64), corresponding with Hamza's theory of where language becomes discriminative. However not all Ahmadis interviewed found it to be inherently discriminative. Overall 3 Ahmadis interviewed answered that they did not *directly* find the term Qadiani to describe them offensive, whilst another 3 said they did. Interestingly, those who answered that they found it offensive were raised in Britain, while 3 of those who didn't directly find it offensive were raised in Pakistan.

The term 'directly' is used here given that when expanding, it appeared that those who initially said they didn't find it inherently offensive did believe the connotations of its use was – "the manner in the way people say it, you can tell it's a slur" – claimed Tawfiq. Former community worker Amanda compared the pejorative use of the word to those used to describe black people in a derogatory way - "it doesn't matter where a word really comes from or what it really means".

For Abbas, a local leader of the community, the term “projects an image of disbelief” as Ahmadis call each other Ahmadi rather than Qadiani, and many of them had never been to Qadian themselves. Therefore, it appears that Qadiani is used as a term to merely call the faith a ‘local phenomena’ that does not deserve legitimation, and therefore neither do its followers. One Ahmadi, Tariq – of Pakistani origin – compared it to a non-Muslim calling him as an Arab because he is a Muslim.

What was noteworthy was how the Ahmadis in Cardiff claimed that despite it apparently being used to offend them, that they avoid being offended by it as “they [the ‘name-callers’] then get what they want”. It appears that there is a self-created barrier in how Ahmadis approach the term Qadiani to ‘get by’.

Another interesting point was that one Ahmadi noted how Ahmad terminologically refers to ‘the community of the Prophet Mohammed’ and is a title given by God. Therefore, it could be deemed that some Muslims refer to Ahmadis as Qadianis due to their own religious beliefs around the right to the title Ahmadi – suggesting this act could be ‘religiously sanctioned’.

In conclusion, it appears that the context of using ‘Qadiani’ isn’t as simple as it seems and may vary by case. Most respondents however agreed that its modern connotation make it derogatory today.

The question of self-identification

A significant factor in defining anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is separating whether a denial of Ahmadis self-identifying as Muslim – an identification many Muslim organisations like the MCB appear to have rejected (MCB 2016a) - constitutes discriminative practice. For politician Larissa – discrimination is

when it becomes “a denial of other people’s rights to define their own faith”.

She stated this as contrary to British values:

"In this country, we have the right to self-define... I have my differences with Jehovah’s Witnesses. But they describe themselves as Christians so therefore I accept them as Christians. Who gets to decide what you are?"

[Larissa, a Christian politician]

Religious freedom was referenced by several interviewees regarding this question of self-identification. For Ahmadi Tariq, he believed it was “acceptable” and “within the bounds of his [a Muslim’s] freedom” to not consider Ahmadis ‘true Muslims’. However, where he believed the line was drawn was cases in which Ahmadis were ‘forced to accept that they are heretics’ and thus not allowed to publicly call themselves Muslim nor appear on platforms using this self-identification.

Tariq was referring to the ‘Messiah has come’ campaign in which Ahmadi adverts on billboards featuring a website link titled ‘True Islam’ were taken down out of ‘security concerns’ after complaints to the Advertising Standards Agency (Faith Matters 2018) that they were “inciting hatred” and “deeply offensive and hurtful to millions of British citizens” (Farley 2018) – to Amanda, this was a case of ‘extreme ideology’ from Pakistan now manifesting itself in Britain due to its prevention of Ahmadi self-identification.

However, for Sunni Muslim Hakim, while he believed Ahmadis have a right to call themselves Muslim “in this country”, the removal of the billboards was “the right move” given the ‘true Islam’ title. He stated that the “overwhelming majority of Muslims will be offended by that”:

“What they are actually passively saying is that we [Ahmadis] are following the true Islam and the rest of you are following the false Islam, that has implications... that you [non-Ahmadi Muslims] are all destined for the Hellfire, and your Prophet was a liar”
[Hakim, Sunni Muslim student]

This therefore suggests that the language used by Ahmadis in their self-identification may lead to opposition by ‘mainstream Muslims’ for potentially denying their self-definition as Muslims.

In summary, it appeared that the majority of Ahmadis were not striving to demand ‘mainstream Muslims’ to recognise them as Muslims but opposed cases where they (Ahmadis) felt prevented from recognising themselves as Muslim – cases of which will be highlighted in the sub-chapter for the second aim.

Boycotts

Economic boycotts were cited in news articles as examples of anti-Ahmadism with a comparison of this act to the early steps of Nazi Germany against Jews (Soni 2010). While the Ahmadis didn’t find certain cases of boycotting as directly discriminative – for example a Sunni not buying halal meat from an Ahmadi butcher as they may not deem it halal - attempts to marginalise the community economically were cited as discriminative practice existing in Britain. For all non-Ahmadi Muslims interviewed, boycotts of non-religious Ahmad-made products was unjustifiable – except for Hakim in cases where the funds may be used to ‘propagate their beliefs’.

One Ahmadi cited a case in which a British Urdu-language newspaper (Nawa-i-Jang) had a full-page advert calling on its readers to boycott Shezan (BBC World Service 2017) – a Pakistani drinks company run by Ahmadis. Another

analogy referencing the historical boycotting of Jewish products was made about this:

“Imagine the Daily Telegraph, putting out an advert saying you cannot buy this drink from the Jewish community, because it’s Jewish”
[Abbas, Ahmadi]

Social boycotting by former friends upon discovering the Ahmadi identity of interviewees was another case highlighted, as was playground bullying at school and a refusal to greet Ahmadis with the customary Islamic manner.

From Hakim’s perspective, it appears that keeping a social distance from Ahmadis may be down to fears of Ahmadiyya belief having an impact on a ‘mainstream Muslims’ own beliefs:

"I can interact with them in society... and live a peaceful coexistence. But I wouldn't want to have a close Ahmadi friend. And that is because of safety for my own belief. You know, the Prophet Mohammed, he said that you are the religion of your friends"
[Hakim, Sunni Muslim]

He admitted that part of this not wanting a close Ahmadi friend was also due to feeling a “sense of animosity towards their beliefs” which originates from how he feels their beliefs are an insult to God and the prophet Muhammad. Hakim also stated that he would be wary of his children being close friends with Ahmadis and would “try my best to avoid that situation”. He stated that he would feel more comfortable with his children being friends with Christians and Jews as “their beliefs are sort of clearly different” rather than having what he deemed contradictory claims to Islam, but “would also teach my children to be able to deal with differences in beliefs to live harmoniously in a society”.

Overall, the findings in this aim to understand what defines and constitutes anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination uncovered that the concept of what discrimination is varied among interviewees, with a lack of clear alignment on a definitive view possibly due to a void of specific legislation on the matter. The apparent observations of what may constitute anti-Ahmadism in Britain will be outlined in the discussion chapter. Moving forward into the next sub-chapter, the theories put forward by participants around concepts of boycotts and denial of self-identification alongside general cases of harassment or violence are used to understand what cases of anti-Ahmadism exist in Britain.

Aim B: How has anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination manifested itself in Britain?

In looking at the lived experiences of the community and origins of anti-Ahmadism in Britain, the elements that it appears to have manifested itself in are through politics, media, 'Muslim organisations' and religious preachers. This sub-chapter is a significantly longer one as it focuses more prominently on the research question.

Is it an issue in Britain?

To get to the core of what state anti-Ahmadism is in Britain currently, participants were asked if they see it "as an issue" in Britain today – 7 said yes (including a 'mainstream Muslim') while 4 said no (including 3 Ahmadis). As with the Qadiani question, there was a difference in the Ahmadi response between those raised in the UK (who largely said yes) to those raised in Pakistan (who largely said no). It appeared that different interviewees' measurements of whether it was an issue in Britain corresponded with their own individual definitions of what constitutes discrimination, perhaps based on their own realities in Pakistan. For example, Suhail (a co-leader of the

Cardiff community), emphasised “Not as much as back home in Pakistan... Here, there is freedom of speech, religion” while his colleague Ilyas – also raised in Pakistan - explained how ‘being able to pray here freely’ while the “Pakistani government sponsors state terrorism” shows that the experiences faced by Pakistani-raised Ahmadis in Britain appears menial in comparison to their experiences in Pakistan where their faith is effectively outlawed.

For politician Larissa, it is a “minor issue. Because the numbers are small” while for Hakim, it didn’t appear to be an issue due to the Ahmadi’s close relationship with the government and image as a “protected, strong community”.

For the Cardiff Ahmadis, it was hard to know whether certain cases were general Islamophobia or anti-Ahmadism such as rubbish being dumped repeatedly at an Ahmadi mosque. The idea of “being squeezed from both sides” was articulated about dealing with discrimination from both far-right and Islamist elements. Another trend was around regional differences in experience. Tawfiq, an Ahmadi raised in Scotland and then in London, claimed that “in London it’s a lot more liberal in the sense that not direct stuff happens” compared to colleagues who were bullied at school in Wolverhampton for being Ahmadi. Scotland was also cited as a place where the government and police’s ‘strong stand’ since the Asad Shah murder has created less issues for Ahmadis there. The ethnic origins of individuals was also a factor for Tariq, who stated from his experiences that Arabs often were more willing to engage with Ahmadis and still regarded them as Muslim despite ‘theological differences’.

Tariq had interestingly stated that he does not believe anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination to be an issue in Britain for two reasons:

“1: Sunni Muslims aren’t in positions of power to exercise discrimination. 2: Sunni Muslims who do get into positions of power have adopted the British mind-set of toleration and neutrality when it comes to other people’s religious beliefs”
[Tariq, previously in Ahmadiyya student associations]

Therefore, the differing perspectives of whether anti-Ahmadism is an issue or not depends on individuals’ own backgrounds and definitions.

What are its origins?:

Misconceptions on the faith and ‘blind following’ of scholars is what most Ahmadiis interviewed believed has led to discrimination against the community in Britain. This sub-section around origins is shorter given that the literature review and Qureshi’s work largely focused on this.

Some first-hand experiences of Ahmadiis interviewed were that ‘misconceptions’ existed around their community, and was viewed as an origin of hostility. One claimed that the idea they had “brought a new book” and didn’t follow the Qur’an was stated, with another being accused of viewing Ghulam Ahmad as ‘above the Prophet Muhammad’. It did appear from interviews with Sunni Muslims that there were contradictions in what they thought Ahmadiyya theology was and what Ahmadiis claimed in interviews – such as believing Ghulam Ahmad was still alive and wasn’t viewed as ‘the second coming of Jesus’ but merely ‘a new prophet’. From my own perspective, it was difficult at times to grasp a full understanding of Ghulam Ahmad’s status and thus theology won’t be an emphasis in this study. For

Amanda, 'whether they're Muslim or not' was irrelevant in secular Britain. She emphasised viewing this discrimination from an Equality Act lens.

An interesting perspective claimed by some Ahmadis was around 'mainstream Muslims' without "theological mechanics" to do independent research after being exposed to 'misconceptions' by scholars and preachers. The influence of KN preachers and the over-reliance of their congregants was cited by Ahmadis as leading to hostility against them despite attempts to engage in dialogue and debate. To Tariq, the self-interest of preachers and the status quo of Islamic leadership has led to this. He stated that if Muslims believed in the significant nature of Ghulam Ahmad's claims:

"These clerics whose livelihoods depend on people following them and giving them money... they will lose all of that. And they [Muslims] will be obliged to follow someone else. So, it's about power. It's about authority."

[Tariq, Ahmadi]

He believed that the Ahmadis are the only community to have been selectively declared as non-Muslim by "all 72 other sects of Islam" due to the 'minor but fundamental' theological difference of Ahmadiyya (as well as claiming Ahmadis were 'better in argumentation'). He questioned why scholars hadn't given the same opposition to certain Shia communities that believe that Ali "the cousin of the prophet Muhammad was actually the intended recipient" of prophethood or Barelvi groups who "worship other saints" and do 'idolatry' palm reading.

Predominantly, it is apparent that Ahmadis feel a lack of understanding about their faith was a key factor that had led to continuous following of anti-Ahmadi preachers that have at times called for violence against the community, as will

be explained later regarding Khatme Nabuwwat.

Local politics and councils

All participants appeared to cite institutions as sources of anti-Ahmadi cases. While no issues appeared to be taking place within the national government, there were cases found of anti-Ahmadi discrimination within local councils and Home Office-backed interfaith forums across the country.

In Cardiff, the Ahmadiyya community spoke of issues with ‘Muslim councillors who had opposed the building of their mosque’, claiming concerns over traffic congestion. Nabeel believed that “if it was a Sunni mosque here, that would have gone through the council straightaway [their application]”. The interviewees also said that councillors had claimed that there were ‘enough mosques in Cardiff already’ – despite that according to Ahmadis, they would not be welcomed at other mosques in Cardiff if open about their faith. Accusations of misleading the planning committee chair about the number of Ahmadis in Cardiff’ were denied by a councillor in question in the press, who claimed he was ‘unaware of “frictions”’ in the local Muslim community and believed Ahmadis would be welcomed at any mosque (Bryan 2017b).

It appeared that this wasn’t the first controversy around the Ahmadiyya in Cardiff Council. In 2016, a councillor resigned after what she deemed bullying over her defence of the local Ahmadiyya community (Silk 2016). The ex-councillor explained that a colleague had warned her to not attend an Ahmadi event as they were ‘linked to ISIS’ – something she claimed was unfounded following consultation with police. Upon believing other councillors had been told this and thus were boycotting Ahmadi events, she tabled a motion at a

Labour meeting to state that ‘there was no objection to any of us attending any of their events’. In an interview with a former Council figure who was present, this motion, they said, was met with “aggression” and “personal attacks” from a councillor (of South Asian origin) for ‘interfering in Muslim affairs’ as well as the colleague in question (who had linked Ahmadis to ISIS) “leaving the room” in its process. In Silk’s article, she expressed her dismay at the party for ‘taking a passive stance on the issue’. This event highlights how contentious and emotive the issue has become in local politics.

In other cases of local politics, Larissa referenced a situation in which two Conservative candidates for local elections in Bradford had uploaded a video on Facebook attacking Ahmadis – which she said the party immediately acted upon by suspending the candidates. She spoke of another case in which a Birmingham MEP in a ‘Muslim-heavy area’ lost his seat after being told “we’re not going to support you” by constituents after attending an Ahmadi function. Similarly, a trend of councillors and politicians being fearful of the consequences of aligning with the community were often cited by interviewees – councillors in Glasgow were allegedly telling others to not attend Ahmadi events “because we’re told they’re not Muslim” (Larissa) while a senior Commissioner in Cardiff with ‘good links with the local Muslim community’ had discouraged staff members from going to an Ahmadi event as “they’re outsiders” (Nabeel). In one case, during an elections hustling at Tooting Islamic Centre, a non-Ahmadi parliamentary candidate had to be locked in a room for his own safety after an angry anti-Ahmadi crowd gathered, believing he was the Lib Dem’s Ahmadi candidate local Muslim leaders had told people not to vote for (Balzani 2015, p.60).

Within interfaith councils, Ahmadi exclusion and boycott appeared to be common across the nation, apparently often due to their desires to identify as Muslim. In Waltham Forest, a former counter extremism co-ordinator for the council, Charlotte Littlewood, expressed outrage at the council's 'collusion in sectarianism' when colleagues discouraged her push for equal representation of Ahmadis on the local Faith Forum given that "elections were coming up" and 'Ahmadis were a minority compared to the "influential" Sunni community' (based on an interview with an involved figure). According to her, the Muslim trustees threatened to boycott the forum if it was to recognise them as Muslim to give them equal powers on the forum (Littlewood 2018. From Littlewood's point of view, this episode highlighted issues around fears of appearing "culturally imperialistic" in which some are "floundering over whether to prioritise human rights or the values of minority groups," , as well as issues of the diverse British Muslim community being viewed by councils and authorities as being spoken for by "a single group of unelected "community representatives"".

For Larissa, this could lead towards a harmful precedent and encourage sectarianism within other faiths:

"Because if you don't stop them [those preventing Ahmadis from joining interfaith groups], they'll say one day we don't want Catholics. What are you going to do then?"
[Larissa, politician]

Universities and Isocs

While Hakim – who has been involved in University Islamic Societies (Isocs) for several years – had never seen issues of 'anti-Ahmadism' in University, Abbas, a recent Ahmadi graduate, cited anti-Ahmadi harassment on campuses as becoming "routine". Various cases included "undermining Ahmadi activities on

campus” (such as requesting Ahmadis to remove the word Muslim from an event they were hosting) in Imperial College and refusal to pray alongside an Ahmadi in Kingston University’s prayer room. A more serious case discussed that gained press attention was of a ‘prominent former member of Isoc’ (interview) entering an Ahmadi event in UCL (Porter 2016) distributing leaflets calling for the social boycott and capital punishment of Ahmadis. What all the above cases have in common is that they were all committed by individuals linked to University Islamic societies. According to Tariq, given that the ‘mainstream Muslim community’ is ‘so large’ and “carries a lot of clout”, often getting elected into student leadership positions, ‘it has influence’ when threatening to boycott interfaith events if Ahmadis are included and thus Universities often complied with excluding Ahmadis from events at his University.

According to Sunni Muslim Hakim, Ahmadis would be welcome to join Isoc events whether they be social or religious but could not lead any. Similarly, they were welcome to pray with ‘other Muslims’ without leading.

For Abbas, the issues with Islamic societies and anti-Ahmadiyya sentiments originated from a reliance on cleric. He stated that he had Sunni friends at university who were “perfectly fine with me being an Ahmadi” as “they were independent in their interpretation of Islam”. This aligns with the ‘origins’ subsection detailing how Ahmadis believed a lack of independent research on the community led to hostility.

Asad Shah

When challenged on whether Asad Shah's murder was an example of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination or merely a case of blasphemy, all Ahmadi participants were adamant that his faith was the motivation behind his murder. However, among some non-Ahmadi participants, the element of blasphemy made the case a complex one. Some admitted that they didn't know the full details of the case and weren't aware of his claims to prophethood (Kermani 2016). However, for Rebecca and Nabeel, it appeared suspicious that one of the 'few blasphemy-motivated murders in Britain' involved an Ahmadi:

"There have been plenty of other people who have claimed to be prophets, and they were not killed... So why has a shopkeeper from a small part in Scotland been singled out?"
[Nabeel, co-leader of the Cardiff Ahmadiyya community]

Similarly, Abbas questioned why Shah should have been murdered when "it's a country [the UK] where there's free speech right? There are no blasphemy laws in the UK" – again highlighting a commonly-found observation from interviews that 'Pakistani laws' are being implemented in a diasporic setting in Britain. He also believed this questioning around blasphemy to be a case of "the Muslim community trying to justify his murder".

Abbas' suggested reference to Pakistan's blasphemy laws was echoed by Amanda who stated that "Ahmadis are under threat for 'being blasphemous'" due to the Pakistani penal code.

Blasphemy issues aside, what became apparent was how significant this event was as a concern for the Ahmadis interviewed – "if an Ahmadi shopkeeper can get murdered on British soil where do we seek refuge?" (referring to how a

vast number of Ahmadis have come to the UK as refugees escaping persecution in Pakistan). This concern was echoed in a BBC report by the brother of Shah – “The family don't feel safe anymore living here in Scotland and it has split the family apart” (Kermani 2016). One participant claimed that Shah’s family are now seeking to move abroad – something which would significantly imply that anti-Ahmadism is becoming a growing issue in Britain when looking at the context that first brought the community to the UK.

It is also evident that his murder made the government take anti-Ahmadism seriously, with London co-leader Abbas saying the government previously believed it to only be a Pakistani issue and that ‘it will never happen in Britain’.

Besides the Asad Shah case, the only other evidence found of violence against Ahmadis was a recent Tell MAMA report (2019) of an individual injuring an Ahmadi stall-holder and attempted to assault an elderly volunteer before 'berating' Ahmadis saying they "had no right to deliver this message". Cardiff Ahmadis had stated occasions in which their information stall had been pushed over, yet didn't report harmful incidents.

Cases such as in London and Glasgow show that general hostility towards the Ahmadiyya community does indeed have the potential to progress into violence.

Stockwell Green Mosque and Khatme Nabuwwat

One of the most significantly reported cases of ‘anti-Ahmadism’ in Britain after the Asad Shah murder was that of leaflets authored by a former head of Islamic movement Khatme Nabuwwat allegedly found at Stockwell Green

Mosque (Iqbal and Titheradge 2016). The leaflets called for the deaths of Ahmadis 'if they refuse to convert to mainstream Islam'. The large media attention towards this matter led the Muslim Council of Britain - as an affiliate of the mosque - to launch an investigation that focused on Khatme Nabuwwat's activities in Britain (rather than abroad), but appeared to not cease their affiliation to the mosque (MCB 2016b). This investigation was criticised by both Tariq and writer Kashif Chaudhry (2016), who questioned the sincerity of the selected investigation panel who themselves had been linked to Khatme Nabuwwat and involved in anti-Ahmadi activity. One panellist, Mr Allama Shahid Raza Naeemi, spoke at a Khatme Nabuwat conference in which he forbade Muslims to have any social interaction with Ahmadis, calling it "far worse than being addicted to drugs and alcohol" and that meeting them would lead to an "incurable cancer" in their faith (Miyaa 2013). It must however be noted that these comments were in 1999, and questions around whether a statement 20 years old still reflect the personal opinions of an individual. Despite this, it is apparent from Tariq and Chaudhry (2016) that the public evidence of Naeemi's past claims were sufficient to question the MCB's sincerity in investigating Khatme Nabuwwat's activities.

The outcome of the investigation as well as the Charity's Commission recent investigation will be explained in the next sub-chapter.

Media

When looking through the more recent news articles around anti-Ahmadism in Britain, the media appeared to be a common platform for anti-Ahmadi rhetoric. To Larissa, "one of the biggest drivers for bringing anti Ahmadi feeling to the UK is satellite TV channels from Pakistan where people give out

messages of hate”. In 2019, an Urdu-language, UK-based TV station – Channel 44 – was fined £75,000 by Ofcom for featuring a programme in which a guest “made repeated, serious and unsubstantiated allegations about members of the Ahmadiyya community” (Murphy 2019). The show in question featured a guest that called on people to “rise up” against the community and that until Ahmadis suffered a “bad ending, matters will not approve”. Similarly, in 2018, Derby-based Radio Ikhlas were fined when their presenter described Ahmadis as “dangerous, liars, enemies and hypocrites” (Ofcom 2018). Finally, Takbeer TV were fined £25,000 for broadcasting statements describing the community as “lying monsters” ‘worthy of elimination’. This supports the previous sub-chapter’s finding that language is a large factor in the manifestation of anti-Ahmadism.

In print journalism, a local Luton newspaper apologised and disassociated itself from an advert in its paper by the Ahmadiyya community marking its 125th anniversary having understood it had “caused great offense to members of the Muslim community in Luton” following a meeting with local Muslim leaders (Rabwah Times 2014). It appears that within the media, Ahmadis are both the subject of dehumanising language and are prevented from self-expression.

When an editor of Urdu newspaper the Daily Ausuf (whose European edition is printed in London) was questioned on language deemed as inciting against Ahmadis, he responded that “to refer to them as cursed is very common in our society” (Rana 2017, p.11). A former editor also explained that despite acknowledging a claim in the paper of Ahmadis having a “huge contingent in the Israeli army” to ‘not be true’, that it still “sells in Pakistan” and when stated

that “where there is no rule of law, there is no ethics” regarding regulation of the paper’s claims, referring to Pakistan (p.15).

Social media is also an emerging platform for anti-Ahmadi tweets, sometimes by ‘public Muslim figures’ (Kazi 2016)⁶ such as Dilly Hussain who may not reflect Muslim consensus but has a following, as well as young people (xMiaMoon 2019). While these tweets may reflect the theological views of Muslims, they are conveyed in ways deemed derogatory based on this thesis’ findings given their intentions of ‘dehumanisation’ and ‘mocking’ cited by Hamza as being after the ‘crossed lines from free speech to discrimination’.

In concluding the overall findings for this second aim, it appears that despite differences of opinion over the extent of the issue and subjectivity on what cases were found to be discriminatory, all Ahmadiis spoken to either had experienced hostility or knew of negative experiences faced by peers due to being Ahmadi, with the perpetrators most often being ‘mainstream Muslims’. This demonstrating that anti-Ahmadism is present in the UK, manifesting itself in forms of daily life from local politics to University spaces. What is being done regarding this realisation – or lack thereof – is the final step to understanding what the future of anti-Ahmadi discrimination in Britain is.

Aim C: To what extent are Ahmadiyya and non-Ahmadiyya groups dealing with the manifestations of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination?

In asking participants who should be responsible for countering the discrimination and how it should be tackled, it appeared that there was a

⁶ The tweet in question has since been deleted but the screenshot of which is viewable in Kazi’s work

consensus that it was “everyone’s responsibility” to tackle any “generic societal issue”. However, two non-Ahmadi and non-Muslim participants stated their frustrations around an apparent reluctance and fear of non-Muslims to engage in the matter. For one participant, a fellow council worker telling her “we can’t really interfere in other people’s faiths” felt to her ‘cowardly’:

“Wherever there is racism, prejudice, injustice, I think it’s all of our duty to tackle it”.
[Rebecca, former council worker]

The most significant ‘players’ cited for tackling anti-Ahmadism were the government, ‘mainstream Muslim’ leadership and the Ahmadiyya community, with ‘hate preachers’ signified as another sub-category significant in this topic.

The government and authorities

Overall, it appeared that participants found that the government were taking “the right steps” on the matter and maintain a good level of engagement with the Ahmadiyya community. It appears that further progress is being made in the future with a “first of its kind” (Larissa) report detailing an investigation into Ahmadi persecution worldwide set to launch in Winter 2019. This is largely due to the efforts of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the Ahmadiyya community – a group of MPs who lobby the government on Ahmadi issues at home and abroad. Larissa, linked to the APPG, stated that she had witnessed a good turnout from MPs in debates on the matter and that even ‘mainstream Muslim’ MPs have showed support to the cause. However, she noted that the APPG are not the sole figure to counter anti-Ahmadi discrimination in Britain:

“I think the idea that somehow the APPG can suddenly transform things is unlikely. It plays a part... I mean, we’re trying to do a very difficult thing in Britain. We’re trying to get people of vastly different cultures, religions, persuasions to all live peaceful together, side by side. And there are not many countries in the world that have achieved that”
[Larissa]

While some Ahmadis felt the government hadn’t understood sectarianism enough, Hamza (a Sunni Muslim) disagreed, believing that ‘the government is obsessed with sectarianism amongst Muslims’. He suggested “colonial divide and rule politics” or a ‘European look at religion based on Protestant and Catholic sectarianism’ as being behind this. He believed that authorities have generally been slow to react all issues of equality in a meaningful way and have been “[doing] the document rather than doing the work” with multiple reports being commissioned yet a lack of action in setting targets against discrimination.

Amanda saw the Equality Act as the most effective way for authorities to combat anti-Ahmadism, emphasising a ‘need’ for “Equality Act training for counter extremism co-ordinators and interfaith workers” – whilst Hamza criticised the Act for subsuming race into a wider category, meaning it is combatted less effectively.

Increased Urdu specialists in Ofcom to monitor anti-Ahmadi media was cited by two participants as a solution. A lack of alignment in the definitions of extremism between Ofcom and the Home Office was deemed a current barrier towards tackling anti-Ahmadism in the media. Abbas explained how this non-alignment leaves a void which means that individuals may not be prosecuted by the Home Office for manifesting anti-Ahmadi sentiments despite Ofcom charging the station the individual used as a platform.

Finally, it was apparent that many interviewees saw Pakistan as the source of the manifestation of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Britain, and calls for the British government to raise religious freedom issues around the blasphemy laws in Pakistan as well cutting resources from the International Development fund going into 'breeding grounds of hate' (Malik). However, on this matter, Larissa took a stance that Britain's influence could only go so far and that 'change needs to come from within Pakistan' –

"It's up to Pakistani politicians to challenge radicalization and discrimination. And you can see from the case of Asia Bibi just how tough things are, and how opposition of the blasphemy laws just stoke up aggression, anger, violence, murder."
[Larissa, politician]

It is therefore clear from respondents that the government and the APPG are deemed to be in the prime position to make change. There are however varied perspectives on the extent of influence the government can have and its competence on tackling sectarianism such as anti-Ahmadism.

Muslim leadership

The question around 'bridge-building' to unite Ahmadis with 'mainstream Muslims' was raised to a response that unanimously was agreed on being needed, yet to Ahmadis 'was not being initiated by Muslims' (something denied by a Sunni leader) and to many participants 'is perhaps unlikely to happen' in reality. The idea that living in a 'western society' in Britain was raised as a reason for which Ahmadi participants believed "we've got a duty to understand each other", with Abbas stating a desire of other Muslims acknowledging theological differences but engaging in dialogue to "integrate into wider society".

In response to this accusation of 'following Pakistan', an interviewee linked to the MCW explained that their constitutional view on the finality of prophethood was replicated "across the board among Muslims with incredible uniformity" and that lines needed to be drawn to determine the theological boundaries of Islam "without state interference". He claimed that the MCB's requirements for affiliation meant other Islamic reform movements such as the Nation of Islam were also unable to affiliate as Muslims.

This interviewee stated that the MCW were "absolutely open" to dialogue with Ahmadis. The interviewee however repeatedly claimed that "most Muslims don't know who they are" and that this posed challenges in countering anti-Ahmadism from an MCW/MCB standpoint – "if you were to do a campaign the first response would be "Who are the Ahmadiyyas?" ('including imams'). An explanation put forward for this was that the current leadership of the MCB 'had many 3rd or 4th generation British Muslims' who may be disconnected and unfamiliar with the realities in Pakistan for Ahmadis – with most "not being Pakistani".

When it came to the question of potential affiliation with the MCW, the interviewee identified two barriers – a potential membership schism arising when 'the Ahmadis consider Muslims who don't view Ghulam Ahmad as the Messiah as non-Muslims' and that "Ahmadis also tend to describe Muslims who don't consider them Muslims to be extremists.". The claim of Ahmadis viewing Sunnis/Shias as non-Muslim didn't appear in line with Tariq referring to these groups as 'non-Ahmadi Muslims', however he did believe that Muslims who didn't deem Ahmadis as Muslim were 'extremists'.

The respondent also spoke of how an MCB member was unable to accept an invite to an Ahmadi interfaith event as ‘true Islam’ was stated in the event description. This interviewee stated that “if they were making a sectarian claim within the event, I can’t go and be present because I would essentially be co-opting that message against the others [affiliates]”.

For Ahmadi Malik, the concept of dialogue, whilst important, appeared challenging – “it’s difficult to build bridges when you’ve got an unjust law in Pakistan – you’ve got the blasphemy law hanging over us right” – citing apparent cases of ‘British clerics lobbying for the maintenance of Pakistan’s blasphemy laws’. Ahmadi Tawfiq believed that it shouldn’t be the “community that’s being oppressed” to take on the ‘responsibility’ to solely ‘change things’ but the communities deemed to be “oppressing them” – referencing ‘mainstream Muslims’.

While Sunni Muslim Hakim was supportive of a “peaceful coexistence with them”, he deemed the Ahmadis as a “theological threat” to Muslims and that “we have to be weary of their beliefs creeping into our own beliefs and contaminating our own beliefs”:

“We can't allow them to keep on propagating their beliefs. And we can't physically stop them. Because we're bound by lots of things, including the laws in the country that we live in a country that rightfully as well allows people to express their beliefs in different ways. But what we can do is propagate our own beliefs and make it very clear where we stand on this issue”

[Hakim, Sunni Muslim]

Hakim believed that dialogue was possible while maintaining a degree of distance with the community, yet believed that the MCB didn’t hold

responsibility over the matter as there were more ‘pressing matters’ for them to direct efforts towards.

To conclude, it appeared that the Ahmadis in the sample were not expecting nor requesting affiliation with the MCB, but were seeking ‘greater respect’ and initiative from the ‘mainstream Muslim community’ to engage with the Ahmadiyya community. What exactly constituted a sufficient level of ‘respect’ and ‘recognition’ was not always clear however.

Religious preachers and Khatme Nabuwwat

In tackling anti-Ahmadi ‘hate preachers’, one recommendation put forward by interviewees was that of enacting tougher laws over hate crimes, in that even non-violent, verbal forms of ‘anti-Ahmadi rhetoric’ must be acted upon to ensure it does not escalate. The second applicable recommendation was that of making Friday sermons at mosques public and monitored – which was echoed by most Ahmadis – apparently due to the Ahmadiyya head Caliph’s suggestions on the matter:

“the best way to challenge evil behaviour, especially evil words, is to expose it. To shine a light on it, it immediately dies”

[Tariq]

When challenged on how they may seem like surveillance and why it should be implemented, Tariq responded that a mosque is a public place, not a private home and that “privacy applies in the private sphere”, as well as drawing attention to how “there’s no church that’s being affiliated with a hate organisation killing people for their faith”. The Ahmadis in Cardiff supported

this, highlighting that their mosque sermons are available online to create transparency (Tariq).

A lack of action around the activities of Khatme Nabuwwat was a highlighted factor for Tariq, who stated it was an 'absurdity' that the MCB's investigation only researched KN's activities in the UK given that the organisation was founded in Pakistan and most of its material comes from there. It appeared that the continuing affiliation between the MCB and KN-linked Stockwell Green mosque was of concern to many Ahmadis, who regarded KN as the prime facilitator of 'hateful rhetoric' against the community, which they say inspired Asad Shah's murderer.

It therefore appears that a priority of the community was to call on the government to prevent certain speakers from speaking at KN conferences in Britain as well as for the MCB to disaffiliate from 'problematic' organisations such as KN.

The Ahmadiyya community

To the Ahmadiyya community, outreach and educating people to 'take away misconceptions' as well as their efforts to engage non-Ahmadi Muslims in events as a means for dialogue appeared to be their strategy for countering anti-Ahmadism. However, for Tawfiq, an Ahmadi more distant from the faith community despite still volunteering for some of their events, the Ahmadiyya community faces its own internal issues of bigotry within itself that perhaps is a barrier in further 'unifying' Ahmadis in their campaign against discrimination.

An interesting point mentioned by Tawfiq that explains the harmed relationship between Ahmadis and 'mainstream Muslims' was around Ahmadi attitudes towards their own 'South Asian identity':

"the more they get persecuted in South Asia, the more they try, and rightfully so, they see themselves as British. So they align their allegiance to the British government... they discriminate against non-Ahmadi South Asians because they haven't done anything for us"
[Tawfiq]

This sense of being shunned from the South Asian identity leads towards an "it's not my problem" attitude towards issues facing other South Asian communities as well as a factor behind Ahmadis working as immigration officers in the Home Office – which to Tawfiq is considered "a big no-no in the South Asian community". Although this was an observation not referred to by any other interviewee, it gives interesting insights into the emphasis mentioned by many Ahmadis of feeling pride in living in the 'safety' of Britain as well as wanting to see other Muslims embrace 'the ways of Britain' rather than Pakistan, of which will be discussed in the following discussions chapter.

Conclusion

In concluding the findings chapter, it is apparent that many ideas around ways in which to deal with the manifestation of anti-Ahmadism in Britain have been formulated. The application and feasibility of which were debated concepts. It appeared from most interviewees that 'the cards were on the table' of 'mainstream Muslims' to act on the matter, but that pre-conditions appeared to be required regarding the power dynamic between the two communities both in Britain and abroad. Having first assessed what constituted anti-Ahmadi discrimination in theory, it was easier to then assess and decide which stories and examples provided in the second aim's questions 'met the criteria' to

demonstrate how anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination was manifesting itself in Britain through local politics and 'hate preachers'. Finally, having understood the themes and manifestations of anti-Ahmadism, the final aim of the findings chapter uncovered an analysis of the current state of action on the matter as well as putting forward the suggested actions for the future.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Having compiled the findings from the fieldwork and putting them to perspective based on the literature review, it can be concluded that anti-Ahmadism is an issue in the British Muslim community. The following chapter discusses the findings with consideration of previous academic work on the matter as well as citing how the findings link towards other wider questions on sectarianism, blasphemy and the government. It has been divided into the various common themes that arose from both sources before a conclusion as to how all respective themes answer the aims set out in this thesis.

The significance of terminology

In the same way that terminology has become a common factor of religious discrimination (e.g. using the term 'terrorist' to describe a Muslim), language became an apparent signifier of anti-Ahmadism – with particular tropes and terms appearing to be specific in the context of this community. The two terms in question are that of 'Qadiani' and of 'British agent'. The term Qadiani is relevant to discuss as it appears to be continuously used by communities in Britain – even by those with high positions such as former MCB Sec General and senior advisor Iqbal Sacranie (Balzani 2007, p57). It's description as a 'local phenomena' and "projects an image of disbelief" contributes to an understanding of Mathie's (2016, p.604) theory that "in sectarianism, individuals may deny the authenticity, legitimacy and very faith and claim-to-belief of other sects/streams/movements", citing 'kuffar' or 'shegetz' as examples found within Islam and Judaism. The dissociation of some Ahmadis to the term's pejorative use plays into Bayat's (2010) idea of the 'passive

network' who down-play and emotionally detach from events of discrimination to 'get by' in life, but also adds to the theory that perhaps the down-playing is as a means of resistance, in that these Ahmadis claimed to avoid offence to the term to not "give them what they want".

The 'British agent' trope appeared to be another common figure of speech used against the Ahmadis. This has its roots in the early campaigns against the community in which Ahrar (now associated with KN) called the Ahmadis a "poisonous movement" for their 'loyalty towards the British' during colonial rule. From the interview with Hamza (Sunni), it appeared that this idea still manifests itself today, admitting that some members of the Pakistani community regarded Ahmadis as being a group that "threw us under the bus because they sided with the British" and thus still carrying the association of treachery to this day. Why this appears derogatory is that accusations around disloyalty or of being 'agents' is used in other contexts of pitting members of the public against religious sects as well as having legal implications in Islamic law. The Baha'is' accusations of being 'Zionist agents' is a useful comparison (Milani 2016, p.142), with a clear intention to create hostility towards the community from pro-Palestinian Muslims. Interestingly the 'Zionist trope' was applied to Ahmadis as well in Urdu newspaper Daily Ausuf (despite a former editor admitting 'its falsehood' – Rana 2017, p.15).

As noted in the literature, religious language was a signifier used by anti-Ahmadi groups to push for structural measures against Ahmadis. Similar use of religious language to rally Muslims against Ahmadis in Ahrar's campaign for legal ex-communication is being used by preachers on British-based Urdu TV channels. However, given one Sunni participant's feeling of animosity against

Ahmadi what he feels are beliefs 'insulting to the Prophet', further research into whether some non-violent yet 'offensive' views on Ahmadis propagated on TV actually reflect the feeling Muslims may have on what they view as blasphemous.

'Mainstream Muslim pressure'

Taking into account the discouragement of a council worker to pursue a case of 'anti-Ahmadi marginalisation' on a faith forum by the council as "it's a very tense issue right now and we're on the run up to an election" as well as testimonies of politicians being fearful to engage with the Ahmadis, it appears that the pressures poised by 'mainstream Muslims' (such as threatening to boycott interfaith panels if Ahmadis are identified as Muslim or demanding a Luton newspaper removes an advert by the community) has led to authorities (and print media) boycotting and isolating the Ahmadiyya community themselves. 'Mob mentality' and 'lobby' were terms used by some interviewees to describe these practices. Intimidation was also evident, with one factor being the 'true Islam' billboards' removal being physical threats made against workers putting them up (Faith Matters 2018).

These tactics are often used by 'religious majorities' to exclude minorities from status or presence. In Georgia, members of the Orthodox Church demanded the government to remove Jehovah's Witnesses from the constitution through physical protests involving crosses at the start court (Ochs 2002, p.239), while Ahrar' threats of boycotts are being replicated by 'mainstream Muslims' to barr Ahmadis from identifying as Muslim on faith forums – albeit without violence. Both cases were called for as a means for the respective movements to gain greater control.

Despite a meeting in Luton of councillors and imams reportedly urging a government declaration of Ahmadis as non-Muslim (Rabwah Times 2016), it appears that there aren't widespread calls upon a state-sanctioned denial of Ahmadi self-defining as Muslim.

Leadership in the Muslim community

Given that Qureshi's 2016 work highlights the Muslim Council of Britain as an organisation deemed by some Ahmadis as "facilitating an anti-Ahmadiyya sentiment" (p.51) due to its 'inadequacy of addressing the systemic roots of why the Ahmadiyya are facing increasing discrimination in Britain', it was important to assess Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi views on whether the MCB were 'complicit' in anti-Ahmadism in Britain. While there is evidence that the MCB had participated in 'pressures' by discouraging the media from calling the Ahmadi mosque in Morden a mosque, dubbing it a "Qadiyani centre" (MCB 2003), the language used in their 2016 statement appears more diplomatic and doesn't appear to cite an explicit indication of condoning violence against the community nor denying their Muslim self-identification (it in fact rejects attacks on 'their property or persons' and 'affirms the right of Ahmadis to their freedom of belief') (MCB 2016a). It is noteworthy however that many Ahmadis still objected to this statement (Ahmedi 2016) (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community 2016) for not 'categorically stating that Ahmadi Muslims have the right to identify themselves as Muslim'. Therefore relations with the MCB appear unresolved.

It should be noted that the MCB does not necessarily reflect 'Muslim leadership' nor the consensus of most Muslims, and that to a degree the

concept of 'Muslim leadership' doesn't exist given the 'utterly fragmented' nature of the community (Tariq) or – in more positive terms – 'unique diversity' (Hamza). The Equality Act also noted that religious organisations whose primary purpose isn't commercial can be 'discriminative' on membership if necessary for meeting the organisation's religious aims – therefore the MCB's non-affiliation with Ahmadis is not illegal.

The relationship between scholars, preachers and congregants in relation to anti-Ahmadism was interesting to analyse. As stated in literature – there is a correlation between hostility and actions against the community following religious decrees (Kraince 2009). Ahmadis interviewed stated that lay Muslims' reliance on scholars 'with agendas' was a factor leading to hostility against the community. However due to the legal restrictions and lack of blasphemy laws in Britain – something emphasised by some Pakistani-raised Ahmadis as why they don't see anti-Ahmadism as 'an issue' here, these decrees or lectures haven't often transpired into violence like they do in other nations.

A general minority issue

With an MCW member noting that other reform movements questioning core Islamic tenets such as the Nation of Islam being unable to affiliate and with Khan & Samadder (2013) noting barriers in other Pakistani minorities in gaining flood relief, it should be noted that some cases of anti-Ahmadism may be touching upon wider issues faced by minorities. As mentioned earlier, the Ahmadi's relatively small population led to a lack of response to perceived cases of anti-Ahmadism. A Sunni interviewed also mentioned how alongside the 'offense' caused by the 'true Islam' billboard, the fact that Ahmadis were a minority was a factor in removing it, claiming that it would be more acceptable

if Ahmadis were 'the majority'. These findings play into a 'majority rules' idea that privileges should be prioritised for communities with larger presence. Interestingly, the Sunni also noted that by being a minority, Ahmadis were often well equipped in debating and knowing 'their creed' and 'the other side's creed' to defend themselves.

Denial of self-identification

Putting into public practice a denial of Ahmadi self-identification as Muslim seemed to be the action most highlighted cases of discrimination led to. Cases of this involved prevention of their self-identifying as Muslim on faith forums (at times leading towards 'indirect discrimination' (Equality Act 2010) due to losing out on equal rights on the forums) and in University events (Tahir) through pressures on authorities to exclude Ahmadis.

However, it feels unreasonable to outright state this as demonstrating how anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is manifesting itself in Britain given that enforcing Muslims who may not identify Ahmadis as Muslim to concede that belief in certain cases (such as making them allow Ahmadis to identify as fellow Muslims on faith forums) could be viewed as against religious freedom.

This event as well as the 'true Islam' case highlight the zero-sum game between Ahmadis and 'mainstream Muslims' in both of their attempts to live their lives as self-identified Muslim. Balancing the demands of conflicting religious groups appears to be a dilemma secular Britain will continue to face.

Generational differences in perspectives of discrimination

An interesting trend that appeared among some interviews was that of generational differences in attitudes around discrimination. This became apparent upon comparing the younger generation's general insistence that anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination was an issue in Britain to a greater level than those of elder Ahmadis interviewed, who didn't perceive discrimination to be an issue for them in Britain. This indicates a difference in priorities between generations but also perhaps an appreciation of elder Ahmadis to be living in a country they deemed 'free'.

When posing this to some participants (including Sunnis), it was noted that for general Muslim communities, a shift has occurred in prioritising being 'safe physically' from harm (for the first migrants) towards 'being safe from the "penalties socially and structurally imposed"' upon minorities – thus different understandings of needs are now in place. With a report on sectarianism in Glasgow (NFO 2003, p.28) similarly citing age-based differences in opinion on discrimination – with younger minority respondents more likely to believe they had faced discrimination in employment than elder – explaining differing opinions of communities on discrimination they face based on age would be a useful step for future research. This finding thus helps us understand other forms of discrimination in other ways, such as Islamophobia.

My own explanation for this difference could be that the British-born generation have grown up at a time of legislation (such as the Race Relations Acts of the 60s and 70s and the 2010 Equality Act) in which further legislation and awareness of their rights regarding discrimination – awareness not provided for the elder generation or those growing up abroad.

The question of state-sanctioned definitions of discrimination

With this research being conducted among the backdrop of recent campaigns for governmental acceptance of definitions of anti-Semitism (Torrance 2018) and Islamophobia (Brokenshire 2019), it felt useful to explore whether a state-sanctioned term for 'anti-Ahmadism' would be useful in answering the aim of what is being done to counter the discrimination. Overall, it was suggested from interviews that a definition may not hold enough significance to counter anti-Ahmadi discrimination in Britain given it may only have internal policy implications rather than legal implications, and for Amanda - legislation protecting certain religions are "dangerous" for 'shuts down free speech' on religious beliefs. She further suggested that the Equality Act's inclusion of religiously-motivated hate crimes covered cases of anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination and that proper implementation of it was needed. This finding corresponds towards Hepple and Choudhury's (2002) belief that the subjective nature of defining religion is a barrier for evolving relevant law and policy on religious discrimination. However, it still feels that anti-Ahmadism has its own unique context and to be subsumed into the wider narrative of 'religiously-motivated hate crimes' may prevent effective countering of its own unique prejudice.

A wider issue of blasphemy in Britain:

A topic found from interviews that perhaps has less of a presence within the literature review was the idea that anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination in Britain is part of a wider movement against blasphemy. For one participant, anti-Ahmadism was synonymous with 'anti-blasphemy' as the community were

‘seen as embodiments of blasphemy’ to some South Asian Muslims. However, her use of poll statistics around attitudes of British Muslims towards ‘blasphemy’ was questioned by another participant who stated that often in this debate around blasphemy and British Muslims, ‘half-baked statistics are regurgitated’ and the context of questions are rarely looked at. This formulates a hypothesis that clear, quantifiable evidence needs to be collected around British Muslim attitudes towards blasphemy and the Ahmadis – then explored without leading to overstatements.

Inevitably the Asad Shah murder comes under this topic of blasphemy, given that findings suggest that more was at play than his Ahmadiyya identity. While I agree with Qureshi that the murder was an illustration “of the very real consequences that the politics of sectarianism in Pakistan are now beginning to have around the world” (p.76), the empirical evidence provided implies that Shah’s murder was more about his claims of prophethood rather than his Ahmadi identity. His faith should be taken into context as a potential contributor of the murderer’s resentment of him, but it can be argued that had he wanted to kill an Ahmadi, he needn’t have gone as far as Glasgow. Jeong Ha’s (2017, p.142) idea of ‘righteous indignation’ could apply here in that minority groups may sometimes perceive events as being primarily motivated by their faith due to their already vulnerable nature.

Shah’s family’s ambitions of leaving Britain as well as a participant questioning where Ahmadis can seek refuge if a member has been murdered in the very ‘safe haven’ they took refuge in do signal the ‘game-changer’ Shah’s murder was in questioning the scale to which anti-Ahmadism could go in Britain.

Thus, Qureshi's idea that "the homeland conflict and ideology of hatred" is manifesting itself in Britain appears to hold weight. This is due to many social actions in Britain akin to those of Pakistan's blasphemy laws - 'Mainstream Muslim' refusal to greeting Ahmadis in the Islamic manner 'that is also reserved for non-Muslims' could be viewed as in line with Ordinance 20's rule banning Ahmadis from using the same greeting. Meanwhile, the 2003 statement from the MCB calling on media outlets to not refer to the Ahmadi Baitul Futuh as a 'mosque' as well as 5 Pillars' (2018) titling of it as a 'temple' show laws from the Ordinance (that Ahmadis may not call their place of worship a mosque) being manifested socially in Britain – though it could be argued that they are merely expressing their own theological belief that Ahmadis aren't Muslim. The observations from Ahmadis that they faced less issues from Arab Muslims highlights that the influences of Pakistan's blasphemy laws in the diaspora, but perhaps is also due to a smaller presence of Ahmadis in Arab nations – and thus are deemed 'less a threat' warranting hostility.

Regarding Qureshi's statement, the MCB's decision (published after his thesis) to only look at Khatme Nabuwwat's actions in the UK was counter-productive in investigating anti-Ahmadism, given that Ahmadis deem speakers and materials coming from Pakistan as a threat to their own wellbeing in Britain. While their report into the Stockwell Green investigation claimed that the BBC hadn't provided evidence that harmful KN leaflets were found at the mosque despite a trustee admitting KN were contacted for 'educational purposes', the Charity Commission's (2019) investigation concluded that evidence was found of connections between the mosque and KN Pakistan in the form of address listings on websites. It appears that what happens in homelands abroad does

indeed impact diasporas within Britain – and is an underestimated phenomenon.

It should be noted that investigating ‘Khatme Nabuwwat’ is challenging, as the term refers to the general idea of the finality of prophethood and thus can be used by many organisations. Cases in which ‘KN’ is used to refer to and has evident links with the same KN network in Pakistan cited as calling for violence against Ahmadis must be the only ones analysed (as was highlighted in the Charity Commission’s report).

An example of how this transfers into the diasporic setting was stated by Tariq as the number of first-generation immigrants who in their attachment to the homeland, continue to watch Pakistani TV channels in the UK which “influence attacks” ‘through anti-Ahmadiyya material’.

This ‘emerging phenomenon’ is a new dynamic in diaspora politics and is one that the UK government and authorities may increasingly need to deal with.

The UK authorities’ understanding of sectarianism:

Qureshi’s 2016 thesis stated certain speakers at KN conferences (p.47) as one of the most significant sources of facilitating anti-Ahmadi prejudice in Britain. It appears that three years on from his thesis, that this continues to concern Ahmadis – suggesting inaction on the matter. The calls by Ahmadi leadership to make all mosque sermons public is a credible suggestion for discouraging extremist rhetoric and sectarianism but in my belief won’t be accepted by the wider Muslim population given the current scrutiny of Prevent and perceived surveillance of Muslims, and may increase tensions between the Muslim

community and UK government. Amanda's suggestions that a lack of Urdu specialists at the Home Office to monitor the visa processes of 'hate preachers' and Abbas' concerns over a non-alignment between Ofcom and the Home Office's definitions of extremism highlight contemporary barriers to countering Ahmadi discrimination from an authority level.

Before undertaking this study, the APPG (from Qureshi's work) seemed the most effective element in the Ahmadiyya community's countering of discrimination home and abroad. Despite a clear presence and development, it was clear that their power was limited based on a member's own testimony. It felt that the continuous calls for reform of Pakistan's blasphemy laws – cited by most Ahmadis interviewed as of concern to them – was not likely to go far and that the APPG's ambitions of 'co-existence' was an ambitious one.

However, it is evident that the APPG's presence is symbolic in signifying a structural barrier against anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination. This reinforces Irawan's (2017, p.164) belief that anti-Ahmadi persecution is often due to the absence of "full protection of the government to protect religious minority groups". With the APPG and Equality Act in place, it appears that Britain is not yet a place where anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination can reach the same violent consequences it reaches in Pakistan.

Qureshi's 'paradoxical hidden yet public manner' of anti-Ahmadism continuously appears evident – yet less so since the events of 2016. It appears from my research that a large contributor in this was the 'inaction' and concerns of 'intrusion' for fear of losing popularity among Muslim voters (comparable to those in Bangladesh cited by Khan and Samadder 2013, p.378). Both former council workers interviewed stated concerns shared by colleagues

of “appearing culturally imperialistic” or “insensitive” by engaging in cases deemed as discriminative of Ahmadis by ‘mainstream Muslims’. One interviewee claimed that ‘the instructions from the Home Office’ were that following the case of Ahmadi exclusion from Birmingham’s Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), “we found huge opposition... so it’s better that you don’t involve yourself in this”. As mentioned with the ‘mob mentality’/‘lobby’ section, it appears an emphasis of maintaining good relations with ‘mainstream Muslims’ was a driving force in cases of ‘anti-Ahmadism’ leading to inaction and thus not progressing into public action or awareness.

Indeed, it appears that some British councils have generally failed to understand sectarianism in Britain. Walls and Williams (2003, p.658) cited Glasgow Council race equality officers as failing to understand sectarian divides between Catholics and Protestants due to instructions to only deal with groups of ‘visible difference’ and thus seeing sectarianism in black and white. This ‘black and white’ concept corresponds to Littlewood’s (2018) criticism of her former council’s viewing Muslims as spoken for by a “single group of unelected community representatives”. As with other themes found, this isn’t unique towards the Ahmadi question, but also links to the recently proposed Islamophobia definition, with one interviewee claiming it hadn’t included ‘liberal voices’ or addressed sectarianism.

However, given Hamza’s belief that the government was overly-obsessed with sectarianism among Muslims, it is evident that religion and discrimination indeed are contested concepts. Finding the balance among these discrepancies leads to this thesis’ final chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is indeed an issue in the British Muslim community given that evident indications of its manifestation are found within Weller's (2000) six dimensions of religious discrimination. For every theory of religious discrimination found in the literature review, a case of anti-Ahmadism corresponded. Several difficult questions are raised however.

Given that this thesis has demonstrated how subjective religious discrimination due to religion being a personal experience and social construct open to individual interpretation, the idea of when a phenomenon such as anti-Ahmadism becomes 'an issue' is also subjective. In this research, I conclude that from step 1 of Allport's (1954) scale of discrimination is where it a form is 'an issue'. This is due to the social constructionist nature of my underpinning theory that regards truth as being out of social phenomena – in that even perceivably menial cases are deemed part of 'an issue' if elements of society perceive so. Looking at Allport's scale, it seems that step 3 (out of 5) of 'discrimination' is where Ahmadi have mostly reached. The exclusion from opportunities and services in the form of economic (Shezan) and socio-religious (SACRE) *is* prejudice put into action, signifying 'an issue' as Ahmadi thus face inequality in certain fields other faith groups may not. The further level of physical attack has rarely been met and the final step of extermination is highly unlikely given the UK's Equality Act and APPG.

In defining anti-Ahmadism, the general behaviours associated with anti-Ahmadi acts were reflective of those other minorities face, except that cases were often influenced by the unique theological and historical framing of

Ahmadis. In defining what makes anti-Ahmadism unique it is the use of the term Qadiani, suggestions around treachery and 'alternative loyalty' to other states and the active prevention of their self-identity as Muslims being put into practice. These instances are almost always manifested among 'mainstream Muslim' communities – hence the focus of '... in the British Muslim community' in the research title. If a state-applicable definition of anti-Ahmadism were to be coined, a more in-depth analysis with greater quantitative and qualitative research than this brief snapshot must be undertaken. It must also be stressed that a generalisation is not being made about the whole British Muslim community – only a small minority are deemed as committing anti-Ahmadi discrimination.

Finally, in balancing the 'religious freedom' of 'mainstream Muslims' who may not regard Ahmadis as Muslim with Ahmadis, it does indeed appear to be a zero-sum game of both sides' demanding irreconcilable expressions of faith in a secular nation that seemingly can't provide equally to both in many scenarios. It appears that this theological dead-lock has come from a lack of dialogue between both sides, with conflicting attitudes being put forward between both sides (i.e. around 'who's initiating dialogue') and no current cases of active communication or co-operation being identified across the nation. Thus, the need for bridge-building between the communities appears evident as does the use of legalised concepts such as the Equality Act as the only realistic base to address the competing theological claims of 'religious freedom' in a secular, British landscape.

What this piece of research offers that wasn't provided in the last significant academic work on the matter (Qureshi 2016) is an assessment of the outcomes

of the then on-going investigations into Asad Shah's murder and Stockwell Green Mosque. In conclusion, it appears that Shah's murder – while symbolising a defining moment for the community and unravelling the issues of anti-Ahmadism – was more motivated around blasphemy than it was his Ahmadi identity. Regarding the MCB's investigation into Stockwell Green mosque, it highlighted the general lack of transparency between mosque spaces and the wider public in that contradictory accusations were made on both sides as to the reality of the situation. However, the MCB's choice of investigation panel given the open, historic anti-Ahmadi and pro-KN attitudes of panellists as well as its choice to only assess KN's activities in Britain despite the evidence and theories that its activities in Pakistan influence Muslims in Britain called into question the MCB's competence and sincerity in dealing with an issue they – and others in 'public Muslim leadership' apparently don't want to address in greater detail than a public statement made in 2016 (based on my challenges during fieldwork). While it was fair to expect the statement to clarify their position with no need for further discussion, the evident Ahmadi opposition towards and dissatisfaction with the MCB's attitudes imply that the Ahmadi question will be posed to them again in the future – whether each side are willing to reach a stance on this issue that is mutually endorsed is another question however. This thesis also gives new meanings to Qureshi's ideas of how anti-Ahmadism has remained 'hidden' from wider view given authorities' apparent unwillingness to act. It also puts emphasis on the tactics used or suggested to use to tackle the discrimination, predicting how the future may look.

The thesis did face inevitable limitations. A significant barrier was the lack of academic literature available specific to the British context as well as my

positionality as a non-Urdu speaker who was unable to independently translate various transcripts of KN speeches deemed discriminative. My positionality as a non-Ahmadi and non-Muslim however was perhaps an advantage in approaching the sample for interviews, in that less assumptions about my own motives were made and people perhaps more willing to speak. It however held burdens in the writing process as the possible and unverified expectation of 'appeasing' or providing a narrative one side or the other wanted to hear was felt. The very choice of topic however did hold disadvantages in getting responses from 'mainstream Muslims' approached, potentially fearing ulterior motives to pre-determine their views. My positionality as a theological agnostic of Ahmadiyya and mainstream Islam also helped in not feeling too emotively connected to the topic to take it on objectively or be negatively affected by potential 'anti-Ahmadi' rhetoric or challenging of core Islamic tenets found in the research process.

Finally, various suggestions of future research have been identified. As gaining clarity of the theological differences between Ahmadi and 'mainstream Muslims' was a challenge and required a lot of analytical thinking in attempt to reconcile the competing claims, a theological insight into the matter of 'what constitutes a Muslim' and whether or not the Ahmadi could be considered Muslim would be useful. Secondly, a noted weakness of this thesis is that it gives perhaps too broad a look at the various fields in which anti-Ahmadiyya discrimination is being played out and players involved in its 'tackling'. Perhaps a closer look at one element (such as Universities or the APPG) would be a useful approach. Quantifiable evidence around 'mainstream Muslim' perception of Ahmadi is also recommended, to verify or challenge the MCB's

statement that theirs is in line with most Muslims as well as assessing whether anti-Ahmadi beliefs exist among non-South Asian communities.

Finally, research into the identity of British Ahmadis should be undertaken. Observations were made in this process around their 'attitudes to other South Asians being sour' due to the persecution they faced in Pakistan and perceived 'silence' of others – thus leading them into jobs such as immigration officers in the Home Office – deemed a hostile role towards diasporic communities in Britain. This rejection in the Subcontinent and perception of the UK as a 'safe haven' after Ordinance 20, Ahmadi beliefs on 'loyalty to the nation' and the British agent trope are all good reasons to explore how these factors may have led towards the image today of Ahmadis as loyal British citizens with their poppy appeals and counter-extremism campaigns being praised by the UK government.

A notable anecdote during this research process on Ahmadis which summarised the coping mechanism of the community with a hint of British dry humour was how one interviewee had received a 'kuffar' (disbeliever/infidel) comment on an online video of his during the interview, to which he laughed and stated, "it's part of the daily fun of being Ahmadi".

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