

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

***The Identity Politics of Interfaith Encounters: A Social  
Psychological Analysis***

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## Declaration

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## Abstract

Interfaith dialogue is an identity re-negotiation process at the heart of the current UK context. It facilitates temporary, project-based community building between diverse groups and is materially, symbolically, and psychologically mediated. While there is a rich social psychological literature on identity and intergroup relations, the role the material environment plays is less well explored. This thesis argues that the physical environment is a central component of contextualized identities and thus intergroup relations. Taking a social representations approach to knowledge encounters and dialogue, this thesis explores how the physical environment functions as a channel of communication between groups and affects identity formation and community building. This research is made up of three studies that examine the process of interfaith contact and dialogue. Study I focuses on the actions of students at 27 faith-related events prior to the opening of a University Faith Centre. Findings indicate that students verbally communicated inclusiveness and engaged in physically protective behaviour during interfaith encounters, thus maintaining their faith in-group identities while simultaneously meeting the expectation of participating in interfaith dialogue. Study II examined how university students in 6 focus groups made sense of the concept of interfaith dialogue and of the new Centre as well as how 7 school managers viewed faith on campus. Findings show that interfaith dialogue is a time-intensive process of re-evaluation that is mediated by space and can be hindered by psycho-social processes of identity. Study III focused on the experiences of 18 interfaith practitioners across London, exploring how they make sense of interfaith relations and how they manage interfaith encounters. Findings indicate that interfaith relations are part of a wider social project of re-presenting faith in the UK public sphere, which is pursued via physically and psychologically facilitating dialogical encounters between diverse belief groups in order to maximise social capital. Overall, the findings highlight the interplay between the material, symbolic, and psychological aspects of identity negotiation and community building, and show that interfaith dialogue is a complex process that functions not just at the psycho-social level of contact, but also via the physical environment.

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# 1 Introduction: The Face of Multiculturalism and Faith in the UK

*For all our successes as multi-racial, multi-faith democracy, we have to confront a tragic truth that there are people born and raised in this country who don't really identify with Britain – and who feel little or no attachment to other people here. Indeed, there is a danger in some of our communities that you can go your whole life and have little to do with people from other faiths and backgrounds.*

*~ David Cameron, 20 July 2015*

For many, such as the UK Prime Minister, the UK has entered a post-multicultural era. In UK government policy and elsewhere there has been a withdrawal from the concept of multiculturalism since the 1990's (Nesbitt-Larking, 2014) and a “re-assertion of ideas of nation building, common values and identity, and unitary citizenship” (Kymlicka, 2010, p.98) . This retreat from multiculturalism is focused on immigrant groups, particularly Muslim immigrants (Modood, 2014). In a post-9/11 world “governed by security,” Muslims in the UK and Europe are viewed as threats to national security (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013). Religion and faith have come to the forefront of public debate across the West and notably in the UK since the 7/7 bombings. These events increased the fear of the Muslim ‘other,’ as made evident by the recent governmental concerns about UK nationals travelling to Syria; the ‘Trojan Horse’ schools controversy and the debates over the failure of multiculturalism. The religious ‘other’ is at the heart of this growing apprehension and creates a social challenge that has the potential to alienate minority groups, threaten majority groups and divide communities.

The UK is facing the increasingly complex situation of recovery from the recession in a globalized economy and the blurring of national borders. Amidst this changing global landscape, the UK has been struggling to enact successful multicultural legislation and to incorporate its citizen's increasingly diverse voices into the national public dialogue. With a population comprised of citizens and immigrants from many cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, political ideologies and faiths, it is vital that the UK government brings these diverse voices together in order to make decisions about how to not only interact, but to also live with one another. Creating a



sense of belonging in our ever-changing society requires that both minority and majority voices feel listened to and incorporated in all facets of life (Howarth, Andreouli, & Kessi, 2015). People from diverse backgrounds experience and understand the nature of these relationships differently, and this difference must be accounted for when developing social policies.

The need to integrate these voices is highlighted by a range of tragedies in recent years, such as the high-profile international jihadi Islamist attacks in Paris on the Charlie Hebdo offices and a Jewish deli as well as the café siege in Sydney in 2015. Islamophobic hate crimes in the UK spiked immediately following these events (Littler & Feldman, 2015). According to the London Metropolitan Police, Islamophobic hate crimes have risen 70% in 2015 (Adesina & Marocico, 2015). With all hate crimes on a general upward trend in the UK (Metropolitan Police, n.d.), many minority communities are left feeling vulnerable. It is estimated that half of the mosques in Britain have been attacked since 9/11 (Rawlinson & Gander, 2013). Far-right organizations like the English Defence League (EDL) run on anti-immigration platforms which focus on failed integration. These groups are comprised of largely white British men, who also account for the majority of perpetrators of hate crimes, particularly those targeting Muslims (Copsey, Dack, Littler, & Feldman, 2013). Their actions are often denounced in the press, and yet racist and Islamophobic attacks continue to increase across the UK. This unrest has both an economic toll, in that it requires increased policing activities and restoration of damaged property, and a psychological impact with very real consequences for intergroup relations. The tensions that underlie this unrest suggest a social disconnect between majority group members and the increasing number of minorities viewed as ‘newcomers.’

Social psychological research in the area of intergroup relations has focused on how to improve in- and out-group relations and reduce prejudice. Extensive research has shown that individuals derive their identities from the groups to which they feel they belong (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004), which highlights the importance of creating successful social policies that enhance the sense of belonging for both minority and majority populations. Human beings are social animals that construct their identities via interactions with others. Our sense of place within society, and our sense of self, is derived from how others interact with us (Howarth, 2002a; Mead, 1972).

Arguably, one of the most important components of intergroup relations is meta-knowledge – it's not so much about what 'I' think, but about what I think you think I think (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011). People base their decisions and behaviours on how they think others will react to us (Gillespie, 2008). Knowledge about others comes from interactions with others, or when that is not possible, what is learned about others through members of one's own group (through friends, family, school, the media, the government and so forth) (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Howarth, 2002b; Tropp, 2006). Identity is, essentially, dialogically constructed (Jovchelovitch, 2007). It is, however, not ever complete (Hall, 1992) or stagnant; identities are fluid, constantly changing, and are thus open to resistance and renegotiation (Howarth, 2006).

Intergroup dialogue, in the current global context of cultural exchange, plays an extremely important role in this renegotiation process. With hate crimes on the rise in the UK (Metropolitan Police, n.d.), it is necessary to promote dialogue between the communities of the victims and of the perpetrators in order to call into question misconceptions about both the minority and the majority – as on-going forms of 'everyday reconciliation' (Obradovic & Howarth, *in-press*). It is necessary to understand how all groups perceive themselves and others in order to better make sense of intergroup relations, and thus seek to address intergroup conflict. Public debate and social policy cannot prioritise one 'side', but should, ideally, address the concerns of both the victims of hate crimes and those who commit them. Without understanding the factors influencing the perpetrators, little can be done to enact real and lasting social change.

But how does one tap into the diverse voices that make up the UK cultural landscape? How can one make sense of the lived experiences of so many different perspectives? How can one explore complex, shifting identities and examine how a sense of belonging and community are constructed? Identity politics plays a major roll; researchers have explored how groups think of and relate to one another, of how people become excluded and how they have resisted this exclusion (Howarth, 2004). Psychological research shows that what people say is not always in alignment with what they do (Jodelet, 1991), so it is vital to intergroup relations research to explore dialogue in relation to both talk and practice. As a society the UK may assert that anti-immigrant and Islamophobic behaviour is not acceptable, but what majority group

members actually do when interacting with minorities may not always communicate this ideal. On the other side of the coin, what minority groups are communicating during contact situations in relation to how they perceive the context must be considered. They too may promote difficult intergroup relations and hostile discourses. Gaining a better insight into what is communicated and how all groups perceive it creates the potential for improved self-reflexivity, better understanding of others' perspectives and so improved intergroup relations.

Current psychological research on intergroup relations and dialogue has much to offer policy makers, and is not limited to blatant conflicts like hate crimes, but relates to other contexts where there may be competing perspectives at stake. Studies have been conducted across many such contexts: scientific knowledge vs. lay people's understandings of genetically modified foods (Gaskell, Bauer, Durant, & Allum, 2000), cultural influences on health-related practices (Jovchelovitch & Gervais, 1999), consequences of Muslims' experiences of discrimination in the healthcare system (Mir & Sheikh, 2010), and children's resistance to school exclusion (Howarth, 2004), to name a few. Social scientists are constantly striving to better understand how to facilitate dialogue between groups. Taking stock of this expanding body of knowledge is in the best interest of policy makers, especially within the context of globalization and increased immigration. Researchers and policy makers need to think about how different groups, with competing beliefs and values, can come together to express, discuss, and hopefully understand differences in opinion. Facilitating such encounters is in the best interest of societies attempting to grapple with increasingly diverse and ever-changing populations, as they are a step towards improving intergroup relations. Hence it is important that the research that informs such endeavours and discussions in social policy is as current and detailed as possible. Social psychology has much to offer in this regard.

The area of interfaith relations is a prime example of people working to facilitate dialogue between diverse groups of people. Although the bulk of interfaith research has been dominated by theological and religious studies, there is increasingly more research conducted in the social sciences regarding (non-)belief, relationships between white majority and minority ethnic groups, issues surrounding mistrust and fear, and socio-economic marginalisation. Turning a social psychological lens to the

area of interfaith dialogue can lend unique insight into what facilitates it and reasons why it can so often be difficult. Knowledge about others comes from interactions with them while assumptions about others may come from a lack of interaction. This highlights the necessity of interfaith contact and dialogue in our society. The lessons learned from psychological research can be applied and developed, the findings integrated into our understandings of interfaith dialogue in order to facilitate more inclusive public debates. Engaging all stakeholders creates opportunities to promote perspective-taking and build reflexivity within and between groups (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2013). And by increasing each group's meta-knowledge of others, researchers and policy makers can come closer to taking meaningful action on social issues. Exploring potential avenues for improving intergroup relations in a diverse society is not only important, it is essential for creating successful social policies. Hopefully this thesis provides a small step in this direction.

Specifically, this thesis aims to develop a social psychological framework for understanding how group identities, inter-group contact, and material environmental or space related factors influence decision-making within complex, stigmatizing, multicultural interfaith contexts. The main questions this research aims to answer are:

- 1) What conditions (material, symbolic, psychological) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - a. What might open up dialogue?
  - b. What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith groups in relation to multicultural contact situations?

This project begins with a longitudinal university-based case study in order to address these questions in a very detailed way, examining day-to-day activities on a small,

contained scale, examined in two qualitative studies (one through detailed participant observation, the other through interviews and focus groups). Then the analytic gaze moves out from the university context, to examine inter-faith activities in a broader context – involving inter-faith practitioners and experts from across London in the third and final study. This lends some insight into the general (London) and particular (university) contexts.

The second chapter of the thesis will review the social psychological literature that lays the theoretical foundation for a Social Representations approach that connects social representations theory, dialogue, social identity, contact and decision-making. The third chapter gives a detailed discussion of the thesis's methodological framework as well as analysis procedures. Chapters Four and Five detail the findings from the case study. Chapter Four covers the participant observation phase, while Chapter Five reports the findings from interviews conducted with university authority figures and focus groups conducted with students. Chapter Six will discuss the findings from interviews conducted with interfaith practitioners working across London, examining the extent to which the case study findings resonate with other interfaith contexts. This thesis will close with Chapter Seven, a discussion linking the findings from the three studies with the research question, the contribution to the social psychological literature, the limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research. But, before moving into the study as such, a detailed description of the case study and London context will be given.

## **1.1 Introduction to The LSE context**

A college campus is a place where societal issues and debates play out on a micro scale. The London School of Economics (LSE) is a model example of this phenomenon. It has a student population of roughly 9,500 full-time students hailing from 140 different countries, with its staff and students speaking over 100 different languages (London School of Economics, n.d.). The incredibly diverse campus is reflective of the increasingly diverse UK and particularly London population, and as such, debates on campus reflect many of the public debates that produce headlines in

London and beyond. During the course of data collection, there were 6 active official ‘faith’ societies on campus: Catholic, Christian Union, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Sikh/Punjab<sup>1</sup>. There is also an official Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist (ASH) society. Further details regarding these societies are given in Chapter 3.

In the past several years, the university faith community as a whole has been at the centre of many of the campus debates. The university’s interfaith relations have a tumultuous history, with contentious issues ranging from the macro to the micro, but the 2011-2012 academic year was particularly trying for many of the faith societies on campus. Members from different societies have had their identities threatened on multiple levels: religious, cultural, and racial. Incidents included tension over political satire involving religious figures, debating the balance between hate speech and freedom of speech<sup>2</sup>, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic drinking games<sup>3</sup>, political protests and counter-protests involving physical violence<sup>4</sup>, and the introduction of what some have unofficially labelled a “blasphemy law” by the Student Union<sup>5</sup>, which is intended to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on campus. The university Chaplaincy, in an attempt to grapple with the increasingly complex and heated situation, has been promoting interfaith dialogue on campus via the university Interfaith Forum for roughly 7 years<sup>6</sup>. The Forum is comprised of student representatives from the registered student faith groups who meet to discuss issues on campus and hold interfaith events throughout the school year.

The university faith community is not only in a state of crisis, but also in a process of transition. A completely revamped and extended Student Centre, which unofficially opened in the summer of 2014, houses the new Faith Centre that is a space for spiritual meetings, dialogue and reflection for the entire campus community. The Interfaith Forum has convened to discuss the rules regarding the use of the centre and is

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<sup>1</sup> There is a registered Agape Society, but the society was not active during the course of fieldwork. An 8<sup>th</sup>, Student Christian Movement, has since been added in 2015.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/sanctimonious-little-prigs-richard-dawkins-wades-into-row-as-lse-atheist-society-banned-from-wearing-satirical-jesus-and-prophet-mohamed-tshirts-8864618.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2786173/Banned-London-School-Economics-rugby-players-dressed-Guantanamo-Bay-detainees-Muslim-students-broke-Jewish-boy-s-nose-Nazi-themed-drinking-game.html>

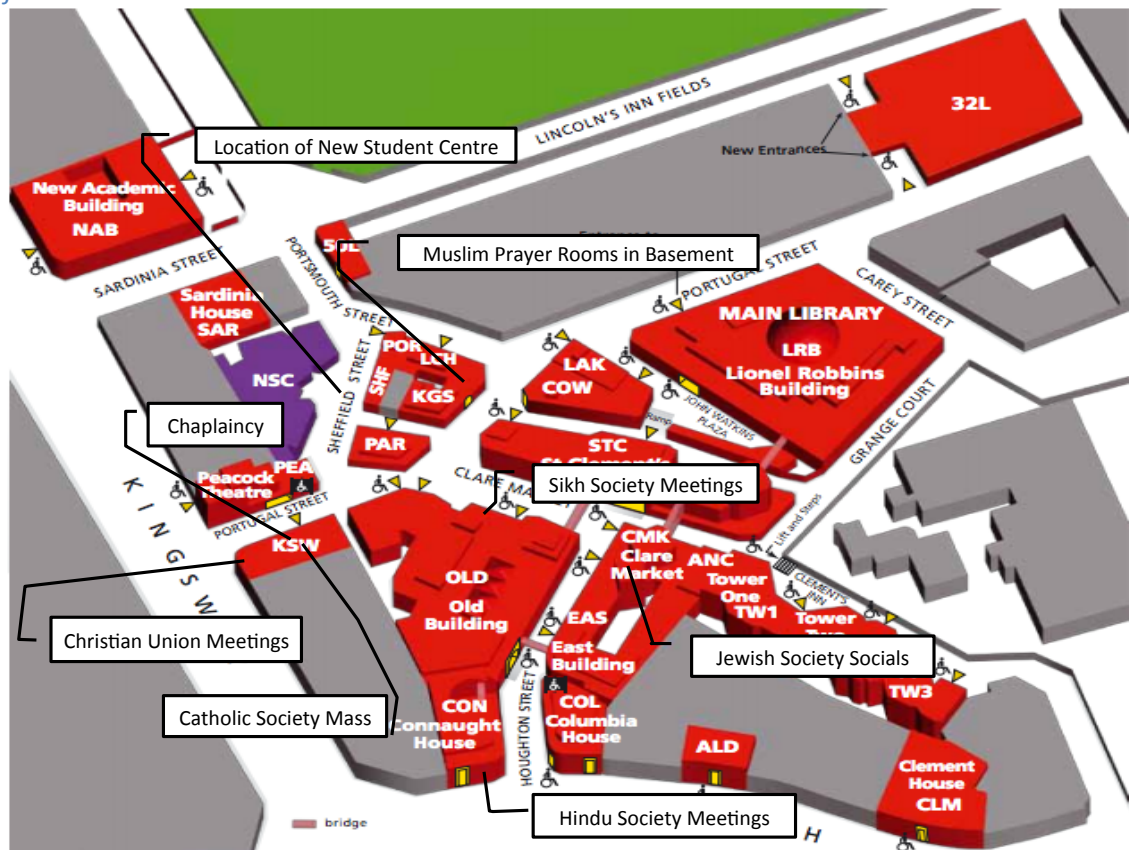
<sup>4</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/02/21/lse-students-fight-over-palestine-protest\\_n\\_1290124.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/02/21/lse-students-fight-over-palestine-protest_n_1290124.html)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2012/01/london-school-of-economics-brings-back-blasphemy>

<sup>6</sup> The LSE Chaplain was unsure of the year that the Interfaith Forum was established, but believes it to have been founded “several years” before he took up his post in 2010.

based in the student centre<sup>7</sup>. Prior to its official opening in October 2014, the university faith societies utilized different spaces on campus, self-selecting where they met for meetings and events. Image 1.1. is a map of the locations where student faith societies met on campus prior to the opening of the Faith Centre.

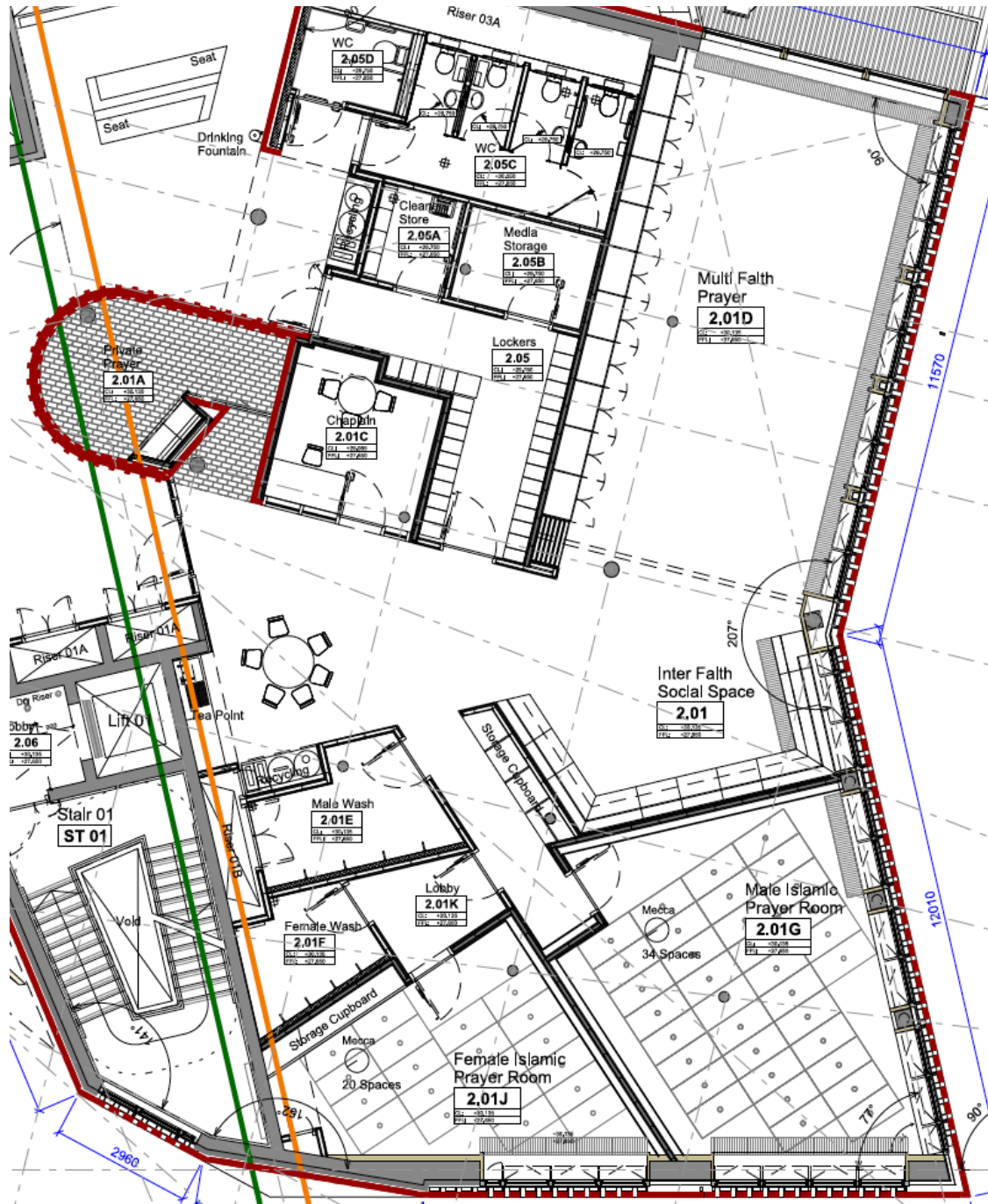
*Image 1.1. LSE campus map indicating regular meeting locations of registered faith societies*



The new Faith Centre, centrally located in the new Student Centre, is now used for the student faith societies' weekly meetings, along with other events. The move to this central space required that these groups interact more frequently. Image 1.2. is the floor plan of the new Faith Centre, indicating the locations of the Chaplain's office, the interfaith social space, a multi-purpose multi-faith space, and the male and female Muslim prayer rooms.

<sup>7</sup> At this meeting, held 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013, it was made apparent to the researcher that none of the faith society presidents present at the Interfaith Forum meeting had been included in the decision-making process regarding the center design.

Image 1.2. The LSE faith centre floor plan



This increased contact, combined with increasingly turbulent religious and political debates, made this an ideal case study for group identity research involving intergroup relations and identities. Not only are diverse groups with some difficult histories required to interact, they are also required to make decisions together on how to navigate this new environment. These groups are undertaking this effort with no



roadmap, no intervention plan; they are engaging in, on a smaller scale, the same negotiation process currently underway across UK society. People in a range of communities, as well as policy-makers, are working on how best to interact and relate in diverse contexts – where, again, there is often a history of conflict. The university faith community is a mirror of this struggle: multiple, diverse voices coming together to make decisions about how to interact and live with one another in one shared, physical space.

Most recently, The LSE has been dealing with the Coalition government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which has impacted school policy as can be seen in the official LSE email from 18 September 2015, shown below.

*Image 1.3. LSE response to 'Prevent' duty guidance for universities – LSE email*  
**NEW "PREVENT" DUTY GUIDANCE FOR UNIVERSITIES: LSE RESPONSE**

LSEmail;  
Fri 18/09/2015 17:25

**NEW "PREVENT" DUTY GUIDANCE FOR UNIVERSITIES: LSE RESPONSE**

Prevent is one of the strands of the government's CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy. Its purpose is to prevent terrorism. The Coalition government reaffirmed and updated Prevent in 2011, and earlier this year Parliament passed the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. As a result of that Act, new duties come into force for the further and higher education sectors from today, 18 September. This message is to let the LSE community know how the School plans to approach the implementation of the new duties.

The Act and its accompanying statutory guidance have been controversial, especially in respect of universities. LSE has actively contributed to sector efforts to improve the guidance. These efforts have had considerable success but some sensitive issues remain.

Essentially, from today, we are required to assess the risk of our students being drawn into terrorism and to set in place policies and procedures to mitigate that risk. We are required to pay particular attention to external speakers and events on campus, staff training, student welfare and pastoral care and IT policies. However, one of the improvements won has been a formal acceptance in the guidance that we must balance our Prevent duties against our legal duties in respect of ensuring freedom of speech and academic freedom and protecting student and staff welfare.

The School set up a group to oversee our response to Prevent early in 2015. The group recommended, and it was agreed, that it would be wrong to take any action in accordance with the government's wishes in respect of Prevent unless and until it became a legal obligation on us to do so. That decision has been respected.

Now, however, the School needs to take action on a number of fronts. Primarily this will be to confirm our expectation that our existing policies and procedures will be sufficient to allow us to meet our new obligations. However we shall also provide or facilitate training for a number of staff who may find it of most use, and make training available to other staff if they wish. There will also be a certain amount of formal risk-assessment and reporting involved.

**I recognise that the new legislation has sensitive aspects. I wish to assure the whole School community that:**

- **no system of active monitoring students or their activities in the context of Prevent will be established; and**
- **no referral of any individual in this context outside LSE will be made without the recommendation of the Prevent group and the express approval of the Director or the Provost as deputy. Approval will only be given in cases of serious and well-founded concern.**

While The LSE reassures that there is “no system of active monitoring [of] students or their activities in the context of Prevent,” it is still a large part of The LSE public debate. Surveillance on campus, as will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5, is very much on the minds of Muslim students and impacts their behaviour.

## 1.2 Introduction to the London context

Interfaith dialogue has been part of the public debate in London since 1901 when 21 religious leaders were brought together by the “International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers,” one of the first recorded examples of an interfaith organization operating in Britain (Boehle, 2001). Interfaith relations and awareness were further developed by The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which hosted a conference in 1924 on the topic of ‘Religions of Empire,’ examining the range of faiths that practiced under British sovereignty via academics, missionaries, and practitioners (Ahmed, 2015). Interfaith groups and organizations in London and the wider UK continued to grow, with several national organizations established around the Second World War (i.e., the World Congress of Faiths in 1936 and Council of Christians and Jews in 1942) (ibid). Small-scale interfaith organizations continued to pop up across the UK, growing to around 30 in the 1980’s and came together via the establishment of the Interfaith Network in 1987 (Pearce, 2012). The 2000’s saw a dramatic increase in the number of UK interfaith groups, with just under 100 in existence in 2000, growing to roughly 240 in 2010 (ibid). This growth has been linked to social crises like the 2001 ‘race riots’ in the north of England, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the 7/7 bombings in 2005 (Ahmed, 2015). Historically, interfaith relations in the UK have been mobilised as a response to the violence and instability resulting from conflict.

The 2000’s also saw the emergence of the cohesion agenda in the UK, with the concept of community cohesion emerging after the 2001 riots in the north of England (*Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, 2001). The report gave rise to the concept of ‘parallel lives,’ highlighting how some communities were polarised and segregated from each other, and called for governmental measures to address prejudices and to promote cohesion and a positive view of diversity (ibid). In

2002 the government published a set of practical guidelines for promoting community cohesion, spearheaded by the Local Government Agency, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, The Home Office, The Commission for Racial Equality, and the Inter Faith Network (*Guidance on Community Cohesion*, 2002). This was followed by the release of a community action guide in 2004 (*Community Cohesion - An Action Guide*, 2004), with the intention of providing local community leaders with “a strategic overview and framework for promoting community cohesion” (p.5). The cohesion agenda shifted focus in 2007 after the 7/7 terrorist bombings in London, turning the governmental focus to countering extremism within Muslim communities (Cantle, n.d.; *Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds*, 2007). In doing so, Muslims as a whole became linked with ‘extremism’ and ‘terrorism’ in the public debate, with discussions regarding integration becoming wholly connected with Muslim communities (Cantle, n.d.), bringing faith to the fore in the UK public sphere. The term ‘cohesion’ was replaced with ‘integration’ in 2012 (*Creating the conditions for integration*, 2012) and spending on community-based initiatives was reduced (Cantle, n.d.).

A recent report on social integration across the UK has found that, while London is an incredibly diverse city, “Londoners are less integrated by social grade, ethnicity and age than the rest of Britain,” even when taking the number of potential intergroup interactions into account (Social Integration Commission, 2013, p.27). This is especially true for white Londoners. Because London is more ethnically and economically diverse than the rest of the UK, this finding highlights that social integration will not automatically occur as the country becomes more diverse (ibid). So, while diversity has increased, ‘integration’ or ‘cohesion’ has stagnated in London and government spending on community-based cohesion initiatives has been reduced. This reduction in spending is particularly poignant for interfaith practitioners working in socio-economically deprived London boroughs as it has a direct impact on their work, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

While government spending on social initiatives is decreasing across the board due to austerity measures, public concerns regarding the ‘integration’ of Muslim communities in Britain is rising. ISIS jihadi ‘groomers’ and the radicalization of young

British Muslims frequent UK headlines<sup>8910</sup>. After several female students from Tower Hamlets travelled to Syria to join ISIS<sup>11</sup>, the public debate is now focusing more on the role of schools in protecting against extremism, with security and monitoring procedures increasing<sup>12</sup> and universities like The LSE being required to monitor student behaviour. MI5 Director General Andrew Parker has stated that the UK is facing “its most serious terrorism threat since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks” and that “Britain’s security agencies need greater powers to deal with a growing terrorism threat” (Holden, 2015). David Cameron, who has publicly lamented the failure of multiculturalism, is working on plans to increase government’s surveillance capabilities (ibid). While privacy advocates and human rights groups object to these developments (ibid), they nonetheless contribute to a public atmosphere in which Muslims are otherised and securitised (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013). Interfaith dialogue, in this context, becomes ever more important.

The following chapter will outline the social psychological literature that underpins the Social Representations approach of this thesis, starting with the relevance of faith to identity. Social Representations Theory and representational projects are connected to interfaith work and the importance of dialogicality. Communication is essential to dialogical encounters and the development of dialogical relationships, which will be connected to intergroup contact context and space. This is followed by a discussion of the Social Identity Theory and Contact Hypothesis literature and outlines a Social Representations approach to intergroup relations and identity politics. The chapter ends by exploring the role of decision-making in intergroup relations and possibilities for social change.

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<sup>8</sup> Coverage of reaction of radicalised girl from London to Tunisia beach attacks - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-schoolgirl-amira-abase-who-fled-london-to-join-terrorists-in-syria-mocks-victims-of-tunisia-massacre-10366924.html>

<sup>9</sup> For example – girl removed from home due to concerns over radicalisation - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/schoolgirl-fully-radicalised-by-isis-propaganda-must-be-taken-away-from-deceitful-parents-judge-rules-10466815.html>

<sup>10</sup> Guardian profiles of Britons who have joined ISIS - <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/07/reyaad-khan-junaaid-hussain-profiles-isis-britons-syria>

<sup>11</sup> Tower Hamlets school inspections after students run away to Syria - <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jun/19/snap-ofsted-inspections-tower-hamlets-schools-syria-runaway-fears>

<sup>12</sup> For example see - <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jun/10/schools-trial-anti-radicalisation-software-pupils-internet>

## **2 Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As discussed in Chapter 1, identity and intergroup relations and dialogue are the central concerns of this project. This chapter will lay the foundation for this research by reviewing the relevant social psychological literature, with emphasis on the Social Representations framework through which this research is approached. First the connections between identity and faith will be examined, followed by a discussion of the social representational project of interfaith relations. The second section of this chapter will examine of the role of communication in dialogical/non-dialogical intergroup relations. Communication is paramount to representational projects. Communication, however, is not limited to the verbal realm, but is also physically enacted, so the role of the material environment must also be addressed. This discussion will be followed by an exploration of the social identity tradition, a fruitful lens through which to examine intergroup contact and conflict, connecting it to the social representations tradition via the concepts of identity and community building. The chapter will conclude with an examination of further relevant literature on identity politics, intergroup decision-making processes surrounding contact, and the process of social change.

### **2.2 Identity and Faith**

#### **2.2.1 Faith as a central component to identity**

Religion, for its adherents, “is inseparable from [their] social identity” (Sartawi, 2011; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2011). Faith group membership can be central to a believer’s individual self-concept (Keeley, 2007; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Ysseldyk et al., 2011) and can strengthen their group bonds (Cameron, 2004). Extensive research has linked religious identity and positive psychological health (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009; Mossakowski, 2003). Religious identity has also been shown to function as a coping mechanism for social exclusion (Aydin, Fischer, & Frey, 2010; Muldoon, Schmid, & Downes, 2009) as well as one’s sense of safety (Muldoon, Trew, Todd, Rougier, & McLaughlin, 2007). This is because religion as a system of beliefs gives meaning to

individuals' experiences, as is often viewed as truth. Religion evokes both epistemological beliefs (what can be known) and ontological beliefs (what can exist) – it is, essentially an all-encompassing claim to truth (Ysseldyk et al., 2011). But, it is this assumption that can also lead to in-group glorification and out-group hostility (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006).

Past research on religion and intergroup contact has tended to focus on conflict (Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004; Cairns, Kenworthy, Campbell, & Hewstone, 2006; Muldoon et al., 2007; Schmid et al., 2010; Shechtman & Tanus, 2006). Encountering contrasting belief systems has the potential to make a group feel inferior or threatened (Mikkelsen & Hesse, 2009). Religion is so often tied to the concept of conflict, that it is regularly regarded as a taboo or conflict-inducing topic that is best avoided in general discussions and interactions (Baxter & Wilmot, 1985; Dailey & Palomares, 2004). The importance of religion to adherents' social identities is one reason for the 'taboo' nature of the topic, as a threat to one's religious identity has the potential to be viewed as a threat to one's whole self and so particularly hostile and stigmatising. While religious identity threat can be viewed as acutely menacing, paradoxically religious beliefs have also been shown to actually promote neutral to positive feelings towards out-groups when identity threats occur (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Wellman & Tokuno, 2004). This seeming contradiction highlights a need to explore "the everyday social practices that support and sustain particular self-definitions," (Hopkins, 2008, p.364) as participants' own understanding of intergroup contact impacts the ways in which they behave towards members of other groups – opening up or closing down possibilities for exchange, understanding and conviviality. Hence it is important to carefully examine the connections between identity, faith, and stigma.

### **2.2.2 Identity, faith, and stigma**

Faith, an integral part of adherents' identity, can also be the source of social stigma. Goffman (1963) introduced the concept of stigma, defining it as a social attribute "that is deeply discrediting," and which needs to be understood through "a language of relationships" (p.13). The discrediting nature of a stigma reduces a person in the eyes of 'normal' society; the stigmatized individual is not seen as a whole person, but rather as "a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p.12). Goffman

(1963) identifies three types of stigma: 1) physical irregularities, 2) character irregularities and 3) that of race, nation, or religion. It is this final form of stigma that is of interest for this study.

As with all individuals' identities, the stigmatized individual's identity is dialogically constructed – one must learn what is normal in order to understand that one is not normal. Through socialization, a stigmatized individual learns and integrates the 'normal' viewpoint, and also learns the consequences of possessing his/her stigmatized attribute (Goffman, 1963; Howarth, 2002b). There cannot be one without the other (Howarth, Nicholson, & Whitney, 2012); there is no normal without abnormal. Society constructs a "stigma theory...[in order] to explain [the stigmatized individual's] inferiority and account for the danger that he represents" (Goffman, 1963, p.15). In other words, a social representation of stigma is constructed over time, and can become institutionalized via the objectification of their socially constructed meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Jovchelovitch, 2007), and imposed on individuals possessing the stigmatized attribute (Howarth, 2002). These 'marked' individuals must live a life of uncertainty, always unsure whether they will be accepted or rejected (Goffman, 1963).

Religion, while often less visually tangible than a stigma such as race, can still socially mark individuals as 'other'. Much of the research focusing on stigma and religion has focused on religion or faith as a coping mechanism for stigmas (Blaine & Crocker, 1995; Brega & Coleman, 1999; Campbell, Skovdal, & Gibbs, 2011; Cinnirella & Loewenthal, 1999; Halter, 2004). Other studies have examined the impact religion has on (other) stigmas, for example, how gay and lesbian individuals negotiate their sexual orientation in regards to their religion (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010; Lalich & McLaren, 2010; Yip, 1997).

Another extensive body of research has focused on the stigmatization of Muslims in western cultures (Marvasti, 2005; Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Wagner, Ragini, Permanadeli, & Howarth, 2012). In contemporary Western societies, the stigmatization of Islam marks Muslims as 'other' (Amer & Howarth, n.d.). The veil, imbued with multiple social meanings (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Wagner, Ragini, Permanadeli, & Howarth, 2012), is one such visual demarcation of stigma. Muslims are often marked as outsiders in Western communities, influencing how Muslims socially position

themselves and enact their identities (Naber, 2000). This othering has been linked to recent waves of immigration, highlighting the immigrant's body as a location of stigma, enacted through both race and religious dress (Vassenden & Andersson, 2011). Many Muslims' religious dress limits their ability to control how visible her/his stigma is to others (Amer & Howarth, n.d.). They serve as highly recognizable visual cues which easily and clearly identify the wearer as a member of the stigmatized group (Tajfel, 1969). However, in some contexts the veil can be an assertive symbol of agency and/or defiance of others' stigmatised expectations (Wagner et al., 2012).

A common theme throughout the literature on stigma is this focus on the importance of context. According to Goffman (1963), "an attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as thing in itself" (p. 13). Stigmas are contextually experienced and are thus contextually bound. Howarth, Nicholson, and Whitney (2012) point out that instead of just the individual's perception, the role the social context plays in the process of stigmatization is key. They reference both Pettigrew's (1959) classic work regarding regional differences in racial prejudice in the United States and Hammack's (2011) exploration of the potential for Palestinian and Israeli reconciliation, arguing that stigmatized identities can be deeply embedded within a particular social location, giving the context meaning and also consequence. Hence negatively stereotyped individuals feel stigmatized in some situations, but not in others – stigma is thereby "inextricably connected to the social context and to one's relationship to others in that context" (Brown, 1998, p.164). The other social actors play a role in stigmatization – as the meaning of the stigma is co-constructed between the stigmatized and the stigmatizer. The idea that stigma is co-constructed is an important one and one that will be returned to in the empirical chapters below, where it will be shown that stigma is socially constructed and is a focal point in the struggle over identity. One theory that deals with the connections between stigma and identity is Social Representations Theory.

### **2.3 Social Representations and the Project of Interfaith/Belief**

Social Representations Theory (SRT) was developed by Serge Moscovici, who developed Durkheim's concept of collective representations and updated it to reflect



the changing nature of modern societies (Howarth, 2001; Moscovici, 1976) . Processes of de-traditionalization opened the public sphere up to contestation, as different knowledges come into contact with each other and compete over public meaning (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Representations are no longer collective or relatively stable, as they were for Durkheim, but instead are social, dynamic and unrestricted by physiological and geographical boundaries. Importantly, Moscovici (1988) defines social representations as “ways of world making” (p. 231), highlighting their *constitutive* function. These ‘ways of world making’ constitute how people make sense of and experience the world and how knowledge is socially created. SRT is grounded in a social constructivist perspective, as it starts from an assertion that all knowledge is culturally and historically situated (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995). Common sense, or common knowledge is at the heart of this knowledge, and is at the centre of the SRT. The importance of such knowledge cannot be overlooked or under-estimated. Every member of society participates in some way in the creation, maintenance, and dissemination of common sense knowledge – from elite social players to those who feel marginalised. It constitutes the essence of our everyday lives; it is the knowledge that each of us shares with the other individuals we encounter over the course of our everyday lives. This everyday knowledge is dialogically produced through social interaction and is reflexive of not only our identities, but also our historical, sociocultural context (Wagner et al., 1999). We make sense of new phenomenon by placing them in existing knowledge structures. New social representations are “anchored in former ones,” making the unfamiliar familiar (Moscovici, 1988), and are thus embedded in society’s historical knowledge system (Orr, 2007).

While historically situated, social representations are also future-oriented, the ‘projects’ that they produce are functionally connected to the goals and interests of actors (M. W. Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). A shared project or goal is “a profound basis for [building a] community,” as it creates interdependence between previously separate groups of people (Howarth, Cornish, & Gillespie, 2015, p.186). Such a representational project affects people’s attempts to participate in, exclude or include different systems of knowledge (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014). To engage with the other, to include or exclude them, requires communication between two or more representational systems that hold “different subjective, intersubjective and objective worlds,” which means that groups’ identities, culture, and ways of life can be at stake, up for contestation when

encountering other groups (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p.129). People can acknowledge the other, or they can dismiss or exclude the other; they can engage in dialogue, or they can shut it down.

### **2.3.1 Dialogical and non-dialogical encounters**

Recognition is at the heart of intergroup encounters – when groups take each other's perspectives into account and recognize the other's way of knowing as legitimate, they are engaging in a *dialogical* encounter (Jovchelovitch, 2007, 2008; Markova, 2003). A dialogical encounter is not about the transition of knowledge, but about the transformation of knowledge. When one recognizes the legitimacy of the other, one must engage with the perspective of the other. Both must negotiate each other and come to understand each other, and in consequence, both groups' knowledge is transformed (Jovchelovitch, 2007). *Non-dialogical* encounters, on the other hand, are defined via a lack of mutual recognition (ibid). The perspective of one or more knowledge systems is denied and recognition remains the privilege of just one way of knowing. In doing so, the other's legitimacy is denied and the dominating group holds to a belief and norm that theirs is the superior form of knowledge (Howarth, Foster, & Dorrer, 2004; Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2013; Jovchelovitch, 2007). One's ability to act is thereby restricted by other's (non-)recognition of that action (Farr & Rommetveit, 1995; Howarth, Andreouli, & Kessi, 2015). This non-recognition results in short-term solutions to intergroup relations that are ineffective in the long term and ultimately prevent knowledge expansion (Jovchelovitch, 2008). Communication practices are at the heart of understanding the ways in which these encounters become dialogical or non-dialogical.

## **2.4 Communication and Dialogical Encounters**

### **2.4.1 The Role of Communication in Dialogical Encounters**

Communication plays a fundamental role in the study of social representations (Markova, 2003). Others' social representation of a group is central to the development of the group's identity; dialogue between groups is the means by which intergroup boundaries are negotiated. This requires communication strategies. Jovchelovitch (2007) argues that we need participatory dialogues through which mutual

understanding between groups, between different ways of knowing, can be developed. But to do so, somewhat ideally, requires that groups recognize any asymmetries in power and status and work through them. All people involved in intergroup encounters are potential stakeholders; each person can gain and develop knowledge. Jovchelovitch, drawing on the work of Freire (1970), states that all knowledges are resources that are enriched through communication processes, and over time can create new ways of knowing and new representations. This ideal dialogic encounter, however, requires a safe space in which to establish communication.

#### **2.4.2 The importance of space/physical environment when examining communication**

Jovchelovitch states that communication is “the path for the development of personal, social and material resources” (2008, p.34). But communication is not only verbal exchanges, it is also physically enacted movements within space and spatial structuring which both function as speech acts, conveying meaning to others (De Certeau, 1984; Tonkiss, 2006). Spaces and the actions that take place within them are not simply things to be read, but are a consciousness in and of themselves (Barthes, 1997). People communicate via space on a daily basis through ‘spatial tactics’, which function like an act of speech conveying meaning to others by informing, elaborating or disrupting the spatial order, through the common routines of moving through and dwelling in space (De Certeau, 1984; Tonkiss, 2006). Spaces themselves convey meaning, and even minor variations in the ways in which people occupy it communicates information about the social relations between people and between groups (Dixon, 2001; Lahlou, 2008).

##### **2.4.2.1 Space and Social Representations**

According to Goffman (1963), identity is a performance, acted out and maintained in specific contexts. It is physically performed in a material environment, and should thus be examined in relation to all facets of the situated context, including what the physical, material environment affords, and what acts individuals think the environment affords. Social representations are a type of enacted knowledge (Elcherath et al., 2011); they cannot be understood solely through what people say, as this does not always match up to what people actually do (Howarth, 2006; Jodelet, 1991). Enactment

involves not just what people do, but also the environmental and institutional contextual meanings in which that behaviour takes place (Lahlou, 2011; 2008). Interfaith/inter-belief encounters involve different belief groups occupying the same space, requiring different belief knowledge systems to come together. One space thus becomes many places and accommodates potentially competing definitions of what the space means and what can and cannot be done in the space.

Installation Theory, introduced by Lahlou (Lahlou, 2008; 2011), provides a broad, three-level framework for understanding how “socio-technical systems” evolve. The three levels are: 1) the level of the physical environment in which our bodies operate, 2) the psychological level of “representations and practices” that individuals learn via socialization, and 3) the “institutional level” in which social regulations control how the system is run (ibid). All social systems function on these three levels – and clearly there are overlaps between the levels. The theory highlights how the physical environment both limits and enables behaviour (ibid). What people do in the physical environment is also shaped by the psychological level (representations and practices) – our behaviour is stimulated, directed, and ultimately restricted by the cultural system in which we live (ibid). It is our means for interpreting and understanding the physical level of an installation. This means the different cognitive systems of the members from each of different belief groups. Their behaviour is guided by the institution(s) in which they function. The institution serves as the means of objectifying and reifying these representations, creating rules and regulations regarding interaction in that context. It not only controls what spaces can be used and the material contents of those spaces, but also the rules of their use.

The concept of social representations informs Installation Theory. Social representations are ways of knowing, and thus function as the means through which we make sense of the installations in which we live (Lahlou, 2011). The social representation of an installation functions as the psychological layer and is co-created by those who use it – it is socially constructed. But it is also institutionalised and incorporated – and so is evident in all 3 levels. In this sense, as is shown in this thesis, members from different (belief) groups co-create the contact environment, each contributing to the psychological understanding of the environment, physically adapting the spaces they currently use to fit their needs, and thus influencing the institutional regulations. In coming together in one space, faith/belief groups are

placing multiple, possibly competing psychological frameworks onto one space, with each group potentially having different concepts of what is and is not possible within it. Furthermore, each group's sense of place is imbued with "moral meanings" of faith group members' day-to-day behaviour (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006), which influence how they perceive who does and does not have a place and a legitimate voice within the interfaith/inter-belief contact space.

This meeting of different shared bodies of knowledge (what can be called cognitive polyphasia (Provencher, 2011)) influences the institutionalization of the interfaith/inter-belief communities. As this study shows, groups bring their routine practices together and how institutions attempt to accommodate all of them into a new formal framework. It is centred on the built environment, what it can and cannot be used for, by whom, and under what conditions. With each group having potentially different representations of how the contact space should be used, it is possible that this one space will be interpreted differently by each group, which opens the meaning construction of the space to conflict (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006). This conflict not only impacts what happens within the space, but also how groups relate to each other. Spatial relations are reflective of the social reality of divisions that influence what individuals believe is and is not possible in relation to other groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997), so in defining what is possible in the space, institutions are also defining what is possible (and desirable) between groups.

The process of anchoring new information into pre-existing knowledge systems, objectifying the new information in a comprehensible way, is an active process, as was discussed above. Elcheroth et al. (2011) contend that it is a practice of remembering involving material culture "that enact particular understandings of the world" that are frequently reinforced by institutional practices (p.741). The ways in which interfaith/inter-belief relations are enacted will institutionalize a way of understanding interfaith/inter-belief communities and the larger UK society. Social institutions bind interpretive frameworks and practices together (Goffman, 1961). Institutional facts are part of the everyday realities of individuals (Searle, 1995); these institutional facts are both a consequence of social interaction and viewed as objective facts (Sammut, Daanen, & Sartawi, 2010). While influenced by belief groups, they also shape the actions of them –shaping what they believe is and is not possible within the contact space. Built environments communicate beliefs because "they enable political values to

acquire material body, to become a concrete feature of everyday encounters” (Dixon, 2001, p.600). Furthermore, spatial organization is linked to the moral context of group relations because the installation of intergroup relations is structured by those groups’ social representations of it and of each other’s’ places within it. Hence spatial arrangements are representations of identity, and also sites of opportunity for contact, community building, and identity (re)negotiation. To explore this the discussion now turns to theories of identity, specifically social identity theory, research related to the contact hypothesis as well as SRT work focussed on community building, in order to develop a comprehensive perspective on the social psychology of inter-faith interactions.

## **2.5 Identity and Community Building**

### **2.5.1 Social Identity Theory and the Self Categorization Literature**

The social identity literature is vast; often developed in the hope of addressing inequalities and power relations in numerous different ways. However some previous research “treated social interaction as if it occurred between separate individuals on an even playing field,” ignoring the significance of social and structural inequalities (Elchereth et al., 2011, p.734). As Elchereth et al. (2011) point out, Israel and Tajfel (1972) first published on this issue; Tajfel (1972), who went on to establish the Social Identity Theory (SIT), was a major contributor to this movement. SIT was proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986) as a means of outlining the psychology issue of intergroup relations, conflict and collaboration. They argue for a distinction between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour, which Brown (2000) contends offers the potential to tackle the “classic social psychological problem of the relationship of the individual to the group and the emergence of collective phenomena from individual cognitions” (p.746). Tajfel (1972) is essentially concerned with how social categorization both constructs and explains an individual’s place in the world. Tajfel and Turner (1986) begin by taking group membership as the basis for identity showing how individuals attempt to preserve a positive social identity for themselves through group membership, which is achieved via favourably comparing their social group to another. This then creates the basis for in- and out-group identification.

Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament's (1971) minimal group experiments showed that individuals would, even at a cost to their own group, attempt to maximize the difference between in- and out-groups. These in- and out-group comparisons have been a large focal point of SIT research, with many researchers seeking to understand the diverse range of dominant and subordinate group members' reactions to intergroup situations (Brown, 2000). Much research has focused on the conditions under which prejudice can be alleviated during intergroup contact situations (Adesokan, Ullrich, Van Dick, & Tropp, 2011; Binder et al., 2009; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Greenland & Brown, 1999; reviewed by Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). SIT research has also focused on the effect of social influence on both social and group identity. Individuals internalize the behaviour of in-group members, and thus create group norms, which then become incorporated into their own social identity (Hogg et al., 2004; Turner, 1982). It is important to highlight that a social identity is separate from a personal identity. Personal identity is conceived as specific to an individual and not shared with others, while a social identity is tied to group processes (Hogg et al., 2004). An individual can have many social identities, as they are determined by the groups to which s/he feels they belong; an individual can have as many social identities as s/he has group memberships (Hogg et al., 2004). This makes the issue of identity salience important in cases involving multiple group memberships, and so highlighting the intersectional nature of all identities (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Ann Phoenix, Howarth, & Philogene, n.d.).

Categorization is therefore essential to understanding identity salience. SIT was further extended via the development of the Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) by Turner (1985), which goes into more detail regarding how "social categorization produces prototype-based depersonalization of self and others and thus generates social identity phenomena" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p.123). In essence, when we categorize someone else, we see that person as a group or category sample, thus essentializing them. Essentializing out-group members through categorization can be connected to stereotyping (Hogg et al., 2004). The same process holds true for self-categorization – individuals behave in a normative manner because they view themselves in relation to the in-group and its traits, and thus act in "prescribe[d] group-appropriate ways" (Hogg et al., 2004, p.254). All of this happens because social categorizations are very real for

people – they are contextually salient. People use these categories as resources for understanding social situations. Social categories are matched to social contexts; the identity that makes the context the most individually meaningful is the identity that is most salient (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social categorizations and ‘prescribed group-appropriate ways’ are, in this respect, the means for knowing what is and is not possible within a context, which serves as the trigger for identity salience. Identity is therefore shaped by the ways in which intergroup contact is constructed, to this discussion now turns.

## **2.5.2 The Contact Hypothesis and Common In-group Identity Model**

### **2.5.2.1 The Contact Hypothesis**

Similarly to some SIT and SCT research (and there are many connections), the Contact Hypothesis was developed to address issues of inter-group conflict and to reduce prejudice (Brickson & Brewer, 2001). The Contact Hypothesis, which claims that consistent interaction between different groups can encourage intergroup solidarity, is attributed to the early work of Allport (1954) and his contemporaries: Allport and Kramer (1946), MacKenzie (1948), and Williams (1947) (cited in Dixon & Reicher, 1997). Allport’s (1954) influential work on intergroup contact identified five conditions necessary for optimal intergroup relations: equal status, common goals, cooperation, support from authorities and time. According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), there have been over 500 independent studies that have tested the contact hypothesis since it was first introduced by Allport. While additional research has supported Allport’s hypothesis (e.g., Chang, 1973; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Wagner, Hewstone, & Machleit, 1989), it has also been expanded in a number of directions. For instance, has been extended to focus not only on optimal contact requirements, but also on structural inequalities and social identities (cf. Brown, 1995; Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Hewstone & Brown, 1986), and to examine the impact of cultural differences on the process of group negotiation (Cohen, 2001; Griefat & Katriel, 1989; Hall, 1976; Ting-Toomey, 1988). In this sense, the Contact Hypothesis has also served to address the concerns laid out by Israel and Tajfel (1972) regarding social and structural inequalities between groups.



### *2.5.2.2 The Importance of the Built Environment in the Context of Contact*

Pettigrew (1998) argued, however, that not enough attention has been paid to the process through which contact affects attitudes and behaviour. Past research has tended to focus on “measuring the attitudes of one pre-given racial group...towards another,” while neglecting to understand how groups are defined by the research participants themselves (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). Participants’ common sense understandings of what it means to be a member of the in-group versus a member of the out-group have been largely overlooked. In doing so, researchers presuppose potentially artificial group divisions – people do not fit neatly into boxes, but frequently shift between group memberships (Gillespie, Howarth, & Cornish, 2012). Erasmus (2010) is more stern in his critique, arguing that researchers cannot continue to conduct research in terms of clear-cut binaries, and Howarth (2008) has claimed that some researchers may inadvertently further the damaging fiction of categories like ‘race’ through the simplified use of ‘black’ and ‘white’.

Contextualizing intergroup relations becomes central. De Tezanos-Pinto, Bratt, and Brown (2010) explore the facilitatory functions of in-group norms and intergroup anxiety during contact situations via a multi-level analysis and argue that contextual variables must be considered when theorizing about intergroup contact. If researchers are to understand the full complexities of intergroup contact, it is vital to try to understand it from the perspective of those who live it. Researchers must focus on participants’ meaning structure(s) and how it is applied in day-to-day interactions (Dixon et al., 2007) as well as further explore how contextual variables, such as the environment itself, impact participants’ meaning making about the contact situation. Researchers need to better understand how participants categorize the contact itself, and also how they categorize themselves and others within it.

In order to explore the meanings of contact as defined by the participants themselves, issues of power and agency must also be examined. Other critics of the contact hypothesis contend that status differences, in addition to cultural differences, must be taken into account (Hubbard, 1999; Schwarzwald & Amir, 1984). Hubbard (1999) argues that researchers must pay attention to the power imbalances that are inherent in intergroup relations and which hinder marginalized groups as they function

within the cultural domain of the dominant group. This point ties back into the need to understand what contact is from the participants' perspectives, as status and cultural differences are created *through* and given meaning *by* the participants. Hopkins' (Hopkins, 2011a) rich research exploring British Muslims' talk about their social identities showed that both religious and national identities were central to their view of themselves, that this meant quite different things to different British Muslim communities (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2009). This finding which resonates with research done in Northern Ireland (Lowe & Muldoon, 2014; Muldoon et al., 2007), highlighting the need for careful attention to meaning-making processes.. These studies demonstrate the need to focus contact research on shifting, rather than clear-cut, somewhat static identities. Subgroups may or may not agree with the main group in regards to the meaning of a social subject (Smith & Collins, 2009). This dis/agreement impacts individuals' interactions with the social subject, and can thus influence their decisions regarding whether or not to engage. This makes contextualization central to intergroup analysis.

Identities, however, do not float in the ether of social relations; they are embodied and located. And, because they are embodied, there is a spatial element to contextualizing intergroup relations. Spatial concerns play a role in the identity negotiation processes that occur during intergroup interactions, and are a part of everyday practice, just as they are for knowledge processes (discussed above with reference to Installation Theory (Lahlou, 2008)). The building of mosques in Western cities provides a prime example. Mosques in Western, largely secular and/or Christian cities stir up debate because they "articulate different constructions of space, place and belonging" and thus juxtapose different conceptions of what it means to be a member of that society (Holtz, Dahinden, & Wagner, 2013; Hopkins, 2008). Group belonging is both at once social and spatial (Trudeau, 2006) and the physical spaces in which we interact are imbued with "identity related meanings" (Hopkins, 2008, p.366) that are historically, socially, and spatially situated (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005), and thus influence how we experience intergroup contact.

Hence, many argue that future research must take the social realities of participants into account (Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Howarth, 2008) by exploring their "situated understandings and experiences of themselves and their relations with others"

(Hopkins, 2008, p.366), which includes the interrelation between identity and space. The interrelated nature of shifting group identities within and across spaces, and within one space that can be multiple places, is at the heart of this research project. In the context of interfaith/inter-belief contact groups with overlapping membership affiliations mix together in spatial terms, renegotiating and redefining group boundaries – in ways that sometimes appear positive, sometimes less so. Boundaries, however, are often salient in intergroup encounters, leading people to be more spatially aware of group boundaries, often resulting in exclusionary behaviour or discourse (Dixon, 2001; Sibley, 1995). Boundary crossing in such an environment is risky because it involves crossing “from a familiar space to an alien one which is under the control of somebody else” (Sibley, 1995, p.32). Where contexts feel risky and out-of-ones’ control, cross-group solidarity is highly unlikely and group differences remain highly visible, as it keeps group identity divisions salient (Dixon, 2001).

Elcheroth et al. (2011) argue that social and political psychology need to integrate the Tajfel’s SIT/SCT tradition with Moscovici’s social representations tradition, drawing on a tradition of work connecting identity more generally with representations (Duveen & Lloyd, 1986; Duveen, 2001; Howarth, 2002a; Howarth, 2006a; Orr, 2007). A social representations approach, they argue, offers critical insight into how people categorize the social world, how that “social knowledge becomes internalized,” and how individuals orient themselves to members of other groups (Elcheroth et al., 2011, p.735). Such an approach could improve researchers’ understanding of identity politics, of how other groups understand or represent each other (Monroe, Hankin, & Vechten, 2000) and the ways in which negative representations of communities are challenged (Howarth et al., 2015). Furthermore, research involving identity politics and intergroup relations would additionally benefit by being extended to include a spatial component. Such an approach could be particularly insightful in terms of exploring the case of interfaith/inter-belief contact, as it addresses the embodiment and spatiality of identity (through its integration with Installation Theory), and may lend important insight into intergroup contact and the process of dialogue more generally.

### **2.5.3 Social Representations and Intergroup Relations**

Integration of the insights from the social identity and social representations traditions emphasises to the need to better understand the contextual and structural variables that impact intergroup relations. Elcheroth et al. (2011) suggest that researchers view identities as social representations and explore “how we categorize ourselves in relations to the groups with which those representations are associated” (p.735). In this sense, social categories serve as the means of organizing social representations. Categorization of groups’ identities “help construct beliefs about them” (Monroe et al., 2000, p.483); they are the social belief structures to which Hogg et al. (1995) elude. Social representations are shared knowledge, the communication of which makes the construction of reality possible (Orr, Sagi, & Bar-On, 2000). They enable communication and thus the transmission of ideas (Howarth, 2011). The identities that they communicate function as social markers (Orr, 2007), indicating where in the situated context different identities are seen to ‘belong’. These social locations are not, however, fixed. Social interaction is a process that involves a “battle of ideas” (Moscovici & Markova, 1998, p.403) in which groups compete over meaning and the power to influence others. Social actors may attempt to modify the contextual constraints in order to make the situation more subjectively meaningful for their identity. This notion of ideological battles surrounding group identity leads us to the discussion of identity politics. Groups are competing over these social markers and who has the ability to define them and how these definitions may be resisted (Howarth, 2006), as is seen in this research.

#### **2.5.3.1 Social Representations, Communities, and Community Building**

The context of this research is London, and like other diverse cities, it is comprised of many ethnic, cultural, and religious groups that permeate intergroup boundaries and communicate with each other on a daily basis (Howarth, 2011; Sammut, 2011), resulting in the emergence of multicultural identities (Massey, 2007). The city is a network society (Castells, 2011), and social groups are diverse, fluid and overlapping, but as Howarth et al. (2015) argue, a sense of community “still has meaning in how people develop a sense of belonging, knowledge systems and possibilities for participation” (p.180). Groups constantly interact with each other, brining together

different knowledge systems throughout the course of daily activities. People can be members of numerous communities, passing between them, and claiming them for a variety of strategic purposes (Stephens, 2007). People in network societies still join together as communities, oftentimes via a project or set of shared goals. Projects, however, are pragmatic in nature and, ideally, must be relevant to and satisfy the needs of all members of the community (Howarth et al., 2015). The stability of such groups hinges on members' need to feel that "their own sense of identity is affirmed" (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011, p.217), and that their representations are recognised and consequential (Howarth et al., 2015). Identity affirmation is at the heart of a dialogical knowledge encounter – it is about acknowledging the perspective of the other and accepting its legitimacy, and requires a commitment to "genuine communication" (Jovchelovitch, 2008). This implies a reciprocal process of knowledge exchange and thus knowledge transformation via the joint action between actors (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014; Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). It is at once an inward and outward-looking process.

#### **2.5.3.2 Network building and bridging capital**

Building connections between people of different belief backgrounds builds "norms of reciprocity and trust-worthiness" (Hopkins, 2011b, p.529), and thus increases the network's social capital. Putnam (1993) outlines four key features of community that create cohesion, two of which include dense community networks and norms of reciprocity and trust. This reciprocal process is vital to community building, as it is what makes knowledge exchange and transformation possible, enabling different groups of people to come together and build what Hopkins (2011b) calls "positive-sum relationships," in that each group contributes to the other. In acting as a common team, not only do different groups create a new sense of community, they can also work together while maintaining the distinctiveness of their particular group (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Howarth, 2001). Communities that have significant social capital enable their members to act collectively because they provide a rich, supportive context in which they can negotiate with other groups (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). Past research has shown that interfaith dialogue networks can enable the bridging of intergroup relationships (Furbey, Dinham, Farnell,

Finneron, & Wilkinson, 2006; Hopkins, 2011b), the building of communities and positive group identities.

## **2.6 Group Identity Negotiation and Multiculturalism Politics**

Identity politics is a central concern of intergroup contact. Groups are not only defining themselves in these situations, but also co-defining the identities of other groups. These groups are also struggling over who has the power to define, the power to manipulate symbolic meaning in their interests. The power to invoke a world view is at the heart of identity politics; the knowledge systems that influence worldviews are never neutral (Howarth, 2014; Marková, 2008), and often compete for recognition. Moscovici's work demonstrates that social representations, or people's worldviews, are "inherently bound up with political stances" (Elchereth et al., 2011, p.732). It is not just about which knowledge system is drawn on, but also how that knowledge is reinforced by that worldview. Social identities are contextualized within these knowledge systems. They are co-constructed by both in- and out-groups, and are made contextually salient via social comparison (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Identities are made salient by the presence of the 'other,' because we understand ourselves through them. Power negotiations and politics are a part of this identity co-construction and are vital to understanding how culturally diverse intergroup relations are managed (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Hopkins, 2008; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). It is about whose knowledge system is drawn on and how it reinforces that particular worldview within the situated context.

### **2.6.1 Identity and Meta-knowledge**

Meta-knowledge is essential to constructing representations of self and others. We can only see and understand ourselves through the eyes of the other (Mead, 1934). This allows us to become self-reflexive; we become aware of ourselves via how others identify us. As Duveen (2001) notes, "identity is as much about the process of being identified as it is about the process of identification" (p.259). How others identify an individual influences how s/he relates to her/himself – we develop a sense of self through the eyes of the other, which may include representations that may conflict with our own (Howarth, 2002a). Knowledge of alternative representations allows an

individual to position her/himself within the representational field of a community (Raudsepp, 2005). This positions the individual as a social actor and influences her/his behaviour in relation to others. The essential element driving our behaviour is not so much what we think, but “what we think others are thinking” (Elchereth et al., 2011, p.733). This is because we analyse information in regards to what it might mean to others and to our relationship(s) with them; we are concerned with how others might react to our interpretation of, and reaction to, that information (Doise, 1993).

This meta-knowledge of our and others’ social representations includes the boundaries of legitimacy of other representations (Raudsepp, 2005). Social representations govern what types of actions are and are not thought to be possible because they constitute our social reality, and, in doing so, create the boundaries of what is considered possible (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Boundaries regulate intergroup contact and maintain social divisions; they affect individuals’ sense of belonging and thus their “beliefs about acceptance and their ability to...maintain [their] own identity” (Dixon, Reicher, & Foster, 1997, p.348). The navigation of boundaries is deeply influenced by power relations between groups, which ascribe where individuals belong. This categorization serves to keep individuals in their place (Reicher, Hopkins, & Harrison, 2006). These ascribed places shape the nature of social relationships, influencing what is believed to be possible between groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). The social divisions and boundaries created are important to understanding groups’ understandings of each other, as they are part and parcel of group members’ meta-knowledge about others.

The perspective of the other and the social divisions created by boundaries can be damaging to those who are stigmatized, limiting on their sense of self and social inclusion (Howarth et al., 2012). Our ability to enact our identities can be constrained by the actions of others (Pehrson, Stevenson, Muldoon, & Reicher, 2014); being stigmatized by others has an impact on one’s ability to enact one’s identity. While members of all faith groups are arguably stigmatized in a largely secular community, today Muslims are particularly singled out (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Hopkins, 2011a; Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002; Wagner et al., 2012). The influence of stigma results in social relations largely shaped by a sense of misrepresentation of the stigmatized and perceived prejudice. This misrepresentation and stigmatization are a

result of non-dialogical knowledge encounters, as the diversity of British Muslim voices (and other faith groups) are not often recognized in the UK public sphere – they are not often seen as legitimate knowledge producers, and thus their group identities are stigmatized. The competencies of the stigmatized are discounted and their ability to participate in public life is impeded (McNamara, Muldoon, Stevenson, & Slattery, 2011).

### **2.6.2 Misrepresentation and Perceived Prejudice**

Diverse meanings can be attached to contact situations (Dixon et al., 2005), with groups struggling to promote their worldview or knowledge system over others. As has been stressed, there is, in fact, no set meaning to contact situations, or any other type of situation for that matter; meaning is constructed by the participants (Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). An intergroup contact event can have multiple agendas, each structured “according to different identity definitions” (McNamara, Stevenson, & Muldoon, 2013, p.261). The dialogical nature of all human interactions is an integral part of identity construction – we are constantly becoming who we are through our interactions with those around us. It logically follows then, that our identities are bound up within intergroup contact situations, as they are part of the day-to-day social practices that we engage in.

It is important to re-emphasise, however, that knowledge systems are not neutral (Marková, 2008). As Israel and Tajfel (1972) acknowledge, social power imbalances exist. Members of minority groups may experience intergroup contact differently because they lack social power (Hubbard, 1999). A lack of social power can have strong implications for minorities’ social identities and can thus create formidable concerns for the group – these concerns can, in turn, shape minorities’ understanding of how inter-group relationships can develop and be utilized to shape their own identities (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Hopkins, 2011a; Pehrson et al., 2014). The demarcation of stigma can have a highly detrimental effect on a group’s identity – persistent devaluation has the potential to influence minorities’ approach to intergroup contact situations, and can possibly hinder positive group contact (Tropp, 2006). In this way, the “restrictive social label” of stigma (Howarth et al., 2012) constrains not only how the stigmatized position themselves towards others, but then also limits others’



interactions with them (Stevenson, McNamara, & Muldoon, 2014), and subsequently their representations of the stigmatized. This demarcation, this misrepresentation, can however serve as an impetus for change, influencing how the stigmatize react and represent their identity to the stigmatizer (Andreouli & Howarth, 2012; Reicher, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Society participation is vital to group identity because, from a social representations perspective, participation is the symbolic ‘power to construct and convey particular representations over others’ (Howarth et al., 2015).

### **2.6.3 Decision Making and Intergroup Contact**

The meta-perceptions of group identities influence group behaviour in contact situations. It logically follows that it also influences group decision-making processes regarding those contact situations. The psychological decision-making literature is vast, ranging from heuristic decision-making to intercultural team management. This discussion is concerned with the latter. Past research has shown that the flow of information within a team is crucial if that team is to be successful (Cheng, Chua, Morris, & Lee, 2012; Hamilton, Puntoni, & Tavassoli, 2010; Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). It has also been shown to be the primary variable in determining intragroup cohesion within demographically diverse teams (Harrison et al., 1998). Harrison et al. (ibid) found that the “richness of interactions” determines the amount of interpersonal information group members have about each other, and this, in turn, impacts members’ perceptions of each other’s attitude similarity. In their research on categorization differences between individuals and groups, Hamilton et al. (2010) found that intragroup dynamics can function to either intensify or decrease the differences between how individuals within the group and the group as a whole categorize phenomenon. Teamwork is, in essence, the flow of information between group members (Hamilton et al., 2010; Smith & Collins, 2009). Knowledge transfer within a group has consequences for both group and individual group member decision-making (Hamilton et al., 2010).

Cross-cultural research has shown that a group’s shared perceptions of values, beliefs, practices, and behaviours are better predictors of behaviour than an individual’s cultural preference (Cheng et al., 2012). In effect, behaviour is largely predicted via what individuals perceive is acceptable behaviour. This is because group members are

not isolated individuals, they are connected to the other members of their group in both their behaviours and in their perceptions (LeDoux, Gorman, & Woehr, 2011). It is, however, important to keep in mind that knowledge may not be shared equally within a group. Members within a group can have unique relationships with other group members, which can result in asymmetry in knowledge within the group. This can hinder group perceptions (LeDoux et al., 2011) and can also influence how they socially interact and engage with others (Cheng et al., 2012). Each individual creates “an internalized group identity that comprises stereotypes and behavioural norms which define the group’s identity” for the individual, allowing them to conform or establish themselves as distinct from the group (Swaab, Postmes, & Spears, 2008, p.170). Swaab et al.'s (ibid) work provides a useful integration of the decision-making literature and that of the SIT/SCT tradition, highlighting how group or social identities are different to individual identities. Their normative group behaviour, what is perceived to be acceptable, is part of the group’s worldview.

Decision-making research shows that values and behaviour are intimately linked – when a value is activated, it influences the choices an individual makes as well as his or her behaviour (Bas Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Individual’s psychological reactions to situations are not only cognitive and emotional, but also “motivational and behavioural” (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996, p.239). Citing past research, Verplanken and Holland (2002) argue that values can influence an individual’s decisions because they define the appeal of potential outcomes (Ball-Rokeach & Loges, 1996; Feather, 1990; 1992; Verplanken & Svenson, 1997). Values are part of the core of a social representation (Abric, 1993) and, as previously discussed, perceived prejudice has been shown to influence attitudes towards contact.

As these studies show, an individual’s behaviour does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in a situated, relational context, which itself has an impact on an individual’s decision-making process. As previously discussed, when multiple individuals interact, they construct meaning together, and thus “sense making involves a collective interpretation of these exchanges leading to a shared experience of conflict” (Korsgaard, Soyoung Jeong, Mahony, & Pitariu, 2008, p.1239), or possibly a shared experience of something more positive. The shared context in which the decision-making occurs must be taken into account on all its levels: psychological, physical, and

institutional, as the “affects of the social context...may affect subsequent judgments of new items” (Hamilton et al., 2010, p.79). The ways in which groups are divided shapes the nature of their relationships. Social divisions shape the possibilities of action between members of different groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). It follows then, that the ways in which group relations are conceived limits the choices that can be made regarding contact between them. It is essential to understand how group members conceive of their group identities as well as their individual identities and how they fit into the group, in all its complexities, from their own perspectives. Only then can one truly understand the nature of their intergroup interactions and how they choose to engage or not engage with members of other groups.

#### ***2.6.3.1 Decision Making, Social Representations, and Perceived Prejudice***

The decisions regarding intergroup contact do not come down to just how individuals and groups choose to interact with members from another group, but ultimately whether or not they will interact at all. Individuals “actively elicit information from social targets with which to construct their impressions” of other groups (Smith & Collins, 2009, p.347). Individuals base their decisions from the information available to them, thus increased intergroup interaction will increase this knowledge. However, individuals who have a negative impression of another group or individual tend to avoid obtaining additional information about that group or individual, which could potentially improve their impression (Smith & Collins, 2009), because they do not wish to increase the amount of time spent with that group or individual members of the group. This can have profound implications. Group members’ perceptions regarding intergroup contact, especially those who perceive that they will encounter prejudice via the other, such as stigmatized groups, impact the ways in which those members engage with the other group(s) (Branscombe et al., 1999; Shelton, 2003), often negatively. Prejudice expressed by one member of another group can become more generalized and produce negative expectations for interactions with other members of that group (Tropp, 2003); even just one instance of prejudice can negatively impact intergroup relations.

Minority group members tend to be acutely aware of their marginalized status during intergroup contact, whereas majority group members can often be unaware of

status issues (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Pettigrew and Tropp's (2005) argue that minority group members' beliefs about intergroup contact "are closely tied to their perceptions of prejudice from the majority group (see Livingston, Brewer, & Alexander, 2004; Monteith & Spicer, 2000)" (p. 956). The Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) study examining British Muslims' theories about their social marginalization and its impact on intergroup interaction, argues that both the minority and majority group members construct the meaning of contact. Insight into minority groups' feelings and beliefs about intergroup contact could help researchers better understand their "caution about contact," and thus the decisions they make regarding intergroup interactions with majority members. In essence, situations can be seen and their meaning interpreted in different ways, so it is important to use an approach that will help account for how meaning is constructed by the participants themselves.

This is of particular importance in contexts similar to that of the university faith community study, as all groups have expressed feelings of stigmatization. As past research has shown, encountering contrasting belief systems has the potential to make a group feel inferior or threatened (Mikkelsen & Hesse, 2009). It is important to remember that this does not only apply to minority groups. Morrison, Plaut, and Ybarra's (2010) research shows that in-groups can view intergroup contact as threatening to their identities if they feel that their group's values have been symbolically threatened by the out-group(s), which can result in increased intergroup biases and increasing representations of other groups.

#### **2.6.4 Re-presentation and Social Change**

Individuals are not passive users of representations; in fact, quite the opposite is true. We reinterpret representations; in fitting them into our pre-existing knowledge we 're-present' a representation (Howarth, 2006). The process of re-presentation allow us to make sense of the world around us; representations not only reflect our reality, but become our reality through our interactions with others (Howarth, 2002a; 2004). Our interpretations of the world around us, our social representations, infiltrate reality to the point that they *are* reality (Goffman, 1963). They are thus 'concrete' and affect our lives in very tangible ways (Howarth, 2006). As previously argued, because our

representations constitute our reality, it follows that they also shape our actions. In essence, they are consequential (Howarth et al., 2015).

Similarly decision-making research has shown that cultural perceptions and behaviour are linked. Cheng et al. (2012) argue that “consensual cultural perceptions...drive cognition and behaviour” because groups depend on shared meanings in order to make sense of their world (p.392-3). Group contact norms, pertaining to potential future contact, determine the acceptability or unacceptability of intergroup contact (De Tezanos-Pinto et al., 2010). Intergroup contact experience is not just about an individual’s personal experience with the out-group, but also about their understanding of the intergroup contact experience of other members of their in-group, as well as their meta-knowledge regarding other groups. Both the in-group and out-group construct the meaning of intergroup contact via their interactions with each other.

We are surrounded by multiple representations, some of which are competing. There are always overlapping in-groups and out-groups and corresponding representations about them. Out-groups are stigmatized through ‘otherising’ representations (Howarth, 2006b) and it is this ‘otherness’ that sometimes provokes confrontation and negotiation. The other is a mirror that we can hold up to ourselves (Jovchelovitch, 1995). The reflection, however, is not a simple one. We are always located in a plurality of representations; we do not fit neatly into clear-cut categories. Rather, we coexist amongst many groups, shifting our identities and group affiliations as we move throughout the course of our daily lives (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015). It is through these shifts that we continually negotiate our identity – we are constantly becoming who we are. And, it is in this shifting that we encounter other knowledge systems, other ways of being, competing social representations that we must choose to either engage or not engage with, to incorporate or not incorporate them into our worldviews. There is significant variation in the centrality of group membership to each group member’s sense of self (Morrison et al., 2010). Not only do individuals have multiple identities, but the salience of each identity can vary between the context that an individual is in. One’s sense of self is fluid, as is the centrality of a group’s identity to one’s own sense of self. Representations from other groups co-exist within each group, as group members are simultaneously members of multiple social groups.

Agency is key; people are not passive agents (Duveen, 2001). In engaging with members of other faith groups, and with the wider UK society, as will be shown, religious individuals are renegotiating not only what it means to be a member of their faith (or non-faith), they are also renegotiating what interfaith/inter-belief means in the UK public sphere. Situations are experienced and meanings interpreted in different ways, so it is important to use a research approach that will help account for how meaning is constructed, contested and understood by the research participants themselves. SRT allows for understanding how groups not only understand, but also represent their identities and their place in the world.

This is of particular importance when examining contexts involving stigmatized identities, like those of faith groups. Howarth (2006b) urges scholars to historically and politically contextualise stigma. The historical and political context of a stigma is crucial, as social stigmas “can only be understood in relation to its material contexts of unequal relations of power (Miles, 1998)” (cited in Howarth, 2006b, p.443). Power stems from histories of domination – as stigmas are imposed on others. They are, however, not static or unidirectional. An individual’s experiences vary as s/he moves through situations, and as her/his experiences vary, so does her/his stigmatization. The dynamic nature of identity and stigma, however, sometimes provokes resistance and change. When the culturally and historically constructed power relations and stigma are examined through the theoretical lens of social representations, the researcher is able to show how the psychological is bound, but not entirely determined by the socio-historical context – there is room for the possibility of change (Howarth et al., 2013; Howarth, 2006b).

Stigmatized individuals “have a universe of response” to the ways in which they are stigmatized (Goffman, 1963, p.32). Many do not passively accept the negative label(s) imposed upon them by society, but choose to challenge their stigma and (re)present their social identity. Examples of research on resistance to stigmas and renegotiation of identities include studies regarding school exclusion (Brown, 1998; Howarth, 2004), the wearing of the Muslim veil (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Wagner et al., 2012), representations of immigrants in Western countries (Keene & Padilla, 2010; Kusow, 2004; Marvasti, 2005; Mobasher, 2006), examinations of the means of combating institutional stigmatization (Howarth, 2010; Lenhardt, 2004), and grassroots

movements giving voice to marginalised communities (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2013). Resistance and social change become particularly possible when individuals become aware that others share her/his sense of injustice (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Knowing that others believe they are stigmatized and misrepresented, the group as a whole give the stigmatized the confidence to challenge their stigma. Groups attempt to legitimize themselves through strategies of social influence (Howarth et al., 2013), such as increasing their social capital (Hopkins, 2011b), building and drawing on their social networks and capitalizing on their resources. Such collective action, working together within the public sphere, provides groups with both “social support and efficacy” (McNamara et al., 2013). Social change is a process of both managing negative representations of one’s group and challenging them (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). In challenging negative representations, the stigmatized challenge how others view them and thus “re-define [their] identity” (Howarth, 2002a, p.155). But it is important to note that this process is two-way; one also redefines one’s own identity when challenging others’ representations of it (Howarth, 2002a).

It is important to remember that social representations are enacted knowledge that shapes our social practices, including how people design and engage with the environment (Elcheroth et al., 2011). Social representations, when viewed as meta-knowledge about other groups and ones’ own, influence both the understandings and use of space. This logically extends to the decision-making processes regarding the use of that space and the interactions with others that take place therein. These decision-making processes, in turn, influence the possibilities for social change – meta-knowledge makes conceiving of social change possible, but also influences social change strategies. Exploring how groups engage with the physical environment in relation to intergroup contact situations will enable researchers to gain a fuller picture of how identities are negotiated, and potentially transformed, during these interactions. It can potentially also lend additional insight into how intergroup and interfaith relations become productive, as this thesis hopes to achieve.

## **2.7 Research Questions**

Chapter 1 examined the context of interfaith relations within the UK post 9/11, showing that increasing diversity amongst the British population has led to an increase

in anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiment. It is not about being “British enough,” but about who has the power to define what that means. Such tensions pose a significant challenge to bringing the increasingly diverse voices of UK citizens and residents together in order to make decisions about how to interact with each other and live together. This chapter explored the social psychological literature uniquely suited to lending insight to these issues. A Social Representations approach to intergroup contact puts situated understandings and meaning making at the centre of research, focusing on the struggle over the power to convey meaning and the means through which communication, community building and intergroup decision-making processes are enacted.

This thesis will go on to explore the everyday interfaith contact experiences of diverse Londoners. It will focus on interfaith dialogue – how it is understood and managed in everyday contexts. As outlined in the literature above, dialogue is not straight forward, but rather is influenced by issues of categorisation, identity, power and difference, and is experienced both verbally and through the material environment. To explore this fully, this thesis sets out to answer the following questions:

- 1) What conditions (material, symbolic, psychological) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - a. What might open up dialogue?
  - b. What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity & spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith groups in relation to multicultural contact situations?

Three studies have been undertaken with the aim of addressing these questions, two centred on a London university-based case study and a third exploring the same questions across London. Chapter 3 will outline the methodological framework constructed for each study. Chapter 4 details the socio-spatial participant observation



portion of the university case study, exploring how people of different faiths behave during intra- and inter-faith events, lending insight into material conditions necessary for dialogue, as well as how spatial factors influence contact and identity processes. Chapter 5 addresses the focus group and interview portion of the case study, addressing the university participants' (which include staff and students) experiences and beliefs about interfaith contact, lending insight into how they manage their identities during contact and how spatial factors as well as stigma and representations of difference influence this process. Chapter 6 steps outside of the university context and into the experiences of interfaith practitioners operating in different London boroughs, and addresses the research questions from the perspectives of those working within similar but also more entrenched communities.

## **3 Chapter 3: Methodological Design**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This project seeks to develop a social psychological framework for understanding how group identities, inter-group contact, and material environmental or space<sup>13</sup> related factors influence decision-making within complex, stigmatizing, multicultural contexts. The LSE Faith Community was chosen as the case study for this project because its members are both culturally and religiously diverse and are in a process of transition that requires the groups to interact more frequently. This increased contact, combined with increasingly turbulent religious and political debates both internally and externally, is an ideal case study for stigmatized intergroup identity research in a 'real world' setting. Not only are they diverse groups that have somewhat mixed and sometimes negative feelings towards each other, but they are required to engage with each other and to make decisions together on how to navigate the new environment of a shared faith centre. Subsequently, interviews with interfaith practitioners across London were then conducted, exploring the same issues with people of different professional and belief backgrounds working in boroughs ranging from some of the most affluent to some of the most socioeconomically deprived in the London area. The questions driving this research are as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> Environmental or space related factors refer to the physical level, or the material reality and artefacts, of the social context (Lahlou, 2008).

- 1) What conditions (material, symbolic, psychological) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - a. What might open up dialogue?
  - b. What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity & spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith groups in relation to multicultural contact situations?

Qualitative methods were determined to be best suited for this project, as it explores the lived experiences, or the ‘life worlds,’ (Flick, 2009) of participants – allowing us to examine their own meanings and identities. An ethnographic approach was chosen because of the sensitive nature of the case study field site, as are the contexts in which interfaith practitioners work – they are entrenched in the ‘everyday controversies’ of identity politics, within which people of faith (and no faith) negotiate their group identities through the “context of practice” (Hopkins, 2008, p.366), generally aware of the sensitivities and anxieties of such. The research is divided into three phases to triangulate the project:

- 1) LSE case study participant observation,
- 2) LSE case study focus groups and interviews, and
- 3) London-wide interfaith practitioner interviews.

The LSE case study, organised into two parts, first examines interfaith contact via observable group behaviour at faith-related events on campus during the 2012-13 academic year. This is followed by a second phase in the 2013-14 academic year examining student perspectives of faith relations and of the new Faith Centre, as well as LSE management (staff) perspectives of faith on campus and the purpose of the Faith Centre. The third phase juxtaposes the LSE case study with interviews of

interfaith practitioners working in a diverse range of London boroughs with different community relations. Table 3.1. outlines the breakdown of the research project.

*Table 3.1. Project design*

Study	Components
1) LSE Participant Observation	LSE faith society closed events
	LSE faith society outreach events
	LSE-organized interfaith events
2) LSE Focus Groups & Interviews	LSE student focus groups
	LSE management structured interviews
3) London Practitioner Interviews	Structured interviews with Interfaith practitioners across London

## 3.2 Study I: LSE Case Study Participant observation

The first phase of this research is a participant observation of faith-related events held at the LSE during the 2012-13 academic year. This section will first outline the rationale for the use of participant observation, followed by the study's sampling procedures. Then a detailed breakdown of the theoretical underpinnings of the observational protocol developed for this phase of research will be presented. Subsequently, the observational procedures and researcher impact will be discussed. This section will conclude with a detailed discussion of how verbal and descriptive observational data were handled during the analysis.

### 3.2.1 Rationale for Participant Observation

Participant observation (PO) is useful for this particular study for three reasons. First, it has proven to be a successful method when research involves exploring social interactions and their meanings from the participants' perspective (Howarth, 2004; Jodelet, 1991) and identities in context (Flick & Foster, 2008; Hopkins & Dixon, 2006). These studies suggest that PO will be a useful means to answer RQ1 and RQ2. Such a method allows for insight into both participants' understandings of their group identity and their representations of other groups as well as how groups behave towards each other during contact situations. Embedded within intergroup interaction are representations of difference, and potentially stigma. Stigma, a discrediting attribute (Goffman, 1963), is both individually and socially constructed, created in socially situated contexts through social relationships (Howarth et al., 2012). This gives further

credence to the need for a methodology that takes participants' lived experiences and own definitions into account and addresses RQ3.

Exploring identities in context extends beyond the psychological realm and into the physical realm where embodied identities are acted out. RQ4 and RQ5 focus on the embodied nature of identities, asking how the physical environment influences intergroup contact and decision-making processes. Past studies have used PO effectively when exploring the intersections of space and identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Ghwdlov et al., 2010; Kyle & Chick, 2007). This makes PO particularly useful for a study investigating the situated meanings of the LSE interfaith and community space, allowing for an exploration of both the psychological level and the physical level of identity management and decision-making processes within context.

Second, PO has been shown to be useful when studying social processes or social change (Becker & Geer, 1967; Howarth, 2004, 2006b), and can allow for the researcher to gain insight into sensitive issues that participants might otherwise be unable or unwilling to talk about (Becker & Geer, 1967). These features make it especially useful for studying the faith community's transition to a new faith centre. This process has the potential to be delicate in nature because it is embedded within the sensitive issue of faith, and is compounded by identity politics and power relations between societies and the educational institution. RQ3 and RQ5 will explore these sensitive processes, through exploring the roles of stigma, difference, and environmental factors in both intergroup relationships and the decision-making processes surrounding them.

Lastly, PO is an open-ended, participant-driven method that is flexible and requires the researcher to constantly redefine themes (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Esterberg, 2002; Jorgensen, 1989). This enables the researcher to integrate participants' agency into the research design. RQ3 asks what roles stigma and representations of difference play in LSE faith community relationships, making participant agency of particular importance for this study. Manzo (2004) warns that power and stigma "are of inverse proportions," emphasizing that researchers must be careful not to further stigmatize the groups they study by assuming they are powerless or 'victims' of

processes of categorisation. It is imperative that research exploring stigmatized identities treats research participants as “agents not objects of stigma” (Howarth, 2006b). In selecting a methodology that is participant-driven and allows for constant reflection on the part of the researcher, this study aims to place the agency of its participants at the centre of the research design.

### **3.2.2 Sampling**

All active faith-based societies registered with the LSE Student Union that are members of the Interfaith Forum were sampled. This was done in order to limit the sample size to those societies that officially recognize the interfaith community and use Chaplaincy space on campus and/or will be using the new centre. This sampling base was extended to include the Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society (ASH), because, through exploratory fieldwork in the 2011-12 academic year, it became clear that ASHS interacts with several faith societies and the Chaplain who also serves as the LSE Interfaith Advisor. These groups are self-identifying with a faith, or in the case of ASH, in relation to faith, and are thus naturally formed groups (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000, citing Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Seale, 1999).

The LSE has a student population of roughly 9,000 full-time students from 140 different countries, with its staff and students speaking over 100 different languages (London School of Economics, n.d.). The members of the Student Union faith societies are equally diverse. While there are no demographics for the diversity within the societies, each encompasses multiple ethnicities, native languages, countries of origin, and denominations. It is important to note that membership numbers are not necessarily reflective of the number of active members in each society, as some students register for a society but ultimately do not participate. Table 3.2 outlines the distribution of registered members per LSE Student Union faith society as of October 2012 and the number of events sampled.

*Table 3.2. Estimated society membership and event sampling for 2012-13 academic year<sup>14</sup>*

<b>Society</b>	<b>Estimated Membership</b>	<b>Outreach Events Sampled</b>	<b>Society-Specific Events Sampled</b>
Atheist, Secularist, Humanists	14515	0	1
Catholic Society	60	0	0
Christian Union	75	2	1
Hindu Society	200	0	2
Islamic Society	150	2	10
Jewish Society	130	0	3
Sikh Society	50	0	2
Interfaith	-	4	-
<b>Total</b>	665+*	8	19

\* Total includes registration for all societies except ASH, as their membership number is based on Facebook group data and accuracy of student membership is not possible.

Three types of faith/belief-related events occurred on the LSE campus during the 2012-13 academic year: society-specific events, society outreach events, and LSE-organized interfaith events. Society-specific events are defined as those intended by the society to be for society members. Society outreach events are defined as those intended by the society to engage students who are non-society members. While these events are, for the most part, open to non-society members, they are designed with the needs of members in mind. LSE-organized interfaith events are, as the name implies, organized by the institution and are designed with the intention of bringing together students of different faiths. Participant observation was conducted at all three types of events held on or in relation to the LSE campus during the 2012-2013 academic year. Sampling of events was determined largely by access. All interfaith events were attended. Society-specific events varied across societies. Catholic Society (CathSoc) events were not sampled because the researcher was unable to gain access to the society<sup>16</sup>. The small number of events sampled for the Hindu Society (HSoc), the Sikh Society (SSoc), and the Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society (ASH) is due to the limited number of society events and to access, respectively. Christian Union (CU) and Jewish Society (JSoc) events were limited due to what is often called ‘saturation’, as the society-

<sup>14</sup> Data on membership numbers provided by LSE Chaplaincy

<sup>15</sup> No official numbers were available from the institution. ASHS membership is estimated via the number of members registered on the society’s Facebook group.

<sup>16</sup> The Catholic Society was contacted via their Student Union email address, connecting on Facebook and messaging them about the research, and attending the end of their weekly mass where members were spoken with directly. No society officer or member responded to the researcher’s follow-ups.

specific events were highly similar and additional sampling did not provide new data (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000). Islamic Society (ISoc) sampling is significantly higher than with other societies due to the level of the society's activity – it holds multiple weekly planning meetings and organizes numerous events each week. ISoc officers invited the researcher to all committee meetings and outreach planning sessions, each of which produced insights and novel data (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000). In total, 27 events were sampled.

### **3.2.3 Observational Protocol Development**

The rationale underlying this thesis's approach is that group identity management and group decision-making processes can be observed in context via a structured analysis of intergroup behaviour. In order to observe such behaviour within the context of the LSE interfaith case study, a standardized observational protocol needed to be developed. This methodological tool applies the theory and principles advanced in the field of group dynamics (Fletcher et al., 2004; Undre, Sevdalis, Healey, Darzi, & Vincent, 2007; Yule, Flin, Paterson-Brown, & Maran, 2006). Applied psychologists have developed behavioural marker systems in order to observe group behaviour in real-life situations. The marker systems are used for evaluation purposes, ranging from teachers' and students' performance in the classroom (Kern, Moore, & Akillioglu, 2007; Rubie-Davies, 2007), to surgical team performance (Fletcher et al., 2004; Undre et al., 2007; Yule et al., 2006), and to adapting built environments to promote physical activity (Floyd, Taylor, & Whitt-Glover, 2009; Meyers et al., 2012; Saelens et al., 2006). The purpose of such an instrument is to define explicit characteristics of behavioural elements in order to guide the researcher during field site events (Kern et al., 2007). The findings are utilized for the development of theory, to give analysis of and feedback on group behaviour.

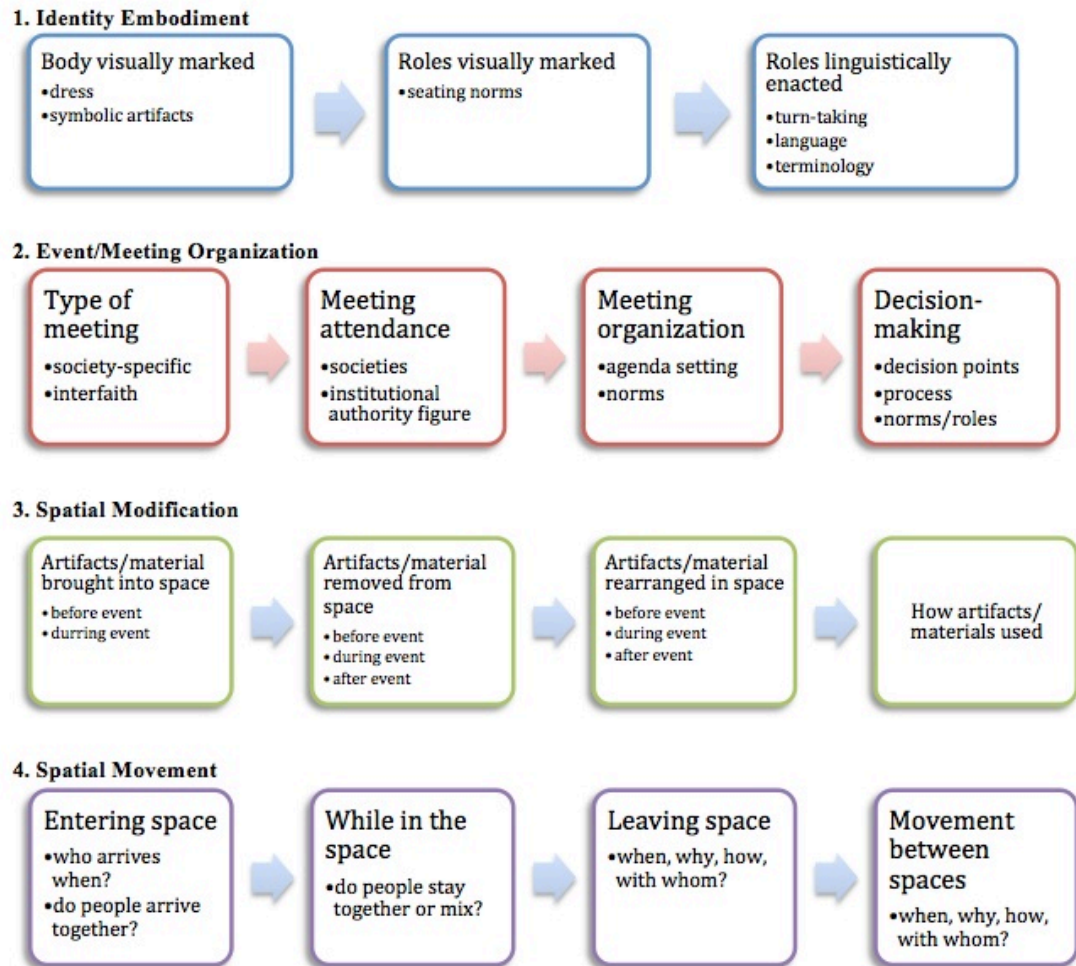
Following the process developed by Fletcher et al. (2004), the first step was to identify the observable characteristics (e.g., changing seating arrangements) for each behavioural element (e.g., spatial modification), which relate to the underlying central research questions. These observational characteristics serve as a means to structure the researcher's analysis of a group's interaction. Specific behaviours or events that are believed to be symbolic or important for group interaction are observed and outlined

using the framework structure. These observable characteristics and behavioural elements were derived from exploratory fieldwork conducted at the five interfaith events held during the 2011-2012 academic year. A preliminary thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was conducted in order to identify initial behavioural elements. This is consistent with other research using structured observational techniques (Hoffman, Crandall, & Shadbolt, 1998). Characteristics of each element category were then identified, as per behavioural protocol standards (Haney, Lumpe, & Czerniak, 2002; Kern et al., 2007; Rubie-Davies, 2007; Undre et al., 2007).

Kern et al. (2007) contend that the purpose of an observational instrument is to “delineate the specific skills or characteristics for each element in an effort to evaluate team/group functioning” (p.T1D-2). The definitions of the observational elements, however, still remained fuzzy, and are always somewhat objective. The task analysis development procedure outlined by Greenberg (2007) was applied to each characteristic in order to more fully define them. Task analysis was chosen because it has been shown to be effective in outlining and defining processes such as change (Greenberg, 2007; Pascual-Leone, Greenberg, & Pascual-Leone, 2009), job performance (Raduma-Tomás, Flin, Yule, & Close, 2011), and decision-making (Kleinmuntz & Schkade, 1993; Roth & Leslie, 1998). Each observational element was treated as a task for which a model was constructed based on the exploratory fieldwork. Image 3.1. shows the initial rational models for behavioural elements.



Image 3.1. Initial rational models for behavioural elements



This was incorporated into a preliminary observational protocol, which was then used to conduct an empirical task analysis in which samples of actual group behaviour were observed. Image 3.2. is the preliminary observational protocol.

Image 3.2. Preliminary observational protocol

Observational Theme	Use of Space	Notes
<b>Location of Space</b>		
Held on/off campus? Where?		
<b>Entering Space</b>		
When do individuals enter?		
Do individuals enter late?		
Procedure/How?		
<b>Modification of Space</b>		
Re-arrangement of furniture:		
Before meeting Starts		
During meeting		
End of meeting		
Are items removed?		
Are items brought in?		
Are non-furniture items in space used?		
Technical equipment		
Non tech equip		
<b>Location within Space</b>		
Do students sit alone or in groups?		
If there are groups, do they change?		
<b>Movement within Space</b>		
Is movement regulated?		
told where/asked		
is movement free		
Do students remain in one part of the room, or do they change locations?		
When do they move - what appears to be the cause (event(s) leading up)		
If students move, how often?		
If groups are formed, so students move between them?		
<b>Leaving Space</b>		
When do individuals leave?		
Who leaves?		
How?		

Meeting Activities	
Observational Theme	Notes
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	
Society-specific meeting?	
Interfaith Meeting?	
<b>Meeting Attendance</b>	
Who is attending the meeting?	
all members of one FS?	
members of different FS's?	
Chaplan/mediator/offical	
<b>Meeting Organization</b>	
Notifications about meeting?	
Is there an agenda?	
who set the agenda?	
format of agenda?	
Who starts the meeting?	
Ground rules for meeting?	
Turn-taking structure?	
Speaking regulations/expectations	
who speaks from each society?	
Other	
<b>Decision Making Structure</b>	
Format of group DM	
How are decision points identified?	
Vote? Debate? Email individually?	
<b>Identity Embodiment</b>	
<b>Observational Theme</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Participant Attire</b>	
Level of formality	
<b>Use of (non)faith symbols</b>	
(non)faith sepecific dress	
How many people?	
What (non)faith?	
Male/female/ungendered	
Item of dress	
<b>Use of (non)faith related objects</b>	
How many people?	
What (non)faith?	
Male/female/ungendered	
Holy book(s)/scriptures	
Prayer aide(s)/items	
Other	

These observations were then broken into “meaningful units of common process” (Greenberg, 2007, p.20) which were examined for patterns of behaviour that could be compared across events. Here there are four such units:

1. identity embodiment
2. event/meeting organisation
3. spatial modification
4. spatial movement.

These are explained in detail below. The observational elements and their corresponding characteristics and tasks were then integrated into the social psychological theory, as outlined in Chapter 2, in order to better understand their conceptual significance. The following sections outline the conceptual significance and codes for each thematic element.

### 3.2.3.1 Behavioural Element: Identity Embodiment

*Table 3.3. Identity embodiment characteristics and corresponding research questions*

Characteristic	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic cues</li> <li>• Use of faith symbols</li> <li>• Gendering (Gender differences)</li> </ul>	<p>RQ2: How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p> <p>RQ3: What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?</p>

The first element focuses on how individual members of the different societies choose to display their group identity. Representations are inherently social (Howarth, 2006a; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Moscovici, 1988). They are communicative and the nature of the communication that makes social representations possible should be included in their analysis (Gillespie, 2008; Howarth, 2011). The physical embodiment of identity plays into this – it is nonverbal communication that expresses group membership. An individual's clothing (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Vassenden & Andersson, 2011; Wagner et al., 2012) and even his skin colour (Howarth, 2002a, 2002b; Vassenden & Andersson, 2011) communicate information to others about his identity. This information is, however, understood through the lens of the other's worldview. Identity embodiment, when viewed in relation to Installation Theory (Lahlou, 2008), can also be understood as part of the physical level of a contact situation, influencing what individuals think is possible within the context of contact.

Embodiment of religious identity is more prominent in some religions than others, and can act as a very visual division of in- and out-groups. This can be observed via dress, use of holy texts or aides (i.e., a rosary), but is also extended to language. Language refers to both a language itself, like Hebrew or Arabic, but also to religious-specific terminology. During the exploratory fieldwork stage, it was noted that language had the ability to mark an individual as either an in- or out-group member, and thus could exclude and include. The use of such language assumes a level of knowledge on the part of the participant, a knowledge that may or may not be there, and can thus unintentionally exclude.

Gender is included in this element because of the ways in which it became significant during the exploratory fieldwork through the embodiment of gendered identities and also gendered forms of religious expression. Gender differences were noted in terms of dress, role of participation, and location within the space used. This gendering of events relates to the group norms of each society, as behaviours are reflective of group values and beliefs (Hogg et al., 2004; Turner, 1982), which in turn shape social representations on both a material and psychological level (Howarth, 2010). Gender can also serve as a visual divide in instances of religious dress, like the wearing of a veil in Islamic faith, though the meanings behind the use of such a visual divide can vary greatly (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Wagner et al., 2012).

### 3.2.3.2 *Behavioural Element: Event/Meeting Organization*

*Table 3.4. Event/meeting organization characteristics and corresponding research questions*

Characteristic	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn-taking</li> <li>• Speaking regulations</li> <li>• Agenda setting</li> <li>• Task delegation</li> <li>• Submission/discussion of event proposals</li> <li>• Event advertising/notification</li> <li>• Event attendance</li> </ul>	<p>RQ2: How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p> <p>RQ3: What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?</p>

The second element addresses the third level of the Installation Theory (Lahlou, 2011; 2008). Social regulations control how an installation is run (ibid). In relation to the LSE case study, this applies to both the LSE institutional level and to the society level (i.e., how each society structures its events). In order to better understand

institutional restraints, the element is broken down into several questions. The first asks who organized the event. This speaks to who the major stakeholder is and who had control over the event – who was invited, how it was run, and where it was located. Major stakeholders function as the driving force behind the shaping of the event's social reality (Elchereth et al., 2011). Participation is fundamentally about “power and agency” (Howarth et al., 2015). In controlling who has access to an event, and to what extent, the stakeholders are exerting power; they are promoting the values and interests of their group while restricting other groups' ability to do so. Examining the structure and ground rules allows insight into how the organizer is shaping the social reality of the event. How an event is organized is reflective of group norms, as behaviours are reflective of group values and beliefs (Hogg et al., 2004; Turner, 1982). In noting the contextualization of social relations, one can see how dynamic social identities are shaped by in- and out-group relations. This speaks to the social belief structures, or the enacted social structural variables, of each group (Hogg et al., 1995).

Secondly, who is in attendance – via invitation/notification of the organizer – accounts for the extent of the potential for intergroup contact at the event. Who is and is not invited, and then who ultimately attends, is reflective of in- and out-group boundaries. Noting who has access to participate is important because it speaks to who has access and ability to influence the co-construction of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995). Knowledge is reflexive of identities and their socio-historical context (Wagner et al., 1999), so in seeing who has routine access to events speaks to who has historically shaped the meaning of those interactions. This ties into the second level of the Installation Theory, in that it addresses who is seen to belong in the space (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). Identities are representations that function as social markers (Orr, 2007), dictating the boundaries of social reality. Accounting for invitation and attendance also speaks to the power relations between attendees and can give potential insights into inter- and intra-group hierarchies and group bias (Brown, 2000). While the power to include via invitation speaks to the construction of inter-group boundaries and notions of who does and does not belong, noting non-participation is just as important. Declining or ignoring an invitation is a means of resistance. For stigmatized groups, it can hold the ability to redefine the context (Hopkins, 2011b) because in resisting, groups can produce alternative representations

(Howarth et al., 2015), communicating information about the nature of intergroup relations.

### 3.2.3.3 Behavioural Element: Spatial Modification

*Table 3.5. Spatial modification characteristics and corresponding research questions*

Characteristic	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing items into the space</li> <li>• Removing items from the space</li> <li>• Rearrangement of items/furniture</li> </ul>	<p>RQ2: How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p> <p>RQ4: How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p> <p>RQ5: How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith groups in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p>

The third element is concerned with participants' enacted agency. Our understandings and experiences of self and our relations to others are situated (Dixon et al., 2007; Dixon, Tredoux, Durrheim, Finchilescu, & Clack, 2008; Moscovici, 1988). What people do within a context functions on three levels: physical, psychological, and institutional (Lahlou, 2008). Social representations drive the psychological level; while the space influences what is possible within it, social representations shape what people think can be done within the space (Lahlou, 2008). The campus faith community uses a wide range of school spaces for society-specific and interfaith meetings and events. Societies have some control over which type of room they book and how they arrange the space, though some rooms offer very little flexibility. Noting if or how the space is (re)arranged before, during, and after an event, as well as if items are removed or brought in, addresses the ways participants adapt the physical environment for their particular needs. The environment of a space affords certain actions within it, and influences not only individuals' behaviour, but also psychological processes (Lahlou, 2008; 2011). Participants, when acting on the physical environment, are reshaping what can and cannot be done within the space.

The registered student faith societies at LSE are co-creating the interfaith environment on campus, and are thus co-creating the nature of the interfaith social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Moscovici, 1988). Sense making is a collective interpretation of exchanges, leading to shared experience (Korsgaard et al., 2008), and the shared context is a part of this. Each group contributes to the understanding of the environment, working within the confines of institutional restrictions, like LSE and

Student Union regulations, but also within their own society's norms. Environmental usage and adaption trends across society and interfaith has the potential to speak to group norms. Individuals internalize group norms (Hogg et al., 2004; Turner, 1982), so trends in how individuals use or adapt space may speak to what groups expect out of an event. In the case of interfaith events, most of which are organized by the school Chaplain, it may also speak to institutional norms and values (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Social categories are matched to social contexts (Andreouli & Howarth, 2012). Identity salience is contingent upon which identity makes the context the most meaningful; people tend to attempt to change an intergroup contact situation in order to fit their needs and benefit their group (Hogg & Terry, 2000). As was seen in the exploratory fieldwork, groups reframed the Chaplain's attempt at intergroup integration via seating patterns in accordance to pre-existing group boundaries. This speaks to how entrenched social representations can be, making them hard to change (Jodelet, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007), but also to the fact that they are dynamic and open to change (Howarth, 2006a). In acting upon the environment created by the Chaplain, society members were exerting some agency via reframing the event context. The possibility of similar actions in the future needed to be accounted for in the observational protocol.

#### 3.2.3.4 *Behavioural Element: Spatial Movement*

*Table 3.6. Spatial movement characteristics and corresponding research questions*

Characteristic	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How space is entered/left</li> <li>• How is movement between spaces managed</li> </ul>	<p>RQ4: How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p> <p>RQ5: How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith groups in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?</p>

The fourth element is concerned with how participants engage with the physical environment. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), group membership is the basis of identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Researchers interested in notions of space and place have drawn on the SIT literature, emphasizing that social identities have a spatial element (Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Hopkins & Dixon, 2006 citing Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Rose, 1995). The concept of movement into, out of, and within space relate both to the spatial element of identity and representations of other groups. Who



individuals choose to congregate with during an event often relates to their understandings of their social reality and its boundaries (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006).

An individual's social identity responds to her/his immediate surroundings, meaning that behaviours are contextually contingent (Hogg et al., 1995 citing Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987; van Kippenberg & Ellemers, 1993). This requires an understanding of how structural variables and social belief structures enter the picture. Group affiliations are one possible way to start exploring this. Individuals internalize group values and norms, incorporating them into their own identities (Hogg et al., 2004; Turner, 1982). This is important in contact situations because values and beliefs are linked to behaviours (Bargh et al., 1996; Orr, 2007; Verplanken & Holland, 2002), thus making it essential to understand which values and beliefs are being triggered. This speaks to which potential social representation is being triggered at that moment.

The first characteristic, 'how space is entered and left,' seeks to account for individuals' potential group membership(s) affiliation at the beginning and at the end of the participants' time in the space. The second characteristic, 'How is movement between spaces managed,' seeks to account for any changes or fluctuations between group membership(s) while in the space or moving to another space during the same event. This is done in order to track how permeable group boundaries might be (i.e., are groups set throughout or do people move between them?), and if there might be shifts in individuals' identity salience. These two characteristics also attempt to account for how participants physically locate themselves in relation to others throughout a meeting or event. This speaks not only to group identity salience, but also to how group boundaries are created, maintained, or blurred (Gillespie et al., 2012; Riesch, 2010), and networks created (Urry, 2011).

The thematic elements and their characteristics were translated into an observational protocol, formatted to serve as field note guidelines for participant observation events. The protocol has separate forms for each element, broken down into characteristics in the first column. The second column provided note space for observations, and the third column provided space for notes regarding conceptual significance in order to aid the development of a coding frame throughout the course of fieldwork. A print out of the protocol was taken to each event. Blank paper was

incorporated into the protocol to leave room for additional notes relating to the content and flow of conversations during each meeting or event. All notifications or advertisements for each meeting or event were included in the completion of the protocol and filed with each completed form. Photographs were taken at events, as organizers allowed. In instances where this was not possible and event proceedings were documented on societies' public Facebook pages, event photos were obtained via the public event pages. Image 3.3. is the complete final observational protocol.

*Image 3.3. Finalised observational protocol*

Observational Theme	Use of Space	Conceptual Significance
Location of Space	Held on/off campus? Where?	
<b>Entering Space</b>		
When do individuals enter?		
Do individuals enter late?		
Procedure/How?		
<b>Modification of Space</b>		
Re-arrangement of furniture:		
Before meeting Starts		
During meeting		
End of meeting		
Are items removed?		
Are items brought in?		
Are non-furniture items in space used?		
Technical equipment		
Non tech equip		
<b>Location within Space</b>		
Do students sit alone or in groups?		
If there are groups, do they change?		
<b>Movement within Space</b>		
regulated?		
told where/asked		
is movement free		
Do students remain in one part of the room, or do they change locations?		
When do they move - what appears to be the cause (event(s) leading		
If students move, how often?		
If groups are formed, so students move between them?		
<b>Leaving Space</b>		
When do individuals leave?		
Who leaves?		
How?		

<b>Movement Between Spaces</b>		
Reason given for move How does movement occur? Walking/driving/public transit?		
How do individuals organize for the movement?		
How do individuals organize during the movement?		
Does this organization change? Do individuals mix formations?		
<b>Identity Embodiment</b>		
<b>Observational Theme</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Conceptual Significance</b>
<b>Use of (non)faith symbols</b>		
(non)faith sepecific dress		
%/# of people?		
What (non)faith?		
Male/female/ungendered		
Item of dress		
Use of (non)faith related objects		
%/# of people?		
What (non)faith?		
Male/female/ungendered		
Holy book(s)/scriptures		
Prayer aide(s)/items		
Other		
<b>Gender</b>		
Gendered use of space?		
Gendered turn-taking/speaking? Asking questions		
Gendered roles in event org - who planned, who runs, who enforces rules, etc.?		
<b>Language</b>		
What language(s) are spoken?		
When did language shifts occur?		
How are different languages utilized, to what end? For what purpose?		

### 3.2.4 Procedure

Initial access to the interfaith community was gained through the LSE Interfaith Chaplain and by contacting all of the faith societies registered with the Student Union via their union email addresses. Responses were received from the Sikh Society (SSoc), the Christina Union (CU), and the Islamic Society (ISoc), all inviting the researcher to join their weekly meetings. Access to the Jewish Society (JSoc) was obtained via self-introductions at interfaith events. Access to the Hindu Society (HSoc) and the Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society (ASH) were gained via attending the societies' public events, as advertised on their Student Union affiliated public Facebook pages, and the

researcher introducing herself to the organizers. The researcher publicly introduced herself as a researcher and disclosed the research aims, verbally and with a printed document outlining the project<sup>17</sup>. This was done through both introductory emails and when visiting each society for the first time in person. Informed consent<sup>18</sup> was obtained before attending any closed meetings, such as those held by the ISoc's head committee or the Interfaith Forum. Table 3.7. outlines the reasoning behind observing both society-specific and interfaith events.

*Table 3.7. Research questions addressed by participant observation event types*

Research Question Addressed	Event Type	Rationale
RQ2: How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?	Society-specific	Internal managing of group identity.
	Interfaith	Enacting identity management in intergroup contact situation.
RQ3: What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?	Society-specific	Internal understanding of group difference/stigma.
	Interfaith	Co-construction of difference and stigma.
RQ4: How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?	Society-specific	Internal understanding/use of space as basis for comparison.
	Interfaith	Co-construction of interfaith context.
RQ5: How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith groups in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?	Society-specific	Internal identity management and understanding/use of space as basis for comparison.
	Interfaith	Co-construction of interfaith context.

The researcher sat on the periphery at larger events, sitting either in the back or to the side, behind event attendees. This was done in order to minimize the impact of note taking on the event participants. At smaller events where this was not possible, she sat within the group where it was designated appropriate by the attendees. For example, she sat on the edge of the sisters' seating areas at all Islamic Society events, so as to conform to group norms. Places at these events were usually offered – when she was not offered a designated seat, she would ask where would be the most appropriate place to sit.

Participants informed the researcher during the exploratory fieldwork stage that societies' activities on Facebook were central to their events – it serves as a social

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 2

space in which events are advertised, reminders posted, and pictures, videos, and comments of past events are shared. Each faith society was approached in person or via email or Facebook message by the researcher, informed of the research project, and asked if they would allow the researcher to join their Facebook group, whether private or public. All groups gave permission, and their activities were followed through the researcher's Facebook stream. The Jewish Society and the Catholic Society's group pages are private, so while their posts were followed in order for the researcher to know about their activities on campus, the content of their Facebook posts are not included in the analysis. It is logical to assume that society members expect their communications within a closed group to be private, thus including this content in the analysis would violate informed consent. Posting informed consent notices on their group pages was not done because it posed the risk of both alienating society members and also changing the very nature of their social media space. All other faith societies run an official society Facebook page, which is overseen by society officers and are public to all Facebook users. Event advertisements from these pages were included in the research as they are available in the public domain (Eysenbach & Till, 2001).

Society Facebook pages/groups were monitored on a weekly basis and screen shots were taken of event advertisements, postings relating to them, and all of the groups' public pages wall activity. This included comments posted in relation to these advertisements or questions, concerns, and links posted to the groups' walls. Screen shots were saved as JPG files, labelled, dated, and stored on a password-secured hard drive. Cross-society posting was also monitored, though only two instances occurred during the 2012-2013 academic year, both of which involved the Christian Union advertising outreach events on the Atheist group's open page. All publicly posted advertisements were included for the sole purpose of better understanding the target audience for society events and how societies attempted to reach them. The content of the advertisements and any comments made on them have been excluded from the analysis because they fall outside of the theoretical scope of the research questions, in that they involve contact situations in social media space and not in the built environment. The content of the advertisements have been anonymized, in that all information that could lead to individual's identification via internet search engines have been removed to the best of the researcher's ability (IRB Advisor, 2010).

### **3.2.5 Researcher Impact**

The researcher was reflective about the impact of her presence on faith society members as much as possible during the course of her fieldwork. Permission to attend events was obtained in advance from all societies, and when in attendance the researcher either occupied a pre-determined space assigned by the society or in the back or to the far side of the space. None of the events were recorded, as bringing equipment to faith-related events could have proven intimidating to some society members, and intrusive to others. The presence of the researcher most certainly had an impact on society members, as she was clearly not a member of the group, nor did she engage in event proceedings at any time during her observations. The researcher became well known to members of the university faith community over the course of the 2012-2013 academic year, and was often recognized outside of the context of faith-related events. This most certainly had an impact on the students that she interacted with, though most likely did not directly impact the nature of society outreach and interfaith event proceedings, as these events were explicitly intended to integrate members of different groups. However, this interaction no doubt also played a key role in building trust and enabling access in the research context.

### **3.2.6 Analysis Procedure**

Verbal data and descriptive data were handled separately and then compared in an effort to gain a more complex view of intersociety relations. Events were not audio or visually recorded, as doing so could have disrupted events that are sensitive in nature, and often considered to be sacred by some members. All data were thus recorded via hand. The descriptive data were recorded within the structured sections of the protocol. The verbal data, on the other hand, were recorded in the ‘additional notes’ section of the observational protocol as they fell outside of the protocol’s scope, meaning its collection was unstructured. Due to these limitations, the verbal data cannot stand on their own, but do provide a fruitful means for contextualizing the descriptive data and thus ensuring a fuller picture of intersociety relations.

#### 3.2.6.1 *Verbal data*

The data discussed in the first study was collected during the observation of the overt behaviours of society members, or communication between them, during the course of fieldwork in the 2013-2013 academic year. All protocols were coded by hand. The verbal data were first coded attributionally to account for characteristic variations in type of event and the attendees. The type of event (society organized or institutionally organized), participant characteristics (male/female, group affiliation), and where each event was located (on or off campus) were noted. This enabled the researcher to classify events as either intra- or intergroup based, and led to the identification of two types of intergroup events: society outreach events and institutionally organized interfaith events. The verbal data was then structurally coded for basic key words/concepts derived from the five research questions that provided the basis for the development of the observational protocol.

Key words/concepts included: identity, group identity, stigma, difference, relationships, space, spatial factors, decisions, and decision-making. Each instance was logged in an Excel file, one spread sheet per code, and all instances of cross-coding were tracked. These codes were then considered in relation to the behavioural elements of the protocol and the initial rational models used to build it. A second cycle of coding was conducted in order to refine the initial codes in relation to the behavioural elements and their corresponding rational models and to identify initial patterns.

A new spreadsheet was created for each new code and existing code spread sheets were marked to indicated each instance of the revised version of the code. All instances of each code in the data were logged and instances of cross-coding were noted. This process was repeated a second and third time, each time two weeks apart, in order to ensure as much intraobserver coding stability as possible (Krippendorff, 2004). This combined theoretical and inductive approach was taken in order to explore theoretical interest as outlined in the observational protocol, while also leaving the coding open to previously unconsidered categories to emerge from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Such a hybrid approach has been shown to be useful when working within a theoretical framework, allowing for theory to be a central concern in the analytic process while also including themes derived directly from the data via

inductive coding (Fereday & Muir-cochrane, 2006). A codebook was created in order to clearly define each code, as well as provide datum examples of each code<sup>19</sup>. The initial patterns were then grouped into basic themes and mapped according to Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic networks strategy, identifying organizing themes from the basic themes. These were grouped together and global themes emerged<sup>20</sup>. Thematic maps and their corresponding datum examples were then reviewed by the researcher and an objective third party and the networks were further refined. This process was repeated with a second objective third party for inter-coder reliability, resulting further refinement of the thematic maps, followed by a final reworking by the researcher.

### 3.2.6.2 *Descriptive Data*

The attributional coding conducted prior to the coding of the verbal data was used to separate intra- and intergroup based events. The descriptive data from each event were provisionally coded based on the behavioural elements outlined in the observational protocol, with each element connected to the corresponding research question<sup>21</sup>. Society-specific events and interfaith events were handled separately, as society-specific events involved intragroup processes while interfaith events involved intergroup processes. Each behavioural element was treated separately; each behaviour recorded in every behavioural element section was logged in an Excel file with a separate spreadsheet for each element. This first cycle of coding also included inductive coding in order to account for any pertinent data that fell outside of the protocol's scope that was recorded in the open notes section of each protocol. Task analysis, which was used in the development of the protocol, was applied to more fully describe the breakdown of groups' behaviour relating to each element. As with the observational protocol, Greenberg's (2007) task analysis development procedure was applied to each behavioural element and the corresponding codes from the first cycle of coding in order to more fully define each element. Task analysis was chosen for this purpose because it has been shown to be effective in outlining and defining processes such as change (Greenberg, 2007; Pascual-Leone et al., 2009), job performance (Raduma-Tomás et al., 2011), and decision-making (Kleinmuntz & Schkade, 1993; Roth & Leslie, 1998). Each observational element and its corresponding codes were treated as a task,

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 4

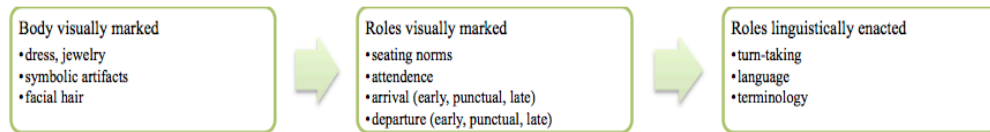
<sup>21</sup> See Appendix 5



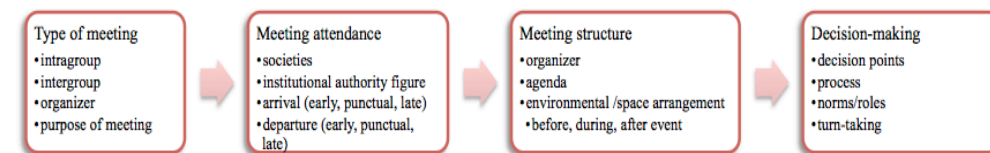
compared to the initial rational models developed during the observational protocol development phase, and refined into more detailed rational models in order to better grasp the operationalization of each element. Image 3.4. is the final rational models.

*Image 3.4. Final stage rational models*

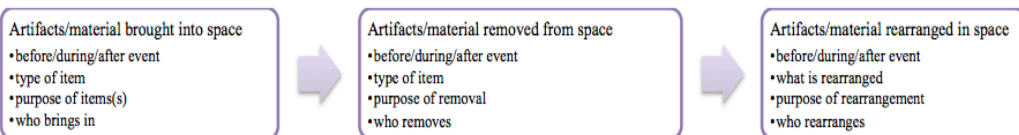
**1. Identity Embodiment**



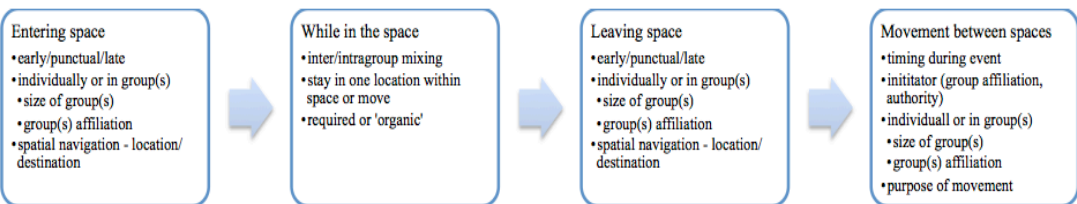
**2. Event/Meeting Organization**



**3. Spatial Modification**



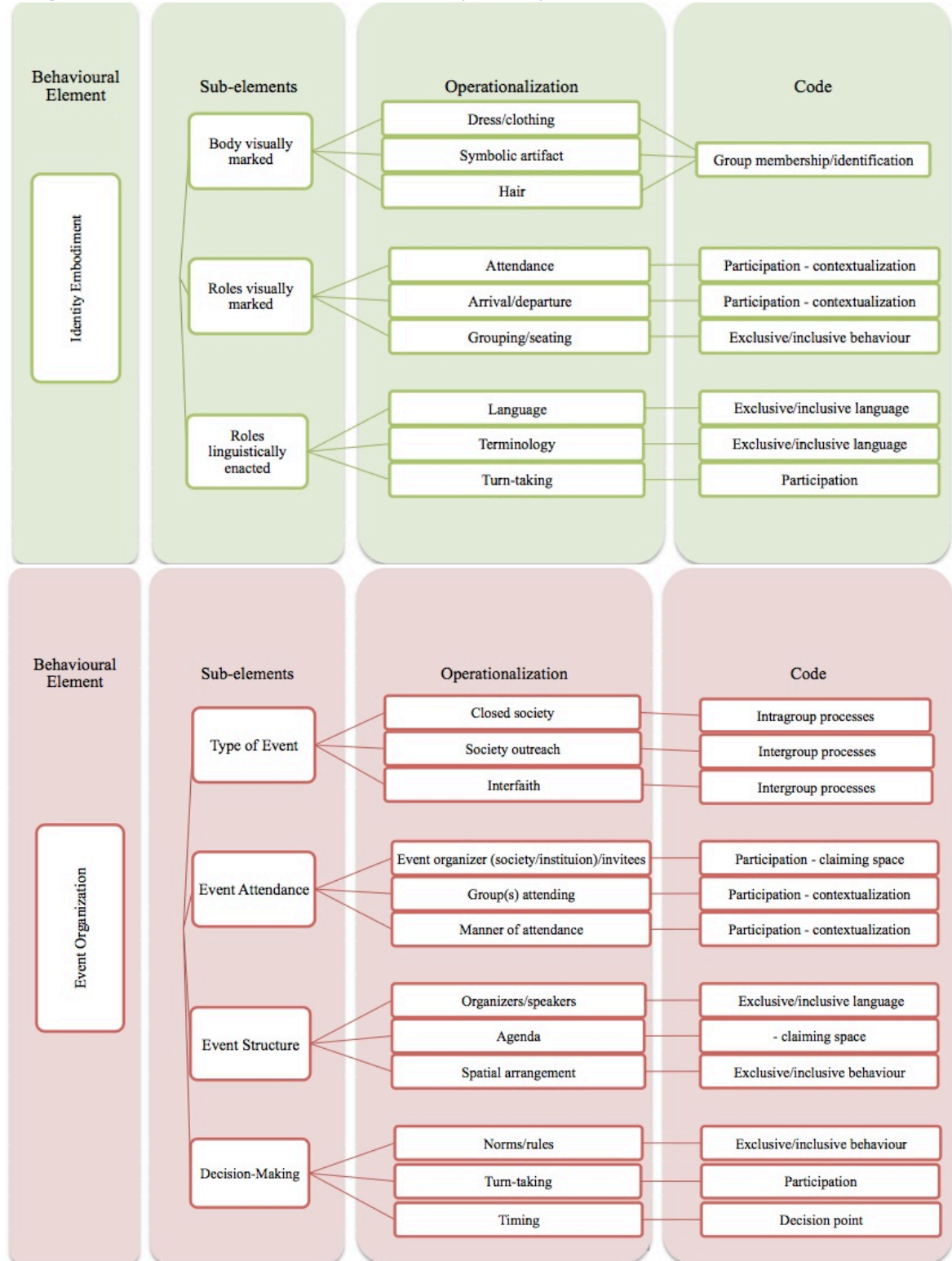
**4. Spatial Movement**



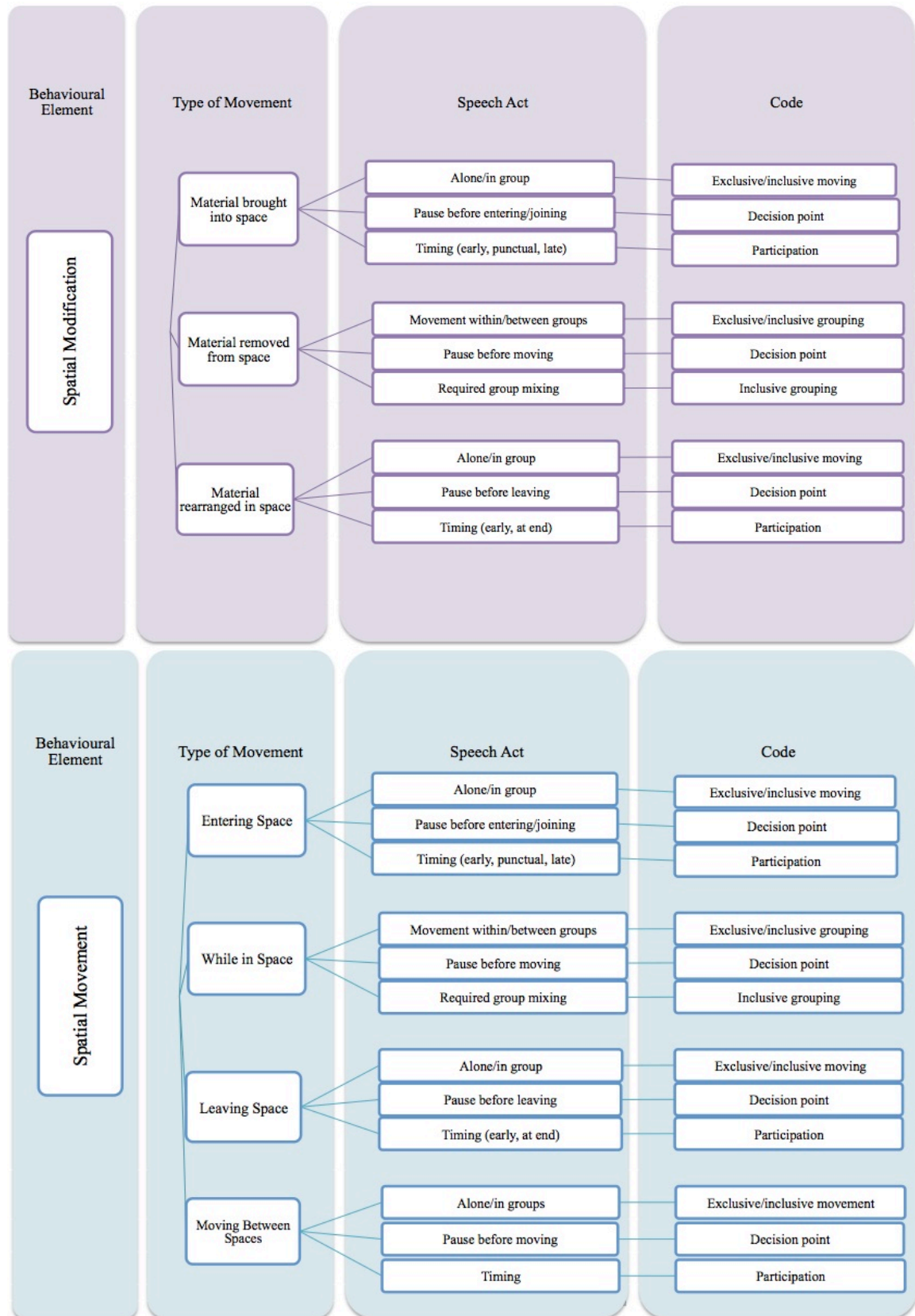
A second cycle of coding was conducted in order to refine the initial set of codes and to identify initial patterns in the behavioural data. Behavioural elements and their rational models were compared in order to identify potential cross-category patterns and to more explicitly define each code. The codes and corresponding behavioural elements and rational models were considered in light of the verbal data coding and thematic maps in order to account for the context-specific nature of the behaviours and to “operationalize [the] dynamic interrelational aspects” of the rational models (Pascual-Leone et al., 2009, p.536). The data were organized into initial themes. The initial

themes were then regrouped and refined and subcodes identified<sup>22</sup>. Image 3.5. shows the final version of behavioural models including thematic elements and codes.

*Image 3.5. Behavioural elements with explicit operationalization and codes*



<sup>22</sup> See Appendix # for the second cycle coding scheme for each behavioural element of the observational protocol.



In the third cycle of coding, the protocol's behavioural elements were then "codified into quantifiable terms" while simultaneously maintaining the significant qualitative relations between them (Pascual-Leone et al., 2009, p.536). This was done to account for code frequencies. For example, the number of times an individual or a group paused before selecting a seat or seats was counted at each event. Counts from each type of event (intragroup events, society-organized intergroup events, and institutionally organized intergroup events) were tabulated separately and examined in relation to the verbal data from each event in order to maintain the qualitative relations. It is important to note that the qualitative relations of each code were maintained to avoid, as best as possible, misleading results that can arise from "assessing behaviours in terms of frequencies" (Tschan et al., 2011). Contextual knowledge is vital, making it extremely important to account for contextual variations between events. Society events were broken down into 'closed' events and 'outreach' events (intra- and intergroup), because events that were intended for society members only fundamentally differed in nature from society events intended to attract individuals who were not society members. It became clear that there were significant contextual differences between society outreach events and interfaith events that made the code frequency variations meaningful. This process was repeated a second and third time, each time two weeks apart, in order to ensure as much intraobserver coding stability as possible (Krippendorff, 2004), resulting in further refining the code book. Table 3.8. is the finalized code book.

Table 3.8. Finalized code book for Study 1

Theme	Code	Definition	Example
Participation	Advertisement	Notifications concerning an event	Society Facebook page, Facebook event invitation Posters/fliers around campus Email list, word of mouth
	Group(s) Invited	Groups that are invited to an event by the organizer	Which Facebook group(s) are included in invitation/flier (posted on group wall) Which societies are included in email notification
	Group(s) Attending	Groups that are represented by event attendees	Institutional figures present at event (Chaplain, school Director, Student Union Officers) Faith society members who attend (officers, individuals known by researcher to be members) Attendance rates of each group per event
	Early/punctual Arrival	Group member(s) arrive before or as an event starts	10 members of the Jewish Society are sitting in the back left-hand corner of the Holocaust Memorial service seating 5 minutes before the beginning of the event Student Union officer arrives to 'What is Interfaith?' event 8 minutes early to help the Chaplain.
	Late Arrival	Group member(s) arrive after an event starts	2 ASHS members arrive after a 'Radicalization on Campuses' starts and move quietly to the back of the room
	Early departure	Group member(s) leave an event early	Hindu Society officer excuses herself 15 minutes before the end of 'Sex Before Marriage' discussion, and quietly leaves the room
Inclusive Actions	Inclusive Movement	Movement through space so as to incorporate others	Turning around to face person when talking Inviting people to eat (verbal & motion) Socialization break - mixing, moving between groups or individuals Moving to a different space with members of other groups
	Inclusive Grouping	Congregating in such a way that incorporates others	Standing at refreshment table with members of different groups Talking with members of different societies in standing groups Welcoming new arrivals into standing groups
	Inclusive Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to incorporate others	Moving seats to make room for others Sitting with or selecting a seat amongst members of different group(s) Arranging seats to mix individuals together
	Required Group Mixing	Intergroup mixing initiated/required by institutional authority figure	Chaplain requesting event speakers from different faith societies to sit together Discussions between members of different faith societies initiated by Chaplain or SU officer
	Mixing with Authority Figure	Grouping or sitting with an institutional representative	One+ society member standing and/or speaking to the Chaplain One+ society member standing and/or speaking to a Student Union rep
	Inclusive Language	Language use that all participants understand	Speaker uses English (first language of UK) No use of religion-specific terminology requiring prior knowledge
Protective Actions	Protective Movement	Movement through space so as to omit others	Moving only with members of own group Moving to separate self or group from others
	Protective Grouping	Congregating in such a way that omits others	Congregating only with members of own group Grouping for exclusionary activity (e.g., going for dinner or a drink) Standing so as to separate self or group from others
	Protective Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to omit others	Sitting only with members of one's own group Moving seats resulting in the exclusion of others Arranging/taking seats resulting in the formation of separate groups
	Protective Language	Language use that requires prior knowledge	Use of language other than English (not all participants in UK may understand) – count per speaker Use of religion-specific terminology that requires prior knowledge – count per speaker or event agenda item
Decision-Point	Pause before sitting	Momentary gap in time before individual or group selects a seat	Individual society member stands still and looks around room before marking a seat with her bag Group of male members of the Islamic Society stand still and ask if the line of seats are a "brothers' row"
	Pause before grouping	Momentary gap in time before individual joins a group	Individual stops upon entering the room, looks around, and then moves towards a group of people at the refreshment table A female arrives to a Sikh Society event late, enters the door quietly and stands still before placing her things along the wall and joining a group of women sitting on the floor who are meditating.
	Pause before moving	Momentary gap in time before individual or group moves into, through, or out of a space	A group of two members of the Catholic Society enter the Chaplaincy, stand in the doorway for several seconds looking in at the people who have arrived, then enter the room and move to the back.



### **3.3 Study II: LSE Student Focus Groups & Intuitional Management Interviews**

The second phase of this research consists of structured interviews conducted with LSE managers and focus groups conducted with LSE students during the 2013-14 academic year. This section will first outline the phase two design and rationale. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the corpus construction process for interviews and focus groups. The materials and procedures for management interviews will be outlined, followed by those used for student focus groups. This section will close by addressing the implications of the methodological design as well as researcher impact.

#### **3.3.1 Research design**

The LSE Student Centre opened in November 2013, at which point the Chaplaincy moved into the new Faith Centre and students were able to start using the new space. The Chaplaincy and the Interfaith Forum agreed to and published online a 'Faith Centre Covenant,' which stipulates guidelines for the use of the new space. Student faith societies started to develop routines during the 2014 Lent Term, establishing regular meeting times and booking society activities in the centre. Phase two data collection was conducted during the 2013-14 academic year. LSE managers involved in either developing or running the new centre were interviewed over the course of the year, while focus groups were conducted with LSE students during the first term of the centre's use (Lent 2014), as students started to negotiate its use. This was done to better understand the institutional perspectives behind the development and management of the new space as well as how students were making sense of the transition process, negotiating the space, and establishing social norms. These interviews and focus groups thus address the project's research questions. Image 3.6. is the architectural layout of the new centre.



as well as those of LSE students. Past research conducted in an educational context found that a data collection strategy of one-to-one interviews with authority figures combined with student focus groups was a fruitful means of accessing both institutional and student perspectives (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Howarth, 2002b). Interviewing is a method shown to lend insight into individuals' experiences, perspectives, motivations and attitudes (Lewis et al., 2011). LSE managers have extremely busy schedules which can make data collection difficult, so one-to-one interviews were the best means by which to access these individuals' perspectives. Conducting student focus groups is a means of exploring participant's perspectives, "allowing researchers to elicit information or explore attitudes that are not easily accessible through observation alone" (Tonkiss, 2004, p.197).

Focus groups are a useful methodological tool for the second study of this project for two reasons. First, they have proven to be a successful method when research involves exploring socially constructed meanings (Markova, Linell, Grossen, & Orvig, 2007; Tonkiss, 2004; Waterton & Wynne, 1999) and socially negotiated identities (Howarth, 2002b). Focus groups put social interaction at the heart of the research, in that they enable the researcher to tap into the interactive nature of the generation of social meanings, tapping into data that would otherwise be inaccessible to methods that use the individual as the basic unit of analysis (Tonkiss, 2004). Focus group participants are creating meaning together. Meaning is socially constructed during the session, thus putting the research participants in control of data generation. They provide insight into the relational nature of belief construction, a social process in which meanings and identities are negotiated (Crossley, 2002; J. Kitzinger & Faqhuar, 1999; Waterton & Wynne, 1999).

Secondly, they are particularly beneficial to this study as they explore inter-group contact, fitting into the study's theoretical framework. Moscovici (1984) speaks of the 'thinking society,' in which opinions are formed outside of the individual, out in the world through interacting with others on a daily basis. Focus groups are, essentially, "the thinking society in miniature" (Farr, 1995, p.6). In essence, they allow the researcher to explore how participants transfer and develop meaning as a group, i.e., how knowledge is formed and transformed by the group (Markova et al., 2007).



While focus groups with students were feasible, arranging a focus group of LSE managers who were involved in the development and running of the Faith Centre was not a practical option. The staff members involved are high up in the administration of the school and thus have extremely limited availability. For this reason, one-to-one interviews were conducted instead. Interviews and focus groups have been shown to be a complementary data collection strategy, as interviews are a useful means of eliciting divergent understandings (Tonkiss, 2004) and triangulating the data for generalizability (Flick, 1992). It is important to note, however, that one-to-one interviews and focus groups are “different contexts for the production of meaning and the shaping of discourse,” and so the analysis must reflect this differentiation in meaning making (Tonkiss, 2004, p.197).

### **3.3.3 Corpus Construction**

A theoretical sampling strategy was adopted, both for the focus groups and the one-to-one interviews (Tonkiss, 2004). One-to-one interview participants were identified via snowballing, starting with the LSE Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor. Through speaking with him, the researcher learned of other administrative staff that were involved in the development and opening of the Faith Centre. Initial interviews with administrative staff identified additional school staff that were involved, ranging from positions involving estate development, student relations, and overall school management. Seven individuals in total were identified, though one had since left The LSE and was unable to schedule an interview.

Focus group participants were selected from the student population on the basis of their relationship to faith/religious belief: students of faith who had used the centre and had not used the centre, students without a specific religious affiliation who had used the centre and had not used the centre, and students who actively identify as atheist. This was done to explore how students with different belief affiliations talked about and made sense of both the new Faith Centre and the concept of interfaith. Students were recruited via a three-pronged approach. Fliers were posted across campus, as well as in the Faith Centre, to recruit any student who might see them. Students from the faith societies and the Atheist Humanist and Secularist Society were directly recruited via Facebook postings and in-person visits to their events. And lastly,

general population students (those not affiliated with a society) were recruited via course seminars. While it has been argued that members of a focus group should be homogenous and unknown to each other as to avoid established power relations within natural groups (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan & Krueger, 1997; Morgan, 1997), this was not possible for this study due to the limited sampling pool of students who would be interesting in discussing faith related issues. While not all focus group participants knew each other directly, they knew of each other via their student faith society affiliations or via courses. Kitzinger (1994) argues that such relationships can be beneficial to focus group research, as participants who know each other can “relate each other’s comments to actual incidents in their shared daily lives,” giving the researcher insight into differences between what participants say they do and what they actually do (p.105).

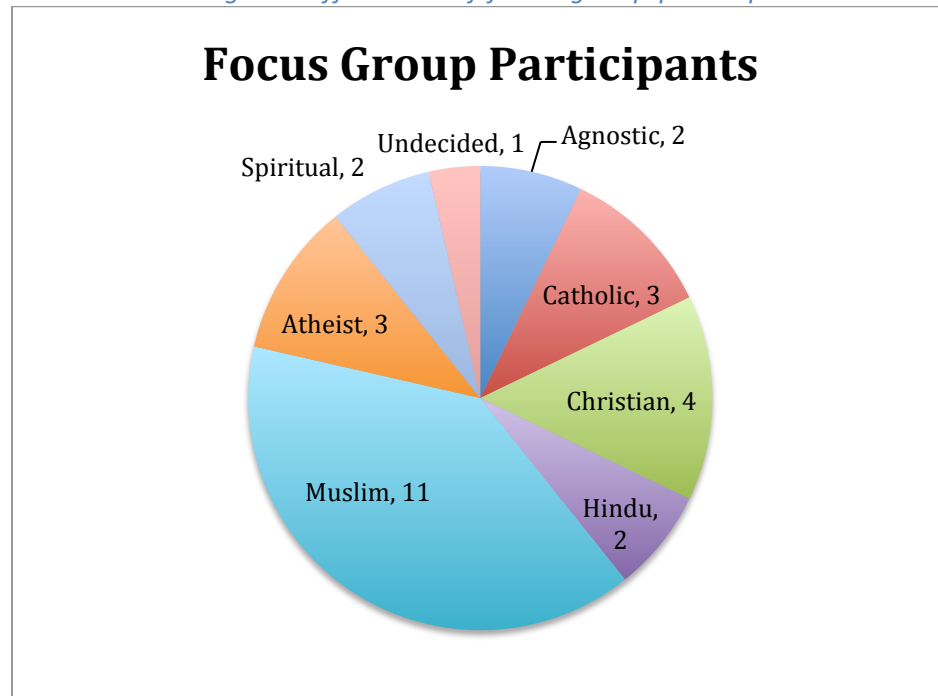
Belief affiliation served as the break characteristic for focus group construction: groups were constructed in order to create interfaith encounters and belief-specific discussions. Interfaith/inter-belief groups were constructed in order for participants to not only discuss the concept of interfaith dialogue, but to also simultaneously engage in interfaith dialogue. This was done to support the theoretical framework of the research, creating micro interfaith encounters via the focus group participant construction; participants were not only talking about interfaith dialogue, they were also engaging in it, providing the researcher with meta-meta perspectives on interfaith dialogue (Acocella, 2011; Kitzinger, 1994). Diversity within focus groups has been shown to ensure that participants are required to explain the thought process behind their answers instead of just giving the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer (Kitzinger, 1994). Kitzinger (1994) and Tonkiss (2004) both note that it is important to be aware of minorities within group compositions, as their voices may be muted by majority groups. For this reason, a belief-specific focus group was conducted with students from the Islamic Society, as they are the most frequent users of the Faith Centre. This was done in order to create an environment in which students would feel as comfortable as possible to express their beliefs about interfaith and opinions of the centre. A belief-specific focus group was also conducted with atheist students. While they are in the majority on a secular campus, they were still in the minority of those willing to discuss faith-related issues, and thus given a space where they could freely express their beliefs. In doing so, the

researcher covered a diverse a range of faith-based social positions in order to explore issues involving “social inclusion and exclusion, group identification, difference, locality and belonging” (Tonkiss, 2004, p.202). The researcher aimed to recruit 8 students for each session. Interfaith was defined as any students who actively identify with a religion. Inter-belief was defined as any students who identify with a religion, belief, or none. The number of focus group attendees is summarised in the following two tables.

*Table 3.9. Focus group participation breakdown*

Group Type	Participants Confirmed	Participants Attended
Inter-belief 1	7	7
Inter-belief 2	5	4
Interfaith 1	6	3
Interfaith 2	6	5
Muslim	7	7
Atheist	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>

*Table 3.10. Religious affiliation of focus group participants*



\*Christian and Catholic are split into two groups as all Catholic participants self-identified as ‘Catholic’ while participants of other Christina backgrounds self-identified as ‘Christian’

### 3.3.4 Materials & procedures for one-to-one interviews

A preliminary semi-structured interview topic guide<sup>23</sup> was created following the steps outlined by Foddy (1993). Questions were based on the theoretical framework underlying the research questions and data obtained during two years of participant observation and informal interviews conducted with LSE society members. An interview was conducted with the LSE Chaplain and Interfaith Advisor, which yielded fruitful data, and so the topic guide was finalized. A semi-structured format was used; questions were highly structured to create a level of standardization across interviews, but questions were left open to allow for flexibility (Wengraf, 2001). Interview requests were sent via email, which included information regarding the research project, an informed consent form, and the interview questions<sup>24</sup>. The questions were sent in advance, as all interview participants are individuals in management positions within the school, and are thus bound by tight schedules and legal constraints. Not all participants were able to answer all of the interview questions, either because the question did not apply to them or because they could not address the question on legal grounds. All interviews were conducted in the participants' offices as per their availability over the course of the 2013-2014 academic year, were audio recorded, and lasted between 25 – 50 minutes.

### 3.3.5 Materials & procedures for focus groups

A preliminary topic guide<sup>25</sup> was created following the steps outlined by Morgan & Krueger (1997); it was brainstormed, piloted on individuals, and then revised by the researcher. A pilot focus group was run using the revised topic guide and a copy of the Faith Centre floor plan as stimulus material. The pilot was conducted with two groups of 6 participants and observed by the researcher and 10 other individuals; all of those involved, both observers and participants, are members of the LSE Department of Psychology. A debriefing was held, asking all participants and observers to reflect on the experience and provide feedback regarding the topic guide and research questions. All sessions, both focus groups and debrief, were audio-recorded and transcribed. The

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 8

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 9

topic guide was revised and additional stimulus material<sup>26</sup> developed according to the debrief feedback and subsequent reviewing of the pilot transcript.

The focus groups were conducted in the LSE Department of Psychology, as it is centrally located on the LSE campus and thus easily accessible to students. Participants were informed via email in advance of what to expect. Sessions were held in a small well-lit conference room, which can accommodate up to 10 people. Participants were seated around a large rectangular table and refreshments were provided in order to make the atmosphere informal and as comfortable as possible, with sessions lasting between 55 and 110 minutes. The moderator explained the focus group guidelines<sup>27</sup> at the beginning of each session, prior to audio recording, and participants were given time to ask questions and to sign the informed consent form<sup>28</sup> prior to recording. Video recording was not used, as the nature of the topic is sensitive and it was felt that video could be too intimidating for some participants.

#### *3.3.5.1 Differences between focus group compositions*

Focus group participants were selected from the student population on the basis of their relationship to faith/religious belief: students of faith who had used the centre and had not used the centre, students without a specific religious affiliation who had used the centre and had not used the centre, and students who actively identify as atheist. Interfaith/inter-belief groups were constructed for participants to not only discuss the concept of interfaith dialogue, but to also simultaneously engage in interfaith dialogue. A belief-specific focus group was conducted with students from the Islamic Society, as they are the most frequent users of the Faith Centre. Atheists' views are often in direct conflict with people of faith, so in order to create a convivial atmosphere for open discussion, an atheist-specific focus group was run. There were differences between the discussions across the focus groups, with different group formations emphasizing different aspects of interfaith dialogue. It is important to note that this formulation may have resulted in an over-emphasis on perspective taking amongst the participants.

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 10

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 11

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 12

The interfaith focus groups, comprised of participants who actively identify with a faith, focused heavily on the physical design of the Faith Centre and its use. This is a natural outcome, as most of the participants are active members of a faith society or faith discussion group and were reflecting on their experiences in the space. The inter-belief focus groups focused on perspective taking. This is unsurprising, in that in order for conversation to flow smoothly between participants of varying belief and non-belief backgrounds, perception checking and asking clarification questions are a common occurrence. These groups also concentrated on the labelling of the different spaces within the centre, along with the name of the centre itself, discussing how this included some and excluded others.

Discussions in belief-specific focus groups were significantly different than in the mixed groups. The Muslim-specific focus group's discussion most frequently leaned towards issues of inclusion – of constructing interfaith dialogue and interfaith activities that are equitable to all of those involved. This is not an unsurprising focus for a group comprised of students who are followers of a faith that is often stigmatized in the West, as they are more likely to have experienced some degree of marginalization and exclusion. In contrast, the atheist focus group focused on a critical approach to religion and faith in general as well as to equitable space allocation and gender segregation.

### **3.3.6 Methodological design & researcher impact**

While focus groups with students and one-to-one interviews with staff proved to be a productive methodological strategy, there are several implications of the design. First, the potentially sensitive nature of the topic and the history of political tensions between societies on campus may have influenced if and how students participated in the focus groups. Participant recruitment proved to be difficult and though 37 student participants confirmed their participation in writing, 9 did not show up to the sessions. In addition, student participants were asked on the informed consent if they would be willing to disclose their religions/belief affiliations, if any. All participants responded, though the answers ranged from straightforward to very complex, which is a reflection of the dynamic nature of belief identities.

Secondly, the student status of participants most likely influenced the focus group sessions. Five of the 6 sessions were status-specific, either all undergraduate or all post-graduate students. One session was comprised of four post-graduate students and one undergraduate student. The undergraduate in this session spoke very little, and usually only when prompted by the moderator and raised concern about feeling left out of a postgraduate interfaith discussion group hosted by the Faith Centre. This difference in student status most likely influenced the session.

Lastly, the students who participated in the focus group sessions function on a different timeline than do the staff who participated in the one-to-one interviews. Students have a short lifespan at the school, staying from between 1-4 years, and if involved in the development of the centre, it was short-term. Staff, however, have a much longer lifespan at the school and had been involved in the development of the centre and with the LSE faith community for many years. And while this provided insightful and different perspectives, they cannot be directly compared.

It is also important to note the impact the researcher had on the data collection process. She is well known to members of the student faith societies after two years of participant observation research. This most certainly had an impact on focus group participant recruitment, both positively and negatively. For example, liaising with the presidents of the Islamic Society (ISoc) and the Atheist Secularist and Humanist Society (ASH) was a streamlined process, and participants readily confirmed their attendance. However, while the ISoc focus group was highly attended, all ASH members did not show up for the atheist focus group despite having confirmed their attendance. This non-attendance could potentially be due to ASH leadership's tense relationship with the school and the faith societies, as the researcher was up front about collecting data from all groups.

The fact that the researcher is well known to the LSE faith community most certainly had an impact on the focus group sessions themselves, as she was the moderator for all sessions. Several of the focus group participants were also students of the researcher, which may have influenced their behaviour during the session, potentially wishing to please their graduate teaching assistant. In order to mitigate this effect, the researcher informed all participants that there were no right or wrong

answers, that all ideas (no matter how fully formed), and differences of opinion were important.

### **3.3.7 Analysis Procedure**

#### **3.3.7.1 Thematic Coding**

The researcher transcribed all six focus group audio recordings and four of the interview recordings. The remaining two interviews were outsourced to a secure professional transcription service. The transcripts were uploaded into NVivo for coding. NVivo was chosen for four reasons: 1) its memo function allows the researcher to attach notes directly to specific words or sections in the data, enabling connections between observations and direct data, 2) ease of node creation, nesting, and building node relationship structures, 3) transparency of the coding process and 4) efficiency. NVivo has been proven an effective tool for thematic coding of interview data (Weston, Gandell, Beauchamp, McAlpin, Wiseman & Beauchamp, 2001), as well as for focus group data centring on issues related to identity and belonging (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson, & Sammut, 2014). While interviews and focus groups are both social in nature, one-on-one and group interactions create different contexts in which meaning is created and thus influences participants' discussion (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996), making it imperative that the researcher account for this in the analysis (Tonkiss, 2004). Interview and focus group transcripts were coded and data handled separately for this reason.

Focus group data was analysed first, as they were completed before all of the LSE institutional interviews could be conducted. A total of 7 rounds of coding were conducted on the focus group data. Preliminarily, it was structurally coded for basic key words/concepts derived from the five research questions that provided the basis for the development of the topic guide<sup>29</sup>. Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network approach was used to make sense of the initial codes. Initial themes were constructed via terms used by the research participants as best as possible in order to best "understand their lived experience" (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012, p.19). The first round was open coding which identified terms, categories, and themes used/identified/mentioned by participants. This first order analysis resulted in 46 codes

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 13



that were listed in NVivo's default alphabetic setting<sup>30</sup>. These were refined and recoded to identify additional patterns in the focus group data. The researcher reviewed these initial rounds of coding with 5 independent/neutral social psychology researchers. A second order analysis of the codes was conducted to bring the analysis into "the theoretical realm, asking whether the emerging themes suggest concepts that might help us describe and explain the phenomena we are observing" (Gioia et al., 2012, p.20). The codes were re-organized via the theoretical framework and in relation to the research questions<sup>31</sup>, after which the researcher distilled the emergent second order themes into second-order 'aggregate dimensions' (Gioia et al., 2012, p.20). Each instance of each code was reviewed in detail and the coding framework was restructured to account for what facilitates and what hinders interfaith dialogue, with each broken down into individual, group, and institutional levels<sup>32</sup>. This 6<sup>th</sup> level of coding reflects additional codes that were added upon separately coding the institutional interviews, which followed the same coding process. The interviews were initially coded fresh, though the coding framework quickly reflected that of the focus groups, with the addition of three codes (place-making, UK context, and symbolic).

### **3.4 Study III: London-based Interfaith Practitioners**

The third phase of this research consists of structured interviews conducted with interfaith practitioners across London between June 214 – March 2015. This section will first outline the phase three design and the rationale behind the use of semi-structured interviews. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the corpus construction process. The materials and procedures for the practitioner interviews will be outlined, followed by the implications of the methodological design and researcher impact. This section will close by addressing the analysis procedures of the interview data.

#### **3.4.1 Research Design and Rationale**

Interviews with interfaith practitioners across London were conducted to explore the same research questions in different multicultural interfaith contact settings outside

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 14

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 15

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 16

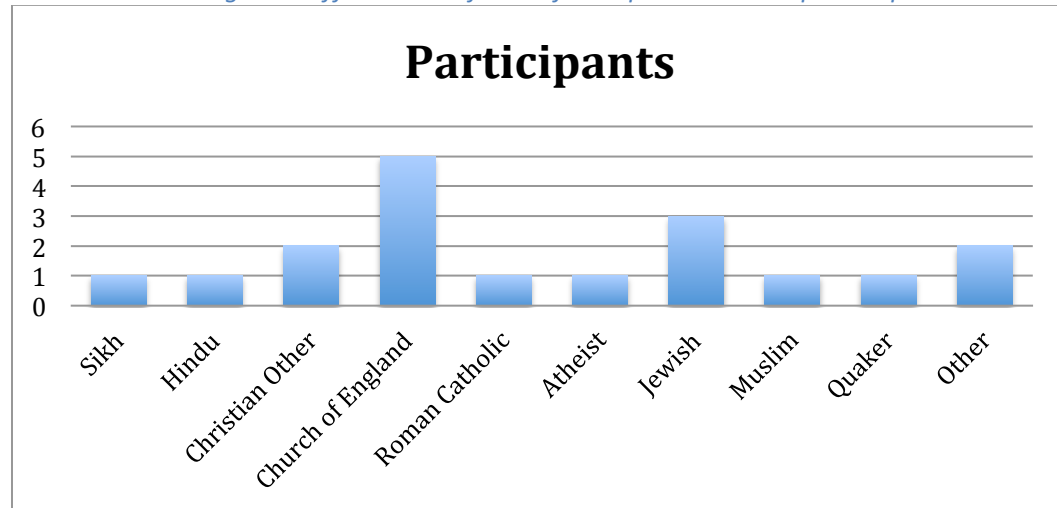
of the LSE case study. People working on interfaith issues in London boroughs operate within entrenched communities with much broader concerns than can be found within the LSE faith community. Semi-structured interviewing was selected as a methodological tool for three reasons. First, it has been shown to be well suited for exploring individuals' experiences, perspectives, motivations and attitudes (Lewis et al., 2011), enabling the researcher to explore local understandings regarding intergroup relations, instead of the researcher working with pre-defined categories. Secondly, it facilitates the examination of complex issues rather than resulting in standard answers (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Lastly, it is economical time-wise in comparison to participant observation, allowing the researcher to gain insights into many different London-based interfaith contexts. A second case study would not have been possible within the restricted timeframe of the research project. A social constructionist approach was taken, grounded in realism, to the interview process. Interviewees were treated as informants and the interviews as a resource, but with the understanding that the interview itself is an instance of the participant making sense of and understanding the topic of interfaith dialogue. An interview is not an exact account or a clear view into a participant's reality, but it does provide insights into the participant's presentations of self, meaning-making process, and ways of knowing (Wagner, Duveen, Farr, Jovchelovitch, Lorenzi-Cioldi, Markova & Rose, 1999).

### **3.4.2 Corpus Construction**

Interfaith practitioners across London were purposefully sampled. Possible participants were first identified via online research of faith-related activity and organizations in London and a contact list of 98 individual email addresses were compiled. An introductory email was sent out to each address, asking if anyone at the organization would be interested in speaking with the researcher to learn more about the study and to possibly participate. Of those contacted, 22 people responded, 14 of which were ultimately interviewed. An additional four participants were identified via snowballing, for a total of 18 participants. After the 18<sup>th</sup> interview it was determined that saturation had been met, as there was little new information emerging (Green & Thorogood, 2009). Participants came from a range of belief backgrounds, with a higher proportion identifying as Church of England as they are the largest religious group in London. This distribution is consistent with the religious distribution within the City of

London: 52.9% identifying as Christians, 13.5% as Muslims, 5.5% as Hindu, 2% as Jewish, and 1.7% as Sikh<sup>33</sup>. Table 3.11. shows the breakdown of the religious affiliation of participants.

*Table 3.11. Religious affiliation of interfaith practitioner participants*



### 3.4.3 Materials and Procedures

A preliminary semi-structured interview topic guide<sup>34</sup> was created following the steps outlined by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Questions were based on the theoretical framework underlying the research questions and data obtained in phases one and two within the LSE case study. A pilot interview was conducted with a colleague in the Department of Psychology at The LSE and the topic guide was finalized<sup>35</sup>. As with the LSE management interviews, a semi-structured format was used, though questions were highly structured in order to create a level of standardization across interviews, but also left questions open, allowing for flexibility and inviting elaboration (Robinson, 2011). Interviews were scheduled via email, which included information regarding the research project, an informed consent form, and the interview questions. The questions were sent in advance to put participants at ease, as some expressed concern over what might be asked, with many bound by tight schedules and some bound by legal constraints. The researcher travelled to the participants' location of choice, usually a

<sup>33</sup> Data obtained from the 2011 London Census: <https://londondatastore-upload.s3.amazonaws.com/IyE%3D2011-census-diversity-in-london.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 17

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 18

public place such as a coffee shop, but occasionally to their offices or their personal residences. Two interviews were conducted over the phone due to participants' limited availability. For these two interviews, informed consent was obtained in writing via email. All interviews were audio recorded and lasted between 25 – 90 minutes.

#### **3.4.4 Methodological design implications & researcher impact**

A second case study would have been ideal, but was not possible due to project time constraints. Interviews with interfaith practitioners enable us to gain insight into a variety of different contexts around London, though not as in detail as would a case study. It is important to note that it is possible that participants may have approached this research with an agenda, as many are facing increasing cuts to their funding, while others are actively building networks between their organizations and other groups. This most certainly impacted the research findings, but also lend insight into the different issues that interfaith practitioners face. The impact of the researcher is linked to the potential agendas of participants, as an LSE researcher may be viewed as a source of legitimacy for their organization or work practices.

#### **3.4.5 Analysis Procedures**

The researcher outsourced the interview transcribing to a secure source. Four interview transcripts were selected at random and checked for accuracy. The transcripts were then uploaded into NVivo for coding. NVivo was chosen for four reasons: 1) its memo function allows the researcher to attach notes directly to specific words or sections in the data, enabling connections between observations and direct data, 2) ease of node creation, nesting, and building node relationship structures, 3) transparency of the coding process and efficiency, and 4) NVivo has been proven an effective tool for thematic coding of interview data (Weston et al., 2001). A total of 8 rounds of coding were conducted. Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network approach was used to make sense of the initial codes. Initial themes were constructed via terms used by the research participants as best as possible in order to best "understand their lived experience" (Gioia et al., 2012, p.19). The first round of coding was based on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, focusing on what facilitates and what hinders dialogue and broken down into space, psycho-social processes, and institutional influences. The coding was also left open, to account for any data patterns falling

outside of the theoretical framework. This resulted in an initial 43 codes. The data was recoded, breaking larger theoretical concepts into smaller subcodes and identifying additional patterns that lay outside of the theoretical framework. An additional 5 rounds of coding was conducted in order to more fully refine the coding scheme and develop a comprehensive thematic structure, ultimately resulting in 76 codes<sup>36</sup>. These were organized into two global themes, each containing three organizing themes, along with 8 codes that fell outside of this framework, as they are influencing forces at all levels.

### **3.5 Researcher Position & Positionality: the impact of the researcher's faith and gender**

Identity is at the heart of this project; it plays a central role in interfaith dialogue, as well as in the data collection and analysis process. Two aspects of the researcher's identity proved to be particularly influential to the recruitment, interview, and analytic process – her religion and her gender. As much as any researcher attempts to remain objective during the course of conducting analysis, a researcher is still a person whose identity shapes and is shaped by the research process. The following section is a personal account of the researcher's experience of how her faith and gender identities impacted this project.

#### **3.5.1 Faith identity**

The majority of people approached during the participant recruitment and data collection processes invariably inquired as to my faith identity<sup>37</sup>. Requesting participants to discuss their religious/belief backgrounds and their views on interfaith dialogue is a 'big ask,' particularly of those people who are members of a highly stigmatized faith, like Islam, so I felt obligated to disclose my faith background and current faith identity. This took significant reflection on my part, as it is something that I had not considered in depth before embarking on this project. Ultimately, I decided that my faith identity required more than a one-word answer, and so when asked by participants I informed them that I was raised in a very observant, liberal Lutheran home. For those who were unfamiliar with this label, I informed them that Lutheranism is a Christian protestant denomination and that my family does not treat The Bible as

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 19

<sup>37</sup> The The LSE institutional interviews data is the exception to this – none of the LSE managers inquired about my faith identity or religious beliefs.

the literal word of God, but rather as a historical document that must be understood within the context in which it was written. When further asked about my beliefs, I said that I was non-practicing and currently undecided. I described this as “culturally Lutheran” to non-Christians, but did not use that term with Christians, as it had confused some in the past. It did not, however, confuse non-Christians. Disclosing my religious identity enabled participants to categorize me in relation to their own beliefs and establish a basis for building a social relationship. Doing so helped to facilitate the recruitment process, but also hindered it in some cases. Labelling myself was useful when recruiting any participants whose beliefs were not Christian, as it situated me as someone who understood the importance of religion in the lives of believers. I also suspect that in labelling myself as ‘undecided’ indicated that I was open to learning about other faiths, and thus potentially of interest to proselytizers as well as those interested in interfaith dialogue.

The LSE Islamic Society had the most positive response to my request for research participants. I believe this is largely due to the society’s desire to be transparent in order to increase awareness on campus about the diversity of Islam and to counteract fears about Islam as well as Islamophobia on campus. The members that I spoke with were particularly interested in learning more about the diversity of Christianity as well as to learn more about how to engage in dialogue with people of other faiths. They invited me to attend all weekly ISoc committee meetings as well as ‘Discover Islam Week’ organizing meetings. The society was instrumental in recruiting participants for the Muslim-specific focus group, as they promised they would bring me a diverse group of ISoc members to participate. Upon the completion of the focus group they insisted that I join them in the Faith Centre for a tour of the Islamic prayer rooms. I do not think this level of openness would have been possible if I had not been forthcoming to all of the ISoc members’ questions regarding my faith identity – had I declined to answer their questions, the relationship with the society officers would have most likely been different.

Disclosing my faith identity to Christians outside of The LSE case study was not problematic. For most, it resulted in a head nod of recognition, while for others it led to a brief discussion about their own spiritual journey. In one instance, it led to a discussion about similarities between our denominations. However, the ‘liberal

Lutheran' distinction became very important in relation to my interactions with The LSE Christian Union. I believe that the leadership of the society, at the time the research was conducted, were conservatively leaning. I made this assumption based on the types of events that they held and the beliefs expressed at several events<sup>38</sup>. It became quite clear that while I was welcome at all of their events, the CU president was uncomfortable speaking with me and I with him. While always polite and forthcoming, there was a sense of tension when speaking with him, as I believe it was clear that I did not agree with some of the positions expressed at their events. In labelling myself 'liberal,' I had defined myself in opposition to conservative Christian beliefs and in direct disagreement with many of the CU's religious stances. I found this relationship to be the most difficult, as the differing views were much closer to home and in direct contrast to those I hold as fundamental truths.

### 3.5.2 Gender

My gender also had a direct impact on the recruitment, interview, and analytic process of this project. While the majority of the one-to-one interviews conducted across studies two and three were conducted with male participants, the majority of the focus group participants in study two were female. The gender imbalance in the interview samples is, I believe, in part due to a reflection of power dynamics (i.e., who is in a position of power within The LSE and within religious institutions) and network limitations. Men dominate religious leadership positions across most religions, so finding female religious leaders can be more challenging. The majority of the female leaders I did sample came from liberal religious traditions (i.e., Presbyterian, Jewish reform) or served in a position on a borough council. These interviews were extremely positive experiences for me, as these women, despite being of different religious backgrounds, are similar to my faith identity positioning, which most certainly had an impact on the interview process.

The majority of focus group participants in study two were female. The male participants in the Muslim-specific focus group (all ISoc members) and four

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<sup>38</sup> For example, at an outreach event entitled 'Why everyone needs to follow Jesus,' the CU speaker, a Christian pastor, explained that while homosexual thoughts themselves are not sins, acting on homosexual thoughts is a sin. I interpreted this as an attempt to express homophobic beliefs in as politically correct way as possible. When combined with the title of the event, which I assumed reflected a belief that Christianity is the only right religion, I concluded that CU membership consisted of conservative, and possibly evangelical, Christians.

participants across the interfaith/inter-belief focus groups were the exception. It is interesting to note that male participants who did not belong to the ISoc were all post-graduate students. My gender may have influenced this dynamic, as female participants dominated the interfaith/inter-belief focus groups.

My gender positioning also influenced how I experienced the participant observation fieldwork in study one, playing a strong role in my relation to members of the Islamic Society and the Christian Union. Participants at ISoc committee meetings sat in gender-segregated groups while I was seated in between the two groups. In instances when the room was crowded and a neutral location was not possible, I sat with the female members of the committee. This seating segregation did not influence meeting participation, as there was equal representation in numbers. Each committee member was a representative of a subcommittee, and so each member gave a report at each meeting. Despite the equal representation and participation in committee activities, I did feel a stronger affinity with the female members of the ISoc. They always greeted me upon arrival, offered me snacks during meetings, welcomed me into the female Islamic prayer room, and greeted me on campus whenever they saw me. This was not the case with the male ISoc members, aside from the President, who was deeply committed to interfaith dialogue initiatives and keen to learn more about my research.

As previously mentioned, my relationship with members of the Christian Union was tense. My gender identity, in addition to my faith identity, is defined in opposition to the beliefs expressed at the CU events I attended. As a woman who identifies as a feminist, I found CU events to be uncomfortable due to gender dynamics. The society had small group discussions on religious topics at their society-specific events, with each small group (consciously or unconsciously) divided by gender. All group discussion leaders were male, despite there being more female members in attendance. The small groups would come back together and debrief as a whole, with each discussion leader giving a report. I found this particularly troubling, as males were both leading women and speaking for them. I was very uncomfortable in this environment, and am certain that this was obvious to some of the CU members.



The following three chapters will explore the findings from these studies in detail. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the LSE case study data. Chapter 4 examines the findings from the participant observation, while Chapter 5 details the findings from the focus groups conducted with students and interviews conducted with LSE management. Chapter 6 examines the research questions within the context of London-wide interfaith practitioners. The findings from these three studies will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2 along with research limitations and future research in the final chapter.

## **4 Chapter 4: Navigating the LSE Landscape of Belief**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines participant observation research conducted amongst the 6 active LSE student faith societies (Anglican Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Sikh) and an Atheist society over the academic 2012-2013 as they began the transition from physically separated locations into a centralized faith centre. An observational protocol was developed for this purpose, with the researcher sampling 27 student events: four LSE-organized interfaith events, four student-lead outreach events, and 19 student-lead intragroup faith-based events. Findings show that the built environment functions as a channel of communication for intergroup relations. This occurs in relation to how groups claim space, how they behave while in the space, and decisions members make regarding those actions. In laying claims to space, societies are communicating information about who belongs and drawing lines around community membership. Through inclusive and protective in-group actions while occupying space, society members negotiate their group identity and the spatial claims of others. It is in committing to an inclusive or protective in-group action that society members make sense of the intergroup context and make a decision about how they relate to others. All of these themes are tied together by the concept of intergroup boundaries – of how they are created, maintained, and potentially transformed.

This chapter will first address findings from intragroup events. The ways in which these events were promoted by LSE faith societies, the attendance rates and behaviour at the events all speak to levels of society in-group definitions. High in-group

definitions result in what Sibley (1995) calls a “landscape of exclusion,” in which faith societies materially separate themselves from each other. Intragroup events will then be discussed, followed by intergroup events: first society outreach events, then LSE-organized interfaith events. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of intergroup contact decision points, the moments in which participants commit to an intergroup action related to contact.

## 4.2 Intragroup Events

Intragroup events constitute the bulk of the ethnographic data. These events were organized and facilitated by the registered student faith societies and were intended as fairly ‘closed’ group-member specific events. The events included religious observances, organizational committee meetings, event planning meetings, lunch socials, and talks by guest speakers. While it is entirely possible that non-society members attended some of these events, they would have been there at the invitation of a society member. These events were observed in order to contextualize faith society behaviours and to gain insights into the decision-making processes of each group in relation to the wider campus community. Observing intragroup behaviour allows for better understanding of how societies identify as a group and provides a baseline for contextualizing how society members behave within their own group versus when in contact with members of other faith societies.

Image 4.1. is a campus map, with each society’s meeting location indicated. Each society held its events in a regular location, with societies spread out across the LSE campus. The only exception to this are the Christian-based societies; the Christian Union and the Catholic Society met in the Chaplaincy space, but on separate days.

Image 4.1. LSE campus map & location of faith society meetings



The sample of 20 society-specific events is small in comparison to the total number of events held by all of the student faith societies. These groups are, within themselves, heavily active, with an average of 10 events held each week. Yet, despite their heavy activity, these societies rarely interacted during the 2012-13 academic year, only coming together at the four LSE organized interfaith events, which will be discussed in the intergroup events section of this chapter.

#### 4.2.1 Promotion of intragroup events

Societies advertise society-specific events on society Facebook pages, monitored as part of the participant observation, which are both open and closed. Official university Student Union affiliated Facebook group pages are required to keep their Facebook page open. The Jewish and Catholic Societies do not host a society page, but rather a closed private group through which they advertise all of their society events. This keeps the groups and their events advertisements private. For this reason their advertisements are not included in the analysis. The other societies' pages are open and thus publicly assessable, though content is targeted primarily for those who follow the page. Attendance was exclusively society members at all but one of the intragroup

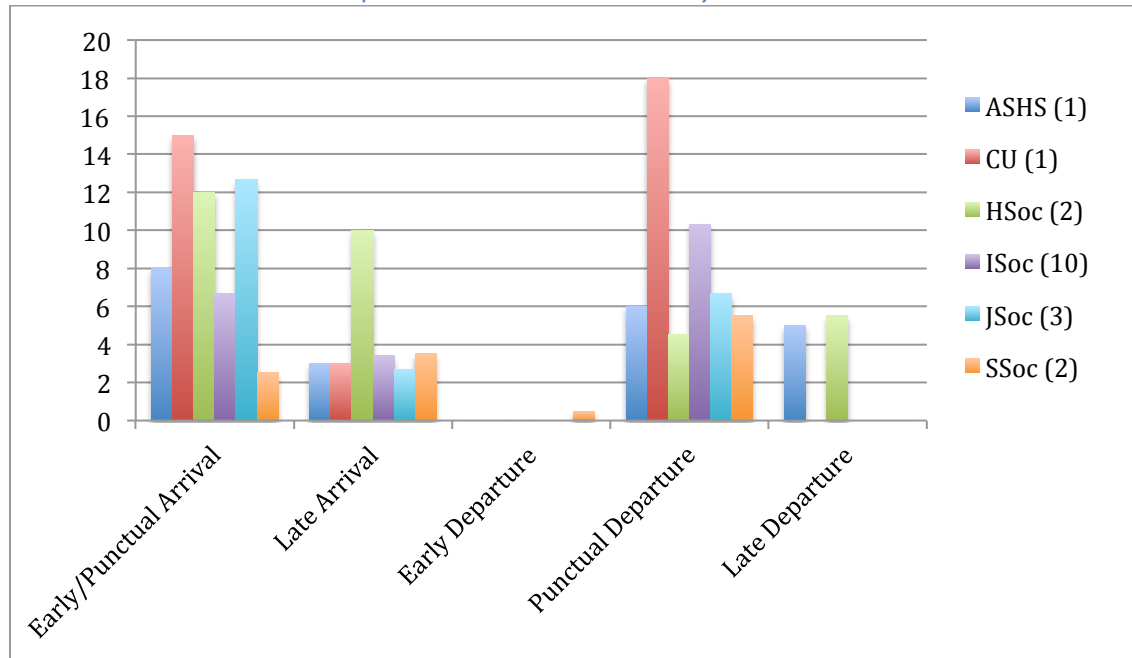
events sampled. The one exception was an Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society (ASH) event regarding campus extremism, which was attended by one member of the Islamic Society (ISoc), and is indicative of intergroup Facebook monitoring. The Sikh Society (SSoc) had limited Facebook activity during the 2012-2013 academic year. The society instead advertised its events via their email list, which is generated by those students who register with the society via the Student Union. This strictly limits their events to those who actively seek out their society and decided to pay a £2 registration fee to join the society.

In promoting the bulk of society events internally and holding events in separate locations, student faith societies remain separate. This physical separation is a reification of intergroup boundaries and minimizes society members' access to alternative representations of faith and belief. The relationships between the faith societies are non-dialogical in nature (Jovchelovitch, 2007). By limiting who is invited to their society events and having limited interaction with other faith societies, participants do not communicate with the other faith societies and thus limit their ability to recognize and take the perspective of others (Gillespie, 2012; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Markova, 2003; Mead, 1934). Their physical separation is itself communicative. It contextualizes their group identities (Dixon, 2001; Tonkiss, 2006) – physically indicating that these groups are separate.

#### **4.2.2 Attendance at Intragroup Events**

Event attendance refers to how participants arrived and departed events. This is a means of contextualizing group behaviour at events, lending insight into intergroup behaviour, as it provides a baseline for understanding how society members behave in settings when only in-group members are present. Table 4.1. shows the arrival and departure rates at closed (intragroup) society events.

*Table 4.1. Arrivals and departures at closed society events*



*\*Numbers for HSoc, ISoc, JSoc, and SSoc are averaged in order to make them comparable to ASHS and CU*

*\*CathSoc intra groups are not included, as the researcher was unable to gain access to them*

Arrival rates at intragroup events are relaxed, with most members arriving on or before the starting time, with groups easily incorporating late-comers. Early departure rates are almost non-existent, with most attendees departing on time and a few staying on after the event has ended to talk with others. These events were informal and attendees move in and out of them. This is reflective of the agenda of these events – intragroup solidarity. Events are structured according to the identity definition of the group – group goals/agendas shape the organization of events, who is invited, where it is held, and who attends (and who is excluded) (Pehrson et al., 2014). Event attendance is linked to in-group identification; if one strongly identifies with the in-group, one is more likely to conform to in-group norms like attending group meetings (White, O'Connor, & Hamilton, 2011). This study, by White et al. (2011) regarding students' class attendance rates found that role identity was a strong predictor of intention – the more a participant felt that studying was an important part of their student role identity, the more likely the participant was to attend study sessions.

#### **4.2.3 Inclusive and Protective Practice at Intragroup Events**

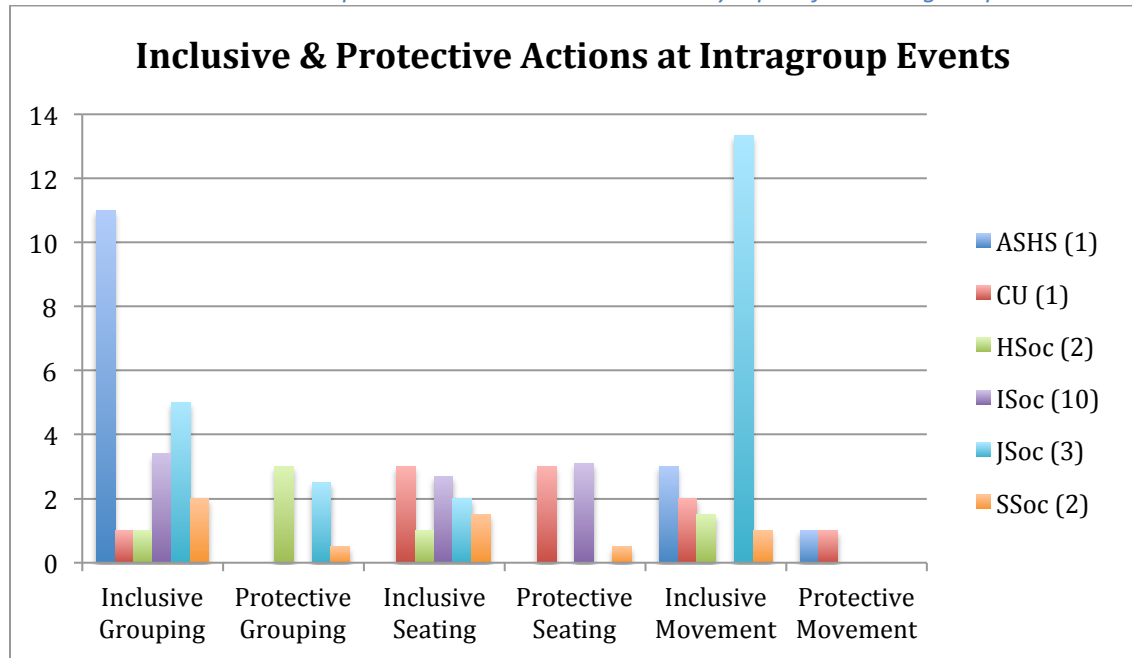
How society members navigate the physical environment during events in terms of indicating inclusive and protective group practices were of interest. Inclusive actions

are defined as any behaviour that incorporates others, while protective actions are defined as any behaviour that omits others. Both inclusive and protective actions comprise movement, grouping, seating, and language. Table 4.2. is the code book segment for inclusive and protective behaviours. Table 4.3. shows the inclusive and protective behaviour at the sampled intragroup society events.

*Table 4.2. Coding for inclusive and protective actions*

Action	Definition	Example
Inclusive Movement	Movement through space so as to incorporate others	Turning around to face person when talking
		Inviting people to eat (verbal & motion)
		Socialization break - mixing, moving between groups or individuals
		Moving to a different space with members of other groups
Inclusive Grouping	Congregating in such a way that incorporates others	Standing at refreshment table with members of different groups
		Talking with members of different societies in standing groups
		Welcoming new arrivals into standing groups
Inclusive Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to incorporate others	Moving seats to make room for others
		Sitting with or selecting a seat amongst members of different group(s)
		Arranging seats to mix individuals together
Required Group Mixing	Intergroup mixing initiated by institutional authority figure	Chaplain requesting event speakers from different faith societies to sit together
		Discussions between different faith society members initiated by authority figure
Mixing w/ Authority Figure	Grouping or sitting with institutional figure	One+ society member standing and/or speaking to the institutional authority figure
		One+ society member standing and/or speaking to a Student Union rep
Inclusive Language	Language all participants understand (counted via each speaker)	Event held in English (first language of UK)
		No use of religion-specific terminology requiring prior knowledge
Protective Movement	Movement through space so as to omit others	Moving only with members of own group
		Moving to separate self or group from others
Protective Grouping	Congregating in such a way that omits others	Congregating only with members of own group
		Grouping for exclusionary activity (e.g., going for dinner or a drink)
		Standing so as to separate self or group from others
Protective Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to omit others	Sitting only with members of one's own group
		Moving seats resulting in the exclusion of others
		Arranging/taking seats resulting in the formation of separate groups
Protective Language	Language use that requires prior knowledge	Use of language other than English (not all participants in UK may understand)
		Use of religion-specific terminology that requires prior knowledge

Table 4.3. Inclusive and protective actions at society-specific intragroup events



\*Numbers for HSoc, ISoc, JSoc, and SSoc are averaged in order to make them comparable to ASHS and CU

\*\*Language was excluded from this tabulation due to intragroup nature of events. No basis for knowing if language use was inclusive or protective in nature.

\*\*CathSoc intragroup events are not included, as the researcher could not gain access to them.

Behaviour at society-specific intragroup events is predominantly inclusive. The only exception is seating, which is split between inclusive and exclusive. This split is due to how event latecomers are handled, and in the case of the CU and ISoc, gender segregation when forming groups at society-specific events. High levels of inclusive behaviour at intragroup events are suggestive of in-group identification, as role identity is a strong indicator of this (White et al., 2011). This finding provides a baseline for comparison with participants' behaviour at intergroup events.

#### 4.2.3.1 Discussion of Intragroup events

The physical dynamics of LSE faith society locations across campus during the 2012-13 academic year and the heavily disproportionate number of intra- versus intergroup events, combined with the promotional strategies, attendance of, and behaviour at intragroup events results in what Sibley (1995) describes as a *landscape of exclusion*. The faith societies are physically separated from each other, and as a result rarely, if at all, interact with one another. Findings indicate that intragroup events and locations create both physical and metaphorical boundaries between student faith groups. The "territorial rights" are clearly defined in this context, making the

“ecological dimensions of [group] identity” very evident (Dixon, 2001). Group divisions are physically and visually encoded, making decategorization or intergroup contact less likely to occur (Dixon, 2001). These boundaries not only constrain the possibilities for intergroup contact, they also accentuate the salience of intergroup differences (Brewer & Miller, 1996; Dixon, 2001), which could encourage participants to relate to one another in terms of religious categorization. Architectural and material layouts of an environment can influence inhabitants’ attitudes towards intergroup segregation (Deutsch & Collins, 1951; Jahoda & West, 1951) and thus provides a context for the negotiation of self-other relations. They are “everyday markers of division” (Muldoon et al., 2007) that contribute to a landscape that signifies intergroup exclusion amongst faith societies at The LSE.

### 4.3 Intergroup Events

Intergroup events break down into faith society outreach events and LSE-organized interfaith events. Society outreach events are those planned by a faith society to connect with LSE students outside of their group, in part as an evangelization effort and in part as an informative effort. LSE-organized interfaith events are campus events hosted by the LSE Chaplaincy and designed with the intention of bringing faith society members, as well as other LSE students, together. There were a total of 10 society outreach events held during Interfaith Week. Most of these events were unstructured events held on the campus thoroughfare, but several were structured talks – two unstructured outreach events and two structured outreach events were sampled. There were a total of four LSE-organized interfaith events during the academic year, all of which were sampled. This section will first outline the promotion of, attendance at, and behaviour during society outreach events. The discussion then moves to LSE-organized interfaith events, of how they were promoted, rates of faith society attendance, followed by a detailed discussion of participants’ behaviour at these events. This is followed by an examination of decision-points at interfaith events and the impact they have on the context of contact. The section will then close with a discussion comparing outreach and LSE-organized intergroup events.



### 4.3.1 Society Outreach Events

Society outreach events range in size and nature, from small and informal society tables on the main campus street, to very large organized talks in lecture halls. These events were only held by two of the six student faith societies: the Christian Union and the Islamic Society. They were promoted with the purpose of drawing in LSE students from outside of the organizing faith society, and behaviour at these events is informal and largely inclusive in nature. The following section will first discuss how outreach events are promoted on campus and via social media, then discuss attendance rates at these events, and conclude with an examination of behaviour at outreach events.

#### 4.3.1.1 *Promotion of Events*

The society outreach events organized by the Christian Union (CU) and the Islamic Society (ISoc) were advertised on Facebook on their open pages, but also via society email, fliers on campus, and by physical presence on campus. Outreach events were advertised as Facebook events, some of which were cross posted between faith groups via open page boards and by linking to the Student Union's page, greatly increasing the number of potential invitees.

Image 4.2 is a screen shot of a heavily-attended ISoc outreach event page in November 2012. The society publicly advertised the event through their open Facebook group, inviting all of the group's members. This method of advertising resulted in attendees being almost exclusively Muslim, either current ISoc members or alumni. The auditorium capacity is listed at 250, and it was standing room only. Of those present, only a small portion, including a speaker and the researcher, were visibly identifiable or verbally self-identified as non-Muslim. While this was an outreach event, in that ISoc members expressed interest in having non-members attend, the manner in which it was advertised resulted in disproportionate attendance<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> This was discussed at the following week's ISoc committee meeting, as an unfortunate side effect of their advertising methods.

Public

By

Islamic Society

Page Events

Join

Maybe

**FAITH IN POLITICS**  
Tuesday 2nd October  
New Theatre (271), East Building  
6:45pm - 8:30pm

Can religious sensibilities be recognised and respected in a way that does not run counter to the rights of free expression and speech?

Do the recent trends, among centre right governments in Europe, away from multiculturalism, provide a dangerous backdrop within which Islamophobia is allowed to flourish with the tacit approval of those that claim to be upholders of free speech?

What role can politically aware British Muslims play and how should their faith inspire and impact their political activism?

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

6:45pm until 8:30pm

Islamic Society Presents:

"Faith in Politics"

An evening with Professor

Tuesday 23rd October 2012

(6:45pm - 8:30pm)

FREE EVENT, all welcome

Limited spaces

First come first served

Increasingly, issues surrounding religion, faith and identity are spilling out into the political arena and causing a polarisation of views on either side of the political spectrum. The recent backlash in parts of the Muslim world after the Innocence of Muslims film has reignited debates over religion and free speech. Can the secular discourse of Western European democracies accommodate religion to play a constructive, prominent role? Or is religion destined to always be seen as, at best a personal issue not to impinge on public life, and at worst the exclusive domain of the irrational in society.

Can religious sensibilities be recognised and respected in a way that does not run counter to the rights of free expression and speech?

Do the recent trends, among centre right governments in Europe, away from multiculturalism, provide a dangerous backdrop within which Islamophobia is allowed to flourish with the tacit approval of those that claim to be upholders of free speech?

What role can politically aware British Muslims play and how should their faith inspire and impact their political activism?

Going (182)

Maybe (37)

Invited (523)

Export · Report

Posts

View Declines

RECENT POSTS

110

Image 4.3. Christian Union event advertisement posted to Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society Facebook page

**FREE LUNCH & TALK!**

**CHRISTIAN UNION 2013 EVENTS WEEK**

**MONDAY 21ST JAN - 1pm**  
**Why following Jesus isn't intellectual suicide**

**TUESDAY 22ND JAN - 1pm**  
**Why doesn't Jesus stop the suffering?**

**WEDNESDAY 23RD JAN - 12pm**  
**Grill A Christian (Q&A)**

**THURSDAY 24TH JAN - 1pm**  
**Why everyone needs to follow Jesus**

**FRIDAY 25TH JAN - 1pm**  
**Why following Jesus isn't a straight jacket**

**Come along every day this week for a FREE lunch and talk and question time about the Christian Faith**

facebook.com/ [link] twitter - @ [link]

**Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society**  
January 20

If you've ever been interested in investigating Christianity, the Christian Union is organising a series of short 15 min talks with free lunch every day next week. There will be lots of opportunities to ask questions and engage with the claims of the Christian Faith.

Like · Comment · Follow Post

3 people like this.

[User] think if you want to talk about whether your religion is 'intellectual suicide', you should probably construe it as 'believing factual claims made by Christianity', rather than 'following Jesus'.  
January 20 at 12:14pm · Edited · Like · 1

[User] ...also, people 'investigating Christianity' with any interest in objectivity or fairness might not be drawn to an event called 'Why everyone needs to follow Jesus'. Also, it's 'straitjacket'. (Though in this context, I imagine 'straight' works just as well.)  
January 20 at 12:29pm · Edited · Like · 2

[User] Thanks Alex, you're right in construing the first talk as 'believing factual claims made by Christianity', though we believe that is part of following Jesus so I think that's still applicable?

I suppose we're not pretending to put on an academic debate. If you wanted to investigate what Christians believed, wouldn't you want to hear what they had to say first hand?

Also, thanks for pointing out the typo - honest mistake!  
January 20 at 1:06pm · Like

[User] Grill a Christian? Pun intended? :))  
January 20 at 3:48pm via mobile · Like

[User] Christians normally go well with barbecue sauce or French mustard..  
January 21 at 12:37pm · Like · 3

Write a comment...

Outreach events were also advertised via society members' presence on the campus thoroughfare, as two of the events were located at tables in this open space. Society members were actively claiming public campus spaces for outreach purposes and inviting all passers-by to their table. For example, members of the CU hosted a table, offering free tea, coffee, and biscuits to students. They were not easily identifiable as a faith group, and it was only when passers-by were standing directly in front of the table and already engaged in conversation with those staffing it, that their society identity became known<sup>40</sup>. In this way, the CU was able to, either intentionally or unintentionally, covertly claim public space and draw students in to learn about their group.

Unlike intragroup events, the organizers of intergroup outreach events widen the scope of those they invite and their methods of reaching them – they are inviting

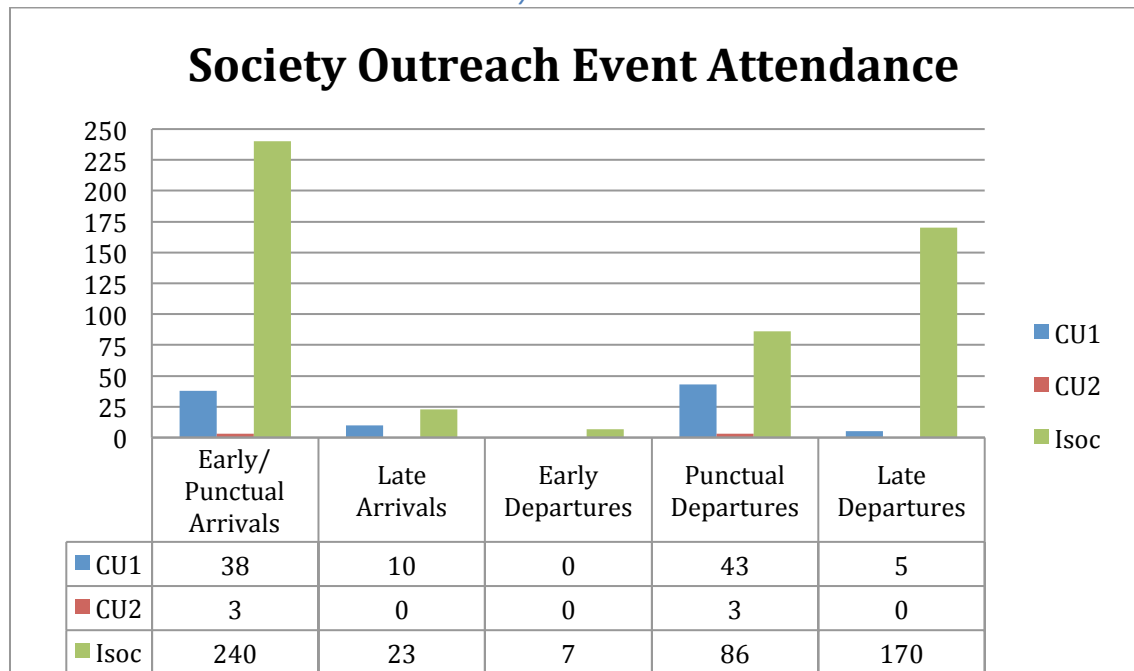
<sup>40</sup> See Appendix 20 for complete research diary entry regarding this event.

outsiders in and widening the scope of possible participants. In doing so, they open their groups up to the possibility of engaging in intergroup contact and dialogue. While there is undoubtedly a strong element of proselytization, they are also letting others know about what they believe and letting others in. Inviting non-group members to an outreach event is a re-presentation strategy. Other's representation of one's group is central to navigating one's own group identity; dialogue between groups is a means by which intergroup boundaries are negotiated (Howarth, 2011; Jovchelovitch, 2007). This, however, requires participatory dialogues and intergroup communication. More people are likely to take part in online contact because of the availability and accessibility of the medium which enables the users to exercise a level of control over the contact space and their exposure to an "other," which can lessen anxiety many often experience during intergroup contact (Amichai-Hamburger, Hasler, & Shani-Sherman, 2015). The CU's social media strategy of posting an invite on the ASH page is a low-risk online spatial tactic, in that it disrupts the on-line spatial order (De Certeau, 1984; Tonkiss, 2006) because they are posting their faith-based event on a social page to which they are not members and have no group affiliation. While the two societies had not interacted previously and met on campus separately, the platform of social media more easily afforded a place of interaction. By cross-posting an event between societies unrelated to each other, and in fact defined in opposition to each other, the CU expanded what was seen to be possible between groups (Lahlou, 2008). In discussing outreach events online, CU and ASH members were co-creating and co-contesting what it means to have inter-belief relations and what faith on the LSE campus means.

#### **4.3.1.2 Event Attendance**

Table 4.4. shows the frequency of arrivals and departures at intergroup outreach events, accounting for early/punctual and late arrivals and departures. The rate of attendance at events speaks to the events' context. Arrival and departure times are relatively flexible, with groups intermixing informally.

Table 4.4. Attendance rates at society outreach events



*\*Isoc numbers are based on estimates of room capacity and observations, as event was extremely large.*

*\*\*The second ISoc event could not be observed for the entirety of its run, as it was a stall set up on Houghton Street for 5 hours. As it was a stall, arrival and departure times were not applicable.*

Early or punctual arrivals heavily outnumber late arrivals at society outreach events. The majority of attendees arrive on or ahead of schedule for these intergroup events, indicating that attendees follow the advertised starting time. Most attendees also depart promptly when the event ends. The large-scale ISoc event had a high number of attendees staying after the event concluded, though most were recognizable members of the society or self-identified as society alumni. Aside from this exception, these events are in and out affairs.

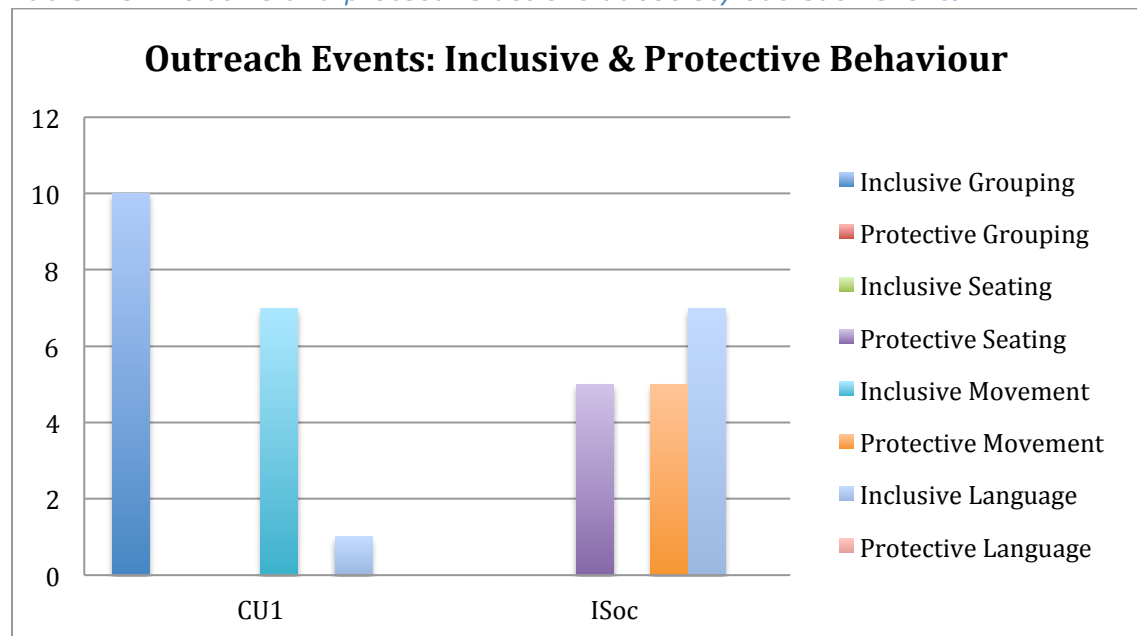
Arrivals and departures at outreach events are relaxed, which is reflective of the agendas of these types of events – educating others about the group and potentially attracting new group members. The goals of these events, which are linked to the identity definitions of the event hosts, shape the ways in which they are organized (Pehrson et al., 2014). As previously discussed, role identity has been shown to be a strong predictor of intentions, which in this case relates to the hosts of outreach events. Society members who run these events have the goals of educating non-members about their society as well as attracting new members to the in-group. High in-group identification would suggest that they would do their utmost to be inclusive of non-

members at these events, which would require them to be welcoming to all who chose to attend, no matter when they arrived.

#### 4.3.1.3 Inclusive and In-group Protective Actions

Inclusive actions are defined as any behaviour that incorporates others, while in-group protective actions are defined as any behaviour that omits others. Both inclusive and in-group protective actions comprise movement, grouping, seating, and language. Table 4.5. breaks down inclusive and in-group protective behaviour at outreach events.

*Table 4.5. Inclusive and protective actions at society outreach events*



*\*Inclusive actions count at ISoc event not accurate, as event was too large for one observer to note all inclusive actions. However, the small number of protective movements and seating was visible.*

*\*\*Behaviours at Houghton Street tables not included, as they were unstructured events*

Inclusive actions outnumber in-group protective actions at all of these events. The high number of inclusive actions at outreach events is logical, as they are organized with the intent of drawing in attendees from outside of the society. The rate of inclusive language at the ISoc event is higher than at the CU event for two reasons: prayers were said in Arabic and then translated into English, and because the ISoc event had 5 speakers, while the CU events had one speaker. All language at outreach events was inclusive, as society members were attempting to attract new members, and using exclusionary language would be counterproductive.



*Image 4.4. Christian Union outreach event*



*Image 4.5. Event attendance at Islamic Society outreach event*



Image 4.4 is from the CU outreach event 1. Attendees sat around tables, and on couches and chairs. Society members hosting the event encouraged people to sit at tables together until they were full, thus maximizing attendee mixing. It is important to note that most rooms at The LSE are restrictive in terms of arranging seating, with most rooms having non-movable chairs and permanent lecture-style setups. Seating at the ISoc event, shown in Image 4.5, was not organized and attendees sat as they chose when entering the room. Visibly non-Muslim attendees sat in small groups, separate from other attendees, as can be seen in the image above. Of the minimal in-group protective actions that did occur, they were solely related to grouping. For example, seating at an ISoc outreach event was segregated via gender due to religious norms, but also along religious affiliation lines. Several pairs of students arrived who were not practicing Muslims (rows 1, 3 & 4 from top) and sat together, speaking only amongst themselves, instead of integrating and talking with Muslim students at the event.

The built environment played a crucial role at these events, structuring what was and was not possible between participants. For example, at the CU event (Image 4.4), the society set up the seating to accommodate the food that they were serving. Attendees could select seats, but moving them was not a readily available option. Grouping and movement were the most predominant types of actions at outreach events, each of which were almost entirely inclusive in nature. These outreach events are what Sibley (1995) would call a weakly classified contact environment; boundaries between and within groups are soft. These types of environments are largely heterogenetic and permeable to out-groups, allowing for the mixing of categories, including people categorization (Dixon, 2001; Sibley, 1995). This is ideal for attempting to achieve the goals of outreach events, as it encourages mixing between faith society members and non-members.

#### **4.3.2 LSE-organized Interfaith Events**

There were four LSE-organized interfaith events over the course of the 2012-13 academic year. Three of these events were public, while the fourth was a meeting of the LSE Interfaith Forum, run by the LSE Chaplain and comprised of representatives from



each of the six registered faith societies<sup>41</sup>. The other three events ranged in size, with one being extremely small, informal, and poorly attended, while the other two were larger formal events that were well attended. The LSE Chaplain organized all four of these events and managed all aspects of their planning and promotion. This section will discuss how LSE interfaith events were promoted, attendance at these events, and the behaviour of faith society members during the proceedings. The section will end with an exploration of the decision points observed at these events, and the impact that intergroup decision-making processes have on the social context of intergroup contact.

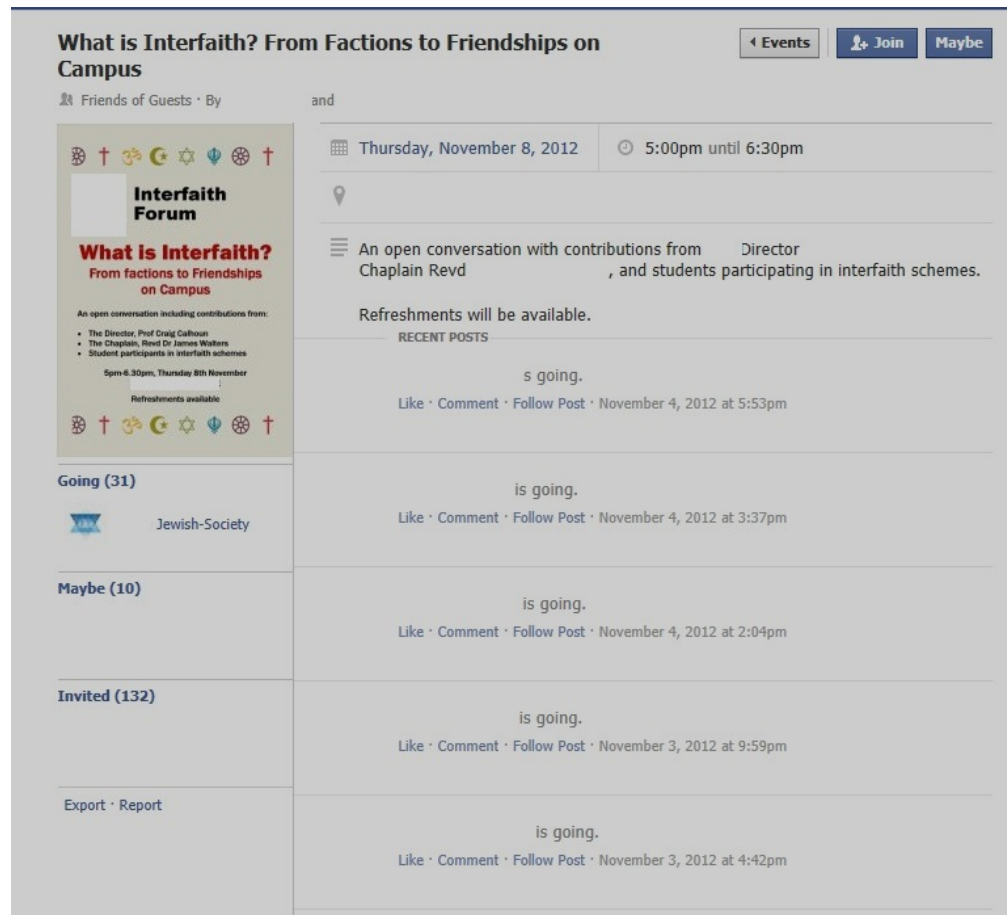
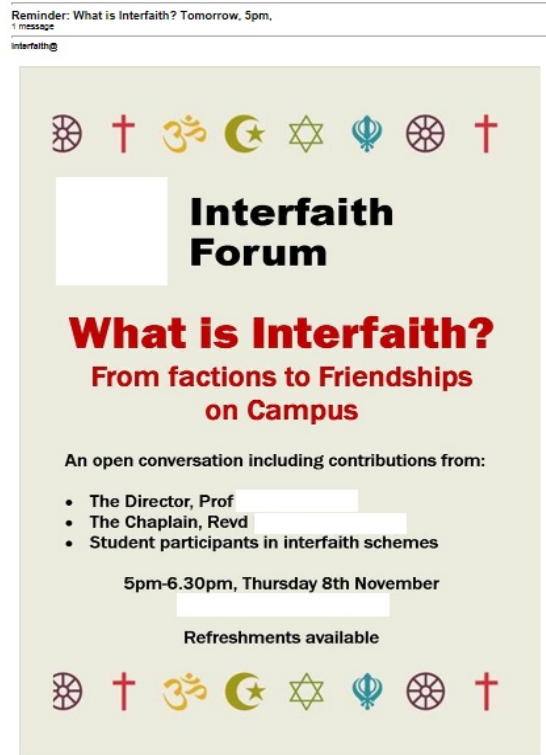
#### *4.3.2.1 Promotion of Events*

The majority of the university interfaith events were held in campus spaces, with one exception (Event 1), which was held as a public event off campus. While all campus spaces are open to the general public, event advertising largely targets the registered student faith societies. This influences who is invited to events via Facebook postings and targeted emails. Events were also advertised via email through an interfaith email list serve. While anyone can join the list serve, knowledge of it is limited to those who visit the interfaith forum web page or attend interfaith related events and request to be added. The institution is thus setting the parameters of who belongs in the university faith community. Institutional representations of faith and religion bound the sense of university faith community, both socially and politically. The school was in the process of determining who could use the new centre during the timeframe in which this data was collected, with the major concern focused on whether or not to include the Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society in the Interfaith Forum. Fliers were also posted around campus, but social media and email invitations were limited to those students who were registered members of a faith society or had registered their email with the interfaith email list through the Chaplaincy.

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<sup>41</sup> The Atheist, Secularist, and Humanist Society petitioned to become members of the Interfaith Forum during the 2012-13 academic year. The forum voted unanimously to include ASHS and they were officially invited to attend termly meetings in the 2013-14 academic year, but as of the 2014-15 academic year they had yet to join.

Image 4.6. LSE interfaith event advertisements via email and Facebook

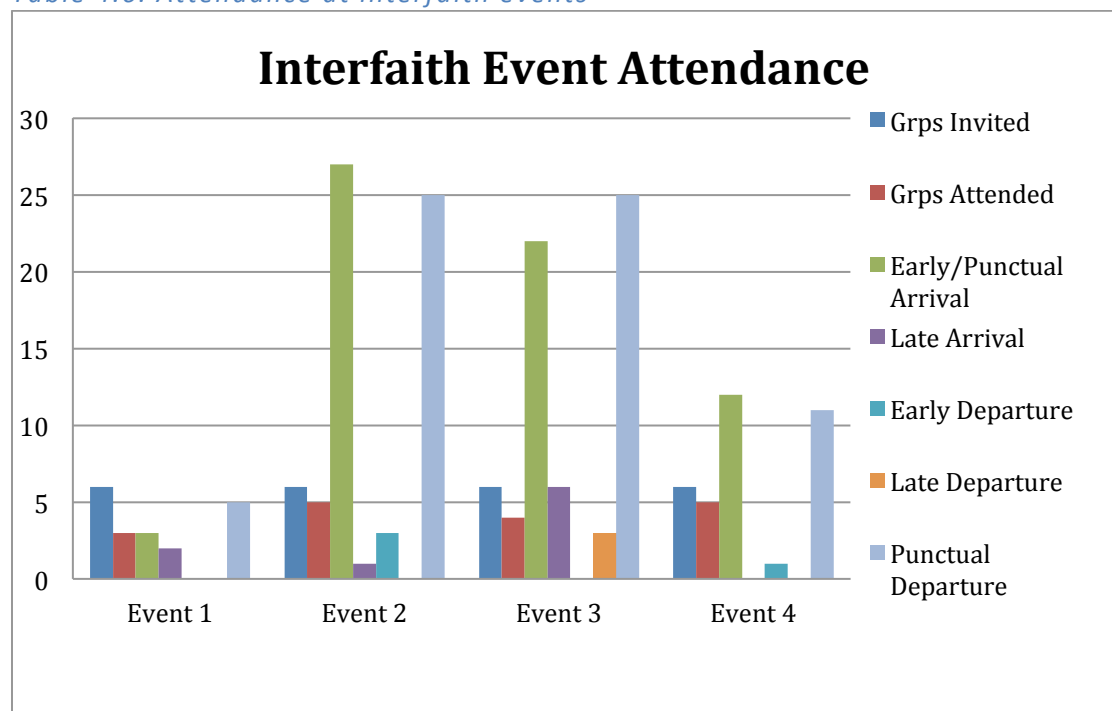


In promoting the interfaith events to the registered faith societies and via an interfaith email list and posting fliers, the Chaplain attempted to maximize the diversity of the events, targeting all registered faith societies and as many students of different belief backgrounds as possible. These inclusive event promotions functioned as a means of counterbalancing the physically segregated nature of the student faith societies and attempt to increase communication between the groups, particularly in light of the pending transition to a more inclusive inter-faith space. It is important to note, however, that the salience of faith identities shaped the promotional strategy of LSE-organized interfaith events, influencing who was and was not invited (Pehrson et al., 2014).

#### 4.3.2.2 Event Attendance

Table 4.6. shows the frequency of arrivals and departures at interfaith events, accounting for early/punctual and late arrivals and departures. Rate of attendance at events speaks to the events' context. Events were well-attended by Abrahamic faiths and arrival and departure times are quite strictly adhered to.

*Table 4.6. Attendance at interfaith events*



The university invited members from all 6 registered faith societies, yet there is always at least one society absent from interfaith events. There were not representatives from

the Hindu Society (HSoc) at any of the four interfaith events, despite it being the largest registered student faith society. The Sikh Society (SSoc) is the second most absent group, as it was not represented at events 1 and 4; the absence of non-Abrahamic faiths was noticed by the Chaplain. For example, the Chaplain had requested that a representative from each society briefly present an excerpt from their holy text for Interfaith Event 3. The representatives from both the Hindu and Sikh societies cancelled at the last minute due to illness and did not send a substitute. An announcement was made at the start of the event, notifying attendees that two representatives were unable to make it, in which the Chaplain highlighted the loss of non-Abrahamic faiths<sup>42</sup>.

Participation “operates as a lever as well as an indicator of intergroup cohesion” (Askins & Pain, 2011; *Creating the conditions for integration*, 2012), lending insight into participants’ representations of intergroup relations. Non-attendance at an event is arguably just as significant as attendance, which highlights the issue of societies’ agency to construct and convey meaning about relations between groups. It is noticed by others and commented on, thus it communicates an equally powerful message about identifying with, or potentially non-acceptance of the current faith community, and also of meta-knowledge of other groups. The lower attendance rate of non-Abrahamic faiths speaks to their identity salience within the university faith community. It is what De Certeau (1984) calls a spatial tactic, a means of using space that functions like an act of speech that conveys meaning to others through such means as claiming space, or not. The meaning of this speech act however, can only be understood through the narratives of both the non-attending societies and those in attendance, and thus speaks to the importance of examining both what participants do and what they say. It is not just about who can and cannot participate (determined via who is organizing an event and who is invited), but also who chooses not to participate and instead speaks through non-participation. Past research in the fields of health interventions shows that practices of participation are grounded in rational and subconscious decisions that are shaped via dialogue, and that non-participation in programs or events is a rational strategy (Cleaver, 2001; Perkins, Borden, Villarruel, Carlton-Hug, Stone, & Keith, 2007). In this sense, the interfaith event itself is being used as a channel of communication for

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<sup>42</sup> University Chaplain: “We are unfortunately reduced to Abrahamic Faiths due to illness.”

information about intergroup relations. While members of the Sikh Society are quite active at some events, comprising half of the speakers at Interfaith Event 4 for instance, it is important to note that they are still visibly absent from others.

Early or punctual arrivals outnumber late arrivals at interfaith events. The majority of attendees arrive on or ahead of schedule and depart promptly when the event ends. There are very few late departures at interfaith events; attendees rarely linger. They are what Sibley (1995) calls a strongly classified contact environment, which are highly ordered in nature. As people shift through groups and group identity memberships, they encounter other knowledge systems, competing social representations that they must choose to either engage or not engage with (Howarth et al., 2015; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Past research has shown that participants in collective events “may approach them with the purpose of enacting particular identity definitions,” which influences not just their understandings of what should happen at an event, but also “who should be included [and] how people should be physically situated and organized” (Pehrson et al., 2013, p.261). This ties into what faith society members think should be done at interfaith events, i.e., who should attend, when they should arrive, and when they should depart. This leads to a discussion of what participants did while attending LSE-organized interfaith events.

#### ***4.3.2.3 Inclusive and In-group Protective Actions***

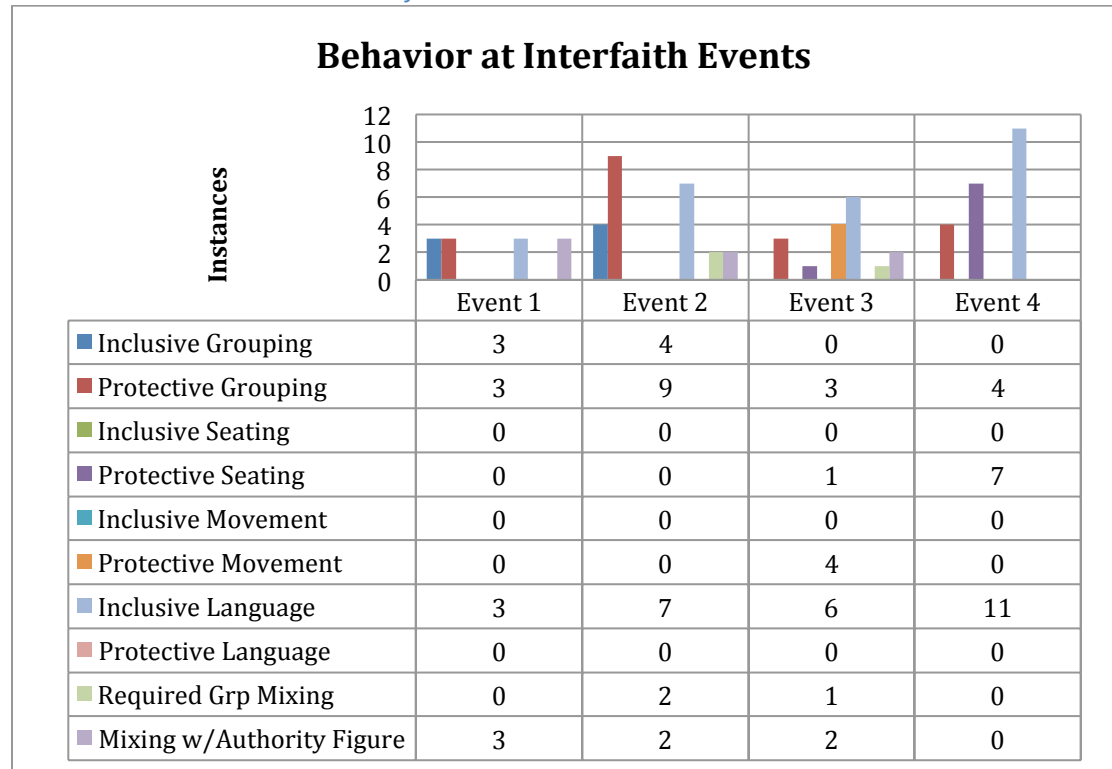
As previous discussed, inclusive actions are defined as any behaviour that incorporates others, while protective actions are defined as any behaviour that omits others. Both inclusive and protective actions comprise of movement, grouping, seating, and language<sup>43</sup>. Inclusive actions have two additional categories, which only occur at interfaith events: required group mixing and mixing with an authority figure. The first refers to the mixing of faith groups as required by an institutional figure (i.e., mandated intergroup contact). The second refers to interactions with an institutional authority figure. This means that the frequency of inclusive actions at interfaith events is influenced by authority figures that initiate intergroup interactions that might not otherwise occur. Table 4.7. breaks down the inclusive and protective behaviour of

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<sup>43</sup> See Appendix X for coding table.

attendees at LSE-organized interfaith events. Note that when discussed in relation to intergroup events, protective behaviour is noted as in-group protective behaviour.

*Table 4.7. Behaviour at interfaith events*

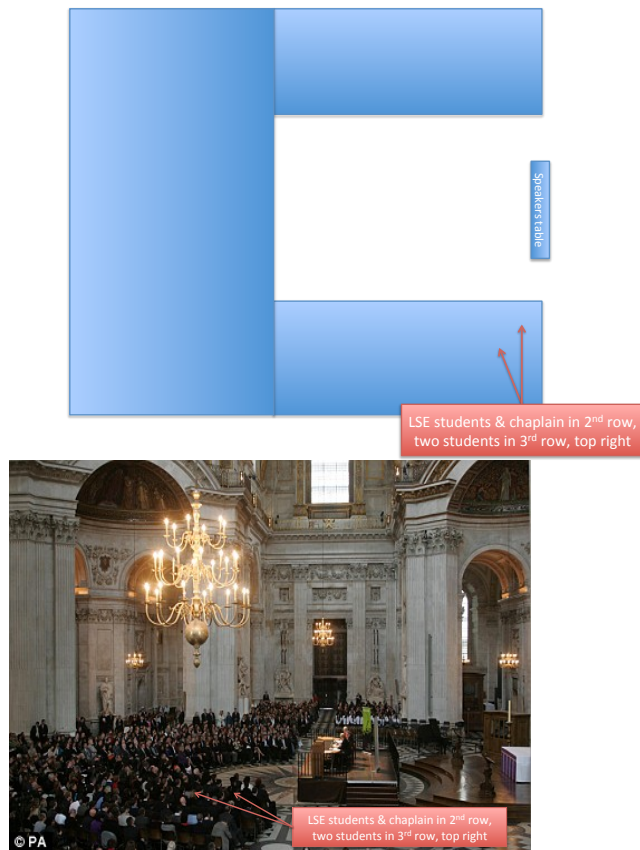


It is important to note that the frequencies of inclusive actions at interfaith events are influenced by institutional figures initiating the mixing of groups. Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954) stipulates that there are four conditions necessary for optimal intergroup relations: equal status, common goals, cooperation, and support from authorities. The rates of inclusive behaviour at interfaith events are clearly influenced by authorities; if only instances of naturally occurring mixing of groups are considered, the frequency rate of inclusive actions at interfaith events decreases. Inclusive actions that were required by an institutional figure or involved an institutional figure outnumber those that occurred only between students. There were no instances of inclusive seating or movement. Of the inclusive physical behaviour that did occur, the majority involved an authority figure, either as the initiator of the action or as the centre of it. The mixing initiated by an authority figure influences levels of cooperation at these events – LSE institutional intervention at these events has a clear impact on faith society intergroup behaviour.

Interfaith events, on average, are formal in nature and have speakers from each faith group, resulting in a larger number of speakers than society-organized events. Interfaith events have the lowest rates of inclusive behaviour categories except for language. Inclusive language is defined as language that all participants can understand. This is operationalized via the exclusive use of English, as it is the majority language in the UK, and by the avoidance of religious terminology. In the few instances in which religious terminology was used, the speaker defined the term for the rest of the participants, as understanding of the terms is limited to those with previous knowledge of the specific religion. For example, there were 7 speakers at interfaith event two: two institutional authority figures, two from the Sikh Society, and three from the Islamic Society. Members of the different faith societies discussed their experiences at different types of interfaith activities organized by the Chaplain the previous year. Due to the need for student speakers to explain technical details of their religious practices, there was a much higher rate of inclusive language utilized than at society outreach events.

In-group protective actions at interfaith events are comprised wholly of physically enacted behaviour. This includes standing or sitting in faith-specific groups and walking or moving through space in faith-specific groups. Event 1, which had the lowest amount of in-group protective behaviour, was a very small-scale event that was held off campus. The protective behaviour that occurred during this event took place while on campus and during the walk between the campus meeting point and the location of the event. Once at the event, all students sat together in one row in the order in which they entered the building, as can be seen in Image 4.7.

*Image 4.7 Attendee arrangement at interfaith event 1 (St. Paul's)*



\*Photograph via St. Paul's website. There was no photo of the entire room from the night this event was held, but the seating arrangement was identical to the arrangement of a previous event held in St. Paul's, for which there is a photo of the entire space. The researcher was unable to photograph the entire space, as access to a higher vantage point was not available.

Events 2 and 3, which are close in total number of in-group protective behaviour, were both large-scale events, which were highly structured and held on campus.



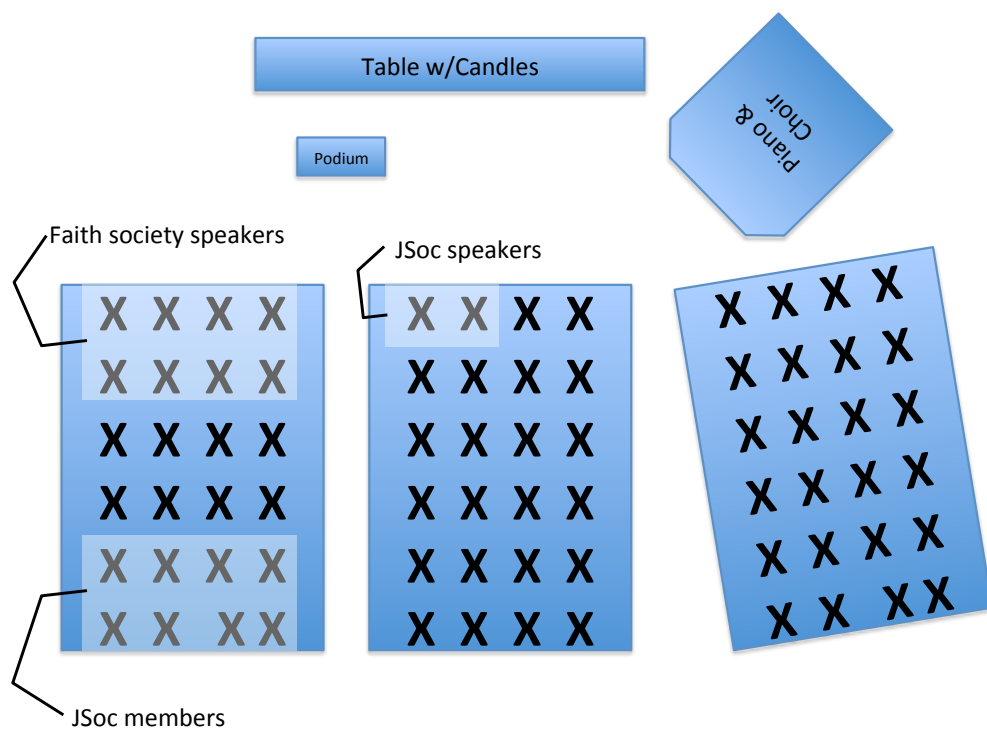
*Images 4.8. & 4.9. Attendee arrangement at interfaith event 2 (What is Interfaith?)*



Representatives from all faith societies were invited to speak at interfaith event three, a Holocaust memorial service, and the Chaplain had reserved a block of seats for all of the speakers. The Jewish Society representatives, however, chose to sit separately from

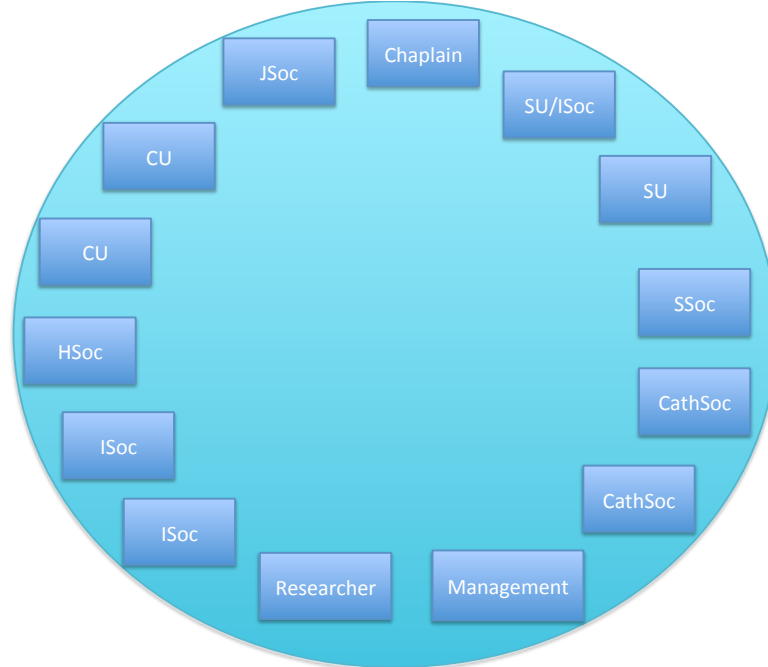
the faith society representatives, as can be seen in Image 4.10. The JSoc presenters, via their physical in-group protective behaviour, make it clear that they approached the collective event with the intention of enacting their Jewish identity, as physically separating themselves from the other faith presenters in an indication of their understanding of “how people should be physically situated and organized” (Pehrson et al., 2013, p.261) at this particular event. This physical separation highlighted intergroup boundaries during the event.

*Image 4.10. Attendee arrangement at interfaith event 3 (Holocaust Memorial)*



The fourth event was private, as it was a termly meeting of the LSE Interfaith Forum. This was held in the LSE Chaplaincy. The Chaplain had forum members (representatives from each registered faith society) help organize chairs into a circle and take a seat. Each attendee paused momentarily while determining where to place their chair. Image 4.11 is a diagram of the circular seating arrangement.

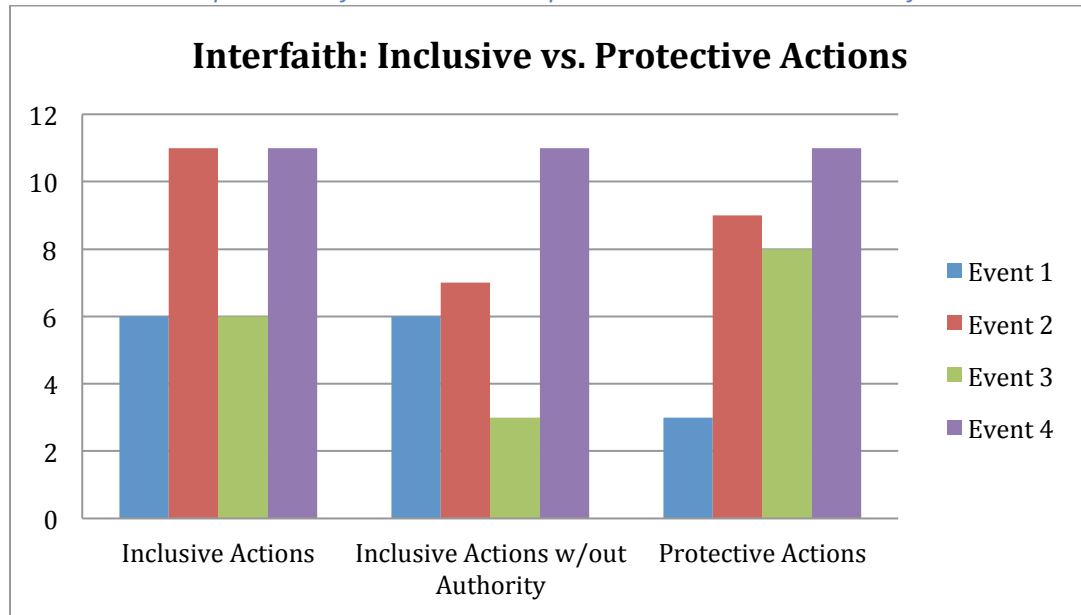
*Image 4.11 Attendee arrangement at interfaith event 4 (Interfaith Forum Meeting)*



Societies that were represented by two members grouped together when placing their chairs in the circle, with the Chaplain, Student Union (SU) officers, an institutional manager, and the researcher positioned roughly half way. These groupings are suggestive of faith-based boundary definitions, as the material environment afforded many different circle arrangement options (Lahlou, 2008, 2011).

While the number of inclusive actions and in-group protective actions at interfaith events are roughly the same, they differ in the nature of action. Inclusive actions at interfaith events are almost exclusively language based, while in-group protective actions are exclusively physically enacted, as show in Table 4.8.

*Table 4.8. Comparison of inclusive and protective actions at interfaith events*



Action	Inclusive	Protective
Grouping	7	19
Seating	0	8
Movement	0	4
Language	27	0
Total	34	31

Inclusive actions are predominantly due to language use, which is necessary for successful interfaith interactions, when interfaith dialogue is expected. In-group protective actions are, however, exclusively physically enacted. While the language use is inclusive, always in English with any specific religious terminology is explained, attendees are behaving in an in-group protective manner. They are standing or sitting in faith-specific groups, walking and moving through the space in faith-specific groups. They are, essentially, saying one thing and yet doing another. Verbally, attendees are communicating inclusive interaction, but physically they are communicating visible intergroup boundaries based on faith identity. As past social psychological research has shown (Howarth, 2006a; Jodelet, 1991), it is important to pay attention to both verbal and physical communication. How people understand reality, how they understand their relationships with others at both the interpersonal and the macro levels, is built through communicative practices with others (Dixon et al., 2005; Habermas, 1989, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Our social realities are constituted by our situated

experiences and understandings of our relationships to others (Dixon et al., 2005). Our behaviour is enacted communication.

The knowledge of how to navigate social spaces comes from society members' meta-knowledge of other groups, their social representations of others groups and their own, forming the psychological basis for understanding and interpreting what is possible within the social and material space (Lahlou, 2011, 2008). This resonates with Sibley's (1995) concept of strongly classified contact environments. Boundaries between in- and out-groups are tightly drawn at LSE-organized interfaith events. Society members are more spatially aware of intergroup boundaries in this strongly classified contact environment, which often results in in-group protective behaviour (Dixon, 2001; Sibley, 1995). Boundary crossing or blurring at such strongly classified contact events is risky, because it involves crossing "from a familiar space to an alien one which is under the control of somebody else," which can cause anxiety for those involved because of the uncertainty of where the edge of the in-group turns into the edge of the out-group (Sibley, 1995, p.32). Encountering contrasting belief systems has the potential to make a group feel inferior or threatened (Mikkelsen & Hesse, 2009). This anxiety is heightened by the added component of religion/faith because, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is central to a believer's identity, inseparable from the adherents' social identity and concept of self (Keeley, 2007; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sartawi, 2011). This is evident at interfaith events by the contrast between inclusive verbal actions and exclusive physical actions; one can visually see boundaries between groups.

While occupying space, society members simultaneously "exercise their spatial rights while negotiating the spatial claims of others" (Tonkiss, 2006, p.59). This is accomplished through "spatial tactics," which function much like a speech act, in order to convey meaning to others (De Certeau, 1984). These spatial tactics are accomplished via everyday practices like moving through or inhabiting space (De Certeau, 1984; Tonkiss, 2006), adding to the ways in which that space is symbolically structured (Moore, 1994). The researcher, known to event participants, was used as a barrier between seated faith groups at one interfaith event. The social space in which individuals move, conveying information to others with their bodies, is a channel that can either serve to facilitate or inhibit intergroup contact (Dixon, 2001). Accounting for how participants physically locate themselves in relation to others throughout a

meeting or event speaks not only to group identity salience, but also to how group boundaries are created, maintained, or blurred (Gillespie et al., 2012; Riesch, 2010), and networks created (Urry, 2011).

The interfaith events themselves are organized with the expectation of intergroup dialogue – attendees are expected to cross intergroup boundaries. LSE authorities not only invite all registered faith societies to attend, they facilitate inter-society mixing at interfaith events, when participants would otherwise not physically mix. The discrepancy between types of inclusive and in-group protective behaviour indicate that while students are verbally expressing boundary blurring and intergroup dialogue, they are physically enacting intergroup boundaries. This is accomplished via the use of inclusive language (i.e., giving English translations of Arabic or Hebrew prayers/passages), the modification of space (i.e., selecting or changing seats), and physical grouping and movement within the space (i.e., standing or walking in faith-specific groups). Attendance rates and arrivals and departures also speak to inter-group divisions, as non-Abrahamic faith societies often chose not to participate, and participants who do attend arrive and depart promptly, thus minimizing inter-group contact time. Group divisions, or boundary lines, are thus spatial, “enacted and reproduced through embodied practices” (Tonkiss, 2006, p.97). Negotiating belonging within these boundaries is thus a social and spatial activity (Trudeau, 2006). Faith society members are, through their contradictory behaviour, protecting their group identity via protective physical behaviour while simultaneously meeting the expectation of interfaith dialogue within the event context via verbally communicating inclusiveness.

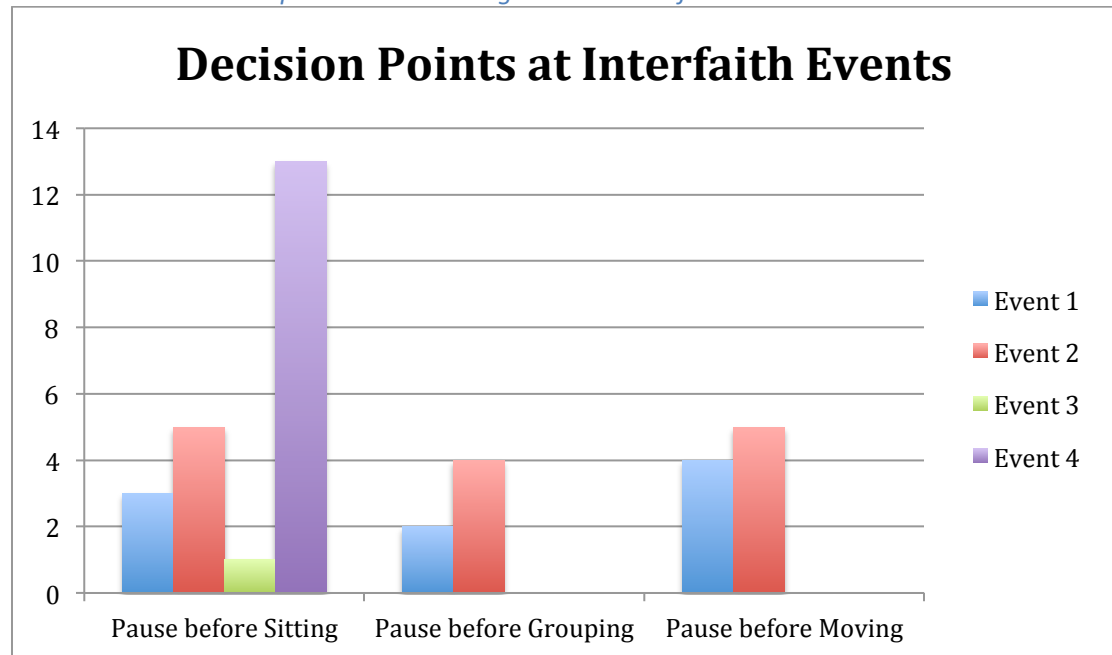
This, however, is not necessarily a ‘bad thing’. Interfaith dialogue is perhaps more likely to occur when people feel safe. Acting in an in-group protective way is a means of maintaining a sense of safety in what can be an anxiety-producing situation. Interfaith contact situations involve both inclusive and in-group protective behaviour – they require both inward and outward looking practices. Participants must navigate what they think others think they think (Elchereth et al., 2011), ultimately requiring self-reflexivity. This reflexive process requires a space in which participants feel safe, requiring researchers to explore how people go about this process. Starting with

participants' point of departure for contact is a first step, examining the initial stage of their intergroup contact decision-making process.

### 4.3.3 Decision Points

Decision-points occur at interfaith events and are defined as pauses before an individual or group of individuals enact behaviour – these are the points in time directly prior to an individual or group of individuals committing to an inclusive or exclusive action during an event. Decision points are operationalized in the decision-making literature as points within individual or group interactions or during task performance, in which a decision regarding behaviour needs to be made before an action can be taken (Bazerman, Giuliano, & Appelman, 1984; Crandall, Klein, & Hoffman, 2006; Fischhoff, 2008; Steven Yule, Youngson, Pauley, & Flin, 2011). Decision-points were only observed by the researcher during intergroup processes, and were only prevalent during interfaith events. Table 4.9. shows the rate of occurrence of decision-points at interfaith events.

*Table 4.9. Decision points at LSE-organized interfaith events*



Decision points are almost exclusively interfaith intergroup phenomena, which is most likely because these events are designed by institutional authority figures with the intent of bringing the different faith societies together – they are not student-initiated. It is important to note the differences between the interfaith events. Events 1 and 4 were



small scale, allowing for the actions of individuals to be thoroughly documented. Events 2 and 3 were large. Event 3 was highly orchestrated, with ushers in place to guide all attendees to their seats, while event 2 was less formal and more fluid. The scale of these events speaks to limitations of one observer; it becomes difficult to track individuals' behaviours with large numbers of participants, which could result in some missing data. Due to these limitations, the researcher focused on small group behaviours at these two larger events, as they allowed for one observer to more thoroughly document behaviour.

Social representations are enacted knowledge that shapes our social practices, including how we design and engage with the material environment (Elchereth et al., 2011; Lahlou, 2008, 2011). Social representations, when viewed as meta-knowledge about other groups and ones' own, influence both the understandings and use of space. This extends to the decision-making processes regarding the use of that space and the interactions with others that take place therein. Decision points can thus be viewed as the moment in which an individual or a group decide which type of action (inclusive or protective) to commit to during an intergroup event. It is during these moments in time, pauses before committing to a behaviour, that individuals or small groups are making a choice about how and where they will sit, with whom they will stand or move through space.

The decisions that participants make may be linked to values. When a value is activated, it influences the choices that an individual makes as well as his or her behaviour; this is because values define the appeal of potential outcomes (Bas Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Values are intimately linked to social representations (Abric, 1993) – an individual's behaviour does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in a situated context, which itself has an impact on an individual's decision-making process. When multiple individuals interact, they construct meaning together, and thus collectively interpret the meaning of intergroup relations (Korsgaard et al., 2008). The shared context in which the decision-making occurs must be taken into account on all its levels: psychological, physical, and institutional, as the “affects of the social context...may affect subsequent judgments of new items” (Hamilton et al., 2010, p.79). Participants at interfaith events must make choices about who they interact with and how, and these decisions are made based on the context of the situation (i.e., who



organized the event, who was invited, who is attending). The choices that participants make at these decision points are shaped by the nature of their perceived social reality, but in turn also shape their reality. Social reality divisions shape the possibilities of action between members of different groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). The ways in which group relations are conceived limits the choices that can be made regarding contact between them. It is essential to understand how group members conceive of their group identities as well as their individual identities and how they fit into the group, in all its complexities, from their own perspectives. Decision points are the moments of departure for inclusion or in-group protection, when individuals or groups of individuals make a decision about with whom they will interact. Participants commit to an inclusive or in-group protective action based on their social representation of the context, which regulates what is and is not possible between groups. These decision points are crucial – they are the point at which boundaries are set, or the point at which they can be challenged or blurred.

#### **4.4 Intergroup Events Discussion**

Self-other relationships were being negotiated at interfaith intergroup events. In-group members were attempting to attract new people to join their in-group at faith society outreach events, while at LSE-organized interfaith events the institution was attempting to facilitate intergroup relations amongst faith societies. When comparing the number of intragroup events to the number of intergroup events during the 2012-13 academic year, it becomes clear that non-interaction was the norm. The CU and ISoc's outreach events and the LSE-organized interfaith events were attempting to bring normally separated groups together; they were engaging in future-oriented projects (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008).

In attempting to bring different groups together for these future-oriented projects, the organizers (both faith societies and LSE) attempted to bring together different knowledge systems. Doing so requires communication between different representational systems (Habermas, 1989, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Society outreach events differ from LSE-organized interfaith events. Outreach events are student society organized and student society led, designed with the goal of recruiting new members. This differs from LSE-organized interfaith events, which are designed

with the intent of facilitating faith society intergroup contact. In these situations groups' identities are at stake, and possibly disputed when encountering other groups (Jovchelovitch, 2007). This is why interfaith events are strongly defined contact situations (Sibley, 1995) and boundaries between groups can be tightly drawn. These contact environments are not directly of the students' making and are situations that participants carefully navigate.

LSE authority figures expected interfaith dialogue to occur at these events, as was made evident via their initiation of intergroup mixing at these events. These authority figures were exerting influence over the definitions and salience of group identities "by regulating patterns of sociospatial inclusion and exclusion" (Dixon, 2001, p.599). Safe navigation in these intergroup encounters requires participants to both meet institutional expectations of interfaith dialogue and also maintain a sense of security in an anxiety-producing environment (Sibley, 1995; Dixon, 2001). Navigating intergroup boundaries can produce anxiety (Sibley, 1995) and this anxiety is a significant driver behind the observed decision points. Participants were making a decision, consciously or unconsciously, about who to interact with and whether or not they should cross intergroup boundaries or engage in in-group protective behaviour. As the data shows, when participants were left to their own devices (not influenced by an authority figure), they chose to physically protect their in-group identities. In this strongly defined contact space, participants were drawing on relational-identity definitions when making these decisions – who you are is just as important as who you are not (Muldoon et al., 2007; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). However, they simultaneously engaged in inclusive verbal behaviour. In this way, participants were able to meet institutional expectations of interfaith dialogue while also safely navigating a potentially threatening intergroup encounter. This "identity-relevant behaviour" is part of the construction and contestation processes of participants' in-group identities (Pehrson et al., 2013), and indicates that communication between different representational systems (Habermas, 1989, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2007) is achieved both verbally and physically/spatially.

## 4.5 Discussion

Prior to the opening of the interfaith centre, the LSE faith societies occupied different physical locations across campus and had little to no interaction. Intragroup events during the 2012-13 academic year were held in separate locations, physically creating a non-dialogical relationship between faith societies. In being physically separate and not inviting other faith societies to intragroup events, faith societies limited communication between each other as well as their ability to recognize and take the perspective of other faith societies. Separate intragroup events far outnumbered the intergroup events – out of the 31 events sampled, only 8 involved intergroup contact, four of which were initiated by LSE management. Outreach events, via the ways in which they are promoted and the behaviour of attendees, widen the scope of possibilities for intergroup contact, as they are weakly defined contact environments (Sibley, 1995). LSE-organized interfaith events, on the other hand, are strongly defined contact environments (Sibley, 1995) in which faith society members negotiate their in-group identities while attempting to meet the institutional expectation of engaging in interfaith dialogue. Decision points are participants' jumping off point in the intergroup sense-making process, as they are the moments in which participants commit to an action, be it inclusive or in-group protective. The material environment plays a crucial role in these intergroup processes, as it is a channel through which participants communicate information about intergroup relations.

Power and surveillance play significant roles in the context of LSE interfaith relations. The data indicates that interfaith contact and dialogue between the faith societies is an institutional representational project (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). As previously discussed, only 8 of the 31 events sampled involved intergroup contact. The bulk of events were intragroup and half of the intergroup events were organized with the intention of recruiting new society members, not improving relations between faiths on campus. LSE-organized events were the only intergroup events that explicitly emphasized dialogue and the building of relationships between faith societies. And at these events, the bulk of intergroup mixing was initiated by an LSE authority figure. When left to their own devices, students did not mix freely. The authority figures are exerting control over student movement, not just by encouraging members of student faith societies to attend, but also exercising control over their movements during

interfaith events. This, Foucault (1975) argues, is a means in which those in authority coercively assign and distribute individuals in society – determining where they must be and exercising “a constant surveillance” over them (p.199). In overseeing student behaviour at interfaith events and initiating faith society mixing, LSE authority figures are exerting control over students’ behaviour in an effort to promote their representational project of what interfaith relations on campus should be. Interfaith dialogue, in this sense is “a particular form of behaviour [that] must be imposed” (Foucault, 1975, p.205) in order to promote the institutional project of interfaith relations on campus, and so LSE authority figures utilize their hierarchical power to intervene and redirect students’ behaviour.

Chapter Five will expand on these findings by exploring school managers’ intentions behind the development of the new Faith Centre and their hopes for its future, lending better insight into the future-oriented institutional project of interfaith relations on campus. How LSE students, members of faith societies as well as non-society members who are both of faith and no faith, make sense of the new space shortly after its opening will also be examined. Participants highlighted the importance of the centre’s layout, explaining how it influences their behaviour within and towards the space. Muslim participants’ perspectives are particularly insightful, as they have an added difficulty in navigating the Faith Centre – that of a heavily stigmatized faith identity.

Chapter 6 will explore these issues within the larger context of the City of London, examining the experiences interfaith practitioners who facilitate interfaith encounters within the city’s diverse boroughs. They face similar issues to those expressed by LSE participants, but their work is further complicated by socioeconomic factors within their boroughs and by restraints placed upon them by large bureaucratic networks. While the future-oriented project within the LSE case study is focused on improving interfaith/inter-belief relations on campus and turning an academic lens on faith, participants in study three are part of a wider future-oriented project – that of bringing faith back into the public sphere. They are interested in removing the taboo of faith in the UK and re-presenting faith as a resource to, instead of a drain on society.

Chapter 7 will link the findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6, discussing them in relation to the research questions. This will return to the social psychological literature and consider how the findings can lend new insights. This final chapter will close with an acknowledgement of the limitations of this research and thoughts on future research.

## **5 Chapter 5: Negotiating Faith Identities within an Institutional Project of Interfaith Relations**

The previous chapter explored what LSE students do at faith events on campus. In strongly defined, potentially identity-threatening interfaith situations, students mitigated the possible threat via physically in-group protective actions. Simultaneously, they engaged in verbally inclusive behaviour, thus meeting the interfaith expectations of these events while maintaining their in-group identities. This chapter will explore the LSE institutional project of accommodating faith on campus via the creation of the Faith Centre from the perspective of school managers (in part 1 of the chapter) as well as how LSE students make sense of the newly built space and the potential for its use, both in terms of what facilitates dialogue (part 2) as well as obstacles to dialogue (part 3). Part 1 lays out the context as understood from an institutional perspective; the latter, a longer section, covers the complexities of this from the students' perspectives. School managers focus on the need to protect students in order to maintain safety on campus while also protecting students' rights and accommodating their religious needs, expressing the goal of creating an environment in which students are comfortable with critically engaging with issues surrounding religion. The Faith Centre is an installation (Lahlou, 2011) created by the LSE, but its usage and regulation was, at the time of the research, still being determined. The Faith Centre installation operates on three levels simultaneously: the physical, the psychological, and the institutional. How it will be used is determined both by school regulations and by what students think is possible between faith groups within the space.

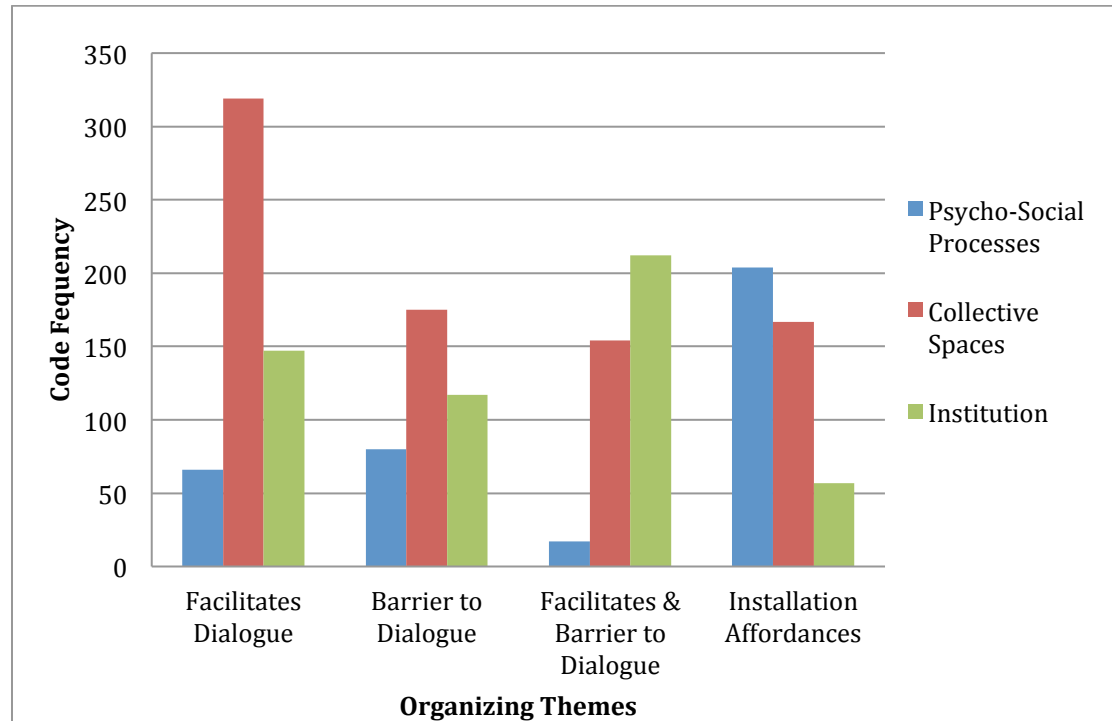
Part 2 of the chapter examines student focus group participants' discussions centred on the process of engaging in interfaith dialogue within the centre's interfaith space. This describes a time-intensive process of constructing intergroup networks with the purpose of building a Faith Centre community. This community building process is,

ideally, an inward and outward looking process of identity re-evaluation and establishing dialogical intergroup relationships. Creating such relationships is, however, as can be seen in part 3, a difficult process that can be impeded by processes related to identity threat. It is additionally complicated for Muslim participants, as institutional surveillance creates a point of tension within the LSE faith space.

*Table 5.1. Institutional interviews key*

IP#	Institutional Perspective, used to anonymously identify the institutional managerial participants
<i>Ital.</i>	Emphasis placed on word by participant
...	Participant pauses while speaking
[ed]	Segment of data has been removed for brevity

*Table 5.2. Institutional project of interfaith: coding frequencies of organizing themes*



Note: Reported factors facilitating and inhibiting interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE institutional interviews

## 5.1 The Faith Centre: an Institutional Project of Faith

Political conflicts on campus regarding the Israel-Palestine situation were the impetus for the development of the centre (see Chapter 1 for details). IP2 stated that there was “quite a lot of *willingness*...between the faith groups [to] at *least* communicate with each other,” while there was “*less willingness* between the two political groups.” Faith groups were seen to be easier groups to work with, so

institutional managers looked into how other institutions handled such religious-political tensions via dedicated faith spaces on other campuses.

What we had, what we still have, are Muslim prayer rooms which are *buried* at the bottom of King's Chambers I think. There's a Chaplaincy, which isn't *entirely* for Christian services; they *do* hold interfaith discussions there, but *essentially* it's for Christians though...[ed] And then other faith societies just had a room at the LSE and used it. So that wasn't very satisfactory. (IP2)

Two key managers had a vision for how they wanted to see faith-related conflicts on campus managed. The opportunity arose when the school started to plan a new student centre. IP2 stated that faith groups “had to have something separate...[but] they also had to have some *shared* space.” The institutional vision was that students of different faiths “*had* to be able to mingle” instead of simply keeping to separate spaces. The Faith Centre then, is the reification of the institutional managers’ representational project (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008) of and ambitions for faith relations on campus. A project, when shared, can be a “profound basis for [building a] community,” as it creates interdependence between previously separate groups of people (Howarth et al., 2015, p.186). But a project, which is contextually bound, shapes the nature of knowledge encounters and affects people’s attempts to participate, to exclude or include different systems of knowledge (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014). The institutional Faith Centre project will affect students’ attempts to participate in faith/belief/religion on campus and their attempts to shape the faith community at the LSE, and in turn influence LSE managers’ perspectives of faith on campus. This requires communication between all project stakeholders – they can acknowledge each other, or they can dismiss/exclude each other. They can engage in dialogue or they can obstruct it. Communities that are brought together by political projects, such as the LSE Faith Centre, may not have shared social representations and may not themselves experience a sense of belonging as a community (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Gillespie, Kadianaki, & O’Sullivan-Lago, 2012; Howarth et al., 2015).

A tension between observing student behaviour for safety and security purposes (in a climate of rising Islamophobia and anxieties about security, (Kinnvall, 2015; Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013)) and protecting their rights is inherent in the interviewees’ discussions. Protection is at the heart of this tension. Interviewees highlight the need to make the campus a safe space for everyone while also enabling

students to openly express their beliefs and to have open debates – to both facilitate student groups while also monitoring them. Managerial figures describe the Faith Centre as a resource for students that enables a diverse and international student body to fulfil their faith needs while on campus. IP1, a very senior administrator, recognizes that many international students will come to campus with “faith expectations,” which leaves the school with two options: to keep it private or “try and accommodate [it] reasonably.” IP1 states that the Faith Centre is an opportunity to both accommodate students’ faith needs while also centralizing faith activities, making them easier to control:

We've already had lots of facilities around the place accommodating the legitimate requests of students to pursue that aspect [faith] of their life. [IP2] was very good in terms of seeing this as something that could be brought together under the interfaith adviser in a space that we, the school, controls, which is very important for our obligations both to protect students and to be aware of what is being done on the campus.

While ‘accommodating the legitimate requests’ of students is highlighted, the main focus is on the school being able to control the space in which faith activities occur. Concerns stemming from a campus history of political tensions underlined by faith are exacerbated by larger social concerns and discourses surrounding religion in the UK and further afield. This impact, however, is not strictly limited to administrative concerns regarding the use of the Faith Centre, but extends to outsiders’ perceptions of religion at the LSE. This issue is discussed by IP3, a very senior management figure, who reflects on inquiries one office has received from media and alumni regarding faith on campus:

Two things are anxieties from many about the Faith Centre, and the ease with which media representations of things like gender segregation in teaching could catch on.

On campus, some people have these anxieties. Then in alumni groups or the court of governors, there were more of these anxieties. We're introducing sex segregation. Are we introducing problematic practices of any kind into the campus by doing this? People would hear a story like ritual washing as it pertains to Muslim students. They'd say, "We've gone toward sex segregation and everything."

IP3 states that there is a “leap from hearing that something like this might be condoned somewhere to assuming we were doing it.” He states that he is “shocked” by this



“panic response,” which is an issue that needs to be considered by the school. The concerns that alumni and media voice are directly related to the perceived actions of Muslim students. A “politics of fear,” like that of Islamophobia, “almost always involve[ed] clear identity boundaries in which certain people, groups or elements of society become securitised” (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013, p.356). A religious practice, such as separate ritual washing and by extension separate prayer, are imagined by some to potentially extend to institutional practices as well. Such emotional governance is, in a Foucauldian sense, also a means of surveillance and manipulation (ibid), influencing The LSE’s institutional project of faith relations on campus. While IP3 is “shocked” by this mis-representation of faith at the LSE, the school’s administration and interfaith project are influenced by it. The school must strike a balance between accommodating faith practices and also making it clear that Muslim religious practices do not extend to the school itself.

School officials recognize that political issues surrounding faith are “*always* going to expose a rawness” and that administrators and academics must accept that they cannot solve all the world’s problems. IP2, an academic and former administrator, emphasizes that while the major problems cannot be solved on campus, students and staff must be able to talk about them:

*All you can do is, ah tell people that they have to behave with mutual respect and create a safe environment in which people can express different views. And they’ve got to be able to do that, and they must be able to do that, because if they can’t do it at university, when can they do it? [laughs]*

The school is seen as a place where these discussions must take place. IP3 also emphasizes this point, stating that universities can “promote those bridges” so that “students are talking to us and other students in a way that they wouldn’t back home.” The school is viewed as a potentially unifying force for students; a place where they are not “separated the way they are in the outside communities.” It is a place in which students have the opportunity to engage with other perspectives via a unifying school group identity. Interviewees stress that this uniqueness is something that must be fostered and promoted by the school. It is, essentially, a place in which dialogical communication is more likely to occur, as there is more opportunity for knowledge

encounters and the critical thinking inherent in academia can foster knowledge transformation.

This uniqueness is extended to the Faith Centre itself, as it has two potentially contradictory goals: facilitating religious practice while also encouraging interfaith dialogue and debate on religious and political issues. IP4, who manages the centre, states that he hopes it can be a place where both goals are possible:

I really want it to be both a place where we can allow and even encourage students to express their religious identity, to practice their faith fully and unashamedly within this institution, within a space that is designated for that. Also, ahm, a space where there is genuine and *challenging* interaction between people of different faith communities. Both engaging in intellectual debate about what they believe, and about religion in the contemporary world, but also engaged in action and doing things together.

The hope is that the centre can help students bridge religious practice and academic inquiry. Not just of inquiry regarding differences in belief, but also critical explorations of the role of religion and belief in wider society and its impact on their relationships with others. In essence, they want to bridge micro and macro perspectives by facilitating belief while also challenging students to move beyond their own perspectives. As IP3 states, it is about bringing religion back to academia, allowing students to “get to know others different from them in a relatively safe environment” and thus “allow themselves to be challenged and to learn from those relationships in ways that they might not elsewhere.” The Faith Centre and the institutional project of interfaith relations on campus is a project focused on fostering a new sense of community on campus amongst a diverse student body. It is not just about communication, but action, which can be a solidifying force when bringing people together who may not identify as a single community, but do act jointly (Howarth et al., 2015).

These contradictory goals are suggestive of cognitive polyphasia within the institutional representational project. The LSE managers are drawing upon different forms of knowledge “depending on the particular circumstances in which they [find] themselves and on the particular interests they [hold] in a given time and place” (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p.69). Their concerns are contextualized – is it the academic speaking, or the administrator who is governed by institutional image concerns and UK

policies? The requirements of the social setting influence which form of knowledge people draw upon, with different forms of knowledge coexisting rather than excluding (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Administrators are struggling with an institutional social representation of faith. It is on campus and should be accommodated, but also monitored. They wish to give fair and equal voice to all students on campus while also protecting all students' rights. There is an expressed desire to bring religion back to the realm of academic debate, but the school must also mitigate the concerns that this causes amongst media, alumni, and wider social concerns regarding religion and fears of the religious other – Islam. The LSE is attempting to promote its project of interfaith relations on campus, reified by the Faith Centre, of building a more interdependent faith community on campus, but is also heavily influenced by a climate of Islamophobia within and beyond the school.

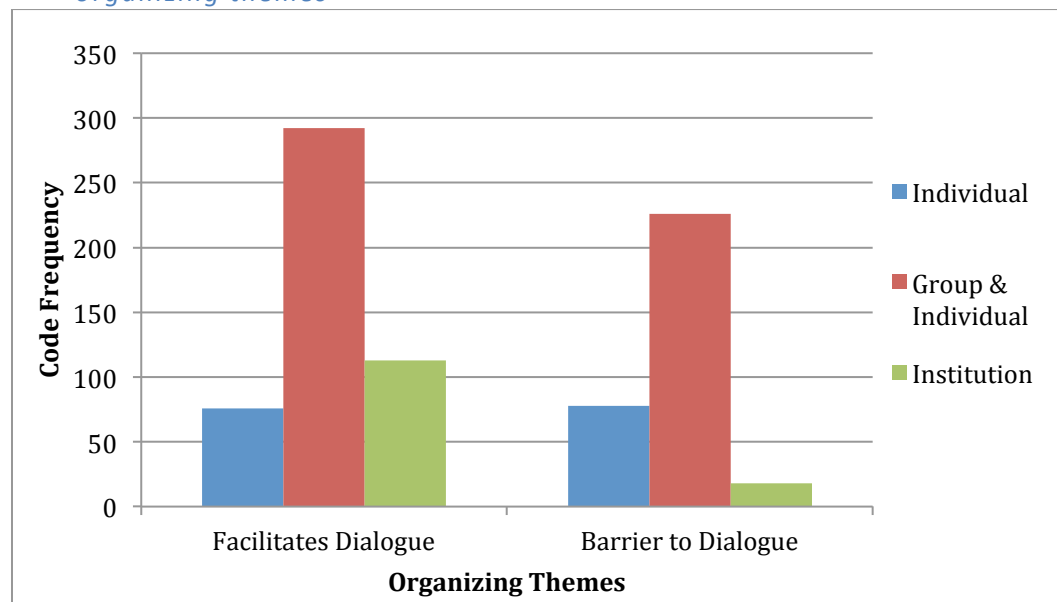
The following section will explore how LSE students make sense of this institutional project, reflecting on what does and what can promote interfaith/inter-belief dialogue on campus as well as what obstructs it. While focusing on a desire to build networks between students of different faiths, ideally resulting in dialogical intergroup relationships, participants also focus on the obstacles to this process. While this resonates with the institutional project of faith relations on campus, Muslim participants highlighted issues surrounding surveillance within the Faith Centre, highlighting the cognitive polyphasia within the institutional project.

## **5.2 Students' Sense-making of the Institutional Project**

Focus group participants were asked to discuss the concept of interfaith dialogue, along with the Faith Centre. Two global themes emerged from the sessions: how interfaith dialogue can be facilitated and reasons why it can be difficult. Facilitating interfaith dialogue, as will be shown, is ultimately about developing a pathway towards dialogical intergroup encounters. Developing this pathway is, however, difficult, and is hindered by identity-related processes. Both of the global themes broke down into three layers: psycho-social processes, space (i.e., the built environment), and institutional influences. These three layers are different contextual levels that work simultaneously (Lahlou, 2008). Table 5.3. shows the coding frequencies of the organizing themes that emerged from the student focus groups. Table 5.4. depicts the coding frequencies of the

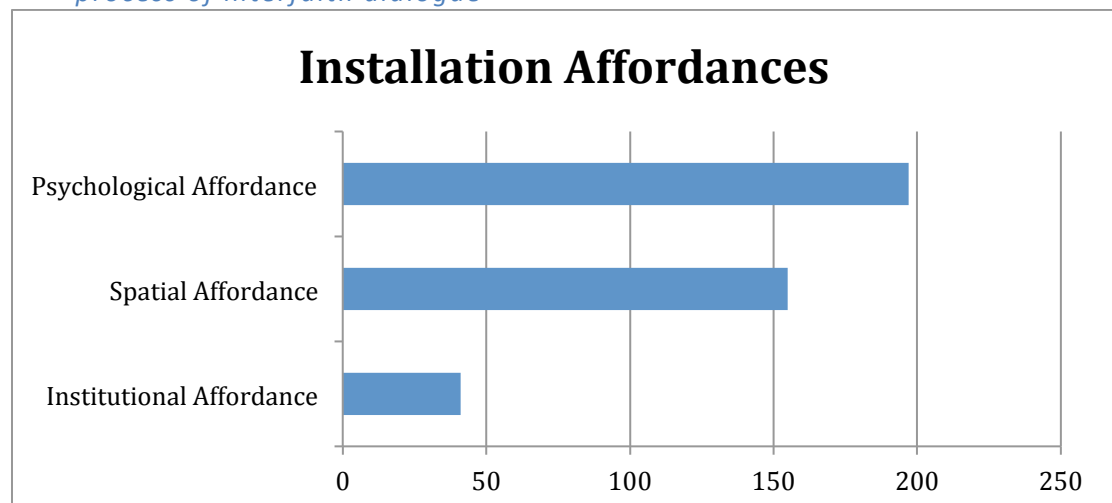
three contextual layers of contact installations that student participants identified. Table 5.5. further breaks this down into how contact installation affordances both facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue. Table 5.6. details how these three levels, as discussed by participants, can both facilitate and also hinder interfaith dialogue. The numbers in the table highlight the links to the research questions.

*Table 5.3. Students' sense-making of the interfaith project: coding frequencies of organizing themes*



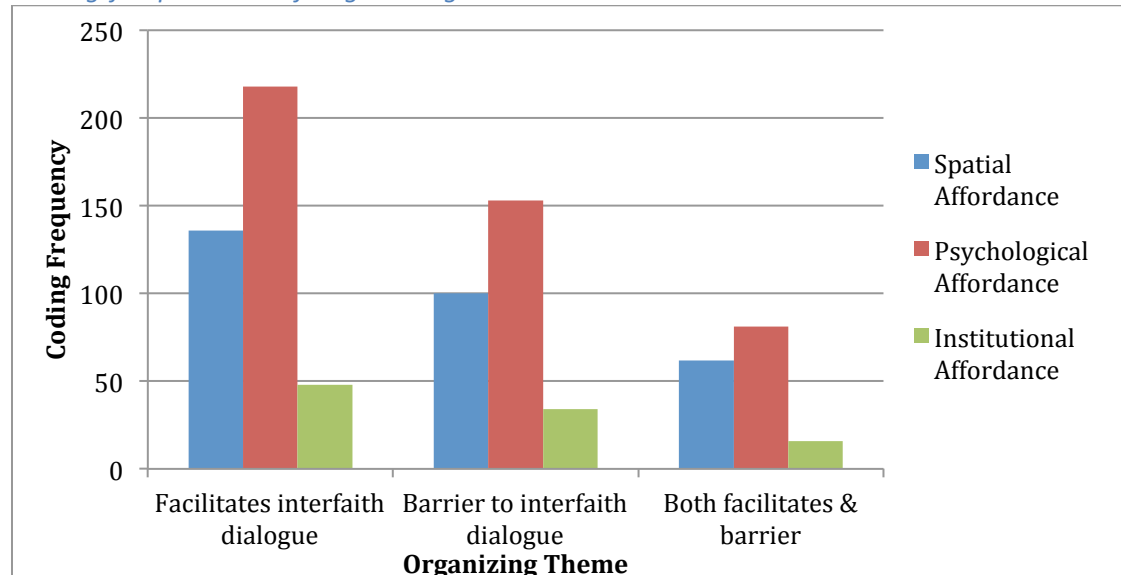
Note: Reported factors facilitating and inhibiting interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.4. Coding frequencies of installation affordances that influence the process of interfaith dialogue*



Note: Reported aspects of interfaith contact installations. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.5. Installation affordances that facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue: coding frequencies of organizing themes*



Note: Reported aspects of interfaith contact installations cross-coded with factors that facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.

Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.6. Interfaith installation: facilitating and hindering interfaith dialogue*

	Facilitates Interfaith Dialogue	Inhibits Interfaith Dialogue
<b>Psycho-social processes</b>	Perspective Taking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open-mindedness</li> <li>Seeking knowledge/information about the other</li> </ul> Re-evaluation of Social Representation of the other <b>1, 5</b>	Identity Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious/belief identity salience</li> <li>Identity threat</li> <li>Uncertainty of social norms</li> </ul> Identity management strategies & limited navigation <b>1, 2, 5</b>
<b>Safe/unsafe spaces</b>	Comfortable Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known social norms</li> <li>Inclusive – safe space for all</li> </ul> Boundary Blurring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commonality (goals &amp; identity)</li> </ul> Everybody's space (diversity & equality) <b>1, 2, 4</b>	Claiming space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space allocation</li> <li>Labelling of space</li> </ul> <b>1, 4</b>
<b>Institutional Influence</b>	Integration of Belief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional recognition</li> <li>Normalization of religion/faith</li> </ul> Providing Guidance Establishing social norms <b>1, 3</b>	Contradictory nature of Faith Centre (purpose) Institutional surveillance <b>1, 3</b>

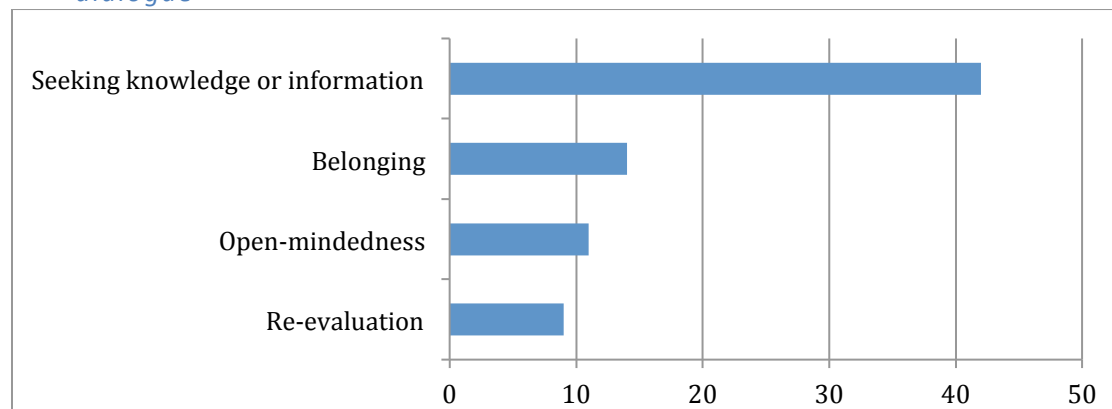
**Research Questions:**

- 1) What conditions (psychological) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - 1a) What might open up dialogue?
  - 1b) What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith society members understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity & spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith society members in relation to multicultural contact situations?

### 5.2.1 Facilitating Interfaith Dialogue

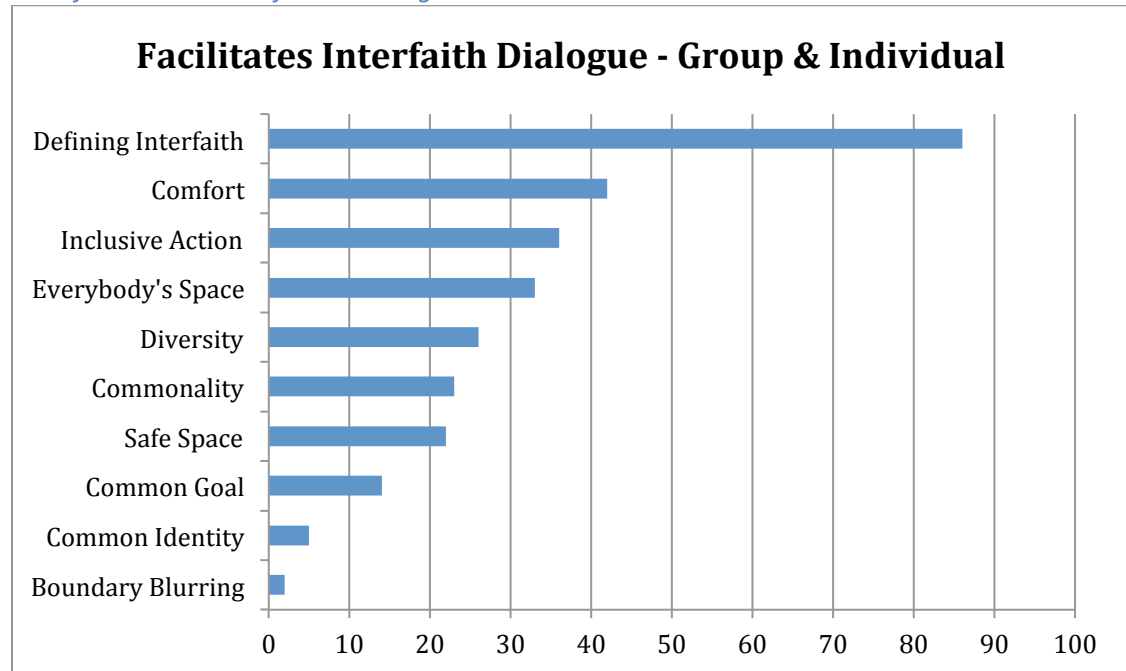
Participants of all belief backgrounds discussed interfaith dialogue in terms of a social process that requires an investment of time, resonating with past research regarding prejudice reduction (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Ideally, it is seen as a process of re-evaluation in which people come to reassess their values and beliefs about members of another religious or belief background(s). Participants asserted that the social context of interfaith contact is of high importance, as all focus groups stated that a ‘safe space’ is needed for interfaith dialogue to occur. The data shows that a safe space is created through the intersections of psycho-social processes, physical spaces, and institutional influences. It is a contextualized process that takes time, and participants stated that it first requires a willingness to go, then learning more, deciding if the space is safe, and then making a decision regarding future encounters. While participants did not specifically use the term ‘stage’ or explicitly discuss steps needed to facilitate interfaith dialogue, they clearly expressed that certain things must be done before communication between people of different faiths can occur freely and without a sense of fearfulness. Ultimately, the data as a whole indicates the importance of a pathway for developing dialogical self-other relations and establishing relationships of mutual understanding and recognition. Tables 5.7. through 5.9. show the coding frequency breakdown for the individual, group and individual, and institutional influences on the process of facilitating interfaith dialogue. Image 5.1. is a model of participants’ ideal process for facilitating interfaith dialogue.

*Table 5.7. Coding frequencies for individual-level factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue*



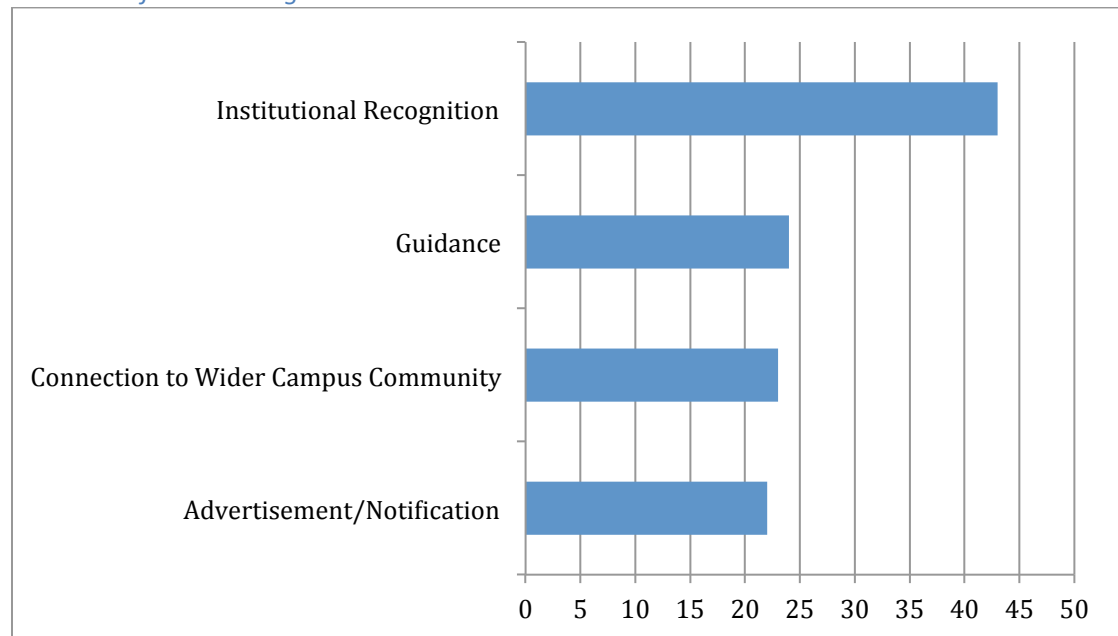
Note: Individual factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.8. Coding frequencies for group and individual-level factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue*



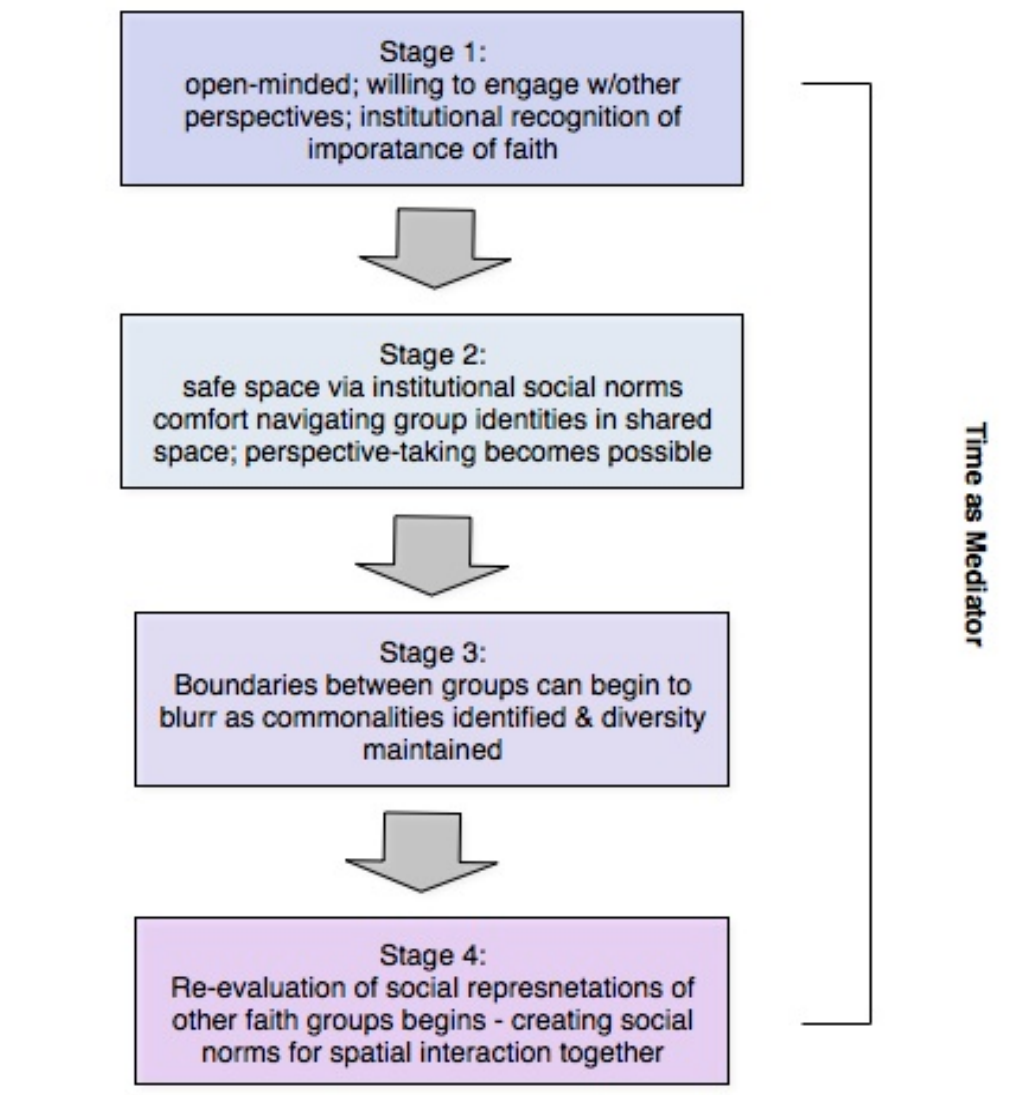
Note: Group & individual factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.9. Coding frequencies of institutional-level factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue*



Note: Institutional factors that facilitate interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Image 5.1. Model of interfaith dialogue facilitation*



The following sections will examine each stage in depth. Stage One requires the psychosocial process of being open minded; participants indicated that interfaith dialogue starts with being willing to accept that there are other points of view. For this to happen on campus, participants highlighted the importance of institutional recognition of faith as important to their lives and integrating it into the campus community. Stage Two involves making it possible to take on the perspective of someone of a different faith. Participants indicated that this becomes possible via interactional guidelines, which help to make the interaction space feel safe, which in turn enables them to feel comfortable asking questions and seeking out information. Only then is Stage Three possible – when participants state they would feel comfortable in a safe space and free to ask questions, they are able to start blurring



boundaries between faith groups. And, ideally, this creates the opportunity for Stage 4, when students start to re-evaluate their beliefs about people of other faiths.

*Table 5.10. Focus groups data key*

A#	Participant has self-identified as Atheist/Agnostic/Secular
C#	Participant has self-identified as Christian
H#	Participant has self-identified as Hindu
M#	Participant has self-identified as Muslim
<i>Italics</i>	Participant has emphasized the word(s) while speaking
...	Participant has paused while speaking
[ed]	Quote has been edited for brevity or grammatical reasons
<b>Bold Itl.</b>	Participant heavily emphasizes the word(s) while speaking

#### *5.2.1.1 Stage 1: willingness to engage with the ‘other’*

Participants indicated that first and foremost, interfaith dialogue begins with a willingness to interact with people who have a different set of beliefs. They also felt that it was important that the LSE recognizes the importance of faith/religion to the student body. In doing so, the participants said that the institution helps to normalize religion and faith, making it visible to the wider campus community and viewed as something that is ‘okay’ to talk about.

##### *5.2.1.1.1 Psycho-social process: open-mindedness*

Participants of all belief backgrounds emphasized the need for people attempting to engage in interfaith dialogue to be open-minded. Open-mindedness was discussed in terms of a willingness to see past socio-historical conflicts, and also to ‘dive into’ another faith. Acknowledging historical and political differences between faiths and respecting that people might not agree with one’s own viewpoint was considered foundational to the beginning of dialogue between faiths. Doing so is a means of recognizing the legitimacy of the other faith’s way of knowing. Participants highlighted the importance of not forcing or faking agreement for the sake of making contact with each other. Acknowledging differences and being willing to accept disagreement in a respectful manner was highlighted as an extremely important component of interfaith dialogue. Accepting these differences, which they said tend to lie outside of interpersonal relations and instead are rooted in macro-level conflicts, is

required to see beyond faith-based conflict and engage in person-to-person dialogue. A Muslim post-graduate student succinctly summarized this point:

Be honest in your dialogues...If A person sees this as black and B person sees this as, this thing as *white...okay*. And we don't have to see white as grey or black as *grey*...So if we're going to have an interfaith space, there should be absolute respect...and honesty. And part, part of that respect is being honest...as you said, it's not like, as we all hate each other but now we're going to pretend to love each other for ten minutes while we're here...No. I, I think if you want to start an interfaith space... you have to have absolute respect that there *are* some genuine historical problems...And...but they are...many times rooted in politics more than actual...people to people issues...If you *can't* talk about it, then don't start a space...that brings it to the fore. (M1)

Interfaith dialogue often evokes historically and politically rooted conflicts, which can negatively impact interpersonal relations, as daily interactions are imbued with social representations of the past (Bar-Tal, 2008; Billig, 1995), influencing behaviour in the present (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). It is therefore important that one can see past this, be willing to accept that the other person might not see things from one's point of view, but still be able to engage with them. If one is able to engage with the viewpoint of the other, one must also accept that the other does not have to agree with you – that white or black does not have to become grey. It is about seeing and accepting that there is another point of view, without needing to change it or whitewash it. It is fundamental to be open to alternative truth claims. Past research has shown that perspective-taking encourages empathy, which may lead to improved out-group prejudice (Batson et al., 1997; Pettigrew, 1998), as perspective-taking has been shown to focus attention on situation factors instead of dispositional factors when making attributions about others (Adelman, Brehm, & Katz, 1974; Galper, 1976; Gould & Sigall, 1977). Essentially, perspective taking can reduce the rate of what Pettigrew (1979) calls the ultimate attribution error, or the tendency to attribute negative behaviours to an out-group members' disposition, while attributing negative behaviours of in-group members to situational factors. Perspective taking stimulates a self-other cognitive overlap, which leads to a decrease in intergroup prejudice (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), and can be a step towards creating dialogical relations. Such relations are about knowledge transformation (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Markova, 2003), but participants state that transformation in the interfaith context is not immediate. Transformation cannot be forced; it must be mutual,

otherwise it is simply forcing a viewpoint on another, a form of psychological violence (Jovchelovitch, 2007, 2008), which can be made all the more damaging by the added identity component of faith.

Participants expanded on the concept of open-mindedness, linking it to not just acknowledging the existence of another viewpoint, but also to a willingness to immerse oneself in someone else's perspective. H1, a Hindu undergrad, reflects on the benefits of such willingness.

the *real*... getting a taste of the culture and the religion of the other person while respecting the differences.... is the idea of *getting into* a religion. Getting to know a religion and not being *scared of immersing* yourself within a religion... Because some people just stick to their faith...which is kind of... not conducive to interfaith dialogue. (H1)

Open-mindedness is related to getting to experience the viewpoint of the other – of ‘getting into’ the other’s perspective. This immersion process pulls one out of one’s own faith and into that of the other, and has been shown to increase people’s willingness to interact with people from other, often stereotyped groups (Wang, Tai, Ku, & Galinsky, 2014). Perspective taking is vital to interfaith dialogue; being closed off to another faith group’s perspective is in fact ‘not conducive to interfaith dialogue’ because it impedes the self-other cognitive overlap made possible by perspective-taking (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Wright et al., 1997). As is made evident in both excerpts, respecting differences between perspectives is a central component of being open-minded, and also a fundamental component of a dialogical relationship, which requires a commitment to both equality and genuine communication (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

#### 5.2.1.1.2 Institutional recognition of belief

Participants discussed open-mindedness in relation to institutional recognition of faith. Most participants felt that the opening of the Faith Centre was a positive move, as it is a visible recognition of the importance of faith to the student body and thus validates students’ faith identities. Many participants also felt that institutional recognition had the added value of sanctioning the existence of faith on campus, making it acceptable to openly talk about and connect it to the wider campus

community. This in turn is a step towards normalizing faith in higher education and increasing the willingness of students to engage with it. Institutional recognition means it is not just students of faith who are recognizing the legitimacy of each other's faith systems; it means that the school-wide community also recognizes students and staff of all faiths' religious knowledge as legitimate.

The participants stated that the act of investing in and building the Faith Centre is a means of the LSE recognizing the importance of faith to its student body, which in turn makes religion and faith more visible and normal. C1, a Christian postgrad, highlighted the common European secular representation of faith as being taboo and how normalizing faith can change perceptions towards it. Religion has "been given a bad name" and is seen as something private with no "real public practicing of it;" it is something that is not normally spoken about, and they felt is largely stigmatized in UK culture. The construction of the Faith Centre is a means of making religion more visible:

But I think...having a space like this, it allows it to be seen as something, you know, it's bringing back to...public. To normal, to everyday life. It doesn't have to [M2: exactly] be fundamentalist and it doesn't have to be extremist, it can just be a part of someone's every-day life. And um, you know, you can accept that, you don't have to think that, you know, just because M2 goes and prays every day doesn't, you know...can't hang out with her. You know what I mean? (C1)

Recognising the importance of faith in students' daily lives via the construction of the Faith Centre visually brings faith back into the public sphere. Doing so claims a space for religion and belief within a campus that is largely defined as secular. In doing so, the LSE is communicating to the school community that religion and belief belong on campus. Not only does this validate religious students' faith identities (Jovchelovitch, 2007), it normalizes belief and enables discussions about what is oftentimes considered a taboo topic. For many, the LSE is creating a sense that faith belongs on campus; in claiming a space for faith, the school is conveying information about social belonging (Tonkiss, 2006), and so physically and psychologically de-stigmatizing faith at the school.

The Faith Centre itself is identified as both the object of agency as well as its medium. Participants indicated that the centre not only claims space for belief on

campus, it creates a medium through which it can be discussed – it becomes a channel through which belonging can be communicated. A1, an agnostic postgrad, identified the Faith Centre as a starting point for talking about faith. He states that faith is a private matter – someone else’s faith is not his “business.” In order to have interfaith dialogue, religion must first be made a legitimate topic of conversation. He states that the presence of the Faith Centre “quote on quote *sanction[s]*” faith on campus, making it something that is okay to talk about publicly. The centre has the potential to “create a situation where it’s okay.. to talk about [it].” Claiming the centre as a space for faith on campus makes it a medium through which it can be discussed; the space itself is a validation of religion and religious identities. Claiming space for faith is an initial step in re-presenting faith to the wider secular campus community. They are contesting the current meaning of faith in education and providing an alternative representation (Howarth, 2004, 2010). Social spaces are an important component of the process of transforming meaning (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Duveen, 2001; Howarth, 2010). The school is communicating an alternative social representation of faith via the physical environment; spatially normalizing faith, moving away from religion as taboo and making it a part of the everyday.

#### **5.2.1.2 Stage 2: a safe space requires established social norms**

Stage Two involves creating a context in which it is possible to take on the perspective of someone of a different faith. Participants indicated that this becomes possible via interactional guidelines provided by the LSE, which help to make the interfaith encounter space feel safe. Participants reported that the sense of safety established by knowing the social norms, and thus ground rules for the interaction, would enable them to feel comfortable asking questions and seeking out information about another faith. Participants emphasized the need for The LSE to provide ground rules for interfaith interactions in order to provide a baseline for contact. Many expressed concern over not knowing how to interact with the types of people they assumed would be at an interfaith event. Some participants recognised that religion is a sensitive topic, one that can easily lead to unintentional offense. C1, a Christian postgrad, explains her concern:

I feel like religion, especially for people who have very strong beliefs, it's a very touchy subject. [M2: yeah]. So I *would* feel personally, you know, if I wanna explore a religion...I wouldn't know how to approach it without guidance. I wouldn't know what questions are offensive. What can I *do*...or you know... So I feel like a lot of people...like in this kinda place I feel that...without them actually setting up some sort of...practices? (C1)

Religion is seen as a “touchy” subject, one that may easily lead to causing offense, becoming a point of conflict. The stigmatized, sensitive nature of religion/faith additionally complicates the pathway to establishing dialogical relations. Uncertainty on how to talk about the topic limits discussion; not participating can be safer than participating without knowing the social norms, the rules for behaviour in that space. This becomes complicated by the nature of the Faith Centre itself. One night it may be an Islamic place, another night a Christian place, another night a Hindu place, or multiple places within one evening. A sense of place is imbued with “moral meanings” (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006), and is tied up in ways of doing faith and ways of being in that space. Having no guidelines for how to navigate a space that can be many different places can be particularly daunting.

This point is made by M1, a Muslim postgrad, who elaborates on the notion of the intersection of space and place. Not knowing “the code of conduct” is worrying “unless everybody kind of agrees on the sort of conduct.” An “anything goes” stance is a cause for concern. The common social space in the Faith Centre, which is designated as an interfaith space, is ambiguous.

It's not a religious space. It's *everybody's* religious space. So if I'm walking into a Muslim prayer area...I *know* what the etiquettes are. If I'm walking into a temple, I know what the etiquettes are. If I'm going to a church, I know what the etiquettes are. But I [laughing] don't know what the etiquettes are *here*. [laughing]. (M1)

One knows how to behave in specific faith spaces because they are clearly defined. Social divisions shape the possibilities of action between people (Dixon & Reicher, 1997); knowing how reality is divided by faith identity enables one to know what is possible within different places of worship. The social representation one has of a particular faith guides one's behaviour within the space, influencing what is believed to be possible (Lahlou, 2008). This space, however, is multiple places simultaneously – it

is “everybody’s religious space.” The social norms in this space are undefined, creating a sense of uncertainty because there is no baseline for interactions with others. There is no one set of representations structuring behaviour in this space, so participants do not know what is appropriate or what to expect. Participants stressed that the uncertainty surrounding the ‘procedures’ of the Faith Centre needs to be addressed in order for one to navigate the space, to make a decision about how one not only uses the space, but also how one interacts with the other people who also use it. Once the guidelines are known, one can determine if the space is somewhere where one feels comfortable. Guidelines are a means of mitigating the ambiguity of a space that is multiple places – they “enunciate clearly” (M1) what should be done within the space. Knowing what to expect removes a degree of uncertainty, which would otherwise foster a “go do your stuff and leave” (M1) mentality. Rules for engagement then, lay the groundwork for navigating intergroup relations and can kick-start communication between groups.

#### 5.2.1.2.1 Psycho-social processes: seeking knowledge or information

Once the space is “safe enough,” participants feel that they would be willing to engage with people of different faiths. Simply providing the space is not enough to encourage students to engage in interfaith dialogue. Participants state that the psycho-social process of seeking out information or knowledge about religious others must be facilitated, not just by space and guidelines, but also via one’s own curiosity. C1, a Christian postgrad, highlights the importance of having activities for the students who “want to find out about something” related to religion. Simply claiming a space for faith doesn’t make interfaith dialogue actually happen – people need the opportunity to “listen and find out.”

No. It doesn’t make it happen just because...you know, you provide the space. I think...cuz, from *my* point of view. If I wanted to go and...you know, discover other religions and explore and that may be in the purpose of changing *mine* [ed]...So, I I feel like to some extent that if I come in with questions...an go I don’t know anything, can you tell me? There’s the fear of coming off as ignorant, you know. (C1)

Many participants expressed fear of “coming off as ignorant” when asking questions about a faith. This sentiment is common among semi- and non-practicing as well as non-religious participants. Participants are concerned with how others might react to their interpretation of, and reaction to information communicated by others (Doise,

1993). The essential element that drives our behaviour is what we think others think we think: meta-knowledge (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Gillespie, 2008). A physical space and guidance alone are not enough to make perspective-taking possible. One must be willing to seek out the perspective of the other and risk uncertainty as to how their actions will be interpreted. In seeking out alternative perspectives, in being open to the voices of others and their group identities, one will encounter alternative views of their own identity. One may, in turn, re-evaluate one's own views. Thus interfaith encounters are, according to themes presented by the participants, sights of identity negotiation that involve both inward-looking and outward-looking psychosocial processes.

#### ***5.2.1.3 Stage 3: Building community through the intersectionality of identities***

Participants indicated that perspective taking becomes possible via interactional guidelines, which help to make the contact space feel safe, enabling them to feel comfortable asking questions and seeking out information; only then is Stage Three possible. Participants reported that if a space is comfortable, with the social norms known, people feel secure enough to question and potentially begin to engage with the perspective of the other. In being open-minded and seeking information about another faith, participants said that one can gain insight into the social norms of that faith, and thus expands one's understanding of what types of actions are and are not possible within the social context of contact. In doing so, one is re-assessing the possibilities of action within the interfaith context and faith societies can start to construct intergroup networks and build social capital. Putnam (1993) defines social capital as four features that create community cohesion: 1) concentrated networks and local organizations, 2) active participation in these networks, 3) a positive identity, solidarity, and equitable relations with community members and 4) norms of reciprocity and trust amongst community members. Constructing intergroup networks, then, is the starting point for building social capital within the Faith Centre and between faith societies.

But, for this to happen, participants highlight that students must feel included, or recognized. They state that the LSE Faith Centre is especially suited to this purpose, as it serves the LSE community as a whole, allowing users of the space to focus on what different faiths have in common – being a member of the LSE community. This



enables a super-ordinate identity to develop (Dovidio et al., 2007; Gaertner, Dovidio, & Bachman, 1996; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). A2, an atheist postgrad, pinpointed the opportunity that a common LSE identity can create for interfaith contact:

Cuz if I...if I go to the church or a specific space for...those who, people who have their own religious belief. I have, in my mind, I have to obey some rules [ed]...and create kinda pressure for me. But if I got to interfaith centre to talk with people [ed]...I think...the students or the staffs there, they have their own identity...like they have the label of LSE. So I know if I go there...to *me* they are...I I am within the group...of them. So I...I could talk with them, no matter we have...we share our common knowledge of these religious beliefs. But we could, I think, dialogue would be more freely... compared to go to the church or some other places. (A2)

It is easier to see the Faith Centre as a space open to all students and staff, regardless of belief, because of the context of the centre. In diverse societies like London, and by extension the LSE, people are “moving through communities” as they navigate social spaces (Howarth et al., 2015), encountering many different knowledge systems. Since the centre is part of the school, commonality is easier to find – it can start outside of religious/belief conviction and instead focus on school identity. The space can be viewed not (only) as a religious space, but as a school space. The LSE identity is the central point in which all students’ identities intersect (Howarth et al., 2015; Phoenix, 2009). This stands in contrast to entering a faith space in which a unifying group identity seemingly does not exist. Entering such a foreign space would be very uncomfortable because, as an outsider, one does not know the group norms and thus cannot behave in a group normative manner (Hogg et al., 2004). This creates a sense of non-belonging, of being out of place, an issue that may not arise for students in an LSE space.

Inter-group commonalities that can potentially lead to constructing networks between student faith groups also include a common goal or mutual interest, which has shown to reduce intergroup prejudice (Allport, 1954; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). M3, an undergraduate Muslim, explains that it is important to look for a ‘unifying reason’ for people to interact.

there’s still a unifying reason why these people are meeting. And [ed]...when you have a situation where you’re trying to...make different groups...feel included and feel just as part of it...[ed] overall, you need to find a specific...thing...that would interest people of different faiths...backgrounds. In the same level for it to be... equally beneficial. Otherwise what you can have happen, if you have societies...which have more members than others or

more... certain members...it's slightly...ah...I wouldn't use the word skewed because it depends on what your particular attention is, but I think *might* not generate the *same* level of inclusivity that you'd want. (M3)

The Faith Centre is a space designed to accommodate both the individual (in prayer, for example) and the group (in faith and inter-faith events, for example). However, at this stage, group events tend to be religion-specific. Participants emphasize that common ground must be found in order for interfaith events to occur, as this will influence the number of students that attend and of which faiths. Common ground then, is a means for starting the process of building the intergroup networks necessary for social capital (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Putnam, 1993) – it provides a basis for intergroup interaction and LSE faith community participation. M3 states that organizers of interfaith activities run the risk of being biased in their event planning, highlighting that interfaith events must be equally beneficial to all faiths involved if one is to maximize inclusivity and facilitate dialogue between groups. In identifying a common interest, event organizers can maximize the social capital of this emerging interfaith network and bring more students together. However, as will be shown in section 5.2.2, this is a difficult feat to achieve in reality.

#### 5.2.1.4 Stage 4: Re-evaluation and dialogical intergroup relationships

Participants spoke of the ideal outcome of interfaith dialogue, ultimately defining it as a process of re-evaluation and building dialogical relationships with people of other faiths. This ideal outcome is the culmination of all other phases and results in what participants said is a safe space for everyone. If there is a space that is inclusive of all people, one in which students of any belief or non-belief, then it becomes possible to not only communicate and explain one's point of view and come together on points of common interest, it also becomes possible to re-evaluate one's own views. The need for a space in which everyone feels welcome is highlighted in all focus groups. Once a space is safe and commonalities are established, then differences can be discussed and engaged with and interfaith dialogue opens up. C2, a postgrad who identifies as Christian with a Buddhist background, elaborates on this notion of a 'space for everyone':

I think you just need to sometimes create spaces that are...all encompassing and muddled, so that people *feel* that they can come into that space. Ah, share who they are and negotiate their difference with others...And so like it

depends, I think...I think having a space that's not necessarily neutral, but at least *feels* like it's connected to everybody in some shape or form, is important for that. Because there's so few spaces [ed]...that facilitate that sort of feeling. Like I belong, or I can practice who I am openly... (C2)

Dialogue becomes possible when people feel that they belong and are comfortable being themselves; a 'muddied' space that is 'all-encompassing' enables differences to be engaged with. Different knowledge systems can meet in such a 'muddied' space because the boundaries between groups become less strictly defined and barriers are easier to cross (Dixon, 2001; Sibley, 1995). This coming together is spatially facilitated via the Faith Centre – in creating one central space for all faith societies, members are required to interact with each other in order to manage the space and engage with the ambiguity, or the 'muddiness', of a shared space. M1, a Muslim postgrad, hits this point home when she reflects on how the nature of faith spaces on campus have changed since the opening of the new centre:

So maybe what the space has done...is made the societies *re-evaluate*...their contribution...or their roles...or...think of additional things that they may need to do....So...maybe what the space is done is say...listen guys, we have *a place...all of us*...all ten of us...ah fifteen of us....we now have *a place*...We *now* have to talk to each other....because this is our space...[ed] those who are within those societies...will now have to actually *start* to communicate with each other...because we're sharing the space...as opposed to a basement here and a room there and ah that kinda thing. (M1)

The physical nature of the new space requires users of different faiths to come together. Faith societies need to re-evaluate their roles in relation to each other within this 'muddied' space because they must share it. Student faith groups are no longer on their own, but are physically interconnected, which requires new psychosocial practices. It entails the intersection of belief identities and of belief knowledge systems, and is the starting point for building a new Faith Centre community. C3, a Christian postgrad, emphasizes that this communication is a starting point, a symbol to help bring in more students of faith. A3, an agnostic, formerly Hindu postgrad, describes this muddied space where faith societies come together as a "symbolic representation of interfaith dialogue". It is a starting point from which students can re-present what it means to be a member of their faith and re-evaluate their social representations of others – they are collaboratively reconstructing their group identities through and against the representations they all hold of each other (Howarth, 2010). Because it is a shared space and the social representations and norms are unknown, they need to come

together to discuss, relate and manage the space. Together, they are creating new social representations, shared norms and a new way of thinking about and enacting interfaith. They are, in essence, in the beginning stages of negotiating knowledge encounters (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

This re-evaluation process incorporates diversity, not whitewashing differences, but instead minimising the stigma and stereotypes that often surround faith and belief differences. It is the “genuine communication” that is needed to develop dialogical relationships (Jovchelovitch, 2007). C1, a Christian postgrad, reflects on the notion of re-evaluation of the religious other:

I don't know if you'd lose the exotic element as much as you would lose the *fearful* element of it...umm...[ed] I think [it] is a bigger way of promoting...respect and...you know, acceptance of all. (C1)

Dialogue isn't so much about intermixing or making things 'grey' (M1 quote, pg. 11), but rather about taking the fear or anxiety out of interfaith contact. It is about moving away from stereotypes of the other and re-evaluating one's own understanding of other faiths, and potentially transforming the ways of knowing about faith of all involved. Through communication, or interfaith dialogue, the fear of the other is ideally replaced with respect for and acceptance of the other, through a process of dialogue and engagement (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015). In being open to perspectives of others, one opens oneself up to others' re-presentations of their group identities, of exploring alternative representations (Howarth, 2002a) and thus one re-evaluates one's own meta-knowledge of the other group. Participants are ultimately describing knowledge transformation – of the ideal interfaith encounter to not be about knowledge transmission, but about knowledge transformation (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

#### 5.2.1.5 *Time as a Mediating Factor*

It is important to note that time was strongly emphasized by participants, in that the psychosocial processes involved in opening up interfaith dialogue and laying the foundation for dialogical relationships can be time-consuming. Interfaith dialogue is, however, seen to be worth the investment. C4, a Catholic postgrad, states that interfaith dialogue “has to happen [and] it's going to become easier over time.” Dialogue is initially difficult to start. Intergroup contact in strongly defined environments, like

those described in Chapter 4, can be anxiety producing (Sibley, 1995). That is why it is easier to start with commonalities, the “common ground” between faiths, but it is important to realize that this does not mean that the differences will disappear. The differences will still be there, but the more often people of different faiths come together via common ground, the easier participants say it becomes to have dialogue between faiths.

The factor of time is tightly tied to the concept of the stages of interfaith dialogue. M2, a Muslim postgrad, says the waters must be tested and people need to know that the contact space is safe before they are willing to engage with others. Taking that first step in this process is difficult:

I think [it] always takes a first time to know it's a safe space. I joined the Jewish Society but I never really got to go to any of their events....I imagine that if I go once and it's a safe place, then I can go more and learn more. I think it takes the first time...to go to this centre because there's a certain event that's inviting [C1: Yeah] for everyone [C3: mmm]. And then people will be comfortable going again to the space and mingling [A2: mmm]. But the first time is always very tough if you don't have something to do there. (M2)

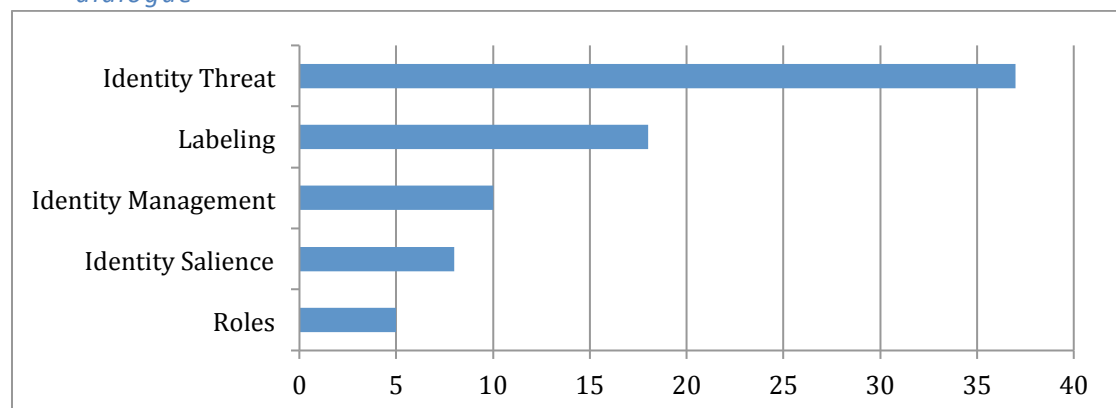
Without an obvious reason or a perceived common connection between groups, it is very hard to initiate interfaith contact. It requires stepping outside of one's comfort zone and entering a strongly defined contact situation in which people are more likely to be spatially aware of intergroup boundaries and behave in an exclusionary manner (Sibley, 1995; Dixon, 2001). Boundary crossing in such an environment is risky, because it involves crossing from a known space into an unknown one, causing anxiety because the line between in- and out-group comes into question (Sibley, 1995). The space is potentially dangerous and one needs to know that it is safe before being “comfortable going again...and mingling.” Not only do students need to feel invited, they must also feel comfortable enough to go again and potentially interact with others more. It is a difficult process, but the difficulty of such interactions diminishes over time with each interfaith encounter. Building transformative relationships requires not only commitment and recognition; it is a process that also requires an investment of time (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014).

This section has outlined the stages of facilitating interfaith dialogue, as defined by focus group participants. Participants emphasized that this process is time-intensive, requiring open-mindedness, perspective-taking, support from authority figures via established interactional guidelines, to slowly build intergroup networks and construct social capital, ideally culminating in dialogical intergroup relationships. The discussion now turns to what focus group participants identified as obstacles to this dialogical process.

### 5.2.2 Obstacles to Facilitating Interfaith Dialogue

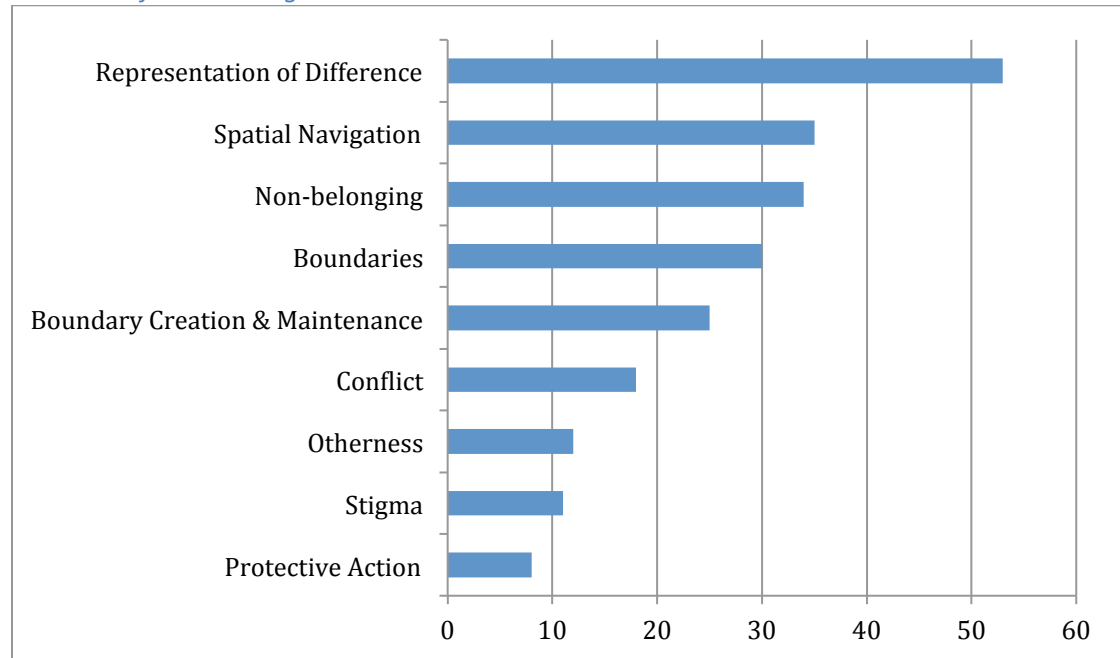
As has started to be seen, interfaith dialogue is fraught with contradictions; the processes that facilitate interfaith dialogue can also impede it. Participants' discussions regarding obstacles to dialogue centred on the lack of a 'safe space' – essentially defining an insecure contact environment. The social context of interfaith contact is identified as being central to dialogue, and while facilitating dialogue is time-intensive, the processes that can impede it can happen quickly. Participants indicated that an insecure space is due to the intersections of psychosocial processes surrounding identity, strongly defined collective spaces, and institutional influences. Tables 5.11 and 5.12 show the coding frequencies of individual and group-level factors that hinder interfaith dialogue. Table 5.13 shows the coding frequencies of factors that can be both facilitators and hinders of interfaith dialogue. Image 5.2. is a model depicting the barrier construction process that emerged from the data that hinders interfaith dialogue and the building of intergroup networks.

*Table 5.11. Coding frequencies of individual-level factors that hinder interfaith dialogue*



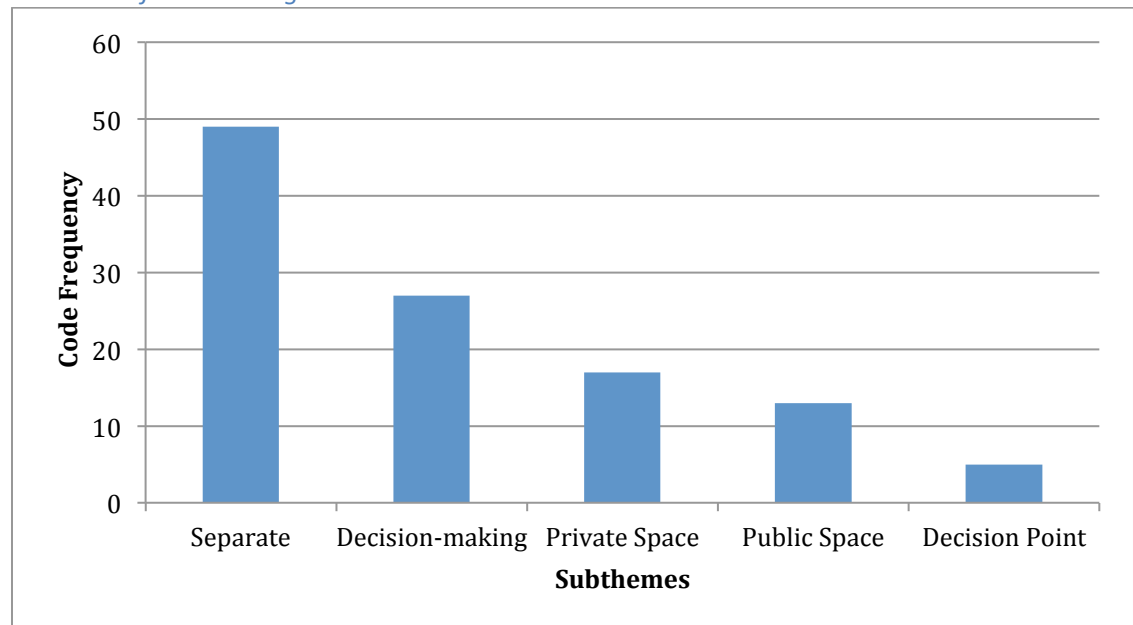
Note: Individual factors that hinder interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.12. Coding frequencies of group and individual-level factors that hinder interfaith dialogue*



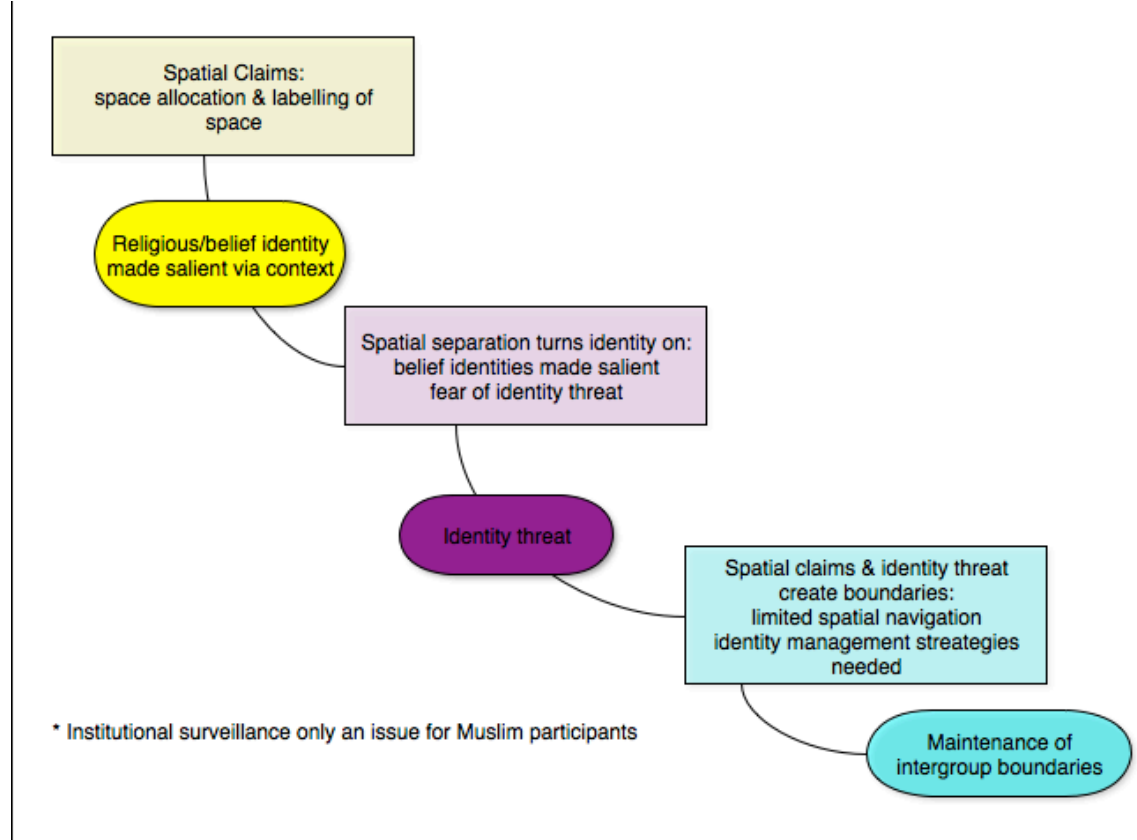
Note: Group and individual factors that hinder interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Table 5.13. Coding frequencies of factors that both facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue*



Note: Reported factors that both facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: LSE student focus groups

*Image 5.2 Model of barrier construction process that can hinder interfaith dialogue*



#### 5.2.2.1 Level 1: spatial claims

The first barrier to interfaith dialogue discussed by participants focuses on how the context of the Faith Centre can make religious or belief identities salient. Identity categories are resources people use in order to make sense of social situations, and are matched to particular contexts; the identity that makes the social context the most meaningful is the identity that is most salient (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Participants who identify as agnostic, secular, searching, atheist, and/or previously of a faith indicated that this starts with how the space in the centre is allocated and how it is labelled. Participants stated that the allocation of space and its labelling highlight religious or belief identities, which can impede the dialogue process. Participants' discussions regarding space allocation honed in on the Islamic prayer rooms and washrooms, as they are the only faith-specific designated spaces within the Faith Centre. While these spaces were acknowledged as being important, participants also recognized that they



could lead to faith societies self-separating. A1, an agnostic postgrad, reflects on this contradiction:

It's interesting, in a certain way I suspect the Islamic prayer [area] is probably the most useful. And is probably the part that will get used the most in a certain way. And will make the most difference to students...but...me, not being of an Islamic faith, I'm like well...you know get got all this space and no one else can use it for anything *else* [ed]...That seems kind of...I don't know...unbalanced or something. (A1)

While non-religious and agnostic participants acknowledged the perspective and needs of Muslim students, most did not care for the physical separation of space. Many participants propose an alternative spatial arrangement or “*two* multi-faith prayer rooms” in order to accommodate both Islamic and non-Islamic students while not favouring any one group. So, while acknowledging the importance of the spatial division, many participants focused on alternative spatial arrangements. The spatial imbalance was heavily debated within the atheist focus group. A4, an atheist postgrad, discusses the separation of prayer space more broadly:

the multi-faith prayer room if they're booking it separately to do separate things...that doesn't really sound like interfaith either. [ed]...But then ... you might end up having a conflict between...this being a...prayer room and it being a place where you have debates... you know? Or this being a prayer room that's used by various people. Because if they don't want to use the same microwave, they might not want to use the same prayer room, you know [laughs]. (A4)

The multi-faith prayer room, which is a bookable space within the centre, has many potential uses. Faiths are physically divided for ritual purposes, but then are potentially being asked to come together for debates<sup>44</sup>, which by definition include disagreement. Participants question if it can be both a place for prayer and a place for debate and interfaith discussion, highlighting the conflicting institutional purposes of the centre discussed in the first section of this chapter. Many participants were doubtful that it can accommodate both purposes. A4 explains her doubts by referencing the microwaves in the shared social space; if students of different faiths will not mix their food, then A4 and other participants wonder how willing they will be to share a space for ritual and

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 10 for focus group handout stating the purpose of the Faith Center, as posted on the LSE website.

debate. The space is contradictory in nature; while in physically recognizing the faith needs of students, it also physically divides them.

Participants also identified the labelling of space as creating an obstacle to interfaith dialogue. Labels lay claim to the space, triggering feelings of belonging or of being an outsider (Tonkiss, 2006). A5, a postgrad who identifies as agnostic but was raised Hindu, states that she would be “really really uncomfortable” if she were asked to discuss faith in a space called “The Faith Centre.” Other participants, those of faith and those of no faith, echo this notion. C5, a Catholic, emphasizes that a “blank space” is needed for interfaith discussions because such a space can “be anything...without something imposing on you.” Designating a space for faith imposes something on those who occupy it. This imposition via labelling has the potential to deter students:

... calling it a Faith Centre. I now realize subconsciously, that’s probably why I’ve never been there [group laughs] in the Faith Centre, so I wouldn’t want to go in there. (A5)

The labelling of space highlights religion, with many non-religious or agnostic participants stating that it led to them avoiding the Faith Centre. When religion and belief identity are highlighted and faith labels become emphasized, the centre is seen as a space only for people of faith. Non-religious participants state that the Faith Centre space is claimed by different faiths, and is therefore not open to them. Calling it a faith centre is a deterrent to non-religious students because it imposes ‘something’ on you. The label communicates belonging and non-belonging via physical space – the centre itself is a channel of communication which symbolically structures intergroup relations (Moore, 1994; Tonkiss, 2006) and reifies social divisions and influences what participants believe is and is not possible within the space (Dixon & Reicher, 1997).

#### **5.2.2.2 Level 2: Identity Salience and Identity Threat**

This imposition created by labelling is tied to identity. Participants identified the LSE Faith Centre as a place where religion is brought to the fore, highlighting belief identities. A6, a Catholic turned Atheist, states that it is a space in which he would “struggle to...go into” because it is a space where he must “own [his belief] in some way.” This faith identity ownership creates a space that is multiple, separate

places depending on who is using it. The space, in essence, becomes claimed, which in turn can impede dialogue between members of different faith and belief groups. M4, a Muslim postgrad, discuss the claiming of space:

Yeah, I think this place is not very accessible for *interfaith* dialogue...it's even *more* accent make an accent on...uh...its turn *on* your identity, religious identity when you come in. Because you see here the Christians, here the Buddhists. You *already* umm...bear in mind your identity. But *usually* when you go outside this interfaith place you, you're not thinking about religion. You uh, just meet person and he you think about his personality etcetera. But in that place...mm...this is a good place...for pray or...I don't know...for to meet people from the *same* religion from with the same faith, but not for...interfaith I think. (M4)

When one enters the space, one's identity is 'turned on,' bringing it to the forefront and thus influencing social interaction. M4 compares this to interactions between students outside of the Faith Centre, when students are not thinking about faith. In this context, one thinks just of the person one encounters as a whole, not in terms of faith identity. In a social situation defined in terms of faith, one's religious identity is activated by the presence of religious other(s), which in turn influences one's behaviour within the social context. Group memberships form the basis of our identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the social contexts we encounter trigger them. The group identity that makes the context the most meaningful is the identity that is most salient, and thus triggered by the situation (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Spatial allocation, the labelling of space, and the multi-purpose multi-faith prayer room turn faith/belief identities on. Agnostic, secular, non-practicing, or atheist participants highlighted how threatening these experiences can be for them, creating a sense of being imposed upon. C1, a Christian postgrad, states that the 'stamp,' or label of religion elicits a negative reaction from many students. This stamp will cause "a lot of people [to] feel like, well it's just another space where someone's gonna...shove their religion in my face and tell me what to think and feel." This is especially true for people who grew up in an environment in which talking about religion is taboo, a view found to be common (Baxter & Wilmot, 1985; Dailey & Palomares, 2004). For many participants, discussing religion is considered intrusive. This, in turn, can construct a barrier – when one is not religious, one is an 'outsider' and is not certain about what one should do upon entering a faith space. Participants expressed concerns about

whether students in the centre would try to “persuade [them] to believe,” a fear that ultimately results in many participants “refuse to go there” (A2).

#### 5.2.2.3 *Level 3: Navigating Intergroup Boundaries and Identity Management Strategies*

The final, cumulative third level of obstacles identified by participants relates to the creation and maintenance of intergroup boundaries. Participants stated that intergroup boundaries are created and maintained on all three levels: the built environment, the psychosocial processes between people, and via institutional influences. Participants reported that the labelling of space and perceived identity threat creates a sense of non-belonging, which influences their behaviour regarding the centre. Many participants state that this requires them to develop identity management strategies in order to deal with the situation.

The separation of prayer space from public social space is part and parcel of the barrier construction process – participants related the separation of spaces to both identity threat and also the reification of inter-group boundaries. All of the prayer spaces are separated by walls, which, according to participants, do not communicate a message of coexistence. It is the physical embodiment of boundaries, separating groups spatially to the point that the only thing they “share in common is [a] door.” Participants reported that the sense of being unwelcome within parts of the Faith Centre has an interaction side effect: limited spatial navigation and thus limited interfaith interaction. A7, a secular postgrad who was raised Hindu, reflects on this limitation:

I would still think that there should be just *one* wide space with possibilities for like, drawing curtains or some kind of seclusion, so that you have an opportunity to...just you know, to *feel* to be secluded when you want to and be open when you want to. And I would, I think, I would be more a...*pro* interfaith dialogue than, already setting up boundaries where you know where you have to go. And you don’t, you don’t have much space to explore...you all experiment...with the space. (A7)

A centre with designated spaces “already set...up boundaries” between students. Separating the space into private and public areas leaves the centre with few spaces for students to navigate together – having to negotiate arrangements within that space would enable more space for students of different beliefs to explore and experiment

together. The limited ability to navigate, explore, and experiment with the space together results in a greater need to develop identity management strategies.

Participants who had been inside the Faith Centre talked about how they were making sense of the new space, of how they felt while entering it during this transitional period. With religious identities triggered by the space, and the potential for identity threatening encounters within the centre, some participants deployed identity management strategies while in the space. The faith societies have historically occupied separate spaces around campus, and according to C6, a Christian undergrad, the groups do not have a culture of “interacting with each other in a very comfortable way.” C6 considers this to be the reason why her society members tend to separate themselves from the other groups. When going into the Faith Centre, she ‘immediately’ starts to ask herself “Should I step in? Should I not?” and says that it’s “kind of weird.” This sense of ‘weirdness’ is what hinders interfaith interaction.

#### 5.2.2.4 Institutional Surveillance

It is important to note that institutional surveillance of student activities in the Interfaith Centre were only highlighted by Muslim participants. The Chaplain’s office sits directly across from the interfaith social space. Its outward-facing wall is made entirely of glass, allowing the Chaplain to see out and students to see in. Every focus group that had a Muslim participant described the design as uncomfortable. M2, a Muslim postgrad says that she’s “not even comfortable sitting [in the interfaith space] and making noise.” This discomfort was discussed at length by the Muslim-specific focus group; as M5, a Muslim undergrad, explains:

An initial reaction I had, which has stuck by me, is that I *really* don’t like this. Uhm...[the Chaplain’s] office. Uhhh... as soon as I walked in, I thought oh you know...ah I ah like [the Chaplain] and everything but...[laughs] but it it seems like there’s always someone there just watching...you know, through the transparent glass and...obviously, and it’s difficult for him as well [ed]... I thought that was a bit of a silly idea. (M5)

M5 emphasizes that he really does not like the office, despite liking the Chaplain. The discomfort created by the presence of the office is centred on the issue of surveillance – “there’s always someone there just watching you.” While one participant likes that it

puts pastoral care at the heart of the Faith Centre, the overwhelming majority of Muslim participants reported negative feelings.

M3: I feel sorry for [the Chaplain] having to watch every...[mumbles] the [M5: yeah] first few weeks... you say hello. Because if you're going there for three prayers of the day... you say hi. Then you when you go the second time, it was the social norm [laughing, group starts laughing]...But you have to...navigate your way through that. But I quite like that.

M6: I think if it wasn't glass...it wouldn't be that much of an issue. It's just that...[the Chaplain's] [M5: yeah] facing that space...there. And I think people might feel a bit uncomfortable.

Surveillance becomes the social norm due to the location of the Chaplain's office. The glass wall creates a constant gaze, creating the effect of Bentham's Panopticon – Muslim participants are in “a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1975, p.201). As M5 states, “there's always someone there just watching you;” the glass wall presents the possibility of constant monitoring, a ‘gaze’ that can “see everything constantly” (ibid, p.173). This perpetual gaze acts on the Muslim participants – it is “an architecture that...transform[s] individuals” and influences their conduct (ibid, p.172). Because of this architectural feature, the Faith Centre is something that must be navigated. The transparency of the glass is the focal point, as it allows the Chaplain to see out into the interfaith social space and observe what students are doing, creating the sense that he is “the boss of the place” (M2) and is something that Muslim participants do not like. They are tuned into the contradictory nature of The LSE management's project of interfaith relations on campus, aware of the school's goal of being “aware of what is being done on the campus” (IP1). While the school is able to live out their project of faith on campus, Muslim students, who are a minority, are “obstructed from living out theirs” (Pehrson et al., 2014, p.261). Muslim participants, due to institutional surveillance, are potentially disempowered by the inability to impose their identities onto events within the Faith Centre (Drury, Cocking, Beale, Hanson, & Rapley, 2005; Pehrson et al., 2014).

This extends to how Muslim participants experience moving through the Faith Centre. M1, a Muslim postgrad, reflects on how she approaches entering the new faith

space compared to the old Islamic prayer rooms that were separated from other faith spaces on campus:

...for me the prayer, the Islamic prayer space, use to be in the basement of one of the buildings. And um...it was quite tucked away. [ed] You went there to get away and take a break and [inaudible] de-stress. [ed] so it was a great place to go and chill out for some time...as *well* as...you know, say your prayers and do whatever do whatever...but as you as you said. Now that this place is in the interfaith space...I'm very conscious when I walk in, that I don't want to offend anybody [laughs]. You know I'm uhh I make sure I'm smiling, *whatever* mood I'm in...Because...I don't want them to get...I don't want *anyone* to misunderstand [C1, M2, C3: umhmmm] Otherwise, when I go to the prayer space in the basement, I could be in the *worst* looking moods and go there and have a good cry. (M1)

While participants felt that the Faith Centre makes religious identities salient, they still see the central social space as vaguely defined. It is a public space for all faiths in which the social norms are not yet established, creating the potential for an identity threatening situation, so some participants, though mostly Muslim, manage their identity in this space. These identity management strategies are a means of exerting one's own spatial rights while also "negotiating the spatial claims of others" (Tonkiss, 2006, p.59). This is accomplished through "spatial tactics," like walking through the social space, which function like a speech act, conveying meaning to others (De Certeau, 1984). These management strategies are influenced by social representations of the other – M1 expresses concern about what other students think; she is hyper-aware of meta-meta perspectives due to the spatial change in where the Islamic prayer rooms are located and the increased contact between faith groups. Social representation of 'othered' faiths drives behaviour in the social space, influencing decisions to adopt identity management strategies. The essential element driving our behaviour is not so much what we think, but what we think others think we think (Elcheroth et al., 2011). M1's identity enactment has become constrained by others, and her spatial tactics are a means of negotiating her identity in this new space (Pehrson et al., 2013), which is made all the more difficult by institutional surveillance. Surveillance is a component of the Faith Centre, and of any interfaith encounter that occurs there, that only Muslim students must navigate.

### 5.3 Discussion

Participants are tuned into the contradictory nature of The LSE's institutional representational project of faith on campus, as it is reified in the Faith Centre. Creating a space to both accommodate religious practices and faith-related debates has the potential to facilitate interfaith and inter-belief dialogue, but it also has the potential to reinforce intergroup boundaries and obstruct interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Facilitating dialogue in such a space requires a time-intensive investment in constructing a pathway towards dialogical relationships between the faith groups that use the space. The cognitive overlap that perspective taking creates is foundational to such a pathway, but must be supported via institutionally established social norms that provide a basis for intergroup contact. Once a safe space is established, people of different faiths can slowly start to navigate intergroup boundaries and potentially develop dialogical communication. This process is easily obstructed by the very space designed to facilitate it. Separate spaces for religious practices can ultimately reinforce intergroup boundaries, making faith identities salient and entering the ambiguous interfaith space uncertain.

The material environment of the Faith Centre is central to how participants think about interfaith relations – it is both the medium and the message. The physical separation of ritual spaces accommodates students' needs, but also physically separates them, reaffirming pre-existing intergroup boundaries. Participants emphasise that this separation makes faith identities salient and can limit the possibilities for interfaith dialogue. The shared interfaith space, however, has the potential to facilitate intergroup contact, but only if the space is made less ambiguous by institutionally established ground rules that can provide a basis for developing social norms.

The space is a reification of the institutional representational project of faith on campus, but it is influenced by wider social forces such as concerns over security and Islamophobia. Unsurprisingly, Muslim participants were the only ones to highlight the issue of surveillance in the Faith Centre, expressing discomfort with the centrality and transparency of the Chaplain's office. The glass wall of the office creates a form of panopticism in that it exercises a form of control over the centre, the constant gaze of authority overlooking the main social space providing a sense of constant surveillance



(Foucault, 1975). The gaze of authority is both visible and unverifiable – the glass wall is always there; students are never certain if they are being looked at, but know that it is always possible. Muslim participants, then, are “caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (ibid); their stigmatized religious identity makes them hyper aware of the institutional gaze and the social stereotypes that are associated with it (Blackwood, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2012; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2006). Constantly aware of the possibility of surveillance, Muslim participants modify their behaviour and, unlike participants of other belief backgrounds, engage in identity management strategies. The Centre’s architecture communicates information not just about relations between LSE managers and students, but also about the nature of interfaith relations and religious identities in the wider UK context, as LSE managers’ representational project is influenced by wider social concerns about Islam.

The LSE does not exist in a vacuum, rather it exists within the wider context of London, a network society comprised of many diverse communities, and the UK as a whole. The analytical lens will widen in Chapter 6, zooming out to examine the experiences of interfaith practitioners who facilitate interfaith encounters and attempt to build interfaith networks within and across the city’s diverse boroughs. Like the future-oriented representational project within the LSE case study, which attempts to bring religion back to academic debate and increase interfaith dialogue on campus, London interfaith practitioners are attempting to bring faith back into the UK public sphere, representing it as a social resource and remove the stigma of religion.

## **6 Chapter 6: Re-presenting Faith in the Public Sphere**

Chapters 4 and 5 explored interfaith relations, interfaith encounters, and social representations of interfaith and the process of engaging in interfaith dialogue within the changing context of The LSE community. Chapter 4 findings indicate that students mediated the potential identity threat posed by institutionally organized interfaith events via meeting expectations of interfaith dialogue through verbal inclusion while simultaneously engaging in physically in-group protective behaviour. Chapter 5 findings indicate that cognitive polyphasia exists in LSE managers’ representational project of interfaith relations on campus; they want to both bring religion back to

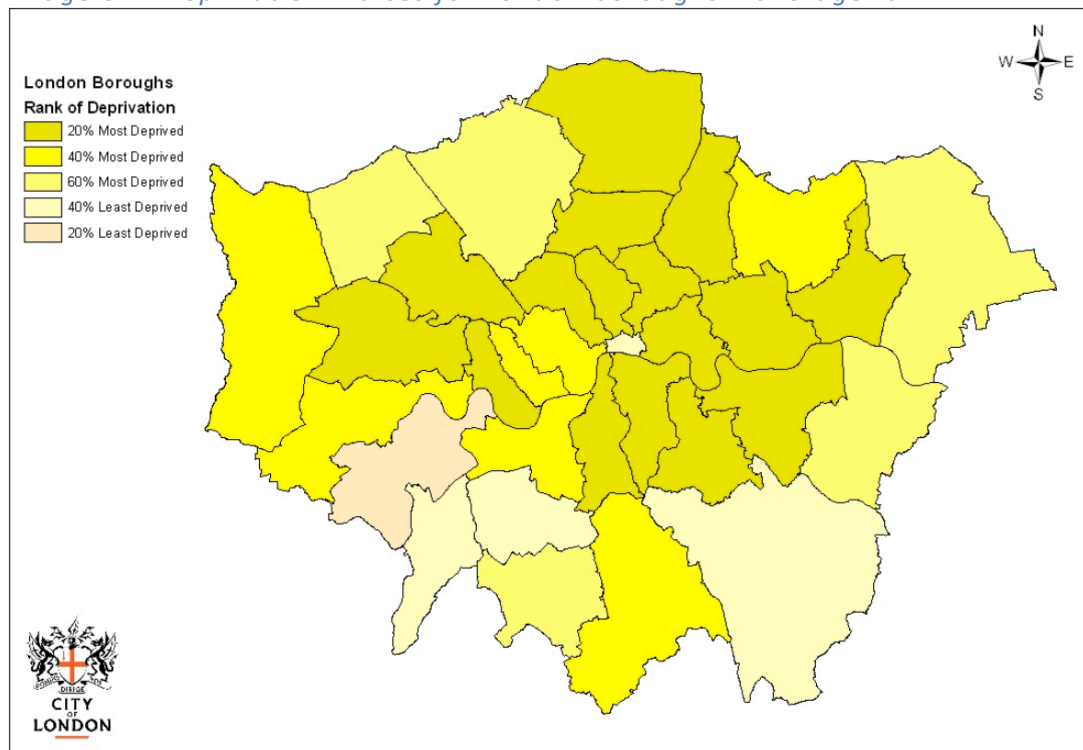
academic debate and accommodate students' needs to practice faith, while also wanting to control student behaviour on campus. Student participants picked up on this discontinuity, with Muslim participants in particular being acutely aware of institutional surveillance. This surveillance makes the time-intensive, identity re-evaluation process of interfaith dialogue identified by participants additionally difficult for Muslim participants.

This next chapter examines the extent to which previous findings from the LSE case-study resonate with other inter-faith contexts, which allows a more robust discussion on the impact that stigma, power imbalances, and agency have on interfaith intergroup relations. Structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with 18 participants involved in interfaith/multi-faith activities across the wider London area, serving in positions on councils, in religious institutions, and at non-profits. Participants work in boroughs ranging from highly deprived to affluent, with five working London-wide. Image 6.1. is a map of London boroughs, indicating the locations in which participants work, while Image 6.2. is a map of deprivation indices for the City of London. Table 6.1. ranks the boroughs participants work in by level of deprivation (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010). They came from a range of different religious backgrounds, with a higher proportion identifying as Church of England as the largest religious group in London, as is evident in Table 6.2. below.

Image 6.1. London boroughs in which participants work



Image 6.2. Deprivation indices for London boroughs – average rank



Source: Indices of Deprivation, Department of Communities and Local Government, Crown Copyright, 2010

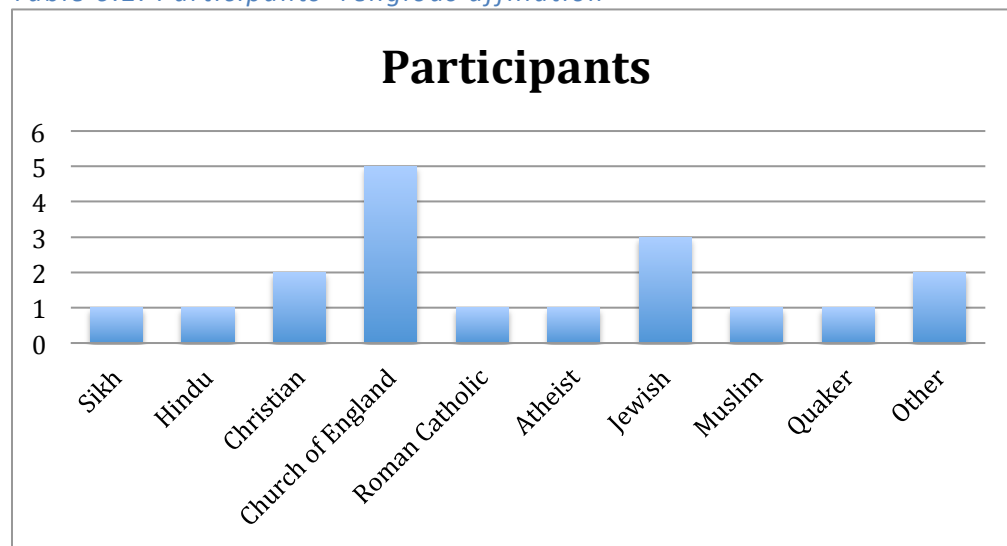
*Table 6.1. Rank of deprivation of boroughs in which participants work*

Borough	Level of Deprivation	Participants in borough
Brent	20% most deprived	1
Camden	20% most deprived	2
Greenwich	20% most deprived	1
Islington	20% most deprived (highest rate of free school meals)	2
Lambeth	20% most deprived	1*
Southwark	20% most deprived (highest in workless households)	1
Tower Hamlets	20% most deprived (in top 3 most deprived boroughs)	1
Wandsworth	40% most deprived	1*
Westminster	40% most deprived	1
Kensington & Chelsea	40% most deprived	1
Barnet	60% most deprived	1
Sutton	60% most deprived	1
Richmond	20% least deprived	1*

\*One participant works across Lambeth, Wandsworth, and Richmond

\*\*5 participants work London-wide

*Table 6.2. Participants' religious affiliation*



Participants were asked to reflect on their understanding of interfaith contact and dialogue as well as their experiences as practitioners in this field. All participants spoke about what drove their work, with one dominant theme emerging – the need to redefine faith/belief in UK society. Participants emphasized that interfaith dialogue should be expanded to include people of non-faith, as this is crucial to engaging in public debate in a secular country. As one participant said:

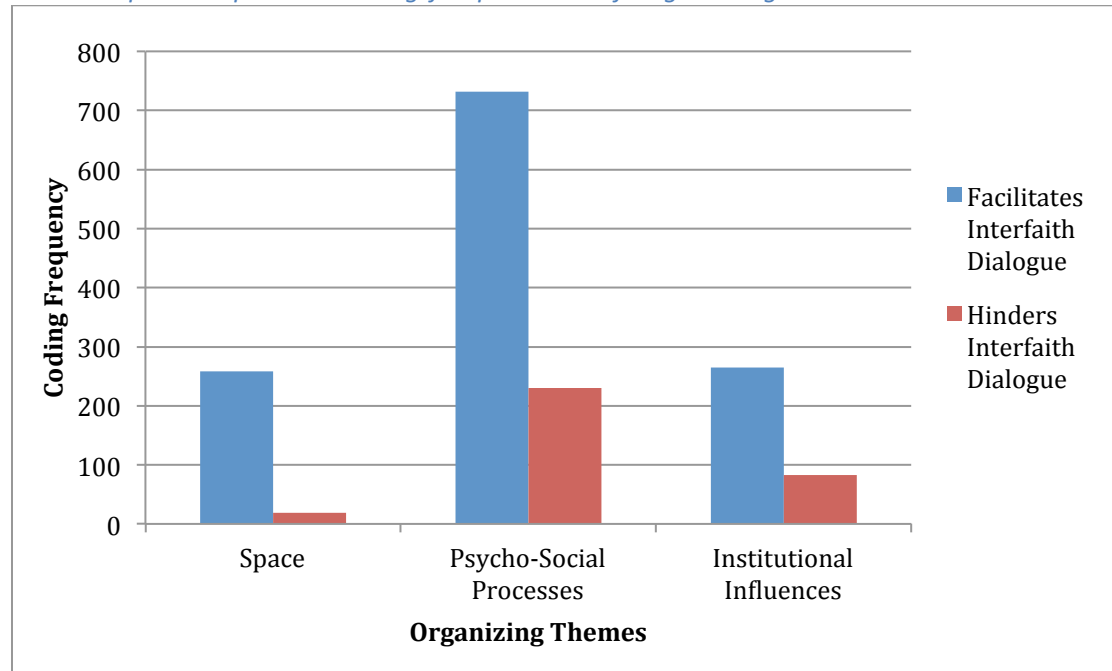
I would say talk to people of as many faiths and none, because you want it to be a safe space for people who are Evangelical Christians, who are Muslims, who are Atheists, they all need to come into that place and feel safe. (P9)

This level of inclusivity is essential to the majority of participants, as it is the central means by which the future-oriented project of interfaith/inter-belief action can be achieved, just as was shown in the previous chapter. Participants' reflection on their work highlighted the role of inter-belief dialogue in network construction and community building. Dialogue between people of different belief backgrounds is viewed as an important social process that enables both community building and identity negotiation within the complex, multicultural setting of London. The participants highlighted that short-term project-based communities are created via social networks, socio-spatial relations, and facilitating dialogical encounters between belief groups, with the aim of re-presenting belief in the public sphere.

The project of inter-belief can, as was also seen in the previous chapter, meet with failure when intergroup communication is non-dialogical. Participants indicate that communication breaks down, or does not occur at all, when public institutions do not provide support for inter-belief projects, as well as when they force the recognition of a faith-based identity that is not representational of all belief groups. As discussed in Chapter 2, this resonates with the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and the extensive research done since (Dixon et al., 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) confirming that support from authorities is a condition necessary for optimal intergroup relations. The non-recognition that results from this lack of support can lead to increased tension and faith groups completely withdrawing from public sphere debates.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the project of redefining faith in the UK public sphere, with the bulk of the chapter examining what facilitates and what obstructs this future-oriented project. Interfaith project facilitation is centred on building dialogical relationships between faith communities via network construction and the creation of temporary project-based communities working towards a common goal. The interfaith project can be obstructed, however, by a mis-representation of faith communities in the public sphere, a lack of institutional support, and misaligned cohesion strategies. Table 6.3. shows the coding frequencies of the reported factors that facilitate and hinder interfaith dialogue in the public sphere. Table 6.4. indicates how these processes relate to the three levels of social installations: psycho-social processes, material space, and institutional influences (Lahlou, 2008; 2011), with numbers in bold referencing which research questions each component addresses.

*Table 6.3. Factors that facilitate and hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue in the public sphere: coding frequencies of organizing themes*



Note: Reported factors facilitating and inhibiting interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

*Table 6.4. Interfaith project: facilitating and hindering faith in the public sphere*

	Facilitates Interfaith Project	Obstructs Interfaith Project
Psycho-social processes	Building Social Capital: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network construction</li> <li>• Temporary project-based communities</li> </ul> 1, 2, 5	Non-recognition in the public sphere <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mis-representation</li> <li>• Imposed identities</li> </ul> 1, 2, 5
Social Spaces	Neutral Venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting each others space</li> <li>• Spatial modifications</li> </ul> 1, 2, 4, 5	Non-neutral Venues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imbued moral meanings</li> </ul> 1, 2, 4, 5
Institutional Influence	Ground rules for interaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust via recognition of identity positions</li> </ul> 1, 3	Lack of institutional support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucratization of self-other relations</li> <li>• Unequal power relations</li> </ul> 1, 3

### **Research Questions:**

- 1) What conditions (psychological) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - 1a) What might open up dialogue?
  - 1b) What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity & spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith groups in relation to multicultural contact situations?

*Table 6.5. Practitioner interviews key*

P#	Practitioner identification number, used to anonymously identify participants
<i>Ital.</i>	Emphasis placed on word by participant
...	Participant pauses while speaking
[ed]	Segment of data has been removed for brevity

## 6.1 The Project: Redefining Faith/Belief in the Public Sphere

London is an extremely culturally and ethnically diverse, globalized city. Over 300 languages are spoken in schools across the city and over a third of Londoners were born outside of the UK.<sup>45</sup> According the 2011 census, 52.9% of Londoners identify as Christians, 13.5% as Muslim, 5.5% as Hindu, 2% as Jewish, 1.7% as Sikh, 1.1% as Buddhists<sup>46</sup>. London is, however, often seen as a secular city, where religion and faith are viewed as something that is done “behind closed doors,” a sentiment that was also expressed by participants in Chapter 5. One participant in this study described what he calls the “tourist version of atheism,” which views faith as “stupid” (P1). However, he states that since the UK is “a tolerant society,” faith is accepted so long as faith groups do not “take up resources and get in the way of real life.” The public perception of faith as being problematic has a political impact on faith groups in London, and is at the heart of why people engage in interfaith/inter-belief work:

I think it's that and it's many more realistic forms that we're out to challenge and to ensure that faith remains within public space. That requires a dialogue between the faiths to understand what it is that we're offering and where the similarities are in particular that we can engage in that public space and not fit into the standard views that we hate one another and are going to fight one another and be disruptive rather than cooperative. (P1)

Participants reported that the project of redefining faith/belief in the public sphere requires faith groups to work together in order to challenge the majority view that faith is a source of conflict and instead show that faith groups can be “cooperative” and can be a resource for society. The embedded social divisions around faith in the UK are meaningful and used to place people within categories (Ferguson, Muldoon, & McKeown, 2014). It is within these social conditions that the interfaith representational project emerges, relating directly to the material and symbolic interests as well as stakeholders’ identities and future-oriented goals (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014,

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/londonfacts/default.htm?category=2>

<sup>46</sup> <https://londondatastore-upload.s3.amazonaws.com/IyE%3D2011-census-diversity-in-london.pdf>

p.37). Practitioners attempt to accomplish this representational goal by building networks that allow them to form temporary project-based communities in order to collaborate together on shared goals and slowly contribute to de-stigmatizing faith. A common goal or shared project is “a profound basis for [building a] community,” as it creates interdependence between previously separate people (Howarth et al., 2015, p.186). These new, temporary project-based communities are a means of building the social capital of faith groups, enabling them to maximize their voice in the public sphere and re-present faith. Doing so influences participants’ efforts to have their knowledge systems recognized not just by wider society, but by other faith groups as well, and to engage with the public sphere (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014).

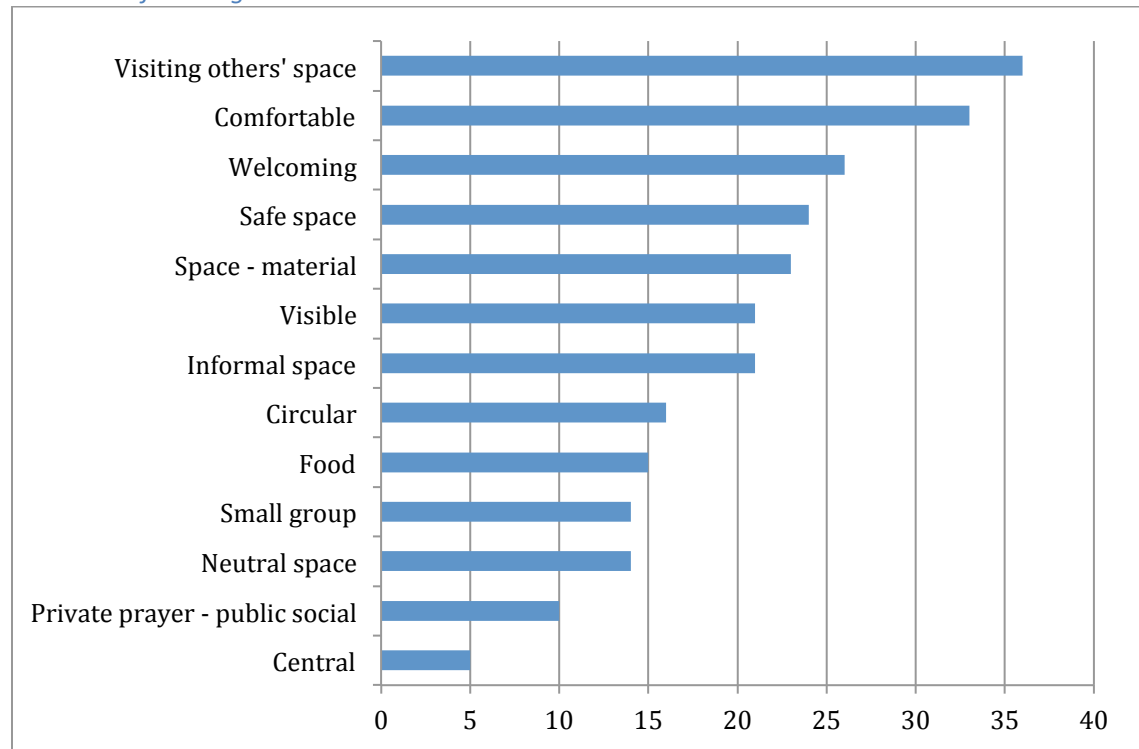
## **6.2 Community-building through dialogue – facilitating the interfaith project**

London, like other diverse cities, is comprised of many ethnic, cultural, and religious groups that permeate intergroup boundaries and communicate with each other on a daily basis (Howarth, 2011; Sammut, 2011), resulting in the emergence of multicultural identities (Massey, 2007). The city is a network society (Castells, 2004, 2011), but as Howarth et al. (2015) argue, a sense of community “still has meaning in how people develop a sense of belonging, knowledge systems and possibilities for participation” (p. 180). Groups constantly interact with each other, bringing together different knowledge systems throughout the course of daily activities. People can be members of numerous communities, passing between them, and claiming them for a variety of strategic purposes (Stephens, 2007). It is within this context that participants work – many highlighting that building inter-belief networks is a means to address issues throughout their borough(s). Practitioners all discussed bringing diverse groups of people together in order to accomplish a goal, whether it be feeding the homeless, cleaning up public spaces in their borough, or tackling social issues like mental health or funeral poverty. All of these goals combine to bring faith/belief into the public sphere – showing that belief communities can be a resource to their boroughs. These goals, and the project of bringing belief into the public sphere, has the ability to bring together “people who may *not* in fact identify as one” to work on a joint project (Howarth et al., 2015, p.183). A project, however, is pragmatic in nature; as the above quote illustrates, it must be relevant to and satisfy the needs of all members of the diverse community. In order to do this, however, intergroup networks must be



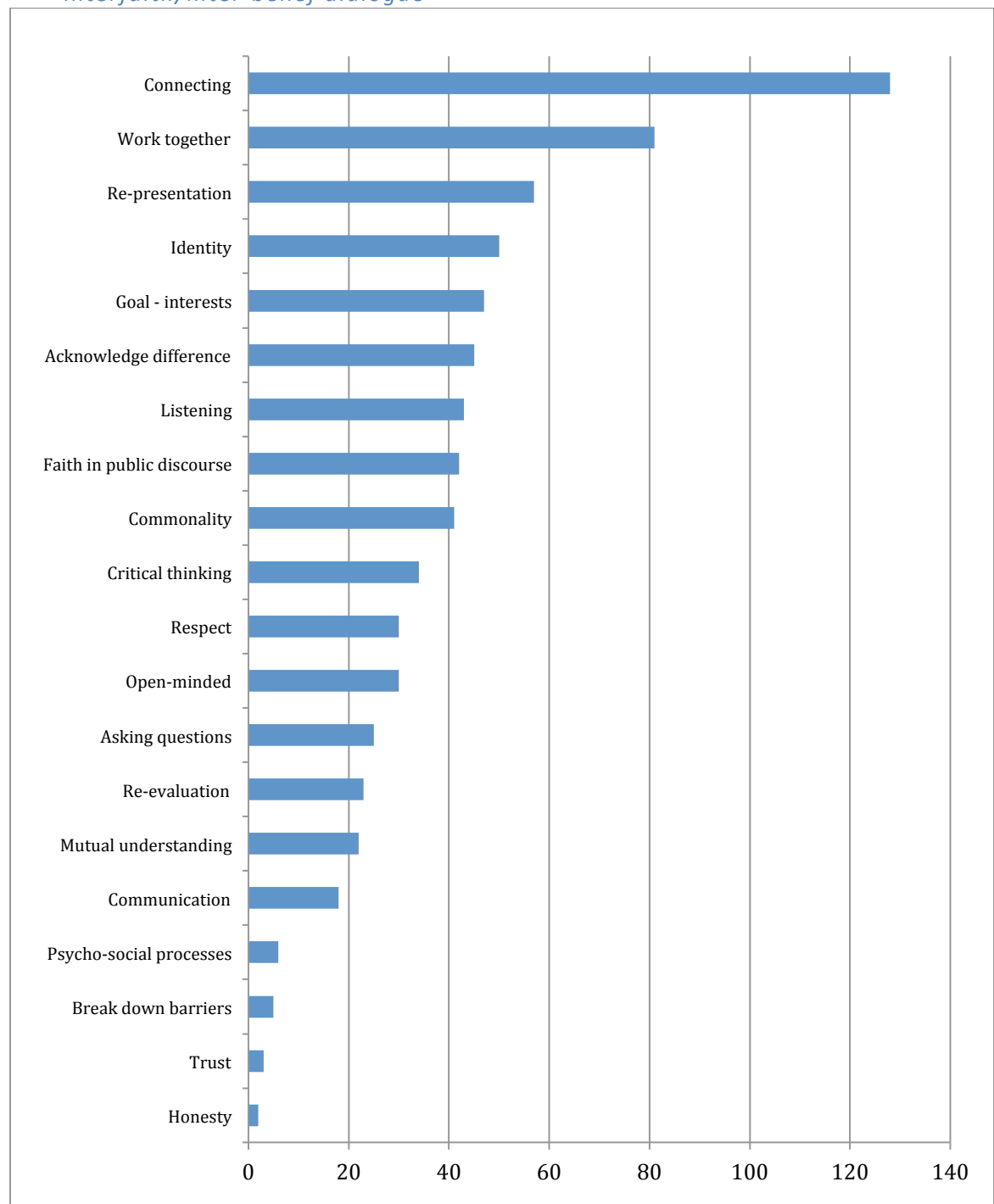
established. Tables 6.6. through 6.8. show the coding frequencies of the three different layers of contact installations that participants reported facilitate interfaith dialogue.

*Table 6.6. Coding frequencies of spatial factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



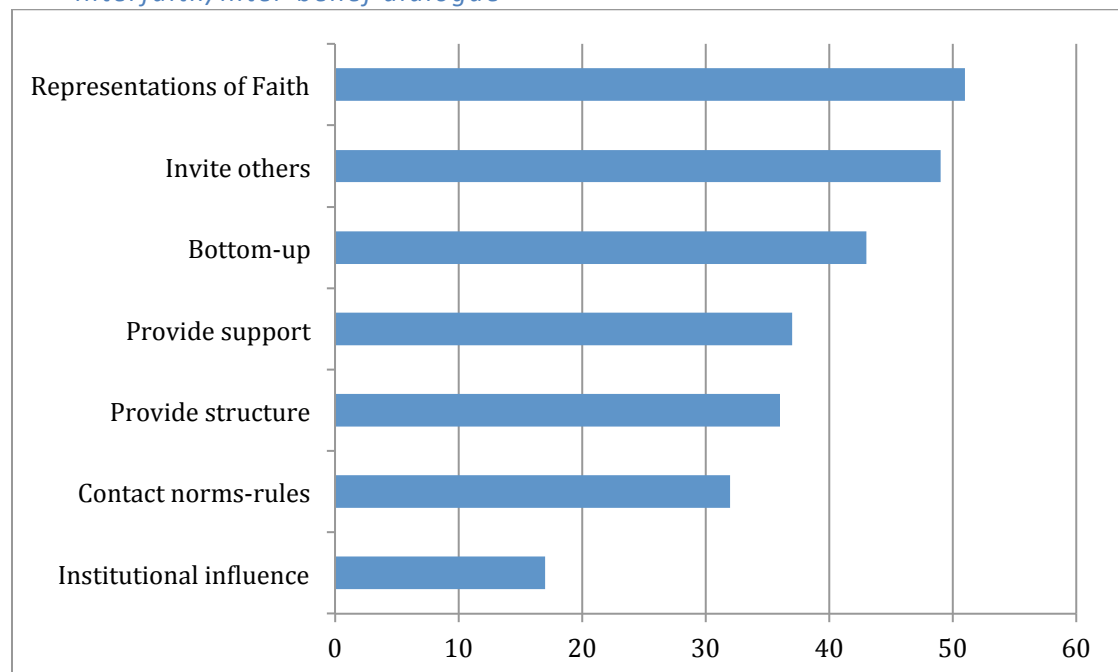
Note: Reported spatial factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

*Table 6.7. Coding frequencies of psycho-social factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



Note: Reported psycho-social factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

*Table 6.8. Coding frequencies of institutional factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



Note: Reported institutional factors that facilitate interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

### 6.2.1 Establishing Networks

Participants highlighted the importance of building networks between different social actors: faith institutions, faith-based groups, borough council employees, and other members of the public. Connecting belief groups is a time-intensive process that is both socially and spatially mediated, as has been shown in the previous chapters. Here, in this study, participants highlighted that oftentimes the initial contact is accomplished via visiting each other's spaces of worship. By inviting others in, and by entering the sacred spaces of others, groups make the first outreach to each other and open the door to trust. One participant describes the main challenge of establishing inter-belief networks is "facilitating an initial hospitable visit to each other's place of worship (P3)."

It took me about three years to get the opportunity off the ground for a reciprocal invitation on one Sunday afternoon. It happened last June, where Synagogue were invited to view the Mosque and the Mosque then went and walked back to the Synagogue to go in and have a look at the Synagogue and the scrolls, etc. ...[ed] The Synagogue faith leaders went and did an initial meeting and then it was to be followed up with this opportunity. (P3)

Such visits lay the groundwork for being willing to do things together, as they foster a sense of reciprocity and cooperation. Intergroup solidarity becomes highly unlikely “in an environment where group differences remain visibly encoded within the built form or use of space or within the territorial meanings attributed to particular places” (Dixon, 2001, p.598). Spatial relations are reflective of the social reality divisions that influence what individuals believe is and is not possible in relation to other groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997), so in inviting others into one’s sacred space and visiting the sacred spaces of others, belief groups are physically and symbolically communicating to each other regarding their relationship. Sharing each others’ sacred spaces is important for developing intergroup networks, as it is a starting point for forging a shared identification that can “allow for an alternative space for social interaction” (Lowe & Muldoon, 2014, p.14).

Networks enable participants to “pick up [on] the local needs...[and] develop a response that will support, that will help address the issues” (P2). P2 described this as “the really important bit” of what they do. One participant noted that it is through these established networks that he is able to “sound out” how receptive different groups would be to an intervention – of forming a project-based group to respond to a relevant social issue. Establishing networks between belief groups is a means of starting to form relationships because they open up channels of communication.

We provide that borough-wide loose organization that enables local people to share good practice, to identify issues, to be able to give them resources, to enable organizations and individuals outside of faith communities access to faith communities, to identify where commonality is to be found and to get on with it. (P1)

These networks enable the flow of resources between groups. As shown in Chapter 5, interfaith dialogue networks can enable the bridging of relationships (Furbey et al., 2006; Hopkins, 2011b) between faith groups, and thus start to build their social capital (Putnam, 1993). While Putnam argues that diversity can destroy community because it leads to distrust between groups (Putnam, 1995; Sander & Putnam, 2009), at least in the short term, but others have found that diversity, when combined with positive contact, can in fact foster trust (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Moran, 2011) (Moran, 2011; Howarth & Andreouli, 2015). In line with the contact hypothesis tradition, relations between groups can become more positive when supported and facilitated by

institutional forces and authority figures (Allport, 1954). As Howarth and Andreouli (2015) argue that changing the way people approach diversity and intergroup contact is not so much about changing attitudes, but about “changing social norms and cultural conventions” (p.3). Building intergroup networks and social capital is a means of influencing these norms and conventions. Participants emphasize that these networks are essential to enable community building, as they create a foundation on which to build new social norms and conventions regarding interfaith/inter-belief contact:

If you nurture the opportunity of getting to know each other as British Citizens of different faith, build a friendship, build a connection ... [if] you haven't got the foundation to rely on comfortable conversation because you're starting off in a place that you don't know each other. You're like strangers. You're not going to trust a stranger. Doesn't matter whether they're another faith or not. Build the network first, build the confidence first. (P3)

Creating connections between people of different belief backgrounds builds “norms of reciprocity and trust-worthiness” (Hopkins, 2011b, p.529). Participants stated that it is only once trust is established and people start seeing the benefits of the work that they are able to “pull in significant numbers (IIF)” for inter-belief events, and thus challenge existing social divisions. Pulling in numbers is vital to participants’ efforts to destigmatize faith and bring it into the public sphere; numbers increase visibility and maximize the social capital of inter-belief networks.

In this borough, for many years, there has been ... People of different faiths have got to know each other well. We've talked to each other. Sometimes we've had to tackle issues together. Sometimes it's been a matter of friendship, visiting each other's communities. We've been invited to things. It's been regular meetings, because that's a very useful way to make sure the relationships stay healthy, by making sure you meet regularly, (P4)

Once norms of reciprocity and trust are established and network members meet regularly, cultural conventions regarding interfaith/inter-belief contact can change. The building of inter-belief networks and the construction of bridging capital is, in part, spatially mediated. Visiting each other’s spaces of worship is an initial step to building trust and communicating inclusivity between diverse groups within London. But, in order to maintain these networks and build on that trust, practitioners emphasize that those visits must continue – to physically communicate a desire to maintain those networks. Without this communication and contact with members from different

groups, intergroup relations can become problematic (Stolle, Soroka, & Johnston, 2008). Communication, both physical and verbal, is “the path for the development of personal, social and material resources” (Jovchelovitch, 2008, p.34).

### **6.2.2 Dialogical Knowledge Encounters: connecting knowledge systems**

The creation of temporary action-based communities involves the intersection of people from different belief groups, with each group holding its own truth claims. It is, essentially, the merging of multiple group identities. Participants emphasized that identity recognition is vital to this merging process – inter-belief action is about accommodating various group identities. In order for people from the different belief groups to come together as a temporary community, they need to feel that “their own sense of identity is affirmed” (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011, p.217). Identity affirmation is at the core of a dialogical encounter – it is about acknowledging the perspective of the other and accepting its legitimacy (Jovchelovitch, 2007). As one participant explained:

That’s the core of interfaith. It’s about meeting the other, not as a Muslim or a Jew or a Quaker. Knowing about them, but learning something more about them. In doing so, breaking that stereotype, breaking that prejudice. (P5)

Meeting the other and accepting their perspective as legitimate facilitates network construction and community building, as identity recognition is necessary for sustainability (Hopkins, 2011a). This recognition has an additional outcome: the representation of belief group identities, which can lead to breaking down stereotypes and prejudice between belief groups. Participants discussed how they attempt to facilitate dialogical encounters while forming temporary project-based communities. Their approaches, while varied, all focused on a two-pronged approach: spatial dialogue and the implementation of contact norms.

#### **6.2.2.1 Spatial Dialogue: connecting people via space**

When asked about how they organize inter-belief events and the spaces that they use, participants stated that it is important to have a “neutral space (P7).” A neutral space is defined as one that does not have “religious emblems in it (P6),” and is “as plain as possible (P4).” One participant argued that doing so enables everyone to use

the space because it “leave[s] the symbolism in the mind (P4).” Most participants felt it is best to hold inter-belief events in secular locations like a town hall. Physical spaces have “identity related meanings...[that] shapes the experience of contact” (Hopkins, 2008, p.366), so hosting events involving the intersection of multiple belief identities in a space that is defined, in part, by not having a belief identity, is a means of communicating inclusivity.

Again it's acknowledging the fact if we do things in a neutral venue, it causes as much a problem for everybody and you increase the number of people participating. If we go to a faith venue then there are problems. So the civic services are now taking place in the park. (P8)

Some groups may still view a neutral space as problematic, but it is, according to one participant, equally problematic for all faith groups involved. When the physical context of contact is viewed as equal for everyone, the number of people who participate increases. This resonates with findings from the Contact Hypothesis literature, which states that collaborating on equal terms is a necessary component for optimal intergroup contact (Allport, 1954). Hosting events in neutral locations is a means of maximizing the potential social capital of the temporary action-based community because it enables many belief groups to claim the contact space.

Participants note that boundaries between groups can be tightly drawn during inter-belief encounters; in such contexts people tend to be more spatially aware of group boundaries, often resulting in exclusionary behaviour (Dixon, 2001; Sibley, 1995), and as was seen in Chapter 4. This can make facilitating a dialogical encounter in a non-neutral space more difficult, but it is not impossible. One participant, a Rabbi, reflects on a time when she helped a group of student visitors to slowly lose their hesitation to enter her synagogue:

"[I was asked] Will you come down? They're refusing to go into the synagogue!" So I went down, and it was clearly a 95% Muslim school, and some of these kids just would not go into the synagogue. And the person, the guide, wasn't handling it terribly well, to be honest. So I said to her, "Take the people who you want to take who are happy, and I'll take the rest of them into the sukkah. So I took them to the sukkah, and we talked about the fruits and the harvest and G-d's gifts and all that kind of thing, and I asked them a few questions, they were eight to eleven. And they relaxed a bit. And we were talking about thanking G-d for lovely things we have to eat in a way that children can understand. And I said to them, "Let's not go into the synagogue, but let's just have a peek through the door." So we stood in the doorway

...[ed] And so it's not scary, it's nothing that a Muslim would find un-dealable with like human images, obviously. And we had a little look-in, and we talked a bit, and I quite deliberately didn't push them to go in. And then after about forty minutes they went. (P9)

As the Rabbi's account illustrates, boundary crossing in a strongly classified contact context is risky because it involves crossing "from a familiar space to an alien one which is under the control of somebody else" (Sibley, 1995, p.32). This could explain the reported hesitation on the students' part, as the synagogue was most likely a foreign space for them. In taking the students to the sukkah, the Rabbi makes a small spatial modification in order to influence in/out-group category construction between her and the students, and ultimately results in intergroup boundary crossing. She acknowledges that the students might be distressed, and her efforts to be empathetic to their perspective results in a reportedly positive intergroup interaction, as has been found in previous research (Wang et al., 2014). Using the physical environment in small, incremental ways is common across the practitioners interviewed, with many focused on the use of circles. Most felt that this small physical adaption "encourages people to participate more" (P10) because it creates a sense of equality because "people can sit as a united group...[and] have direct eye contact with each other" (P6). These spatial modifications are a physical means of recognizing the other's perspective, of seeing the other as an equal and their concerns as legitimate.

#### **6.2.2.2 *Ground rules for dialogue – facilitating dialogical inter-belief encounters***

Participants also discussed facilitating dialogical encounters between people of different belief backgrounds through a set of ground rules that they implement. Equality and identity recognition are at the heart of these ground rules. 'Mutual respect' was the rule most frequently cited by participants, for some it is their only rule. Respect for others and their perspective was emphasized, as well as 'hearing' and 'listening' to the other. This, many participants highlighted, requires that people do not attempt to speak on behalf of a belief group that they are not a member of – if one is talking about a specific belief group's views, then that person should be a member of that faith group. Others "can ask questions or make comments, but it's not for them to talk [for] somebody else" (P11). The goal, then, is to facilitate engagement with the perspectives



of others, instead of reinforcing pre-existing representations of that group. As one participant elaborates:

interfaith dialogue is that you can talk about it, even though it's contentious, and sometimes highly sensitive for some, you can still talk about it and still respect and hear and acknowledge what another faith group, how another faith group interprets that issue, or to what it means to them. And that it can be done in a way where people, you know that respect and tolerance is kept. That it's maintained. (P2)

Having such norms in place enable people of different belief backgrounds to engage with each other on potentially contentious issues. Participants acknowledge that while members of belief subgroups will most likely disagree on many issues, they can still discuss them if they feel that their identity position is recognized. Social recognition is not limited to institutions, but also extends to day-to-day interactions and relationships, which are key to participation within society (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). Social participation requires the power to construct and convey meaning (Howarth, Andreouli & Kessi, 2015), which fundamentally requires recognition from others (Gibson & Hamilton, 2011; Psaltis & Duveen, 2006; Psaltis, 2005). Participants stated that listening is a key guideline to facilitating interfaith dialogue, as it can enable recognition:

... dialogue, which is supposed to be, you are there to listen and understand the other person. They're there to listen and understand you. You should be free to express your views, but you're not trying to score points, or win points, or anything. To me, that's the big rule. With that goes, if I've been listening, you might not respect someone's views. This word respect's a little bit difficult. I'm not sure you can really respect views you think are wrong, but you can respect the person, as a whole, and you can respect the importance of those beliefs to that person's life. (P12)

Inter-belief contact guidelines help participants facilitate communication between groups that hold different social representations about religion/faith and ultimate truth claims. Recognition of the importance of those views to each group is essential to respectful dialogue, as it is recognition of that belief group's identity. As Jovchelovitch (2008) states, for "genuine communication" to take place, there must be an inherent commitment to equality – to set aside differences and adopt "procedures that promote and require dialogue and reciprocity" (p.33). In forming a temporary project-based inter-belief community, participants are in a sense building a new, albeit temporary, group identity. This new group identity is comprised of members who are

simultaneously engaging with a now dual identity – inter-belief action group identity and a specific belief-based identity. The two are not separable, the duality must be recognized and valued – for the action-based group to be sustainable, members’ varying belief identities need to be validated (Hopkins, 2011a). Diversity, then, becomes a means through which community is built – commonalities are created through the recognition of difference (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015).

This recognition process is both inward and outward looking. In acknowledging the other’s perspective as legitimate, one can ultimately reflect on one’s own. Partnerships are a reciprocal process, requiring one to evaluate both others’ and one’s own knowledge (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014). It is a joint activity that ultimately does not transfer knowledge, but can transform it (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). One participant reflected on this process of recognition:

...doing this piece of work ... [realizing] actually how racist I really am, because my initial reaction which I know I'm having which I suppress because I'm supposed to be a parishioner is actually I don't want to be involved in this. I mean like the first time I sat down with a Pagan and he believed and he explained what Pagans believed, I wanted to laugh. [laughs] And it is the truth actually once you start engaging with real people and putting faces to these things and everything else, then you find yourself challenged and actually begin to move. (P8)

In reflecting on his initial reactions to interacting with a Pagan for the first time, he recognizes intergroup barriers and prejudices that he holds. Interactions with “real people” and so humanizing difference can enable one to turn inwards, taking on the perspective of the other, become self-conscious of one’s (stigmatising) perspective, and come to connect to others more empathically (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015). This sense of shared perspective was key to the development of improved intergroup relations for many of the participants.

### **6.2.3 Facing the same way, looking out together: recognition in the public sphere**

Recognition must also be considered in light of the new community that has been constructed around inter-belief projects and the de-stigmatization of faith and belief in the public sphere. Participants highlighted that what is most important is how belief groups can “serve the community [they’re] in” (P4), and inter-belief project-based communities are uniquely qualified for this purpose in the highly diverse

neighbourhoods of London. Action is at the heart of these groups, as it is both a means for changing public perceptions about faith, but also a means for improving relations between belief groups as well:

It's amazing what you discover what you can do when you do something together. That's the important thing. If you simply sit in a circle looking at each other, then you're looking at an opponent, whereas if you're facing the same way, making something happen, then you are together doing it, and you will relate to each other. (P4)<sup>47</sup>

In working together, belief groups can form a united front to push for change and represent faith in the public sphere. One striking example of this in the data comes from an Anglican priest who runs a multi-faith centre. After the murder of Lee Rigby<sup>48</sup>, the participant states that the BBC identified a mosque in their borough in their reporting of the murder, despite the mosque having no connection to the event. The Imam spoke out and was “heckled by the media.” In response, the united faith groups and the authorities in the borough formed a project-based temporary community and produced a BBC Radio response:

[We] said the Muslim community, like every part of [borough] community, condemned the murder as a criminal act, which it was, and that's what we were all saying. We all agreed we'd say that. The borough was saying it, the borough commander was saying it, and yet he was heckled by the media. It was atrocious. (P4)

Stigmatization can undermine the community's ability to provide resources to cope with day-to-day challenges as well as prevent engagement with other communities (McNamara et al., 2013). Even though the Imam spoke out, his ability to be heard was hampered by social stigmatization. The belief groups and the council felt that the media portrayal of part of their community was not reflective of their representation of their joint identity. Working together to challenge discrimination and prejudice can reconcile group identity and stigmatization (McNamara et al., 2013). In working together, as a united community, they re-presented the borough mosque and the borough as a whole. Uniting their social capital they were able to exert more agency and have a louder

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<sup>47</sup> This is the only instance in the data where a participant expressed dislike of the use of circles. While P4 does use them, he emphasized that doing things together was more important.

<sup>48</sup> Lee Rigby was a British soldier who was murdered outside his barracks in south-east London in May 2013. The two convicted murders claimed they were acting as “soldiers of Allah.” See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25450555>

voice. High levels of social capital create a supportive social context in which “people can collectively re-negotiate social identities” (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000, p.6). As identifying as one community, they were able to provide “social support and collective efficacy,” which can positively impact on group well-being (McNamara et al., 2013).

Dialogue between people of different belief backgrounds within these networks and temporary project-based communities enable them, as a larger group, to pursue faith in the public sphere in their own way. In doing so, belief groups are building what Hopkins (2011b) calls “positive-sum relationships,” in that each (inter-belief and belief-specific identities) contributes to each other. The promotion, or re-presentation of one, contributes to the re-presentation of the other. Inter-belief social action is a means of being a good person of faith and being a good inter-belief activist:

all our faiths teach us to go out and do good deeds and help those in need. It was very much a unifying platform to feel very comfortable with, that I could then invite other faith communities to join (P3)

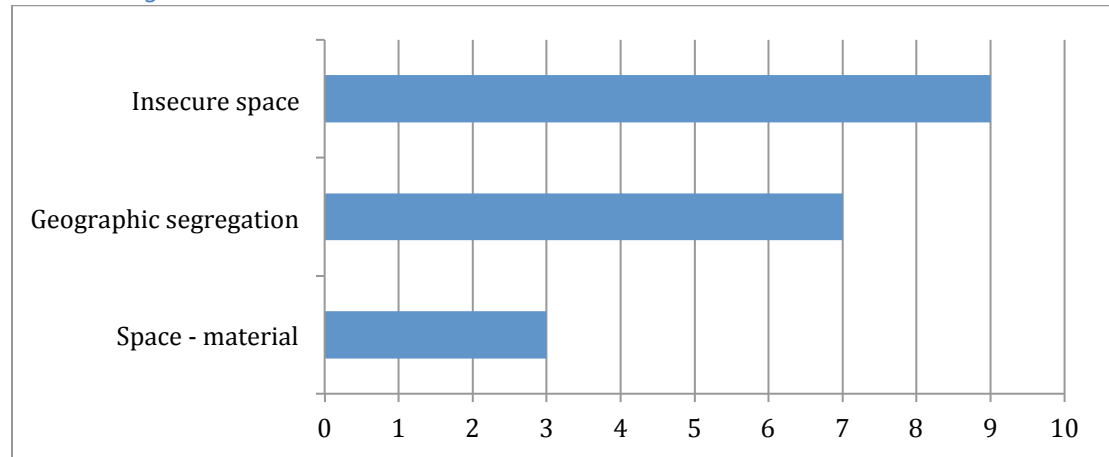
In acting as a common team, not only do different belief groups create a new sense of community, they can also work together while maintaining the distinctiveness of their particular belief group (Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak, & Gaertner, 2008). There are as many different ways to be a person of faith as there are people of faith. These temporary communities focus on re-presenting faith/belief in the public sphere, to destigmatize it, yet still leave room for community members to do faith as they see fit. They emerge out of diverse belief groups converging in order to share resources, innovate and protest imposed faith identities – they are a merging of “diverse interests and diverse stakeholders” who are creating a new sense of community through their diversity (Howarth et al., 2015). This new sense of community is constructed through dialogue (Howarth, 2011; Howarth et al., 2014; Jovchelovitch, 2007), which is both verbally and spatially enacted (as also seen in Chapters 4 and 5), and enables stakeholders to create opportunities for social change (Cornish, 2006; Cornish, Montenegro, van Reisen, Zaka, & Sevitt, 2014). These temporary project-based communities and interfaith networks are, essentially, processes of engagement, and such engagement is a fundamentally social and psychological process.

However, as was shown in Chapter 5, such engagement and the community-building process of interfaith dialogue are easily obstructed. The following section examines what participants in this study report as inhibitors to interfaith dialogue and community building within the diverse boroughs of London. Again this highlights the role of social and psychological phenomena in complex interfaith and intergroup relations, particularly recognition, (stigmatising) representations and dialogue.

### **6.3 ‘Who isn’t there?’: non-dialogical inter-belief encounters**

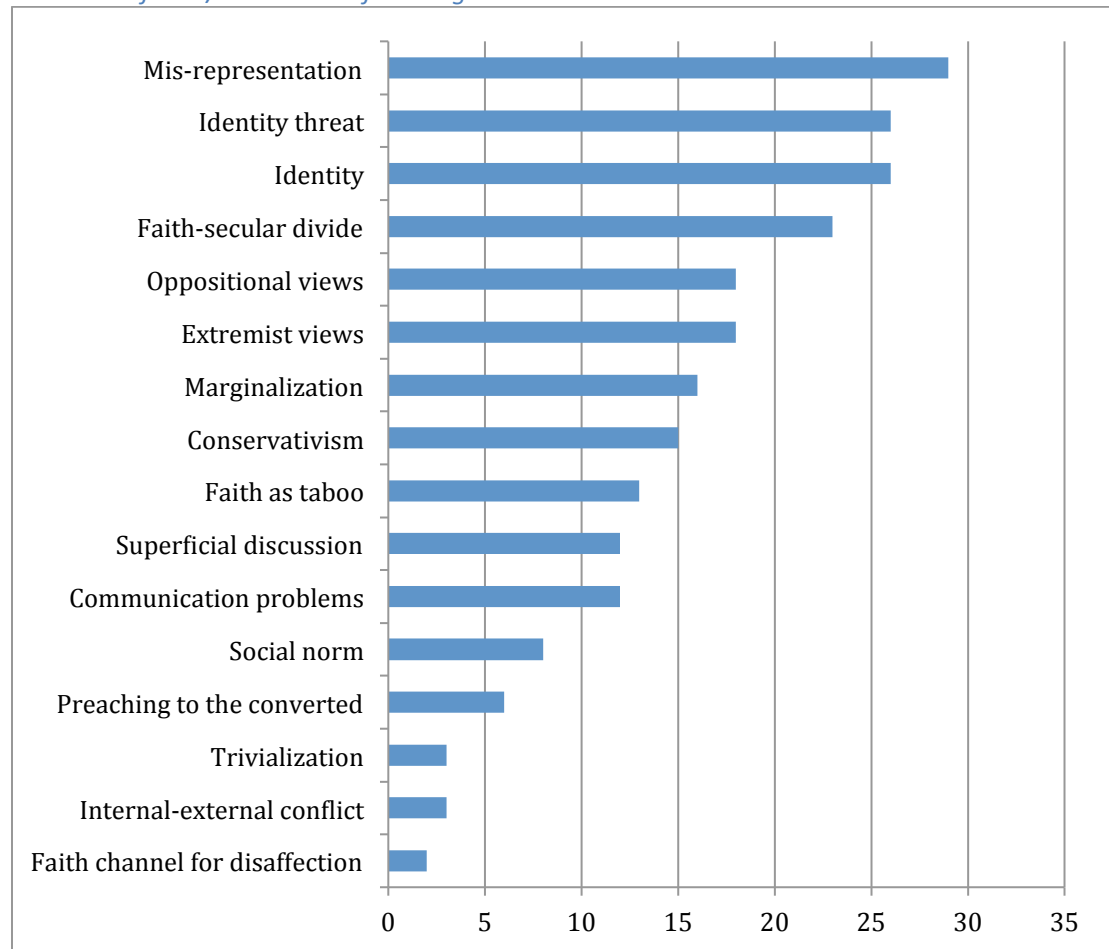
Participants frequently spoke about the difficulties that they encounter when attempting to build inter-belief networks and temporary project-based communities. The lack of mutual recognition is at the heart of the challenges they report facing. The majority of participants spoke of the negative image of faith in the public sphere, with many highlighting the lack of governmental support for their work. Participants who work in socio-economically deprived areas of London emphasized that the governmental approach to ‘community cohesion,’ a term one participant likened to a ‘dirty word,’ often resulted in overlooking serious problems within their boroughs and ignored the realities of the people who live there. The perspectives of people of faith are not recognized in these encounters, and are thus delegitimized (Jovchelovitch, 2007). These non-dialogical inter-belief encounters are mediated via space, psycho-social representational processes, and institutional influences. The experiences reported by participants resonates with research in the Contact Hypothesis tradition, as these non-dialogical encounters lack support from authority figures, do not engage with all faith groups on equal terms, and stakeholders have potentially competing goals (Allport, 1954). Tables 6.9 through 6.11. show the coding frequencies of the three different layers of contact installations that participants reported hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue.

*Table 6.9. Coding frequencies of spatial factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



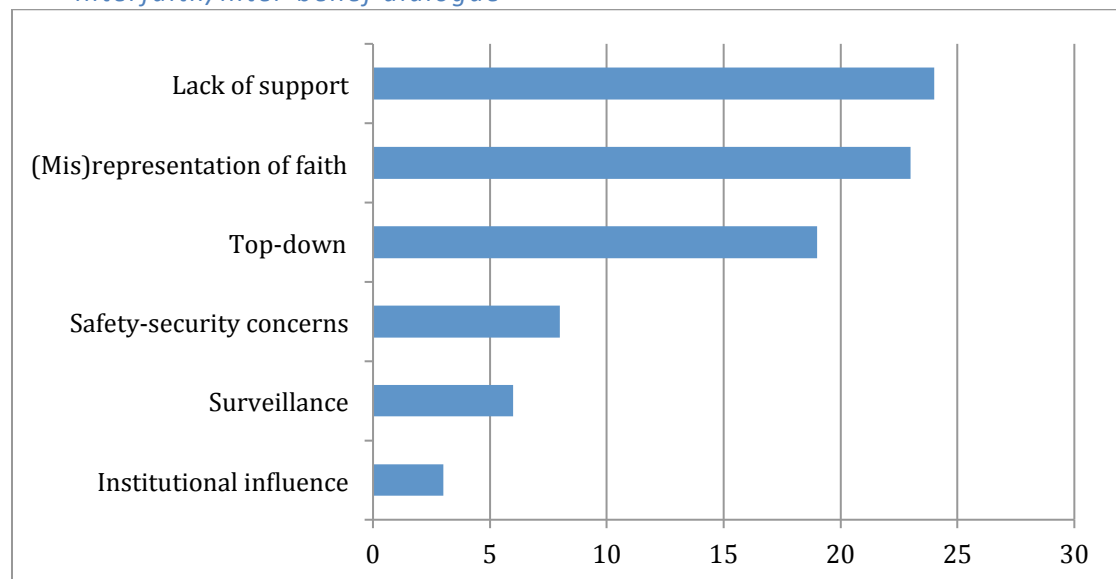
Note: Reported spatial factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

*Table 6.10. Coding frequencies of psycho-social factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



Note: Reported psycho-social factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

*Table 6.11. Coding frequencies of institutional factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue*



Note: Reported institutional factors that hinder interfaith/inter-belief dialogue. Multiple coding allowed.  
Source: London practitioner interviews

### 6.3.1 Mis-representation of faith in the public sphere

Challenging the public's perception of faith is at the heart of participants' work – it is the reason behind their mobilization, but it can also make that mobilization difficult. Many participants stressed the role of the media in the mis-representation of faith, stating “it's always bad news stories about religion and interreligious relations” (P5). They felt that there is a lack of reporting on the positive role that religion plays in society:

What's happening in the media and one religion killing another or religions, things that are happening in Iraq, that kind of stuff. (P14)

According to participants, there is a lack of “positive publicity” around faith. The lack of positive media coverage is indicative of a non-reciprocal process in which religion and faith are portrayed within a limited, negative framework. Getting any type of positive publicity is “what makes a difference” (P14).

This is most apparent in the difficulties faced by participants who work in areas of London that have high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Deprivation and inequality have been linked to low levels of social trust (Stolle et al., 2008; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Read, & Allum, 2011), and prejudices against people from these areas

can result in the majority viewing them as incompetent members of society, potentially impeding their ability to participate in civic life (Mcnamara et al., 2011). The participants who work in these areas face not only what they feel are misunderstandings about their boroughs, but also about faith in their borough. The focus on faith in these areas is centred on Islam and the largely Muslim immigrant communities that live in the borough. A participant who works in Tower Hamlets explains how the area and its community are usurped for outside interests, which impacts how they are depicted by the media:

The key [problems] are from outside. They are reputational. What Tower Hamlets represents to those outside with axes to grind, whether it's ... Al-Muhajiroun ... or whether it's the EDR or Britain First, all so-called reputable journalists who are keen to prove their point about the dangers of Islam. We are manipulated and ignored and misrepresented in order to fit into those people's agendas. It's particularly the case with Britain First and Al-Muhajiroun because they just want to fight really and they're saying almost exactly the same things about one another. We're just the battleground. It's just ludicrous. (P1)

Not only must this participant deal with relations between people of different belief backgrounds in his borough, he must also simultaneously deal with the identities imposed on these faith groups by those “from [the] outside.” These imposed identities limit agency for the people in Tower Hamlets, as it is a complete ‘non-recognition’ of their identity. This non-recognition can be psychologically threatening because it is inconsistent with the way borough residents’ see themselves (Hopkins, 2011a; Howarth, 2002b). This is true especially in relation to faith, as it can be a central component to one’s identity (Keeley, 2007; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). These non-dialogical encounters, in turn, affect their ability to participate in the public sphere and thus re-present their identities. Muslims are already often marked as outsiders in Western society, influencing how they position themselves (Naber, 2000). Non-dialogical media representations serve to further stigmatize the Muslim community in disadvantaged boroughs.

### **6.3.2 Lack of institutional support**

Participants reported that a lack of institutional support was a major hindrance to their work. Many highlighted that inter-belief work “relies on individual people” (P8) who “can’t necessarily do it all themselves” (P3). They stated that relying on one



central person is dangerous because the moment that one person leaves, “it would just go away” (P8), emphasizing the importance of building and sustaining networks. There is, however, a lack of a network of support within state institutions. All participants acknowledge that on the surface there is a lot of support for their work within these institutions, but in reality there is a major lack of investment. As one participant described it, “there is this massive blind spot” (P5). Another participant emphatically stated, “the government has to endorse it”:

The problem in this country is that different governments give very little money to faith, to interfaith. They give so little money... and the Interfaith Week, which in part helps, was partly because the government did do something, but then they stopped doing it. I mean it will carry on, but it needs...in this country, it needs funding. And in order for anything to happen at the society level, is an official state stamp, an official stamp means government approval and government engagement with it...It needs non-government people to do it, but it needs the government engagement, the stamp on it. (P14)

This lack of support extends beyond funding and is oftentimes rooted in institutional biases regarding community cohesion and its measurement. Participants working in culturally and ethnically diverse areas expressed distaste for the term ‘community cohesion,’ and are critical of the instruments that their boroughs use to measure it. One participant described perception indicators as “a load of crap” (P8). Many felt that politicians do not want to acknowledge that there are problems in their boroughs. One participant illustrated this point with an example of a community centre being used as a Mosque and the issue of heavy foot traffic after mid-day prayers:

I started talking to different people in the community to find out what the perception was of the problem...to discover that the white community really resented the fact that the building was now [a] Mosque to be owned by [the] Council, it was a community centre. We gave it to the Muslim community and it's become a Mosque. So it's interesting. The Muslim community refers to it as their Mosque. The white residents still refer to it as our community centre. The local thinker and the local primary school head teacher both said, "There is a serious problem." Again the local politician went nuts. "There isn't a problem, you're inventing a problem where there isn't one, you're not doing this piece of work." And the piece of work was stopped. So there is a political decision we do not want to recognize that there is an issue. We're going to take shelter under the statistic and we're not actually [going] to engage with actual real behaviour (P8)

This excerpt, as well as the previous one, is an example of the many non-dialogical institutional encounters that participants face throughout the course of their inter-belief work – it is a lack of what Jovchelovitch (2007) calls a “participatory dialogue.” Institutional actors restrict the views of people working in the field of inter-belief relations via non-recognition, and thus invalidate their knowledge (Farr & Rommetveit, 1995), and by extension, their work. As Markova (*in press*) argues, within bureaucratic institutions, the ‘other’ in the self-other communicative relationship is replaced with an ‘it’ because they are “deprived of any possibility to respond to the quantitative measure” used by the institution to gauge social programs like community cohesion policies. This power asymmetry affects participants’ ability to communicate within the public sphere. The act of the politician discrediting the participant’s knowledge in the example above is in fact an act of psychological violence, in that it discredits one way of knowing and replaces it with another (Jovchelovitch, 2007), taking the borough statistics as truth and not the lived experiences of members of the community. In failing to recognize and legitimize participants’ knowledge regarding inter-belief relations across London, state institutions often engage in non-dialogical communication that can produce “short-term solutions that do not work in the long run” and ultimately can prevent the development of knowledge to include those of all the knowledges involved (Jovchelovitch, 2008, p.31). This non-recognition can extend to instances when institutional authority figures are attempting to support interfaith relations, especially in relation to institutional representations of social cohesion and policy agendas, as will be discussed in the following section.

### **6.3.3 Forcing cohesion: the danger of ‘keeping a lid on things’**

Several participants highlighted the dangers of the political emphasis placed on community cohesion, stating that government agendas are not always in alignment with needs or desires of the diverse belief communities in London boroughs. The desire for community cohesion, often associated with the belief that communities are comprised of homogeneous individuals, fails to take into account the interdependent nature of diverse perspectives in complex societies like London (Howarth et al., 2015). There is a majority expectation of assimilation and a distrust of those who do not assimilate to the majority culture in many Western countries (Klandermans, 2014). This lack of acknowledgement of interdependent perspectives results in the pressuring of diverse

groups to assimilate to majority practices, which intensify separatist identity politics (Wagner et al., 2012). Suppression of national subgroup identities, like faith, has been shown to reinforce subgroup identities instead of weakening them (Klandermans, 2014; Zegeye, Liebenberg, & Houston, 2000). Participants from disadvantaged areas of London identified several ways in which a community cohesion agenda has been pushed upon them and the groups that they work with, with space and power dynamics playing a central role.

#### *6.3.3.1 Non-dialogical spatial encounters*

Many participants stated that interfaith and inter-belief activities are often a case of “preaching to the choir,”<sup>49</sup> as they tend to attract people who are liberal leaning and already committed to the interfaith cause. The spaces in which events intended to promote interfaith and inter-belief relations are held is of particular importance in this regard. One participant, who works for a London council, stated that when inter-belief council events are held in a faith venue, conservative faith groups would not attend:

faith leaders have said to me, they will not come if it takes place at a faith venue, because it's beginning to move the band way from multi faith dialogue with the Council about we all work for specific good to inter faith, it's about us meeting in each other's venues. Some of the smaller more conservative communities have withdrawn and the Council hasn't taken that on board, because going to each other's faith venues looks nice, there's lots of food, lots of drink, other faith leaders, again the more liberal faith leaders saying "How wonderful it is that we're hosting each other in each other's venues." And it does, there is a nice positive vibe and everything, but it's failing to notice who's not there. (P8)

The participant expressed frustration at the council not heeding the advice he had given them regarding the spaces in which they hold events. While on the surface, hosting events in faith spaces “looks nice” and visually represents the cohesion agenda, it is “failing to notice who’s not there.” The participant states that the groups that are absent are, in fact, the groups the council wants to reach most – the conservative faith groups within the borough. Hosting events in faith-specific spaces is problematic because they are infused with a particular religious way of knowing. Social representations (of faith) are enacted knowledge (Elcherath et al., 2011), which involves not just what people do,

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<sup>49</sup> This phrase was used by Anglican/Christian participants, but the meaning was echoed by non-Christian participants as well.

but also the environment in which they act. Hosting an inter-faith/inter-belief event in a belief-specific space requires other religious knowledge systems to adapt to a foreign faith environment. Our behaviour is stimulated, directed, and ultimately restricted by the cultural systems in which we live – it is our means for interpreting and understanding our physical surroundings, both enabling and limiting our behaviour (Lahlou, 2011). Each belief group’s sense of place is imbued with “moral meanings” of behaviour (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006), which influence how they perceive who does and does not belong within that space. Another participant who states that he does not like interfaith spaces makes this point explicit:

I am much keener on dedicated faith spaces that we are able to share with one another to the extent that that's possible. I think we don't meet in one another's places because I think that brings other issues along with it that we haven't really addressed sufficiently about what does it mean to be in these places. I'm not at all keen on dedicated interfaith spaces because I think they're a fabrication. I think the reality is that we are different faiths and we do things differently and we need to recognize what those differences are about and not try to fudge. (P1)

This participant states that people of different faiths “do things differently” and that *doing faith* is directly linked to the spaces in which it is performed. Spatial relations are reflective of the social reality divisions that influence what people believe is and is not possible in relation to other groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997), and thus what is and is not possible within a specific space. These spaces are symbolically marked, laden with values. And values and behaviours are intimately linked – when a value is activated, it influences the choices a person makes as well as his or her behaviour (Verplanken & Holland, 2002). Faith spaces then, can be viewed as a channel of communication, indicating a sense of belonging, or in the case of some conservative faith groups, of non-belonging. This highlights that the way in which space is organized links to the “ideological context of intergroup relations” (Dixon, 2001, p.593) and can affect the nature of intergroup contact and the decision-making processes of stakeholders.

#### **6.3.3.2 Structural power dynamics and re-presenting faith**

Forming temporary project-based communities and constructing interfaith networks are a means of attempting to reclaim one’s belief identity and re-present the role of faith and belief in the public sphere. As Hopkins (2011b) states, religious and

belief identities are “sites of on going struggle and contestation” (p.533). This on going struggle is, however, “within a range of structural and symbolic constraints” which limit people’s ability to re-present themselves and their group identity in order to reflect their interests and potentialities (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000, p.7). The structural issue of power and people of faith’s ability to re-present themselves in the public sphere is illustrated in the following extended extract from an interview with an Anglican faith leader. A long extract is required to convey the full complexity of the psychosocial processes involved in P1’s account.

Then you distinguish between good and bad faiths, good and bad practitioners of faith. Those who are trying to keep the lid on things are healthy religions or religious people and those who are complaining about the state of things are extremists. I think that's to misunderstand the role of religion entirely.

When I was a teenager, the only way I'd stayed within the Church of England was because I understood its radical tradition. I saw the church as a basis for changing society. It seems to me that there is no difference in that the many bearded young Muslim men who, out of their Islamic faith, are very critical of the world in which we live. I don't think they're extremists. I think they're making use of religion in an appropriate way, as a means of critiquing society.

They're seen in that way because there is that failure to understand religion as being both supportive of the world as it is and deeply critical of it and looking beyond it towards change. We collude very much in that because we want our role at the top table. Community cohesion is quite a useful bit but it can then get very misunderstood when, for some reason, when we don't take that community cohesion light.

A clear example of that, the second time the English Defence League wanted to come and march here, the Police had just had the London riots and were feeling very fragile and were very defensive and were very clear that they wanted the streets cleared so that they could get on with policing. Radical groups, the Anarchists United Against Fascism were saying, "No, we need to have a counter demonstration."

The faith communities by and large were also saying, "We need to support our young people in the street. We want to be out there." I suddenly found myself *persona non grata*. I had been, at that point, chair of the independent advisory group for the Police and I was sacked. It was because I wasn't towing the line. I was suddenly seen to have lost my mind really. Hey, that's the role of religion and sometimes we're on board and sometimes we're most certainly not. (P1)

The participant reflects on an example of when his way of *doing religion* came into direct conflict with that of government officials. In this particular context his religious identity was most salient and he was “certainly not” in agreement with the council and police’s desire to keep people in the borough from protesting against the EDL. Being

sacked from his position with the police is a reflection of government officials attempting to limit his identity and thus limit his ability to exert control of it. He instead chose to join in solidarity with members of other faith groups (i.e., Muslims) to challenge their marginalized status as people of faith. The participant engages in perspective-taking, showing a self-other cognitive overlap when he states that “bearded young Muslim men” are not extremists, but are like him and use their faith to be critical of society. Both draw on faith as a resource for future-oriented representational projects. He challenges the negative identity attributed to Muslim men, that they are extremists, negative attributes that are often used to justify and perpetuate the exclusion of minority groups from civic life (Mcnamara et al., 2011). Collective action can empower marginalized identities because it raises the “levels of recognition they receive from other social groups” (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000, p.7). In identifying with Muslims in his borough and supporting them in their counter-protesting, he was creating a temporary action-based inter-faith community and increasing the social capital of people of faith. These group identity legitimization strategies are a means of attempting to exert social influence (Howarth et al., 2013) by building and drawing on social networks and capitalizing on groups’ resources (Hopkins, 2011b).

The government, his employer, did not recognize his way of *doing faith*, with many believing that he had “lost his mind.” This non-recognition and subsequent sacking is an example of how social power limits one’s ability to act, to re-negotiation one’s identity. Social change is a process of both managing negative representations of one’s group and challenging them (Turner et al., 1987). In challenging negative representations, the participant challenged how others view him and thus “re-define[d his] identity” (Howarth, 2002a, p.155). But it is important to note that this process is two-way; one also redefines one’s own identity when challenging others’ representations of it (Howarth, 2002a, 2002b). Power is intimately linked to everyday negotiations in which diverse representations and identities are debated (Arendt, 1958). When these temporary action-based inter-belief communities participate in the public sphere, they cultivate a way of knowing about people of faith, engage with current knowledges about people of faith, and actualise the social power to participate in shaping it.

## 6.4 Discussion

Re-presenting faith in the UK public sphere is a future-oriented representational project that is centred on a process of engagement for the participants of this study. This engagement process is realized via the construction of interfaith networks and the formation of temporary project-based communities that maximize the social capital of these networks in order to work towards social change. It is a time-intensive process that can be easily obstructed due to social and institutional non-recognition and lack of support, which is largely due to prejudices towards stigmatized religious identities and an institutional self-other relationship which views that ‘other’ as an ‘it,’ effectively removing people’s agency. The material environment in which interfaith/inter-belief contact takes place mediates both the facilitation and obstruction of the future-oriented project of re-presenting faith. Space functions as a channel of communication between stakeholders. This adds additional insight into self-other relations and the facilitation of dialogical encounters and the transformation of knowledge via “genuine communication” (Jovchelovitch, 2007, 2008; Markova, 2003). The material environment also plays a role in how communities in network societies are formed, as they influence people’s representational projects and affects their ability to participate, to include or exclude different knowledge systems (Aveling & Jovchelovitch, 2014; Howarth et al., 2015).

As in Chapters 4 and 5, the issue of power cannot be overlooked. The majority of participants highlighted the lack of institutional support, largely in terms of funding of interfaith/inter-belief projects. Participants working in socio-economically deprived boroughs highlighted the damage that institutional non-recognition of faith groups’ perspectives in day-to-day borough relations can have, like with the community centre-mosque controversy or protesting an EDL march. Examining the impact of both policy making and practice is imperative, as failing to do so “runs the risk of depoliticising identity construction processes and rests on a rather limited analysis of context” (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013, p.362). Pushing a community cohesion agenda without acknowledging the perspectives of all faith groups within a borough (not just those already predisposed to interfaith dialogue) can further alienate already marginalised groups and intensify separatist politics (Klandermans, 2014; Wagner et al., 2012; Zegeye et al., 2000). Hosting multi-faith council events in places of worship is a means

of pursuing the institutional representational project of community cohesion, but it fails to take all faith groups' perspectives into account. By not recognizing the concerns of conservative faith groups, the council that P8 works with does not see who is not present, and so delegitimises their perspectives. The same is true in P1's case – he was sacked from his position with the police because his representation of doing faith and pursuing community cohesion was not in alignment with institutional leaders. Essentially, some government officials are engaging in non-participatory dialogues with their boroughs, depriving community members of their agency and limiting their ability to participate in the public sphere, further marginalizing already marginalized groups.

This study also lends additional insight into the Contact Hypothesis literature, as the practitioners interviewed are heavily invested in their belief identities, and yet are still able to facilitate interfaith/inter-belief contact. Group membership identity salience has been shown to moderate the positive effects of intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Anxiety increases when identity salience is high during contact events, decreasing the ability of contact to mediate intergroup prejudice (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Yet despite the level of identity salience and anxiety that interfaith/inter-belief contact can cause, practitioners are able to facilitate positive project-based communities via interfaith networks. This may be due to the unique nature of faith identities – as P1 states, the role of religion/faith is to be “critical of the world in which we live” and to provide a “basis for changing society”.

The following chapter will review the findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6, discuss the connections between these findings, and contextualize them within the existing body of social psychological literature. This will be followed by a discussion of how the findings lend new insight into social psychological theory. The chapter will close with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the project and thoughts on future research.



## **7 Chapter 7: Discussion – the intersectional, multi-layered nature of interfaith contact**

Community building is at the heart of all three studies. Dialogue is the foundation upon which community building is laid, and as the three studies show, can be both verbally and physically enacted. This final chapter will revisit all three studies, first discussing how each addresses the research questions as well as the links between the three. The second part of this chapter will then outline the contributions of this thesis as a whole to the social psychological literature, examining how the findings extend understandings of a) context, b) identity, c) intergroup contact, and d) social representations. The chapter will close with a discussion of the project's limitations and thoughts regarding future research.

### **7.1 Summary of studies**

This project set out to explore the conditions necessary for interfaith dialogue within the highly diverse context of London, a network society (Castells, 2004, 2011). Within a predominantly secular setting like London in which faith is often viewed as something private and sometimes as potentially threatening, attention must be paid to not only how faith groups manage their identities, but also to the impact of stigma and representations of difference on intergroup relations. In order to explore these issues in depth, a London-based case study was selected. The LSE faith community was chosen because student faith societies are both culturally and religiously diverse and, at the time of this project, are in a process of institutional transition. Faith societies, having a history of political tension and physical separation on the campus, are now required to interact more frequently as they transition into one central Faith Centre. Increased contact between faith societies, combined with increasing intergroup tensions, is an ideal case study because it is a microcosm of the highly diverse context of London, enabling the examination of the social, psychological and institutional factors at play. During exploratory fieldwork at The LSE, it became clear that the material environment is also part and parcel of localized definitions and thus social reality within the context of intergroup contact. The research was expanded to include the intersections of group identity and space, with each research phase structured to address the following research questions:

- 1) What conditions (psychological, symbolic, material) are necessary for interfaith dialogue?
  - a. What might open up dialogue?
  - b. What might obstruct dialogue?
- 2) How do faith groups understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 3) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 4) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 5) How do identity & spatial factors influence the decision-making process of faith groups in relation to multicultural contact situations?

The LSE case study, which is broken into two parts, is longitudinal. The first study examined intra and intergroup student faith society activity on campus prior to the opening of the new Faith Centre, when faith societies were still meeting in physically separate locations. The second study explores students' experiences of the Faith Centre after it has opened and how they are making sense of the transition process. The analytical gaze turns outward for the final study, which explores the same issues with interfaith practitioners working in varied contexts across London.

### **7.1.1 Study 1 summary**

The first study set out to examine what members of LSE faith societies do in both intra and intergroup settings prior to the opening of the new LSE Faith Centre. Intragroup events largely outnumbered intergroup events and with student faith societies occupying separate spaces across campus, intergroup contact was not frequent. Only 8 of the 27 events sampled involved intergroup contact (i.e., members of one or more faith societies interacting with non-society members), and The LSE organized half of those events. The other half consisted of faith society outreach events designed to increase awareness of the organizing faith society and to recruit new members (i.e., proselytization). These outreach events widened the scope of possibilities for intergroup contact because they are weakly defined contact environments (Sibley, 1995) which were promoted for the purpose of welcoming people from outside of the in-group. Conversely, the LSE-organized interfaith events

were strongly defined contact environments (ibid), organized with the expectation of intergroup communication. This expectation required attending faith society members to negotiate their in-group identities while simultaneously attempting to meet the institutional expectation of dialogue. Doing so required faith society members to make decisions regarding if or how to engage with members of different societies (RQ5).

Decision points were their jumping off point in the intergroup sense-making process – these were the moments just before participants committed to an inclusive action (i.e., behaviour that incorporates others) or in-group protective action (i.e., behaviour that omits others). Participants engaged in roughly equal numbers of inclusive and in-group protective action, but the nature of these actions differed significantly. Inclusive actions in interfaith events were almost exclusively language based – they were verbally communicated. For example, whenever a prayer was said in Arabic it would also be said in English, and whenever religion-specific terminology was used, it was explained. In-group protective behaviours, however, were exclusively physically enacted – they were communicated via the material environment of the contact space (RQ2, RQ4, RQ5). For instance, participants sat in religion-exclusive groups with little to no physical intergroup mixing. The few instances of intergroup mixing at these events were almost exclusively facilitated by institutional authority figures. While intended to improve intergroup relations, it is a form of policing student behaviour<sup>50</sup>. Faith society members were able to meet the institutional expectations of interfaith events by being verbally inclusive, while also mitigating the potential threat posed by competing knowledge systems by engaging in physically protective in-group behaviour. In conclusion, the study demonstrated that the space of intergroup contact, both psychosocial and material, plays a crucial role in intergroup contact processes, as they are both a channel through which participants communicated information about intergroup relations.

### 7.1.2 Study 2 summary

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<sup>50</sup> During the Interfaith Holocaust Memorial Service, a member of the Jewish Society whispered, “This is so *weird*” to another JSoc member. While this statement is not part of the participant observational data, it is nonetheless revealing as to the impact of the institutional representational project of interfaith relations on campus and the policing of student behavior at interfaith events.

Study two delved further into The LSE case study by exploring institutional and student perspectives on the new Faith Centre and faith relations on campus after the new Faith Centre opened. School managers were interviewed about their perspectives on faith relations on campus and the new Faith Centre. Focus groups were conducted with LSE students from different belief backgrounds (both of faith and no faith) and at different levels of study (undergraduate and postgraduate, including MSc and PhD students). Participants were asked about the newly built centre and the potential for its use. Managers focused on the need to protect students' safety on campus as well as to protect their rights to religious accommodation. They are struggling with competing institutional social representations of faith – it is something that should be accommodated but also monitored; something that adds value to academic debate and discovery but also something that is potentially dangerous and threatening to both free speech and security. Managers' desire to bring faith back into the realm of academic debate while also meeting students' religious needs is reified in the Faith Centre itself, as it is designed with the intent of both accommodating the observance of religious practice and bringing students together for debate. However, there are also ways in which this is experienced as surveillance. Such multiple meanings, or cognitive polyphasia, is further complicated by the concerns amongst some staff and alumni, as well as those raised by the media, regarding religious practices relating to fears of the religious other (Islam).

Student participants heavily discussed the conflicting nature of the Faith Centre design, reflecting on what does and can promote interfaith/inter-belief dialogue on campus as well as what obstructs it. Focus group discussions centred on the concept of developing a pathway towards building dialogical relationships between people of different faiths, beginning with the construction of interfaith networks. Once a safe space for intergroup contact has been created, facilitated by established contact norms, participants believe it becomes possible to navigate the 'muddled' space of knowledge encounters and perspective taking becomes possible. Perspective taking can enable dialogical communication, and over time people's knowledge systems can be transformed via this inward and outward-looking process (RQ1a).

This process, however, is easily obstructed by the very space designed to facilitate it. Participants were tuned into the contradictory nature of the institutional

representational project of faith on campus and how it is reified in the Faith Centre. The physical separation of ritual spaces, combined with shared interfaith space, has both the potential to accommodate faith-specific practice and interfaith dialogue, but is also has the potential to reinforce intergroup boundaries, promote intergroup anxieties, and obstruct interfaith dialogue. This separation can bring religious identities to the fore and make entering the ambiguous interfaith space uncertain, requiring identity management strategies (RQ1b, RQ2). Muslim participants in particular were aware of this and were the only participants to highlight issues regarding surveillance in the centre (RQ3), stating that they were uncomfortable with the Panopticon-like glass-walled administrative office in the middle of the space. The Faith Centre is both the medium and the message of the institutional representational project – it is the means through which interfaith dialogue can be institutionally facilitated, but the space itself also communicates information about the nature of faith relations on campus (RQ4). In conclusion, this study demonstrated the importance of the material environment when examining the context of intergroup contact, as the Faith Centre is the reification of the cognitive polyphasia embedded in the institutional representational project of faith relations on the LSE campus.

### **7.1.3 Study 3 summary**

The third study examines the extent to which previous findings from the LSE case-study resonate with other inter-faith contexts, enabling a more robust discussion regarding the impact that stigma, power asymmetries, and agency have on interfaith intergroup relations. Interviews, focusing on experiences of facilitating interfaith contact, were conducted with 18 interfaith practitioners of varying belief backgrounds who work on councils, at religious institutions, and non-profits in boroughs across London. They work with communities that are sometimes more entrenched than the student population at The LSE, and are faced with implementing or negotiating around UK government policies, like those relating to community cohesion. They are dealing with broader political contexts, as faith-related events that occur outside of the UK, such as the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza, that have a direct impact on the communities in which they work. Interfaith relations and faith identities are, in this sense, both psychological and political (Howarth & Andreouli, 2013).

The physical spaces in which inter-belief contact occurs can both facilitate and obstruct participants' future-oriented representational project. The material environment functions as a channel of communication between stakeholders, communicating information about who does and does not belong at inter-belief contact events. It also impacts on how communities are formed within a network society. The material environment influences representational projects and affects people's ability to participate in meaning-making processes by the inclusion or exclusion of certain knowledge systems (RQ4, RQ5).

All participants reported a desire to change the way UK society thinks about faith, for it to be seen as a resource to society rather than a source of conflict. This future-oriented representational project is a process of engagement that participants attempt to realize via the construction of interfaith networks and temporary project-based interfaith communities that maximize the social capital of their networks in order to work towards social change (RQ2). It is a time-intensive process that requires constant work and can be easily obstructed by lack of institutional support and social mis-representation, due in large part to stigmatized religious identities and an institutional structure that largely removes people's agency (RQ1a/b, RQ3). The policies surrounding community cohesion impact on religious communities' identities and ability to have their voices heard and thereby participant in society generally (Howarth et al., 2015). In conclusion, this study demonstrated that mis-representation and non-recognition have a negative impact on grassroots social change initiatives, as they limit marginalized communities' ability to exert agency and fully participate in the public sphere.

#### **7.1.4 Links between the three studies**

Both at The LSE and across a diverse range of London boroughs, participants are attempting to construct networks and bring diverse groups of people together to work on a common goal or interest. Organizers are building small, temporary project-based communities via the events that are organized in order to pursue these common goals, should they be leadership building sessions for students or tackling mental health issues in a borough. The function of these temporary project-based communities is fourfold:

- 1) maintain and possibly strengthen intergroup networks,
- 2) maximize the network's social capital in order to pursue the common goal,
- 3) engage in re-presentational strategies that work towards the representational project, and
- 4) engage in re-presentational strategies within the network itself.

These four functions lend insight into the social psychological literature, which will be discussed in the following section. Such projects are often temporary and transient but none-the-less psychologically significant – for community identities and intergroup dialogue. They enable people from highly diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds to come together and create a sense of community through interdependence (Howarth et al., 2015) that might otherwise not be possible. While the social actors involved in such temporary communities may not be of equal social status, a central condition for optimal intergroup contact (Allport, 1954), they are still able to work together on a project of mutual interest. This is what Howarth et al., (2015) call ‘organic solidarity’ within complex modern network societies, which challenges the assumption of homogeneity embedded in policies related to community cohesion. As this research shows, sameness is not a prerequisite for intergroup dialogue and the development of community identity; rather it is the interdependence of diverse social actors.

## 7.2 Contributions to the social psychological literature

Examining intergroup contact in a ‘real world’ setting is less well explored than in traditional experimental approaches, and requires a critical approach that can take power dynamics and issues of agency into account. Much intergroup contact research has tended to fall into the realm of the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self Categorization Theory (SCT) tradition. Past research has treated social interaction as occurring between separate, but equal, individuals, often ignoring the importance of social and structural inequalities (Elcheroth et al., 2011) Israel and Tajfel’s book *The Context of Social Psychology* (1972) provided proposals for addressing this issue, by both Tajfel (1972) and Moscovici (1972). This developed into the social identity theory tradition (Tajfel) and the social representations tradition (Moscovici). The SIT and SRT

traditions are linked by the concept of contextualised social relations and identities. Our identities are shaped by our relations with others (Jovchelovitch, 2007), which enable us to understand who we are through the logics of commonality and difference (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Howarth, 2001). Identities are fluid and shift as we move through social contexts, making context key – identity salience is determined via the presence of the ‘other’ (Howarth et al., 2013). Who we interact with determines which identity is most salient for us at that particular moment. Our social identity is, essentially, a response to our immediate surroundings, and our behaviour is contextually contingent. The role of context must be taken into account when studying intergroup contact, and to date this has not been fully achieved. There is a need to more fully understand how the material, psychological, and institutional levels of contact contexts mediate identity politics and both facilitate and hinder intergroup dialogue.

### **7.2.1 Context**

The research in this thesis shows the importance of context for understanding intergroup relations amongst faith groups. This is consistent with social psychological research on context, which emphasizes that identity, and by extension behaviour, is contextually contingent. A key part of the social psychology of context is the knowledge we have about others’ perspectives and representations, or meta-knowledge (Gillespie, 2008). Meta-knowledge is essential to constructing representations of self and others. We can only see and understand ourselves through the eyes of the other (Mead, 1934). This allows us to become self-reflexive; we become aware of ourselves via how others identify us. As Duveen (2001) notes, “identity is as much about the process of being identified as it is about the process of identification” (p.259). How others identify an individual influences how s/he relates to her/himself – we develop a sense of self via the eyes of the other, which is comprised of representations that may sometimes conflict with our own (Howarth, 2002b). Knowledge of alternative representations allows an individual to position her/himself within the representational field of a community (Raudsepp, 2005). This positions the individual as a social actor and influences her/his behaviour. The essential element driving our behaviour is not so much what we think, but “what we think others are thinking” (Elcheroth et al., 2011, p.733). This is because we analyse information in regards to what it might mean to



others and to our relationship(s) with them; we are concerned with how others might react to our interpretation of, and reaction to, that information (Doise, 1993).

This meta-knowledge of our and others' social representations includes the boundaries of legitimacy of other representations (Raudsepp, 2005). Social representations govern what types of actions are and are not thought to be possible because they constitute our social reality, and in doing so, create the boundaries of what is considered possible (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Boundaries regulate intergroup contact and maintain social divisions; they affect individuals' sense of belonging and thus their "beliefs about acceptance and their ability to...maintain [their] own identity" (Dixon et al., 1997, p.348). The navigation of boundaries is deeply influenced by power relations between groups, which ascribe where individuals belong (Phoenix et al., n.d.). This categorization serves to keep individuals in their place (Reicher et al., 2006). These ascribed places shape the nature of social relationships, influencing what is believed to be possible between groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). The social divisions boundaries create are important to understanding groups' understandings of each other, as they are part and parcel of group members' meta-knowledge about others. Hence a thorough study of intergroup relations requires a bottom-up approach to analyse participants' "frameworks of meaning as they are applied within particular social contexts" (Dixon et al., 2005, p.704), as has been developed here.

Intergroup contact installations consist of three levels – the material, the psychological, and the institutional, all of which impact participants' frameworks of meaning (Lahlou, 2008). The networks that practitioners work to develop and the one currently being constructed between faith societies at The LSE are spatially mediated. LSE faith societies are being physically brought together via the construction of the new Faith Centre, while London practitioners establish relationships between different faith groups in their boroughs via worship place visits and regular interactions in faith-neutral locations. The temporary project-based communities that are created to work on a common goal, be it leadership training at The LSE or a borough event on tackling funeral poverty, enable participants to maximize the social capital of their interfaith networks and pursue a representational project in the public sphere and work towards social change. These temporary communities are essentially tools for re-presentation, both within the network and outside of it. People from different societies or faith

groups can re-present their faith group identities to those of other faiths (and vice versa) while the superordinate group as a whole can re-present the identity of “being of faith” to wider UK society or The LSE community.

Institutional recognition plays a vital role in this process. Andreouli and Howarth (2013) argue that it is important not to depoliticise identity by “overlooking the impact of policy making and practice,” as the role of institutions is important to more fully understanding context (p.362). This is very evident in the experiences of LSE Muslim participants, who highlighted the impact that institutional surveillance has on the ways in which they occupy space within the Faith Centre. The challenges that practitioner participants face in re-presenting faith, particularly in regards to non-dialogical institutional relationships, limit their ability to participate in the public sphere. When media portrayals of faith mis-represent London communities and when politicians pull funding for interfaith projects, the ability of people of faith to participate in the public sphere is increasingly limited. Hence it is important to examine the “interconnections between reified/institutionalised arrangements and lay/everyday representations” (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013, p.378). Exploring all three levels of intergroup contact installations can lend insight on this front as this study exemplifies. However, this study also extends the exploration to examine what people say about contact (Chapters 5 and 6) in relation to what they actually do in contact situations (Chapter 4). A participant observation study enables the researcher to delve into the complexities and contradictions of every-day intergroup contact. As this research shows, contact requires identity-protective spaces in order for people to feel safe enough to begin to include out-group members via inclusive actions. Navigating the ‘muddled spaces’ of intergroup contact requires a safe space for negotiating difference, one that embraces contradiction and ambiguity.

### 7.2.2 Identity

The findings of this research show that both cognitive polyphasia and intersectional identities play an important role in the identity politics of interfaith relations. This study has shown that diverse meanings can be attached to contact situations (Dixon et al., 2005), with groups struggling to promote their worldview or knowledge system over others. An intergroup contact event can have multiple agendas,

each structured “according to different identity definitions” (McNamara et al., 2013, p.261). The dialogical nature of all human interactions is an integral part of identity construction – we are constantly becoming who we are through our interactions with those around us. It logically follows then, that our identities are bound up within intergroup contact situations, as they are part of the day-to-day social practices that we engage in. It is important to remember, however, that knowledge systems are not neutral (Marková, 2008). As Israel and Tajfel (1972) acknowledged in early work, social power imbalances exist. Members of minority groups may experience intergroup contact differently because they lack social power (Hubbard, 1999). A lack of social power can have strong implications for minorities’ social identities and can thus create formidable concerns for the group – these concerns can, in turn, shape minorities’ understanding of how inter-group relationships can develop and be utilized to shape their own identities (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Hopkins, 2011a; Pehrson et al., 2014). The demarcation of stigma can have a highly detrimental effect on a group’s identity – persistent devaluation has the potential to influence minorities’ approach to intergroup contact situations, and can possibly hinder positive group contact (Tropp, 2006). In this way, the “restrictive social label” of stigma (Howarth et al., 2012) constrains not only how the stigmatized position themselves towards others, but also limits others’ interactions with them (Stevenson et al., 2014), and subsequently their representations of the stigmatized. This demarcation, this misrepresentation, can serve as an impetus for change, influencing how the stigmatize react and re-present their identity to the stigmatizer (Andreouli & Howarth, 2012; Reicher, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Society participation is vital to group identity because, from a social representations perspective, participation is the symbolic “power to construct and convey particular representations over others” (Howarth et al., 2015, p.22).

Identity politics is a central concern of intergroup contact. Groups are not only defining themselves in these situations, but also co-defining the identities of other groups. These groups are also struggling over who has the power to define, the power to manipulate symbolic meaning in their favour. The power to invoke a worldview is at the heart of identity politics; the knowledge systems that influence worldviews often compete for recognition. Moscovici’s work demonstrates that social representations, or people’s worldviews, are “inherently bound up with political stances” (Elcherath et al.,

2011, p.732). It is not just about which knowledge system is drawn on, but also how that knowledge is reinforced by that worldview. Social identities are contextualized within these knowledge systems. They are co-constructed by both in- and out-groups, and are made contextually salient via social comparison (Howarth et al., 2014). Identities are made salient by the presence of the ‘other,’ because we understand ourselves through them. Power negotiations and politics are a part of this identity co-construction and are vital to understanding how culturally diverse intergroup relations are managed (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013; Hopkins, 2008; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). It is about whose knowledge system is drawn on and how it reinforces that particular worldview within the situated context.

The social representations tradition views meaning making as a socially situated active negotiation process related to intersectional social categories and social positions (Philogene, 2000; Phoenix et al., n.d.). This research has shown the importance of connecting the concepts of cognitive polyphasia and intersectional identities. Chapter 6 showed how the competing, polyphasic meanings imbedded in The LSE institutional representation of faith on campus has been met with resistance from some students. Muslim participants in particular highlighted the issues surrounding the institution’s polyphasic meanings, focusing particularly on surveillance. For these participants, ‘security’ is not just about protecting the rights of students on campus, but about policing student behaviour, especially Muslim student behaviour. For these participants, representations of faith on campus aren’t just about students’ freedom to practice, but are wrapped up in the everyday politics of identity and recognition. Philogene et al. (n.d.) argue that because Social Representations Theory views meaning making as a socially situated negotiation process, it is related to both social positioning and the “multiple, intersectional social categories to which people belong.” Connecting the concepts of cognitive polyphasia and intersectional identities can help social psychologists better understand the complexities of the identity politics involved in interfaith relations, as the context of contact can make multiple, and sometimes competing, social identities salient.

### **7.2.3 Intergroup Contact**

While this research has shown the ways in which interfaith dialogue can, ideally, be facilitated via dialogical encounters, it has also shown the processes that make facilitating interfaith dialogue and contact often so difficult. Improving intergroup relations via the reduction of prejudice is at the heart of the contact literature. Researchers have explored a range of mediating contact effects like widening perspectives of who is in the in-group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Sherif, 1966), perspective taking (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Craig, Cairns, Hewstone, & Voci, 2002), and the perceived importance of contact (van Dick et al., 2004). Past contact research has focused on the positive features of contact situations, while factors that impede intergroup contact's ability to reduce prejudice are less understood. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) argue that this should become a significant focus in future contact research. Recent developments in contact research suggest that the effects of negative factors are probably mediated via group identity salience during intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). For example, reducing intergroup anxiety plays a significant role in reducing prejudice in intergroup contact situations (Dijker, 1987; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan et al., 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Intergroup contact can decrease anxiety and a sense of threat in relation to future interactions (Blair, Park, & Bachelor, 2003; Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Anxiety has been shown to mediate intergroup relations when prejudice and group identity salience is high, but less so when group identity salience is low (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). In essence, social psychological research examining intergroup contact should not only consider what facilitates dialogical intergroup encounters, but also factors leading to non-dialogical intergroup encounters. What factors of contact result in a lack of mutual recognition, when the perspectives of one or more knowledge systems are denied?

This research is a small step towards addressing Pettigrew & Tropp's (2006) recommendation that future intergroup contact research should explore the factors that impede intergroup contact's ability to reduce prejudice. As Dixon and Reicher (1997) argue, contact research must pay attention to the "interrelation between identity, space and ideology" (p.376). Taking a Social Representations Approach, developing links from Installation Theory – discussed again below, is well suited to this end. Groups'

representations of contact are linked to not only identity politics, but to material practices which all three studies have shown influence groups' decision-making processes regarding contact. Chapter 4 identified LSE faith society members' physical behaviour at decision points as a jumping-off point for exploring the co-construction of intergroup relations. Participants paused before committing to an embodied behaviour like who to walk with or who to sit with at an interfaith event. The socio-spatial observational protocol, theoretically underpinned by Social Representations Theory, is an initial step in building a methodological framework that employs a bottom-up approach to analysing participants' frameworks of meaning within situated contact contexts.

#### **7.2.4 Social Representations**

This research demonstrates that a Social Representations approach to intergroup contact enables a deeper understanding of intergroup contact from the perspective of participants, providing a bottom-up approach to examining the contextualized nature of meaning making. In doing so, it addresses some of the criticisms of the Contact Hypothesis tradition. Pettigrew (1998) argues that not enough attention has been paid to the process through which contact affects attitudes and behaviour. Past research has focused on measuring the attitudes of pre-defined groups towards others, overlooking how research participants themselves define group membership (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). Dixon & Reicher (1997) argue that researchers often presuppose potentially artificial group divisions. As has been stressed in this thesis, these clean-cut binaries overlook the full complexities of intergroup contact (Erasmus, 2010). In order to better understand contact contexts, researchers should focus on participants' ways of knowing and how they are applied in day-to-day interactions (Dixon et al., 2007), or developed in particular projects (Gillespie et al., 2012). There is also a need to consider the context of contact in its entirety, as discussed in section 1.2.1. Dixon & Reicher (1997) have argued that contact research has had the "tendency to underplay the situational, cultural and historical specificity of 'contact'... By superimposing a generic framework over concrete episodes, they have masked participants' own interpretations of the process" (p.364).

Installation Theory, which has its groundings in the Social Representations Theory, views social interaction in terms of installations (Lahlou, 2008, 2011). Installations consist of three intersecting levels: 1) the material/physical environment in which people operate, 2) the psychological level of representations and practice, and 3) the institutional level in which rules and regulations controlling how the system is run operate. The material/physical environment enables certain behaviours while limiting others; what people do within this physical space is shaped by the psychological level, and ultimately restricted by the institutional cultural system in which we live (Lahlou, 2008; 2011). Different cognitive systems, or different ways of knowing, have different ways of being within space and with others. The institution serves as a means of objectifying representations, reifying them within material spaces themselves, and creates rules and regulations regarding interactions within the environment. The ways of knowing that are embedded within installations are social representations – they are the means through which people make sense of the installation, or in the case of this research, the context of contact. The social representation of an installation functions as the psychological layer and is co-created by those who use it – it is socially constructed. This is illustrated very well in the research discussed here. However, this thesis argues that it should be extended, that the psychological layer of the Installation Theory should be expanded to consider the psychosocial and so presently are more explicitly *social* account of the psychology (Farr, 1996). Stakeholders from different groups co-construct the installation of intergroup contact – meta-knowledge of others contributing to the psychological understanding of the contact environment. This can be seen in the findings discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. In both cases, participants emphasised the need for contact norms in order for them to enter the contact space safely. In Chapter 5, LSE participants stated that such rules enabled them to engage in the ‘muddled’ process of intergroup identity negotiation. In Chapter 6, participants focused on the need for respectful listening – of being able to acknowledge the importance of each other’s beliefs, even if they do not agree with them. These findings highlight the importance of extending the psychological level of Installation Theory to include an explicit emphasis on the social nature of the psychology of installations, accounting for the ways in which meaning is socially constructed.

In coming together within a space, groups potentially have different concepts of what is and is not possible within the contact space. Each group's sense of belonging, sense of place, is imbued with "moral meanings" regarding behaviour (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006), influencing participants' perceptions of who does and does not belong in the contact space, and what should and should not be done within it. This opens up the meaning construction of the contact installation up to conflict (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006). This meaning-making conflict not only impacts what happens within the contact installation, but also how groups think about and relate to each other. Spatial relations are reflective of social reality divisions, and thus influences what groups believe is and is not possible in relation to other groups (Dixon & Reicher, 1997). This is shown in both The LSE case study and amongst London-based interfaith practitioners. Chapter 4 showed that LSE faith society members rarely physically mixed with each other at interfaith events. When they did mix, that mixing was initiated by an institutional authority figure. Non-mixing was used to communicate information regarding intergroup relations, like when Jewish Society members physically separated themselves from other faith society speakers at the Interfaith Holocaust Memorial Service. As examined in Chapter 5, LSE student participants discussed their anxiety regarding undefined interfaith space in the Faith Centre, unsure if they could go into others' religious spaces or how they engage in identity management strategies when moving through the ambiguous interfaith space. London-based interfaith practitioners echoed this uncertainty, highlighting how long it takes to establish interfaith visits to different places of worship, with initial meetings taking years to develop.

Thus group categorization and group identity salience in particular reflect social reality divisions (Reicher, 2004). Group category definitions enable many types of social action (Edwards, 1991; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). To properly understand categorization processes, researchers must consider their rhetorical dimensions (Billig, 1985; Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a, 1996b). This research suggests that the rhetorical dimensions of categorization processes extend beyond verbal and written communication, into the material rhetoric of physical space. This has been seen in the labelling of LSE Faith Centre spaces in Chapter 5, which triggers faith identities, making them salient and thus emphasizing certain categories and making them relevant to LSE students. This has also been seen in Chapter 6 when



participants highlight the importance of meeting in faith-neutral spaces. Faith-neutral spaces enable all stakeholders to lay equal claim to the contact space, while non-faith-neutral spaces impose identity and lay unequal claims to the space. The material environment can be both the medium and the message regarding the social realities of intergroup relations.

The material environment, from this perspective, should be viewed as a channel of communication between groups. As discussed in Chapter 2, communication plays a fundamental role in the study of social representations (Markova, 2003); dialogue between groups is the means by which intergroup boundaries are negotiated. Communication is the pathway for developing self-other and intergroup relations (Jovchelovitch, 2007). And, as the findings discussed in Chapter 4 show, communication is both verbally and physically enacted – movements within space and spatial structuring itself function as speech acts, conveying meaning to others (De Certeau, 1984; Tonkiss, 2006). Spaces and the actions that take place within them are not simply things to be read, but are a consciousness in and of themselves (Barthes, 1997). Participants at the LSE-organized interfaith events discussed in Chapter 4 communicated intergroup inclusivity while simultaneously behaving in in-group protective ways. In doing so, they were communicating two different messages – we should be together, but separate. This finding sheds light on the identity work involved in developing dialogical relationships between groups, in perspective taking between groups and in the ways in which each group's knowledge system is recognized and legitimized around identity positions (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

Participatory dialogues need to be understood on all levels of the contact installation – the materiality, the psychosocial, and the institutional levels. Not just what is verbally communicated, but what is communicated via the materiality of the contact installation, and how this interaction is moderated by institutional authority figures. Issues relating to power are central to better understanding the context of contact (Hubbard, 1999; Schwarzwald & Amir, 1984). Research in the area of contact tradition sometimes view intergroup prejudice as a product of unfounded beliefs, but – as is shown here – also a product of structural inequalities, real and imagined conflicts of interest, and social identity forces (Brown, 1995; Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Sherif, 1966). Power imbalances constrain non-dominant groups as

they try to navigate the cultural domain of the dominant group (Hubbard, 1999) and directly influence intergroup contact and social identity processes. The spaces and places that we inhabit have “political significance for our daily routines and decision making;” it is in the mundane routines of living that meaning is co-constructed (Hopkins & Dixon, 2006, p.174). The impact of these daily routines make representations of place and space matter, influencing who is included and who is excluded within those daily spaces, shaping the ways in which we think about ourselves and others. The micro politics of intergroup contact installations are key to understanding how representations of difference and commonality are constructed.

Hence what is important is to connect these different levels of analysis – the material, the (social) psychological and institutional. In order to do this a detailed account of the ways in which contact, identity, representation and decision-making all impact on the intergroup relations is needed. Hopefully one of the most significant contributions of this thesis is the careful integration of these theories: social representations approach (which combines social identity theory and social representations theory), research into dialogical encounters, contact theories and decision-making literature. This has been an ambitious and demanding task. However the ‘object’ of the research on interfaith relations in The LSE and across London boroughs has required this integrated and theoretically complex account. While many researchers remain ‘loyal’ to their chosen theory, a theoretically triangulated account (Flick, 1992) was necessary in order to more fully understand the complexities of interfaith contact and the differences between what participants said about contact and what participants did during contact.

### **7.3 Limitations and Future Research**

This research took an ambitious approach to studying intergroup contact, and it has various short-comings – particularly concerning the socio-spatial observational protocol, sample sizes and religious demographics. Developing the socio-spatial observational protocol posed an interesting methodological challenge. It was not possible to video record interfaith contact events due to their very sensitive nature. The presence of such equipment would have certainly influenced participants’ behaviour at events and it is likely few would have consented to be part of the study. With only one

participant observer and no event recordings, there is most certainly room for human error and subjective interpretations. While the protocol was designed to aid in this, a single observer at larger events will most certainly have not been able to observe everything. In future research this could be addressed by either video recording events (where possible) or having multiple participant observers at each event. This should be viewed as the first round of development for the observational protocol and the system needs to be more fully developed into a neater format to aid in the analysis phase in future research.

On the whole, studies 2 and 3 had a good sample size: Study 2 had 35 participants (7 interviews, 28 focus group participants), and Study 3 had 18 participants. However, the number of Muslim participants in the third study was disappointing. Only one participant identified as Muslim, while 9 identified as Christian (Church of England, Catholic, Quaker, and other), three as Jewish, one as Sikh, one as Hindu, one as atheist, and two as 'other.' The lack of Muslim participants is no doubt in part due to not having sufficient networks in the London Muslim community, but could also be due to Muslims' anxieties about over-surveillance and suspicion (as was shown in Chapter 5). Several Muslim-focused groups the researcher was in contact with said they had only just started interfaith work and were unable to speak to the research questions. Developing networks in order to reach more religious groups, many of whom are cautious with outsiders due to issues related to concerns about stigmatization, takes a significant amount of time – more than the months dedicated to this project. Due to time restraints in the final study, the number of Muslim participants that could be reached was limited, so it is important to highlight that the sampling is by no means reflective of all the diverse religious communities across wider London. Future research would benefit from developing relationships with more Muslim groups and other communities from an earlier stage, so as to have a more representative sampling.

It is also important to note that the bulk of LSE students who participated in the Study 2 focus groups were predominantly postgraduates. This most certainly impacted the findings, as the discussions in the two focus group comprised of only undergraduate students centred mostly on concrete experiences, while the majority postgraduate focus group discussions ventured into more abstract and theoretical discussions. The study

would have benefited from more undergraduate perspectives. However, the recruitment of undergraduate participants proved particularly challenging. Participant recruitment was most successful via the researcher's personal networks of Graduate Teaching Assistants who reached out to their MSc students.

Future research would benefit from re-examining the research questions now that The LSE Faith Centre has been open for a year and a half and an LSE 'Faith and Leadership' certificate course has been launched, in order to explore the impact that space sharing has had on students. It would be particularly valuable to track this overtime alongside events at The LSE that relate to interfaith discussions and debates, as well as events that occur in London and internationally. For example the Charlie Hebdo tragedy occurred during Phase 3 of the research and spurred international debates on freedom of speech. It would have been interesting to follow discussions at The LSE during this time, as freedom of speech is a hot-button issue at the heart of campus life. No doubt future local and international events will stir up controversy and interfaith debates on campus, and while it would be enlightening to examine their interconnections to interfaith intergroup relations on campus, this falls outside of the realm of the timely completion of this PhD thesis.

Taking a social psychological approach to this research enabled the researcher to better understand the complex nature of interfaith relations. The triangulated social representations approach enabled the researcher to turn a critical lens on the intersectional nature of contextualized intergroup relations. Hopefully the main contribution of this thesis is to highlight the intersectional, multi-layered nature of intergroup contact and the importance of recognizing that communication, a vital component of dialogicality, is spatially mediated. Exploring the role of dialogicality in the meaning making process lent insight into the dialogue facilitation process and the reasons behind why attempts at interfaith dialogue can be difficult. A better understanding of how dialogue can be facilitated within contexts where there may be competing perspectives at stake has much to offer policy makers. If the UK is to create a more inclusive society that incorporates increasingly diverse views, policy makers and community leaders need to facilitate day-to-day intergroup encounters that recognize the legitimacy of diverse knowledge systems and empower all members of society to be full participants in the public sphere.



## 8 Bibliography

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## 9 Appendices

### 9.1 Appendix 1: Research project information sheet Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before deciding to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information. Feel free to discuss issues with anyone, and if there is anything which is not clear or any questions you have, feel free to ask. Take your time reading, and don't feel rushed.

#### **What is this research about?**

The purpose of this project is to develop a social psychological framework for exploring the dynamic nature of identities and space on decision-making processes regarding intergroup contact within diverse, multicultural contexts.

#### **Who is doing this research?**

**Researcher:** Teresa Whitney, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [t.whitney@lse.ac.uk](mailto:t.whitney@lse.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:** Dr Caroline Howarth, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk).

#### **Why have you asked me to participate?**

Potential participants are being recruited via all London School of Economics Student Union registered faith societies. The study is focusing on the interfaith community at LSE, as its members are currently in the process of moving from separate spatial locations to one central space – the LSE Faith Centre. This provides a unique opportunity to explore the intersections of identity, space and place making, and decision-making processes.

#### **What will participation involve?**

Photo Elicitation Interviews:

Participants will be asked to take photographs for a week of places, buildings, objects, people (if they consent), etc. that they feel are representative of their experience of their spirituality on campus; what they do, in relation to their faith, in the space that LSE provides; their experience of the faith community on campus; and how they experience their spirituality at school vs. outside of school. Upon completion, they will be asked to share their photos with the researcher. Files will be transferred from the participants' digital device to the researcher's LSE H-space. If this is not possible due to storage space, files will be transferred to a password-protected external hard drive. Participant photos will then be discussed in an audio recorded one-on-one interview – each participant will be asked to indicate if s/he would prefer a female or male interviewer.

Video Tours:

Participants will be asked to walk the researcher through the space(s) that they and their society currently use on campus for faith-related purposes, explaining what the space is

intended for and how they and their society use it. This will be done with the participant either holding or wearing a video camera.

**How long will participation take?**

Photo Elicitation Interviews: interviews range between 30 minutes and 120 minutes, but on average run for 60 minutes.

Video tour: time is as-needed for the participant to walk the researcher through the space(s) that they use. They will most likely not exceed 60 minutes.

**What about confidentiality?**

Audio recordings are for research purposes only. Transcripts will be used for public purposes, but all personally identifying information will be removed prior to publication.

Photographs will be used for research purposes only. Participants will be asked to designate in writing which, if any, of their photographs they will allow the researcher to use in publication or other public purposes. All personally identifying marks will be removed from any photograph utilized for these purposes – the anonymous version of the photograph will be reviewed by the participant and approved in writing before use.

Videos will be used for research purposes only. Participants featured in any video used for public viewing will be contacted in advance for written permission. All identifying markers will be made anonymous (i.e. faces blurred, voices masked) prior to public viewing.

All data will be made anonymous for storage by the researcher.

All photographs and video files will be stored on the researcher's secure LSE H space, and, if necessary due to storage limits, on a password protected external hard drive.

**If you are willing to participate, then please sign a Consent Form.  
You can keep this Information Sheet for your records.**

## 9.2 Appendix 2: Study 1 informed consent

### Informed Consent

**Project:** Representations of Contact: The Impact of Identity and Space on Intergroup Contact Decision-Making Processes within a Diverse, Interfaith Context

**Researcher:** Teresa Whitney, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [t.whitney@lse.ac.uk](mailto:t.whitney@lse.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:** Dr Caroline Howarth, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk)

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### To be completed by the Research Participant

**Please answer each of the following questions:**

Do you feel you have been given sufficient information about the research to enable you to decide whether or not to participate in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you understand that your participation is voluntary, and that you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason, and without penalty?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you are willing to take part in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you aware that the interview will be audio recorded?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the research team to use anonymized quotes in presentations and publications?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the anonymized data to be archived, to enable secondary analysis and training future researchers?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

**Participants Name:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like a copy of the research report, please provide your email or postal address:

### 9.3 Appendix 3: Study 1 verbal data code book

#### Global Theme 1: The Islamic Society and Boundary Management

\* This is the initial coding framework – categories were regrouped to form the final global theme as presented in the analysis

<i>Organizing Theme: Engaging w/Perceptions of the Other w/in the Community</i>	
Basic Theme	Codes
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental concern</li> <li>• Parental involvement</li> <li>• Duty to parents</li> </ul>
Da'wah training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduling Da'wah training sessions</li> <li>• Topics of Da'wah training</li> <li>• Da'wah training requirements</li> </ul>
Engaging with diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-society connections</li> <li>• Working with other societies (ethnic/cultural)</li> <li>• Sunni/Shia issues</li> </ul>
<i>Organizing Theme: Institutional Relationships</i>	
Basic Theme	Codes
Attention Grabbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach efforts/evangelizing</li> <li>• Marketing strategies</li> </ul>
Student Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student politics engagement</li> <li>• Campaigns for office</li> <li>• Campaign strategy</li> </ul>
Inter-society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to other societies</li> <li>• Connections to non-faith based societies</li> </ul>
<i>Organizing Theme: Managing Others' Perceptions</i>	
Basic Theme	Codes
External Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections to non-LSE/SU individuals or groups</li> </ul>
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans regarding potential speakers</li> <li>• Issues regarding current or past speakers</li> <li>• Reception of past speakers</li> </ul>
<i>Organizing Theme: Stigma</i>	
Basic Theme	Codes
One-sided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-sided analysis of Islam</li> </ul>
Islamophobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns regarding anti-Islamic behaviour</li> <li>• Recounting instances of perceived anti-Islamic behaviour</li> </ul>
Threat to be managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity threat</li> <li>• Threatening campus event/speaker</li> <li>• Concerns regarding actions of other student societies</li> <li>• Concerns regarding events on campus</li> </ul>
<i>Organizing Theme: Generalized Other</i>	
Basic Theme	Codes
Acknowledging Controversy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What others think of Islam/Muslims</li> <li>• Discussion of controversial issues involving Islam/faith</li> </ul>
Caution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hesitation over involvement in an event</li> <li>• Concerns expressed over an event or actions of another student</li> </ul>

	society or campus speaker
Mis-representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived inaccurate account of Islam</li> <li>Negative accounts of Muslims</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Need for Tolerance</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Chose a different path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explanation for spiritual divide between Muslims and apostates</li> </ul>
Must be heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach to Muslim apostates</li> <li>Perceptions of Muslim apostates</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Intra-group Boundaries</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender roles</li> <li>Gender spatial divisions</li> <li>Gender identity embodiment</li> </ul>
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with other societies (ethnic/cultural)</li> <li>Sunni/Shia issues</li> </ul>
Training/guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling of training sessions</li> <li>Topics/types of training sessions</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Inter-group Boundaries</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual boundary cues – gendered, religious dress</li> <li>Physical grouping together at events</li> </ul>
Content-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language use</li> <li>Religious terminology</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Boundary Blurring</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Intra-faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunni/Shia</li> <li>Different Muslims/types of Muslims</li> </ul>
School-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach marketing</li> <li>Event attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Access</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Institutional Elite Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSE staff availability</li> <li>Interactions with LSE staff</li> </ul>
Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Booking space</li> <li>Organizing space</li> <li>Space needs</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: View of Interfaith/LSE</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Who belongs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion regarding who should be allowed to join the Interfaith Forum</li> <li>Head Sister asked LSE Director “Should the Atheist Society be allowed to join the Interfaith Forum?”</li> </ul>
Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of interfaith</li> <li>Level of involvement in interfaith events</li> </ul>
Chaplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of relationship to Chaplain</li> </ul>
<b>Organizing Theme: Institutional Surveillance</b>	

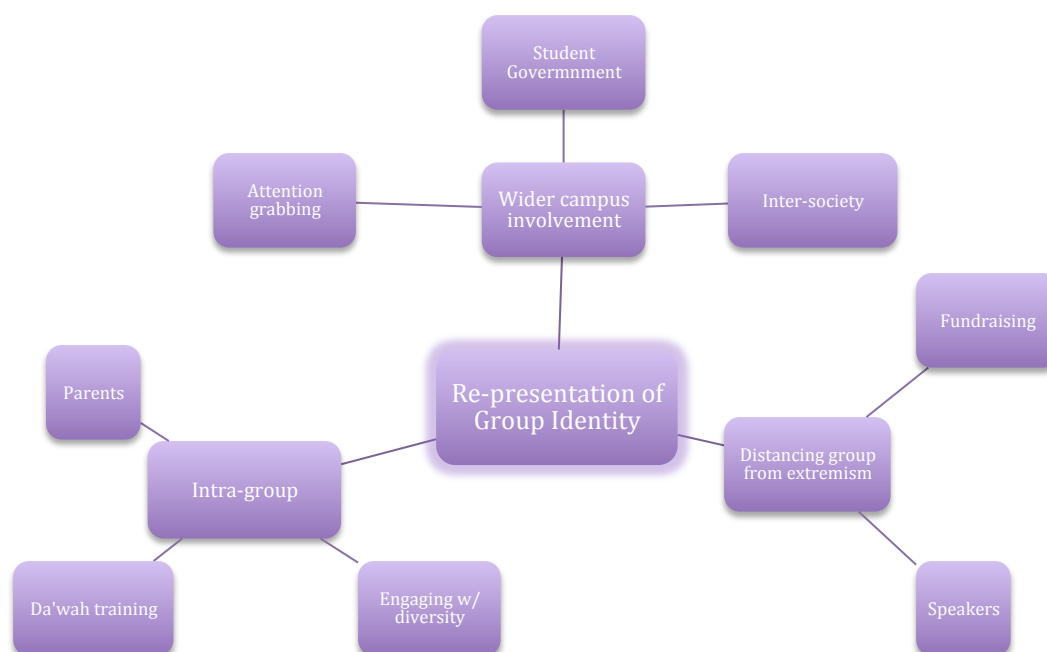
Basic Theme	Codes
Speaker Vetting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of speaker vetting</li> <li>• Reasoning behind vetting</li> <li>• Account of vetting process</li> </ul>
Avoiding Controversy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipating issues</li> </ul>
Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Rules regarding fundraising</li> <li>• Rules regarding use of funds</li> </ul>

## Global Theme 2: Relationship to the Institution

Organizing Theme: Representation of Others	
Basic Theme	Codes
Muslims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to Muslims or Islam</li> <li>• Reference to Mosques</li> </ul>
Generalized Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to member of another religion</li> <li>• Reference to non-religious individuals/groups</li> <li>• Reference to an other</li> </ul>
Other Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to a member of another society</li> <li>• Reference to another society as a whole</li> <li>• Reference to a society event/speaker</li> </ul>
Organizing Theme: Inter-Society Management	
Basic Theme	Codes
Other Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to a member of another society</li> <li>• Reference to another society as a whole</li> <li>• Reference to a society event/speaker</li> </ul>
Agency & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to/use of Faith Centre</li> <li>• Access to Interfaith Forum</li> </ul>
Perceived Prejudice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to stereotype of own group</li> <li>• Reference to stigma, being singled out as different</li> <li>• Reference to intergroup differences</li> </ul>
Organizing Theme: Boundaries & Spatial Relations	
Basic Theme	Codes
Modification to fit existing Social Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing/moving furniture/materials in space</li> <li>• Grouping of students at events</li> <li>• Defining events/space</li> </ul>
Adaption for Identity Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing space for identity needs</li> <li>• Identity enactment</li> </ul>
Blurring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating non-society members into society activities</li> <li>• Individuals attending/joining members from other groups</li> </ul>

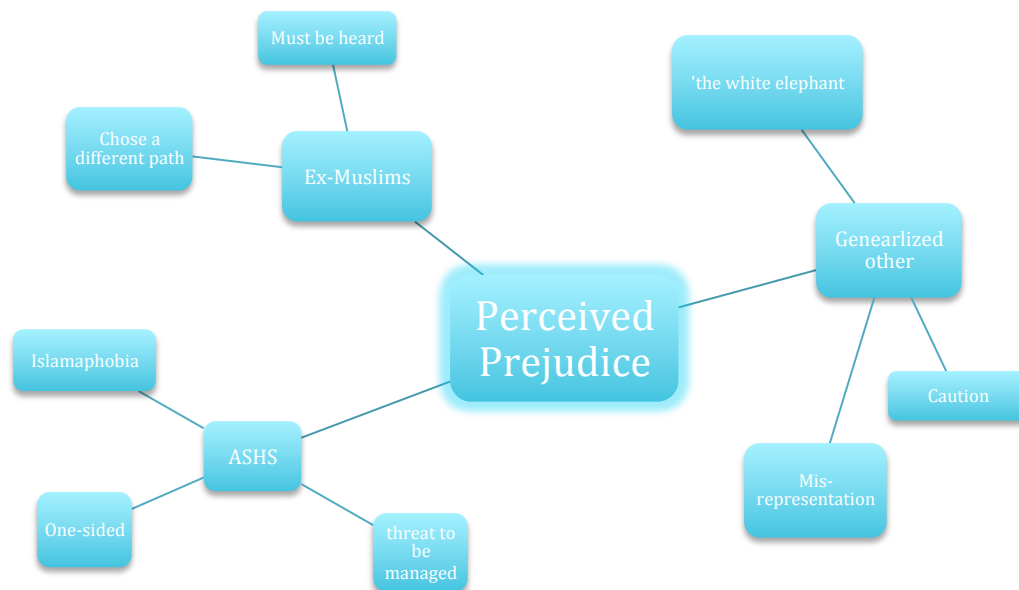
## 9.4 Appendix 4: Study 1 verbal data thematic maps

### Initial ISoc Thematic Maps



<i><b>Intra-group re-representation</b></i>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Parents	Committee Sister: "Parents are often concerned about their children's' involvement in an ISoc due to politics - we must make what we do, what we're about, transparent"
Da'wah training	Discussing Discover Islam Week - there will be "training for those who will be at the table. There might be a few people asking pointed questions; we must be prepared."
Engaging with diversity	Sister: "Why is it just the Pakistani and Malaysian Societies?" Answer: "Others don't exist. The Iranian Society and Arab Societies are very small" Brother: "We need to engage with the ISoc diversity" Head Sister: "It might attract people who normally wouldn't come to ISoc."
<i><b>Wider Campus Involvement</b></i>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Attention Grabbing	President: "We want to be at the forefront on campus" President: "Every year it's the same problem. We put in a big effort and end up with a room full of Muslims"
Student Government	Campus Affairs Officer: "Elections are coming up. We have two to three weeks to come up with a team and a campaign, so we need to get started soon." Pres: "Get an ear out - make sure we know who is in the SU."

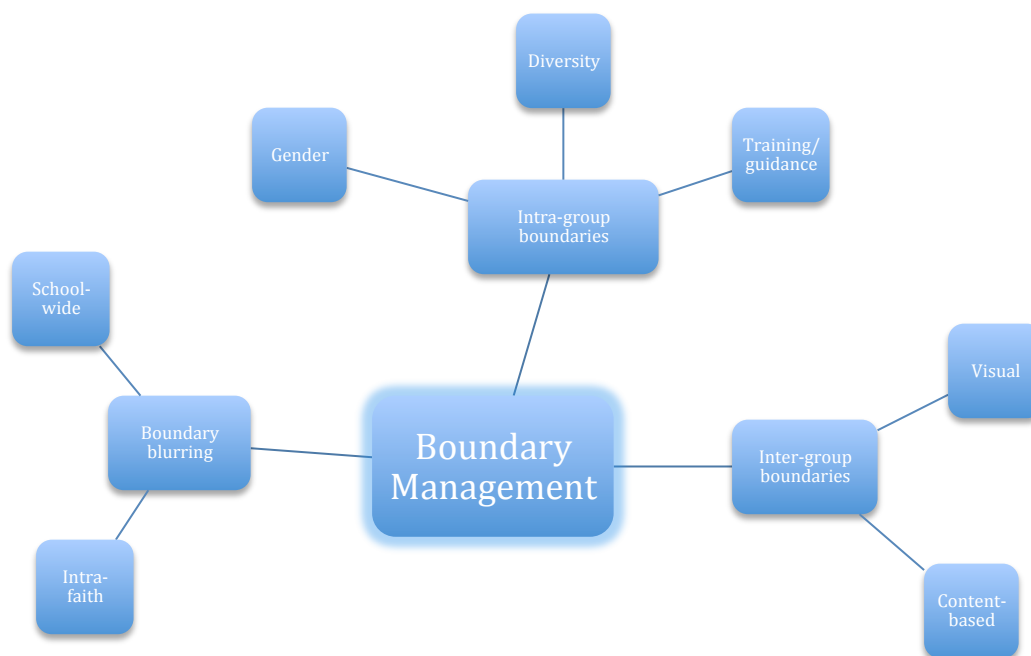
	Brother: "Jay [JSoc] didn't campaign and smashed everyone in last years election. It's all about how you know and which societies you get on board"
Inter-society	President: "We could bring in other societies. It comes down to how you package it. For Women and Islam we could invite the feminist society. For Mohammed, we could invite the anthropology society,"
<b><i>Distancing Group from Extremism</i></b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Fundraising	Discussing PaSoc & ISoc working together - PaSoc Sister talking about the fundraising they do – "we work with a recognized NGO that is in no way connected to terrorism"
Speakers	Brother: "He must be very clear 'this is not what I meant.' If he's not willing to do that, we'd be lumped in with him" [regarding SU banned speaker who allegedly made anti-Semitic comments]



<b><i>ASHS</i></b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
One-sided	Brother: "they're "scrutinizing Islam, but atheism is not put on the table"
Islamaphobic	Brother: talking about ASHS - "there is a lot of Islamaphobia with their events"
Threat to be managed	Discussing Women & Islam event proposed by ASHS - Head Sister says that she thinks "there is an agenda - we need to be careful, going

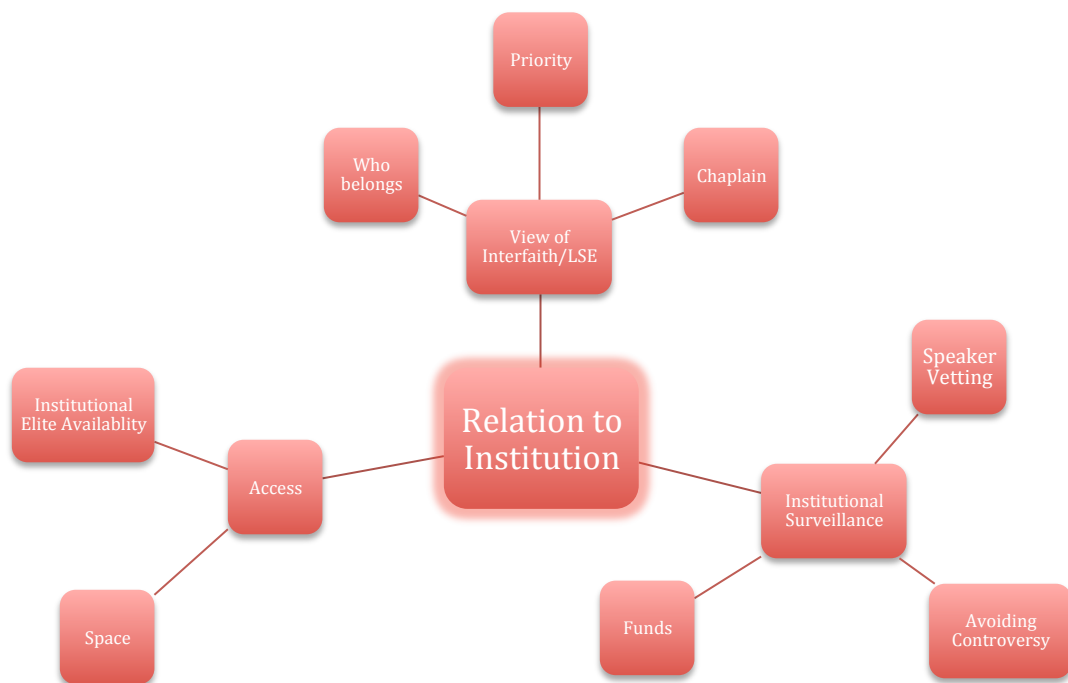


	legitimizes the point of the event. It is not a way to discuss Muslim women in a fair and open platform."
<b>Generalized Other</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
'the white elephant'	Discussing Discover Islam Week speakers - Brother: we should "get the elephant out of the room" and have the "more controversial speakers go first"
Caution	Discussing a campus political event - Brother: "will any of the speakers be anti....um, us?"
Mis-representation	Brother: "It's a beautiful thing that there are a lot of misconceptions about Muslims in the media"
<b>Ex-Muslims</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Chose a different path	Discussing Muslim apostates – President: "It's important to show that you've thought about the same issues and have come to a different conclusion."
Must be heard	Discussing ASHS Muslim Apostate event - Brother: "They feel that their stories aren't told by the media for fear of Muslim retaliation. We need to engage with them or we're buying into that stereotype."



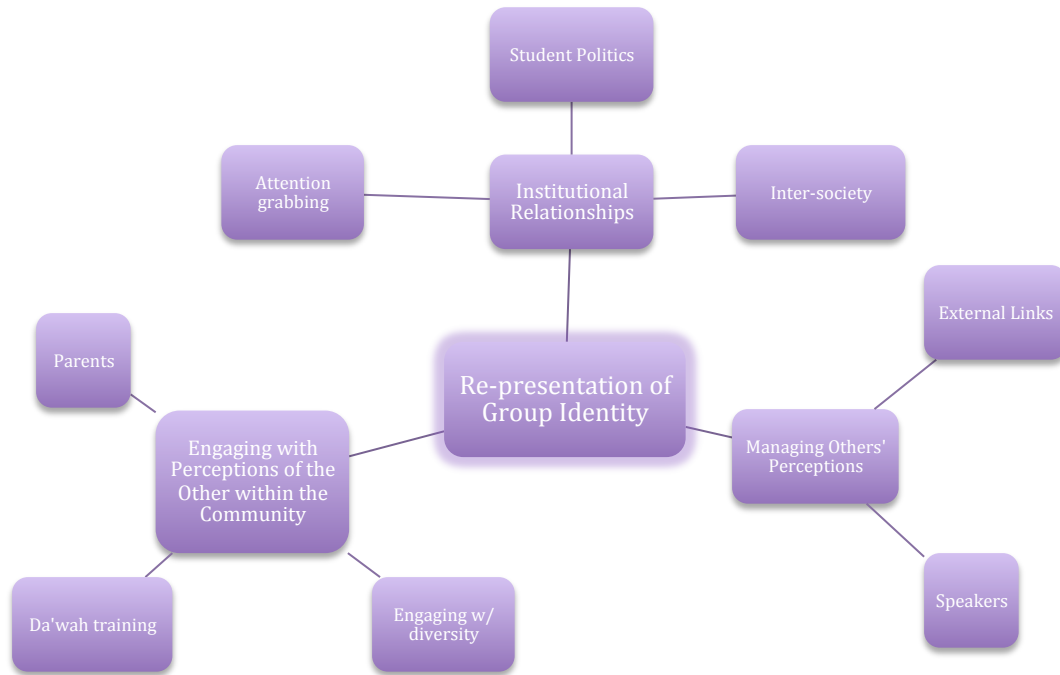
<b>Intra-group Boundaries</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Gender	Discussing circles meetings - Sister: "we don't address inter-gender relations and marriage. Members have a lot of questions and we

	don't have clear answers." President: "there is a way to do things [and we] need to be clear on it"
Diversity	Sister: "Why is it just the Pakistani and Malaysian Societies?" Another Sister answers: "Others don't exist. The Iranian Society and Arab Societies are very small."
Training/guidance	Brother: we "will provide members with guidance for topic research and presentation"
<b>Inter-group Boundaries</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Visual	At outreach event: females who were not veiled stayed with groups (2-3) they came in with while majority of veiled females moved freely between other veiled female groups socializing
Content-based	Brother: "all of the events assume a certain level of knowledge about Islam"
<b>Boundary Blurring</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Intra-faith	President: want to "reach out to other Muslims on campus who aren't members" ISoc is "not just for one type of Muslim" we have "equal love for all, even if they don't wear hijab or beard"
School-wide	Head Sister: "What kind of crowd do we want? In similar past events everyone were Muslims from LSE. We want LSE students of other faiths and no faith"



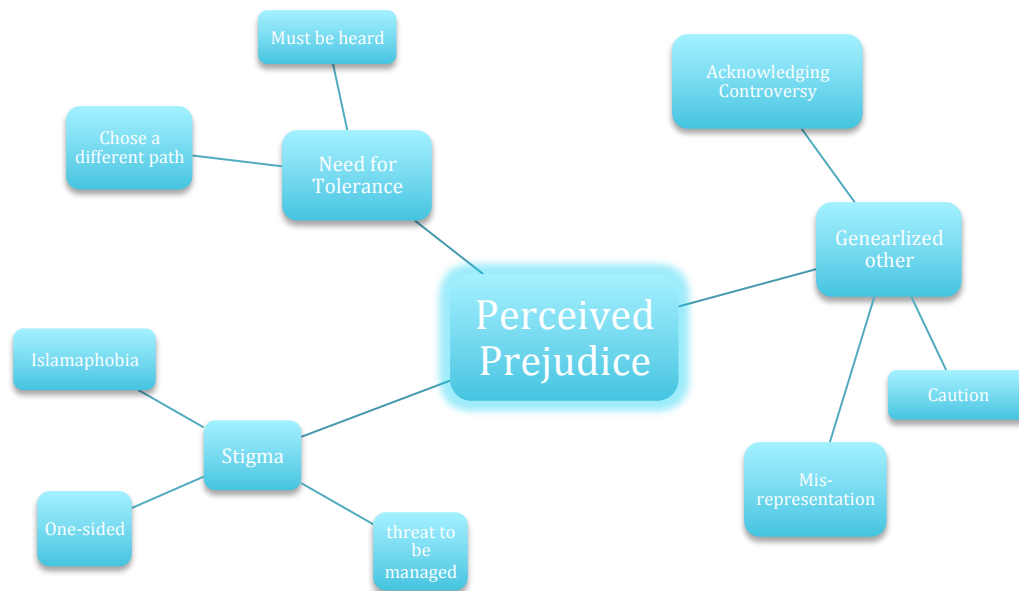
<b>Access</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Institutional Elite Availability	[discussing Interfaith Holocaust Memorial] President: "The Chaplain sent out notification one to two days before event, which didn't leave much time to advertise it."
Space	Head Sister: "The Quad booked up quickly and we're not sure about being able to get another place" ... "we might not be able to do it"
<b>View of Interfaith/LSE</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Who belongs	Head Sister asked LSE Director "Should the Atheist Society be allowed to join the Interfaith Forum?"
Priority	Interfaith listed under ISoc's "Golden Priorities for the year" at first committee meeting of academic year
Chaplain	President: we should "build a relationship with the Chaplain" he is a "nice guy" and a relationship with him would be "good for everyone"
<b>Institutional Surveillance</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Speaker Vetting	President: "Whenever a speaker is invited, they must be vetted by the Chaplain. The school is only doing this to help the ISoc. There are right wing bloggers trying to prevent Muslims from speaking."
Avoiding Controversy	Brother: we need to "clear speakers in advance" so as to "avoid controversies that have happened in the past"
Funds	Discussing the institutionalization of ISoc via Student Union bylaws - "all societies have to register where their money comes from and all of their affiliations"

## Revised ISoc Thematic Maps



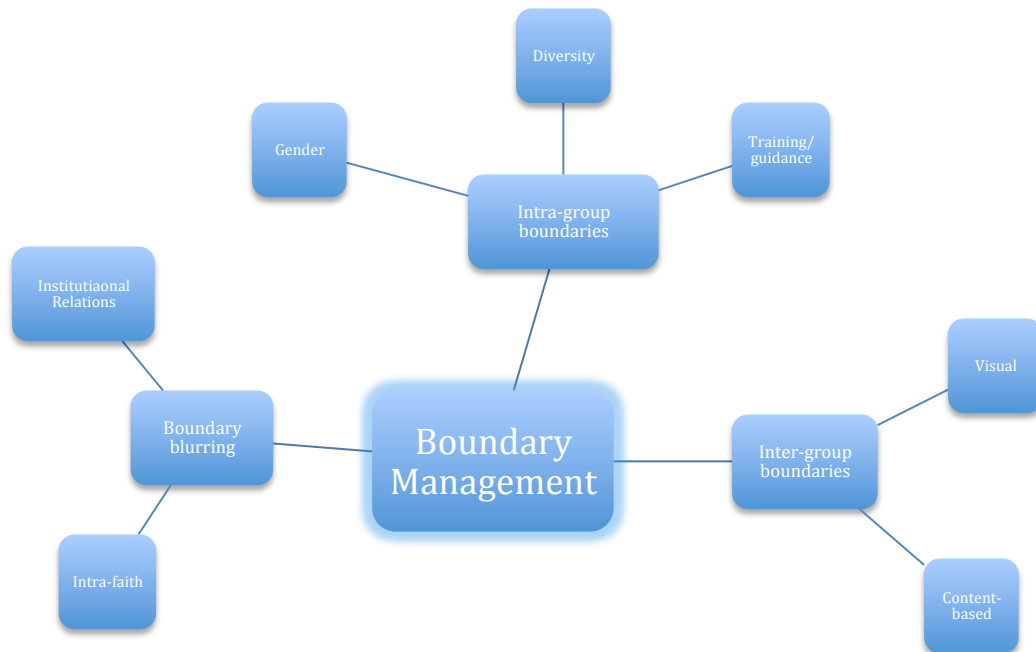
<b><i>Organizing Theme: Engaging w/Perceptions of the Other w/in the Community</i></b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Parents	Committee Sister: "Parents are often concerned about their children's' involvement in an ISoc due to politics - we must make what we do, what we're about, transparent"
Da'wah training	Discussing Discover Islam Week - there will be "training for those who will be at the table. There might be a few people asking pointed questions; we must be prepared."
Engaging with diversity	Sister: "Why is it just the Pakistani and Malaysian Societies?" Answer: "Others don't exist. The Iranian Society and Arab Societies are very small" Brother: "We need to engage with the ISoc diversity" Head Sister: "It might attract people who normally wouldn't come to ISoc."
<b><i>Organizing Theme: Institutional Relationships</i></b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Attention Grabbing	President: "We want to be at the forefront on campus" President: "Every year it's the same problem. We put in a big effort and end up with a room full of Muslims"
Student Politics	Campus Affairs Officer: "Elections are coming up. We have two to three weeks to come up with a team and a campaign, so we need to get started soon." Pres: "Get an ear out - make sure we know who is in the SU." Brother: "Jay [JSoc] didn't campaign and smashed everyone in last years election. It's all about how you know and which societies you get on board"
Inter-society	President: "We could bring in other societies. It comes down to how

	you package it. For Women and Islam we could invite the feminist society. For Mohammed, we could invite the anthropology society,"
<b>Organizing Theme: Managing Others' Perceptions</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
External Links	Discussing PalSoc & ISoc working together - PalSoc Sister talking about the fundraising they do – "we work with a recognized NGO that is in no way connected to terrorism"
Speakers	Brother: "He must be very clear 'this is not what I meant.' If he's not willing to do that, we'd be lumped in with him" [regarding SU banned speaker who allegedly made anti-Semitic comments]



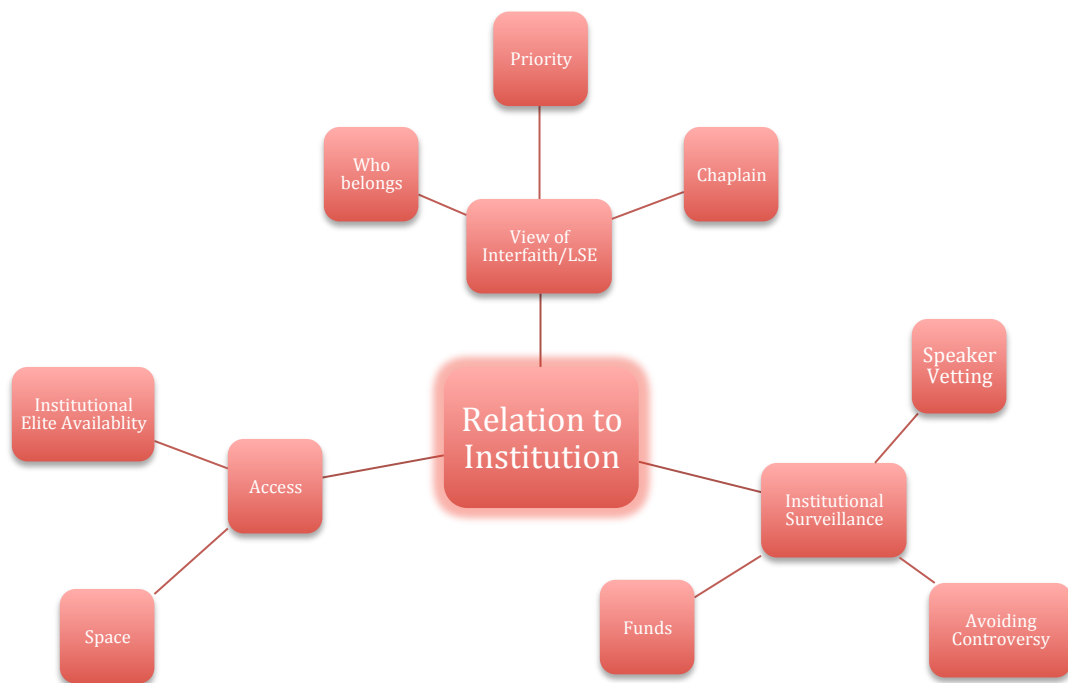
<b>Organizing Theme: Stigma</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
One-sided	Brother: "they're "scrutinizing Islam, but atheism is not put on the table"
Islamaphobic	Brother: talking about ASHS - "there is a lot of Islamaphobia with their events"
Threat to be managed	Discussing Women & Islam event proposed by ASHS - Head Sister says that she thinks "there is an agenda - we need to be careful, going legitimizes the point of the event. It is not a way to discuss Muslim women in a fair and open platform."
<b>Organizing Theme: Generalized Other</b>	
<b>Basic Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Acknowledging Controversy	Discussing Discover Islam Week speakers - Brother: we should "get the elephant out of the room" and have the "more controversial speakers go first"

Caution	Discussing a campus political event - Brother: "will any of the speakers be anti....um, us?"
Mis-representation	Brother: "It's a beautiful thing that there are a lot of misconceptions about Muslims in the media"
<b>Organizing Theme: Need for Tolerance</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Chose a different path	Discussing Muslim apostates – President: "It's important to show that you've thought about the same issues and have come to a different conclusion."
Must be heard	Discussing ASHS Muslim Apostate event - Brother: "They feel that their stories aren't told by the media for fear of Muslim retaliation. We need to engage with them or we're buying into that stereotype."



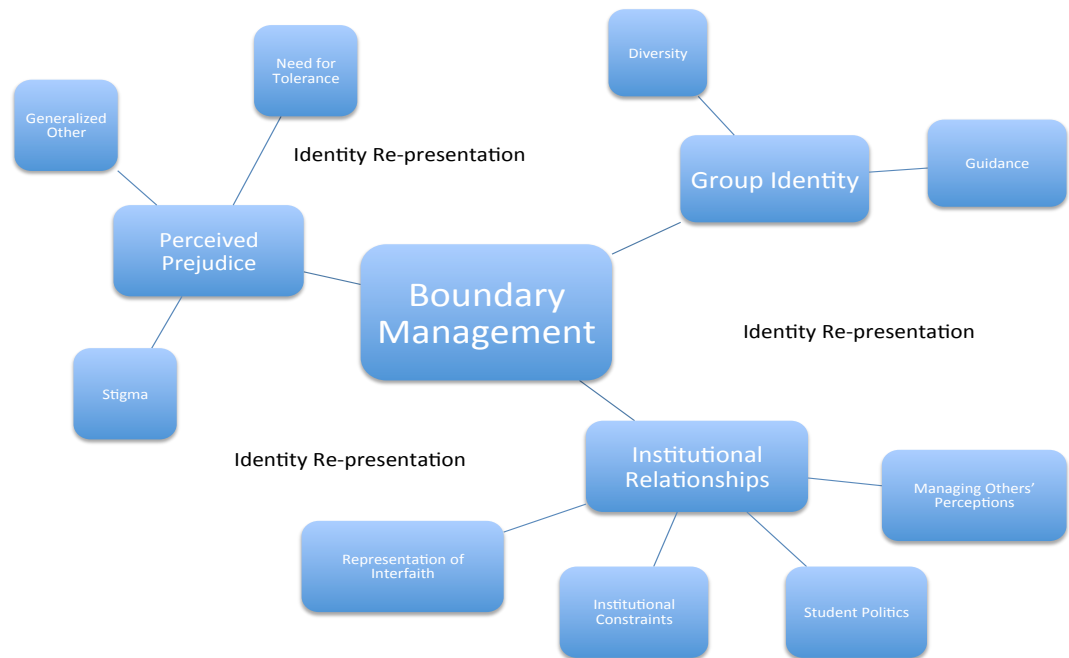
<b>Intra-group Boundaries</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Datum Example</b>
Gender	Discussing circles meetings - Sister: "we don't address inter-gender relations and marriage. Members have a lot of questions and we don't have clear answers." President: "there is a way to do things [and we] need to be clear on it"
Diversity	Sister: "Why is it just the Pakistani and Malaysian Societies?" Another Sister answers: "Others don't exist. The Iranian Society and Arab Societies are very small."
Training/guidance	Brother: we "will provide members with guidance for topic research and presentation"

<i>Inter-group Boundaries</i>	
Theme	Datum Example
Visual	At outreach event: females who were not veiled stayed with groups (2-3) they came in with while majority of veiled females moved freely between other veiled female groups socializing
Content-based	Brother: "all of the events assume a certain level of knowledge about Islam"
<i>Boundary Blurring</i>	
Theme	Datum Example
Intra-faith	President: want to "reach out to other Muslims on campus who aren't members" ISoc is "not just for one type of Muslim" we have "equal love for all, even if they don't wear hijab or beard"
School-wide	Head Sister: "What kind of crowd do we want? In similar past events everyone were Muslims from LSE. We want LSE students of other faiths and no faith"



<i>Access</i>	
Theme	Datum Example
Institutional Elite Availability	[discussing Interfaith Holocaust Memorial] President: "The Chaplain sent out notification one to two days before event, which didn't leave much time to advertise it."
Space	Head Sister: "The Quad booked up quickly and we're not sure about being able to get another place" ... "we might not be able to do it"
<i>View of Interfaith/LSE</i>	

Theme	Datum Example
Who belongs	Head Sister asked LSE Director "Should the Atheist Society be allowed to join the Interfaith Forum?"
Priority	Interfaith listed under ISoc's "Golden Priorities for the year" at first committee meeting of academic year
Chaplain	President: we should "build a relationship with the Chaplain" he is a "nice guy" and a relationship with him would be "good for everyone"
<b><i>Institutional Surveillance</i></b>	
Theme	Datum Example
Speaker Vetting	President: "Whenever a speaker is invited, they must be vetted by the Chaplain. The school is only doing this to help the ISoc. There are right wing bloggers trying to prevent Muslims from speaking."
Avoiding Controversy	Brother: we need to "clear speakers in advance" so as to "avoid controversies that have happened in the past"
Funds	Discussing the institutionalization of ISoc via Student Union bylaws - "all societies have to register where their money comes from and all of their affiliations"





## 9.5 Appendix 5: Study 1 descriptive data connected to research questions

Element	Characteristic	Research Question
Identity Embodiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linguistic cues</li> <li>Use of faith symbols</li> <li>Gendering (Gender differences)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RQ1: How do faith society members understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> <li>RQ2: What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?</li> </ul>
Event/Meeting Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turn-taking</li> <li>Speaking regulations</li> <li>Agenda setting</li> <li>Task delegation</li> <li>Submission/discussion of event proposals</li> <li>Event advertising/notification</li> <li>Event attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RQ1: How do faith society members understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> <li>RQ2: What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?</li> </ul>
Space Modification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing items into the space</li> <li>Removing items from the space</li> <li>Rearrangement of items/furniture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RQ1: How do faith society members understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> <li>RQ3: How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> <li>RQ4: How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith society members in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> </ul>
Spatial Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How space is entered/left</li> <li>How is movement between spaces managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RQ3: How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> <li>RQ4: How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith society members in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?</li> </ul>

## 9.6 Appendix 6: Study 1 behavioural data final code book

Organizing Theme		Code	Definition	Operationalization
Participation	Claim to Space	Advertisement	Notifications concerning an event	Society Facebook page, Facebook event invitation Posters/fliers around campus Email list, word of mouth
		Group(s) Invited	Groups that are invited to an event by the organizer	Which Facebook group(s) are included in invitation/flier (posted on group wall) Which societies are included in email notification
	Contextualize Group Identity	Group(s) Attending	Groups that are represented by event attendees	Institutional figures present at event (Chaplain, school Director, Student Union Officers) Faith society members who attend (officers, individuals known by researcher to be members) Attendance rates of each group per event
		Early/punctual Arrival	Group member(s) arrive before or as an event starts	10 members of one society are sitting in the back left-hand corner of an interfaith event 5 minutes before it starts A Student Union officer arrives to an interfaith event 8 minutes early to help set up
		Late Arrival	Group member(s) arrive after an event starts	2 society members arrive after a an event starts and move quietly to the back of the room
		Early departure	Group member(s) leave an event early	Society officer excuses herself 15 minutes before the end of a discussion, and quietly leaves the room
		Punctual departure	Group member(s) leave an event upon its completion	20 students stand up to leave after institutional authority figure thanks them for coming
		Late departure	Group member(s) leave an event after it has ended	2 members of a society remain at an interfaith event to talk to an institutional authority figure after all other students have left
	Inclusive Actions	Inclusive Movement	Movement through space so as to incorporate others	Turning around to face person when talking Inviting people to eat (verbal & motion) Socialization break - mixing, moving between groups or individuals Moving to a different space with members of other groups
				Standing at refreshment table with members of different groups Talking with members of different societies in standing groups Welcoming new arrivals into standing groups
		Inclusive Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to incorporate others	Moving seats to make room for others Sitting with or selecting a seat amongst members of different group(s) Arranging seats to mix individuals together
				Institutional rep requesting event speakers from different faith societies to sit together Discussions between members of different faith societies initiated by institutional figure
				One+ society member standing and/or speaking to an institutional authority figure One+ society member standing and/or speaking to a Student Union rep
		Required Group Mixing	Intergroup mixing initiated/required by institutional authority figure	
		Mixing with Authority Figure	Grouping or sitting with an institutional representative	
		Inclusive Language	Language use that all participants	Event held in English (first language of UK)

		understand (counted via each speaker)	No use of religion-specific terminology requiring prior knowledge
Protective Actions	Protective Movement	Movement through space so as to omit others	Moving only with members of own group
			Moving to separate self or group from others
	Protective Grouping	Congregating in such a way that omits others	Congregating only with members of own group
			Grouping for exclusionary activity (e.g., going for dinner or a drink)
			Standing so as to separate self or group from others
	Protective Seating	Taking or changing seats so as to omit others	Sitting only with members of one's own group
			Moving seats resulting in the exclusion of others
			Arranging/taking seats resulting in the formation of separate groups
Decision Points	Protective Language	Language use that requires prior knowledge	Use of language other than English (not all participants in UK may understand)
			Use of religion-specific terminology that requires prior knowledge
	Pause before sitting	Momentary gap in time before individual or group selects a seat	Individual society member stands still and looks around room before marking a seat with her bag
			Group of male members of a society stand still and ask if the line of seats are for men
	Pause before grouping	Momentary gap in time before individual joins a group	Individual stops upon entering the room, looks around, and then moves towards a group of people at the refreshment table
			A member arrives to a society event late, enters the door quietly and stands still before placing her things along the wall and joining a group of women sitting on the floor who are meditating.
	Pause before moving	Momentary gap in time before individual or group moves into, through, or out of space	A group of two members of the Catholic Society enter the Chaplaincy, stand in the doorway for several seconds looking in at the people who have arrived, then enter the room and move to the back.

## 9.7 Appendix 7: Study 2 interview topic guide

- 1) What was the situation/context you entered upon taking up your post as [T]
  - a. What was the state of inter-society (faith-related societies) relations at that time?
  - b. Do you know what the initial vision for the new Faith Centre was and how it developed?
- 2) What were your initial goals upon entering this context?
- 3) Have you encountered difficulties/setbacks to these goals?
  - a. From an administrative/institutional standpoint?
  - b. From student societies?
  - c. How has this affected your goals?
- 4) How would you like to see campus interfaith relations and the faith centre develop?
  - a. What are your expectations regarding how students use the centre once it opens?
    - i. How do you think students will use the space?
    - ii. How do you plan on using the space?
    - iii. Do you foresee any issues arising?
  - b. Do you have an 'interfaith vision' or general 'campus relations vision' for the future?
  - c. How do you see this impacting the wider campus community?

## 9.8 Appendix 8: Study 2 informed consent (managerial interviews)

### Informed Consent

**Project:** Representations of Contact: The Impact of Identity and Space on Intergroup Contact Decision-Making Processes within a Diverse, Interfaith Context

**Researcher:** Teresa Whitney, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [t.whitney@lse.ac.uk](mailto:t.whitney@lse.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:** Dr Caroline Howarth, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk)

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### To be completed by the Research Participant

**Please answer each of the following questions:**

Do you feel you have been given sufficient information about the research to enable you to decide whether or not to participate in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you understand that your participation is voluntary, and that you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason, and without penalty?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you are willing to take part in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you aware that the interview will be audio recorded?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the research team to use anonymized quotes in presentations and publications?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the anonymized data to be archived, to enable secondary analysis and training future researchers?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

**Participants Name:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like a copy of the research report, please provide your email or postal address:

## 9.9 Appendix 9: Study 2 focus group preliminary topic guide

### Focus Group Questions

Opening	<p><b>Interfaith:</b> “Tell us your name, what faith you practice, and something you’ve done recently related to your faith.”</p> <p><b>Society:</b> “Tell us your name, how long you have been a member of X Society, and your favourite society event so far this year.”</p> <p><b>General:</b> “Tell us your name, how long you’ve been at LSE, and your favourite thing about the LSE campus”</p>
Introduction	Have you heard about, or been involved in, an interfaith event on campus?
Transition	Are you aware of the new LSE Faith Centre, which is located in the new Student Centre? Has anyone been in it?
Key (10-15min)	Architects, estate planners, and administration have put a lot of thought into the layout. How would you arrange a space in order to encourage interfaith dialogue at LSE?
Key (10-15min)	Now think about interfaith events more generally – like in hospitals, offices, airports, sporting arenas. How should such spaces be arranged in order to accommodate potential users while also encouraging dialogue between faiths?
Key (10-15min)	
Key (10-15min)	What situational factors would get you to participate in an interfaith event?
Ending	What advice would you give to an interfaith centre designer?

#### Prompts – Issue Check List

- What should interfaith spaces allow users to do within the space?
- What should be possible within interfaith spaces?
- What is needed for interfaith dialogue?
- How can group identities be maintained during interfaith dialogue?
- How can interfaith dialogue potentially lead to change?
  - How do we do both while also creating positive change in intergroup relationships?

#### Research Question:

- 1) How do faith society members understand and manage their group identities in multicultural interfaith contexts?
- 2) What are the roles of stigma and representations of difference in the production of multicultural interfaith relationships?
- 3) How do spatial factors influence intergroup contact in multicultural interfaith contact situations?
- 4) How do identity and spatial factors influence the decision-making processes of faith society members in relation to multicultural interfaith contact situations?

Physical environment as channel of communication for intergroup relations  
Meta-knowledge (social rep of group identities) drives intergroup behaviour & influences intergroup relations  
Social representations approach to intergroup relations that takes space into account

Isolate the case study – treat as case study, not as part of driving research question

Drop stigma  
How representations create identities

### **Bigger Picture**

Intergroup relations  
Social representations  
Space

Group identities are social representations  
Installations & identity formation in contact situations

How installations become affordances for identity formation in contact situations

- Installations as affordances for
- Installations function as channels of communication for identity formation in contact situations
- How installations enable communication while simultaneously enabling group identity formation/maintenance, with the potential to change intergroup relations/social reality
  - Role of communication
    - Case studies of communication (Facebook)
  - Role of installations
    - Case studies of how installations have worked (sitting together & separately)
  - Potential for installations and communication bridge group identities
    - Instances of success in blurring group boundaries

Activity (PO, fieldwork, Facebook) & cognition (FG & Interviews)

## 9.10 Appendix 10: Study 2 finalised focus group topic guide

### Focus Group – Discussion Guideline

#### I. Warm Up:

- a. Before we start, would you please tell us a little about yourself:
  - i. Your name
  - ii. Where you're from
  - iii. What would you usually be doing right now, if you weren't here?
- b. Are you familiar with the new LSE Faith Centre?

#### II. Key Questions:

- a. Background:
  - i. LSE has invested in a new Faith Centre, which is located on the second floor of the new Student Centre. LSE states that is “provide[s] spaces for quiet meditation, devotional use by different faith communities and purpose-built Islamic prayer rooms, as well as housing the Chaplain’s office”
  - ii. **HANDOUT** – official stated purpose of the centre
  - iii. This centre also has the potential for students of different beliefs to interact with each other.
- b. Architects, estate planners, and administration have put a lot of thought into the layout of the Faith Centre, including what to name it – note, it is a “Faith Centre” not an “Interfaith Centre”.
  - i. How would you arrange a space in order to encourage *interfaith* dialogue at LSE?
- c. Show floor plan for the centre
  - i. What do you think of this particular layout?
  - ii. What would you keep?
  - iii. What would you change?
- d. In addition to the current layout, a stained glass window is being added
  - i. Show picture of window along w/reading brief description, where it will go
  - ii. Do you think an addition of the window will change the space of the faith centre?
- e. Now think about interfaith spaces more generally – like within community centres, hospitals, offices, airports, and sporting arenas.
  - i. Are you aware that such interfaith spaces exist? Should they?
  - ii. Have you used one or seen one before?
  - iii. How should such spaces be arranged in order to accommodate potential users while also encouraging communication between faiths?



- f. Now I'd like you to briefly reflect on a quote about interfaith dialogue that came out of the pilot for these focus groups:
  - i. "Do we want to end up with a big 'everyone agrees on something'? That kinda loses the diversity of the religions in a way. I find them like exotic birds; you don't want to interbreed them too much, you want to let the diversity to to encourage it. You know it's like, these are beliefs systems that I think are valuable for their diversity. I mean it in a biological sense, you try and preserve the biodiversity of the natural world. It's the biodiversity of our cultural heritage."
- g. Lastly, What advice would you give to an interfaith centre designer?

### **III. Conclusion (last 10 minutes):**

- a. Briefly summarize what you think has been significant during the discussion
- b. What do you feel is most important in relation to designing a space to promote dialogue between faiths?

#### **Prompts – Issue Check List**

- ✓ Always ask participants to elaborate on their views if they do not – explain in more detail, why do you think that's the case?
- ✓ What should interfaith spaces allow users to do within the space?
- ✓ What should be possible within interfaith spaces?
- ✓ What is needed for interfaith dialogue?
- ✓ How can group identities be maintained during interfaith dialogue?
- ✓ How can interfaith dialogue potentially lead to change?
- ✓ How do we do both while also creating positive change in intergroup relationships?
- ✓ Group identity management in contact situation
- ✓ Dialogue and space management

## 9.11 Appendix 11: Study 2 focus group guidelines

### I. Introduction to how FG will run:

- a. I'm keen to learn more about what conditions are needed for successful interfaith dialogue, this includes non-religious beliefs.
- b. I am recording this session to help me with understanding the discussion.
- c. Strict code of ethics – whatever you say will be in confidence; no quote I may take from the recording will be attributed to anyone personally.
- d. What is discussed here will be confidential between all of you and is not to be discussed afterwards. Is that OK?
- e. For recording purposes, please only one person speak at a time.
- f. This is an opportunity to speak freely; there are no right or wrong answers, so please be frank – you don't have to have fully formed thoughts, as immediate reactions are just as important, so do share any thoughts or ideas that you have.
- g. There may be differences of opinions, and that's great! It gives us the opportunity to discuss differences.
- h. Are there any questions you'd like to ask?

## 9.12 Appendix 12: Study 2 focus groups informed consent

### Informed Consent

**Project:** Representations of Contact: Intergroup Processes and Interfaith Dialogue

**Researcher:** Teresa Whitney, PhD Candidate, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [t.whitney@lse.ac.uk](mailto:t.whitney@lse.ac.uk)

**Supervisor:** Dr Caroline Howarth, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Social Psychology, London School of Economics, [c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk](mailto:c.s.howarth@lse.ac.uk)

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### To be completed by the Research Participant

**Please answer each of the following questions:**

Do you feel you have been given sufficient information about the research to enable you to decide whether or not to participate in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you understand that your participation is voluntary, and that you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason, and without penalty?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you are willing to take part in the research?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are you aware that the interview will be audio recorded?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the research team to use anonymized quotes in presentations and publications?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will you allow the anonymized data to be archived, to enable secondary analysis and training future researchers?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

Religious/Non-religious affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Would rather not say

\* This is for research purposes only, to provide the researcher with a demographic background. Any information provided will not be disclosed.

**Participants Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like a copy of the research report, please provide your email or postal address:

## 9.13 Appendix 13: Study 2 phase 1 coding

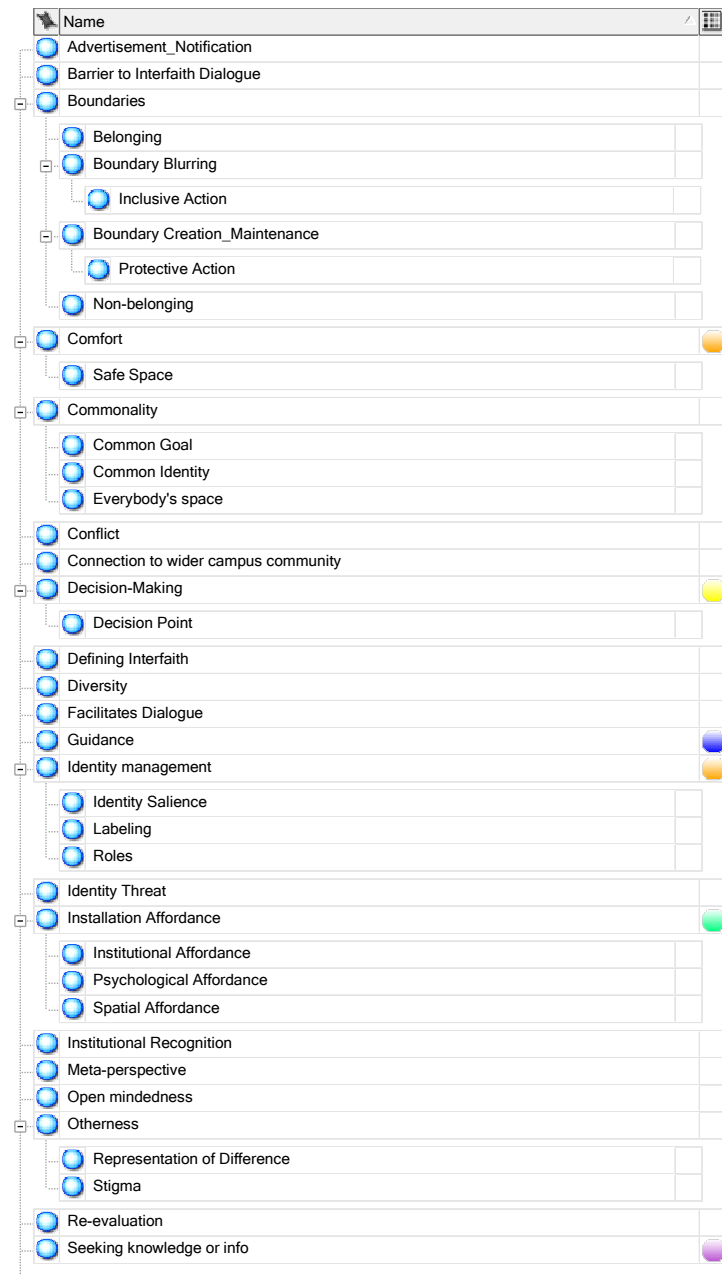
### Nodes

	Name	
	Barrier to Interfaith Dialogue	
	Comfort	
	Commonality	
	Common Goal	
	Common Identity	
	Conflict	
	Connection to wider campus communit	
	Decision-Making	
	Guidance	
	Identity management	
	Belonging	
	Labeling	
	Identity Threat	
	Installation Affordance	
	Institutional Affordance	
	Psychological Affordance	
	Spatial Affordance	
	Otherness	
	Representation of Difference	
	Stigma	
	Seeking knowledge or info	
	Separate	
	Private Space	
	Public Space	
	When interfaith dialogue occurs	

\* More information available upon request

## 9.14 Appendix 14: Study 2 phase 2 coding

### Nodes



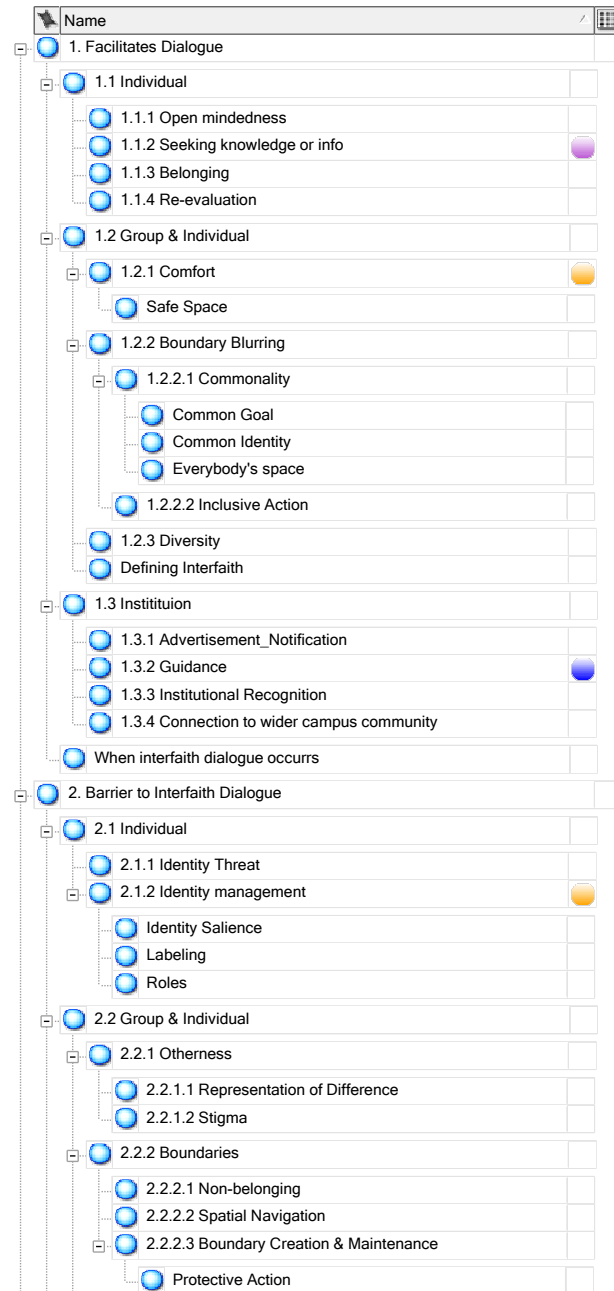
## Nodes

Name	
Separate	
Private Space	
Public Space	
Spatial Navigation	
Time - change	
When interfaith dialogue occurs	

\* More information available upon request

## 9.15 Appendix 15: Study 2 phase 3 coding

### Nodes



## Nodes

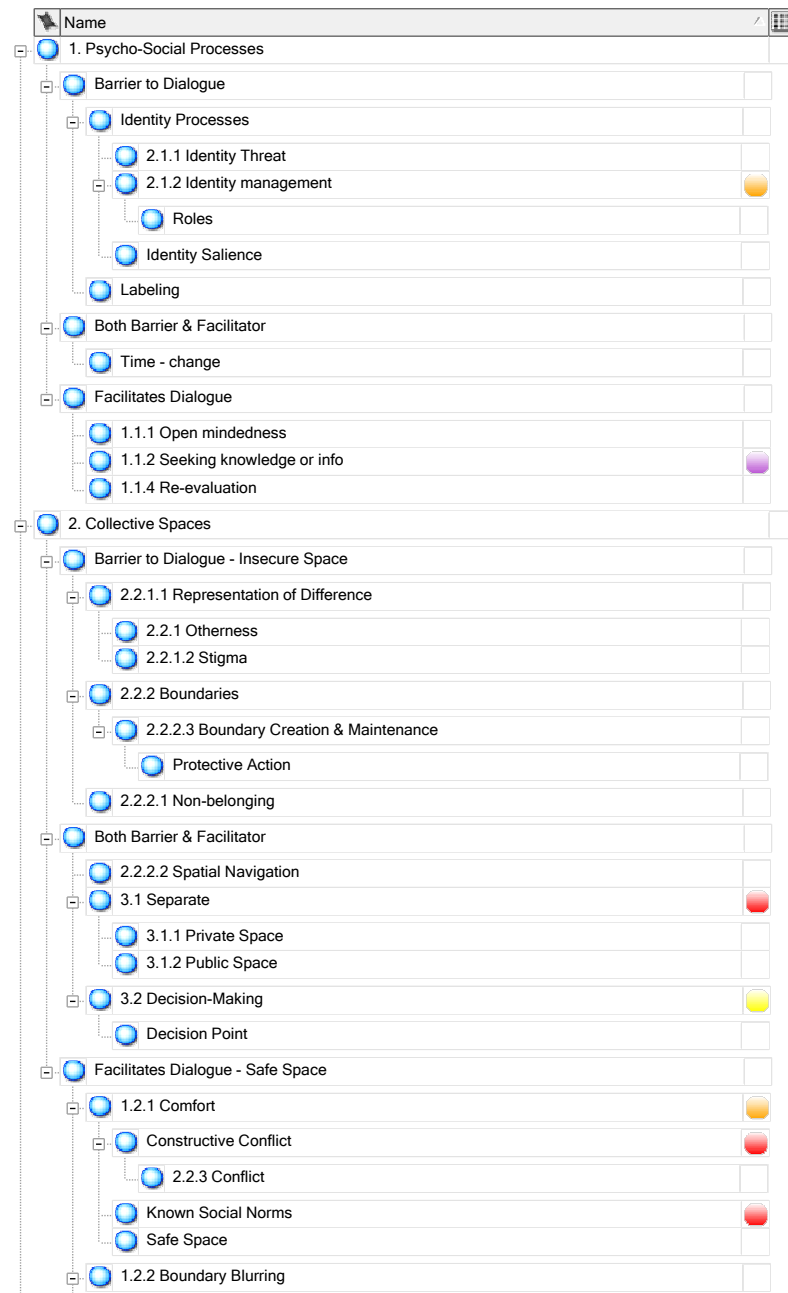
Name		
2.2.3 Conflict		
2.3 Institutional		
3. Both Facilitates & Barrier to Interfaith Dialogue		
3.1 Separate		
3.1.1 Private Space		
3.1.2 Public Space		
3.2 Decision-Making		
Decision Point		
4. Installation Affordance		
4.1 Spatial Affordance		
4.2 Psychological Affordance		
4.3 Institutional Affordance		
Meta-perspective		
Place Making		
Symbolic		
Time - change		
UK Context		

\* More information available upon request



## 9.16 Appendix 16: Study 2 final round of coding

### Nodes



## Nodes

Name		
1.2.2.1 Commonality		
Common Goal		
Common Identity		
1.2.2.2 Inclusive Action		
Belonging		
Everybody's space		
1.2.3 Diversity		
Place Making		
3. Institution		
Barrier to Dialogue		
Institutional SR of Faith & Ritual		
3.1 Separate		
3.1.1 Private Space		
3.1.2 Public Space		
Space Allocation		
Institutionalization of Faith		
Both Barrier & Facilitator		
1.3.1 Advertisement_Notification		
3.1 Separate		
3.1.1 Private Space		
3.1.2 Public Space		
Institutional SR of Faith & Ritual		
3.1 Separate		
3.1.1 Private Space		
3.1.2 Public Space		
Space Allocation		
Facilitates Dialogue		
1.3.2 Guidance		
1.3.3 Institutional Recognition		
1.3.4 Connection to wider campus community		
4. Installation Affordance		
4.1 Spatial Affordance		
4.2 Psychological Affordance		
4.3 Institutional Affordance		
Barrier to Interfaith Dialogue		
Defining Interfaith		
Symbolic		
UK Context		

Nodes

	Name	/	
	When interfaith dialogue occurs		

\* More information available upon request

## 9.17 Appendix 17: Study 3 preliminary interview topic guide

### Practitioner Interviews

#### Topic Guide

- 1) What groups/organizations/communities do you work with and why?
  - a. What are the major issues you attempt to address?
  - b. How do you attract people to participate? (or maybe engage people?)
- 2) How do you go about organizing and managing the inter-faith events that you host?
  - a. What do these events tend to involve?
  - b. Do you have guidelines for behaviour at these events?
- 3) Think back to your last inter-faith event.
  - a. What was the easiest part about organizing this event?
    - i. What was the most difficult?
  - b. What was the easiest part about facilitating this event?
    - i. What was the most difficult?
  - c. If space not mentioned – Tell me about where the event was held and how you organize the space that you used.
    - i. Seating arrangement
    - ii. Speaker arrangement
    - iii. Food arrangement
    - iv. Do you use facilitation materials?
      1. White board, flip charts, hand-outs, etc.
    - v. Why did you arrange the space (& materials) this way?
- 4) How do you determine the level of success of an inter-faith event?
  - a. Tell me about a time inter-faith dialogue was opened up at one of your events.
  - b. Tell me about a time when inter-faith dialogue was shut down at one of your events.
- 5) Imagine you have been tasked with designing an interfaith space within a community centre. Time and money are of no concern, so think about your ideal interfaith space. Based on your own experience as a practitioner, how would you arrange this space in order to encourage interfaith dialogue within an entrenched community?
- 6) Based on your experience as a practitioner, what advice would you give an interfaith centre designer?

## 9.18 Appendix 18: Study 3 finalised interview topic guide

### Practitioner Interviews

#### Topic Guide

- 1) Tell me about your role here. How long have you been working here?
- 2) What groups/organizations/communities do you work with and why?
  - a. What are the major issues you attempt to address?
  - b. How do you attract people to participate?
- 3) Do you run interfaith events? How do you organize them?
  - a. What do these events tend to involve?
  - b. Do you have general principles you ask people to follow at events?
- 4) How would you define interfaith?
  - a. What is an interfaith interaction?
  - b. What qualifies as interfaith dialogue?
- 5) Think back to your last inter-faith event (or event surrounding the topic of interfaith dialogue/relations).
  - a. What was the easiest part about organizing this event?
    - i. What was the most difficult?
  - b. What was the easiest part about facilitating dialogue this event?
    - i. What was the most difficult?
  - c. Tell me about where the event was held and how you organize the space that you used.
    - i. Seating arrangement
    - ii. Speaker arrangement
    - iii. Food arrangement
    - iv. Do you use facilitation materials?
      1. White board, flip charts, hand-outs, etc.
    - v. Why did you arrange the space (& materials) this way?
- 6) Imagine you have been tasked with designing an interfaith space within a community centre. Time and money are of no concern, so think about your ideal interfaith space. Based on your own experience as a practitioner, how would you arrange this space in order to encourage interfaith dialogue within an entrenched community?
- 7) There are increasingly more debates around the topic of interfaith relations and interfaith dialogue in the UK today.
  - a. What do you think is driving this trend?
    - i. What are the pros & cons of this emphasis on interfaith?
  - b. How might we facilitate positive interfaith relations on a societal level?
- 8) Is there anything that you were expecting me to ask that I haven't covered?

## 9.19 Appendix 19: Study 3 code book

### Nodes

Name	
1. Facilitates Interfaith Dialogue	
1.1 Space - Material	
Central	
Circular	
Comfortable	
Food	
informal space	
Neutral space	
Private prayer - public social	
Safe Space	
Small group	
Visible	
Visiting Others' Space	
Welcoming	
1.2 Psycho-Social Processes	
Acknowledge Difference	
Asking questions	
Break down barriers	
Commonality	
Communication	
Connecting	
Critical Thinking	
Faith in Public Discourse	
Goals - Interest	
Honesty	
Identity	
Listening	
Mutual Understanding	
Open-minded	
Re-evaluation	
Re-presentation	
Respect	
Trust	
Work together	
1.3 Institutional Influence	
Bottom-up	
Contact Norms - Rules	
Invite others	
Provide Structure	
Provide Support	
Representation of Faith	
Time as Mediator	
2. Hinders Interfaith Dialogue	

## Nodes

Name		
2.1 Space - Material		
Geographic segregation		
Insecure space		
2.2 Psycho-Social Processes		
Communication Problems		
Conservatism		
Extremist views		
Faith - Secular Divide		
Faith as Taboo		
Faith channel for disaffection		
Identity		
Identity Threat		
Internal-External Conflict		
Marginalization		
Mis-representation		
Oppositional Views		
Preaching to the Converted		
Social Norm		
Superficial Discussion		
Trivialization		
2.3 Institutional Influence		
(Mis)representation of Faith		
Lack of Support		
Safety-Security Concerns		
Surveillance		
Top-down		
Diversity		
Historical roots (philosophy-theology)		
Multi- vs. Inter-faith		
Multiple Places		
Outside Event - Need dialogue		
Poverty & Conflict		
Race & Faith		
symbolism		

\* More information available upon request

## **9.20 Appendix 20: Research diary entry – Christian Union outreach table**

### **Event: LSESU Christian Union Table on Houghton Street**

The Student Union (SU) societies regularly have stands set up along the major campus thoroughfare in order to engage with the general student populous. Stands consist of a table, sometimes covered by a canopy or tent, with various materials relating to the society hosting the stand. Many societies' stands are visually advertised via banners and or posters with the name of the society and the purpose of the stand. Some societies hold stands for fundraising purposes, others for increasing awareness about political issues, to advertise an event on campus, to increase awareness on campus about the society, or to recruit new members.

The Christian Union (CU) hosts a table several times per term, depending on members' willingness to staff the table in 30-minute shifts. Shifts are signed up for via the society's Facebook page – a notification is posted stating that a table is planned for a specific day or days and asks for members to volunteer for shifts via a link to an online scheduling application. Three society members are supposed to be at the stand at all times during its operation. The society had planned to host two table sessions at the end of Michaelmas Term, 2012, but reduced the sessions to one due to lack of members signing up for shifts.

#### **Christian Union Table Setup**

The both sides of thoroughfare were lined with SU society stands on the chilly morning of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012. The CU's stand sat directly in front of the main doors to the SU, located at the 'heart' of campus. The stand, consisting of a single table, was staffed by three female members of the CU, all wearing winter coats, scarves, and mittens while holding a cup of hot coco. The table was easy to spot but hard to identify in the sea of students passing along the street. It was the first table one saw upon exiting or entering the SU, and the pile of biscuits, instant coffee and coco, tea bags and hot water canisters were highly visible. However, the CU, unlike the other society stands, did not have a banner or poster indicating who they were. The only visible indication of their identity were three sheets of white printer paper with the words "Christian Union" hand-written in black thin-



point pen, which were held down by a pile of grey books that looked similar to the line of Moleskin notebooks that are very popular amongst students.

The CU members standing at the table smiled at all those who approached and offered passers by free hot coffee or coco. One member stood at the back of the table, mixing a cup of hot instant coco for a young female student who had come to the table. The member on the left-hand side of the table asked the visiting student how her day was and if she wanted a biscuit. The member on the right-hand side of the table continued to smile at passers by and offer them free coffee or coco. Students who chatted with the society members after receiving their free beverage were invited to a Christmas choral service the following week and were given a card with the printed details of the event. Interested students were also offered a free copy of the small grey book.

### **Covert Religious Identity**

The CU's presence on the campus thoroughfare was a covert affair. Their presence, while highly visible due to the physical location of their stand, was not apparent until one approached their table and started speaking with one of the society members or was close enough to read the small hand-written sign indicating which society they represented. This was an intentional tactic, described by one of the members as designed to "draw people in with the free coffee and coco," and then engage them in a conversation "about our society and what we do." Every student observed approaching the CU stand talked to at least one society member, either while waiting for his or her free beverage, or for a short period of time after receiving it and a free biscuit. Some excused themselves quickly after noticing the name of the society, though all did so politely. The tactic of drawing people in via a free beverage and biscuit was reliant on the UK social norm of politeness, requiring at least a minimal chat after having been treated. Many students appeared to talk with SU members out of a sense of social obligation, leaving quickly once they had excused themselves. All of the observed interactions lasted no more than several minutes.

The covert nature of the CU's outreach extended to the gray books. The books have the word 'Uncover' written on the front in a font simulating handwriting, and are held shut via

a black elastic band. When asked about the books, one of the CU members said that they are provided to them by the UCCF, an organization that centralizes Christian Unions worldwide. The books are designed to look like a standard notebook and serve as a study guide for the Book of Luke, part of the Christian Bible. Passages are singled out, with questions listed below and space for one's own notes. There are also multiple links and bar scans throughout the book that the reader can use to access additional information online. The unassuming books were designed with the intent of being discrete, as they do not draw attention to the reader the same way "carrying a big black Bible with you everywhere" does, as one of the CU members pointed out. Copies are taken to every CU meeting or event with the intention of giving them to members or anyone who shows interest. They are, according to one of the CU members staffing the stand, a means of "uncovering the truth for yourself, by reading the evidence and making up your own mind."

Christianity, in this context, is hidden. CU members appear to operate on the assumption that non-society members will most likely not be willing to interact with them if starting from the premise that they are Christians. Instead, their religious identity is something that must be eased into, not something to be made prominent. People must be coaxed into a conversation, drawn in by the offering of a warm beverage on a cold day in the prominent thoroughfare of campus. Religious texts are viewed as a private affair, made small and unassuming, the discreteness preferable over a highly visible and largely recognizable Bible.

The covertness of Christianity is, however, a privilege. None of the society members staffing the CU outreach table had any embodied religious identity markers. While all members staffing the table are committed to the society, as they volunteered to stand out in the cold to make strangers coffee, and could thus be argued to strongly identify with their religion in some way, they are afforded the option to be a strong believer without physically demarcating it. Strongly identifying Muslims, for example, would not be afforded the same option. One can opt out from carrying the Bible, one of the few physical markers of Christianity, and instead use a Book of Luke study guide that has been intentionally designed to blend in with the larger society. Students who approach the table

can not only discretely discuss Christianity and the CU, but can also leave the stand with a religious text without any non-CU member knowing. The book, in essence, serves as an in-group marker known only to the group; it is an invisible boundary marker.