

A Sociological Study of Islamic Social Work in Contemporary Britain

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Abstract

Recent years have witnessed increasing interest in the topics of religion and spirituality in social work, including a small body of texts focusing on social work with Muslims.

Alongside this, statistical evidence such as the 2001 Census has documented the socio-economic disadvantage experienced by many Muslims communities in Britain. However, there is a paucity of empirical research exploring grassroots initiatives developed by these communities to address welfare needs. There is also a dearth of research analysing the perspectives of Muslim service users. It is this lack of inquiry which this thesis addresses.

This research centres on a case study of an Islamic organisation providing services including Islamic counselling, advocacy, *khul* divorces, mediation and chaplaincy. The study explores the construction of the organisation's Islamic approach to social work, their everyday practices and areas of particular on-going negotiation. It draws on interviews with individuals working at the organisation, Muslim service users who have accessed the services and also external professionals who have referred individuals to the organisation. An exploration of the potential benefits for Muslim service users focuses on the counselling services provided to young women and asylum seekers in particular. The findings of the study highlight the opportunities and challenges experienced in the process of professionalising internal forms of support amongst British Muslim communities.

This research has implications for three key areas of academic debate. Firstly, it contributes to the sociological study of religion, specifically to the field of British Muslim studies. Secondly, the thesis informs current discussion within the social work discipline, particularly regarding the role of spirituality when working with minority service users. Thirdly, this study contributes to contemporary debate regarding the role of faith groups providing welfare services. Overall, this research gives an original insight into the development of professional Islamic social work in contemporary Britain.

Declaration

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research comes at a particularly significant moment. Recent months saw the *First National Symposium on the Muslim Voluntary Sector* hosted by the An-Nisa Society¹ and Radical Middle Way² at the Muslim College in London in May 2012. Furthermore, the first glimpse of the 2011 census data on religion in England and Wales, released in December 2012, showed an increase in the Muslim population from 1.6 million in 2001 to 2.7 million in 2011 (Peach, 2006, Office for National Statistics, 2012). As Dinham (2012, p.7) remarks, ‘the idea that religion could be relegated to a hazy and somewhat dubious past has been comprehensively challenged in the very places where it was assumed secularism seemed to have taken hold.’

The suggestion that ‘faith is re-emerging as a public category’ poses key questions to academics, policy makers and practitioners alike (Dinham, 2012, p.7). In attempting to grapple with these matters, a growing body of publications on religion and spirituality have emerged within the social work discipline (Canda and Furman, 2010, Crisp, 2010, Furness and Gilligan, 2010, Holloway and Moss, 2010). Despite these developments, there is a lack of enquiry into the grassroots welfare initiatives being developed by Muslim communities in Britain and the perspectives of Muslim service users themselves, which may significantly inform current debate. In light of this paucity of research, this thesis presents an original contribution in documenting and analysing the services being developed by one Islamic welfare organisation which has emerged in contemporary Britain. As such, it is the first multi-method sociological study of a British Muslim welfare organisation.

This in-depth case study asks two key questions:

- 1. How is the Islamic identity of the organisation constructed, manifested and contested?***

¹ The An-Nisa Society is an organisation established by Humera and Khalida Khan in 1985 which focuses on the welfare needs of Muslim families. See www.an-nisa.org [Accessed 08/01/13]

² Radical Middle Way is a campaign established following the 7/7 attacks which advocates a moderate interpretation of Islam and encourages the engagement of young people with contemporary Islamic scholars. See www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk [Accessed 08/01/13]

2. How is the Islamic identity of the organisation understood to be significant for service users as a welfare resource?

These questions focus on the Islamic identity of the organisation's services, their theoretical underpinnings and the resulting impact for service users. Contestation surrounding the organisation's Islamic identity is also explored and this is contextualised within related literature on the role of contemporary faith-based organisations.

Overall, it is argued that this research presents an important contribution to contemporary academic discussion in three key ways. Firstly, the exploration of the establishment and development of the organisation, and the challenges experienced by them, contributes to debates within the sociology of religion. In particular, the study contributes to sociological analyses of Muslim communities in Britain, the role of religion in public life, and the secularization thesis. Secondly, the discussion of the meaning of spirituality, as it features within the respondents narratives, contributes to debates regarding sensitive social work practice. Thirdly, an examination of the uniqueness of the organisation may inform conversations within social policy regarding the role of faith communities as providers of services, building on current critiques concerning problematic, homogenizing constructions of faith-based communities in contemporary policy.

A Note on Terminology

Following current academic convention, the term 'service user' is employed to describe individuals accessing the support offered by social services, social workers, voluntary sector agencies and other related welfare organisations. However, the limitations of the term are recognised, noting McLaughlin's (2009, p.1108) critique that this phrasing involves 'privileging one aspect of identity' and 'neglects those who, for whatever reason, are either unable to access services or do not want services.' Preference for using such a term within the thesis recognises that, whilst there are limitations, this appellation is still, to some degree, 'an improvement on previous conceptions' including 'patients' and 'clients', in addressing issues of power and agency (McLaughlin, 2009, p.1113). The term 'client' does appear in the thesis, however, primarily where it has been used by research participants themselves, in order to reflect the content of these discussions with as great a degree of accuracy as possible. It also appears in some documents in the appendices, such as the participant information sheets.

Transliteration of Arabic terms within the thesis has followed Esposito's (2003) conventions in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Diacritical marks have not been included, for ease of reading, and plurals of Arabic terms are given in Anglicised form. Arabic words commonly used in English (such as halal, hijab, imam and Quran) have not been italicised, except where they are included as part of an italicised interview quotation in the empirical chapters. A glossary is provided after the concluding chapter based primarily on Esposito's (2003) compendium.

Outline of Thesis Contents

Chapter 2: The Welfare of Muslims in Britain

This chapter presents an overview of the sociological literature documenting the welfare challenges experienced by Muslims in Britain, charting the development of emerging infrastructure and community organisations aiming to respond to these needs. From depictions of the boarding houses catering for Yemeni seafarers who docked in British ports during the nineteenth century, to the emergence of professional Muslim youth work and Muslim chaplaincy in the late twentieth century, the chapter also highlights the transition from viewing such communities as racial and ethnic groupings to religious minorities.

Chapter 3: Social Work, Religion and Spirituality

Following on from the second chapter, this review of contemporary social work literature highlights a similar shift from focusing on the ethnic and racial identities of migrants to recognition of religious and spiritual identities, with a proliferation of current publications focusing upon spirituality in particular. The notions of spirituality contained within these social work texts are critically evaluated and it is argued that such conceptualisations may be of limited relevance to social work practice with Muslim service users. With only a minority of Anglophone texts exploring social work practice specifically with Muslim groups, and an additional lack of empirical investigation, the need to address such a paucity of research is highlighted.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research questions central to the thesis and presents a detailed insight into the process of data collection, focusing on issues surrounding research access, ethics and reflexivity. Consideration is given to the ontological and epistemological positioning underpinning the project and an explanation of key terms used within the thesis is

provided. The theoretical framework underpinning the findings chapters is also introduced following the section on data analysis.

Chapters 5 to 8: Empirical Chapters

These chapters present the qualitative and quantitative findings of the research. Chapters 5 to 7 focus on the first research question, exploring the Islamic identity of the organisation under study, primarily underpinned by qualitative data. Chapter 8 focuses upon the second research question, which analyses the significance of the organisation for their service users, combining both qualitative and quantitative data.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The conclusion focuses on key areas in which the findings of the thesis contribute to current discussions within the related academic spheres of the sociology of religion, social work and social policy. Firstly, it is highlighted that this research contributes to the sociology of religion by building on work in the field of British Muslim studies, to analyses of the role of religion in public life, and to contemporary debate regarding secularization. Secondly, the findings contribute to the discipline of social work and to critiques of the concept of spirituality as it is employed in current social work literature. Thirdly, the analysis within this thesis adds to discussion within the field of social policy regarding the role of faith-based service providers. The need for further research exploring the emergence of the Muslim voluntary sector in Britain is also emphasised.

Chapter 2: The Welfare of Muslims in Britain

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the literature exploring the welfare³ needs of Muslim communities in Britain and highlights key developments, as well as drawing attention to the need for further empirical investigation to inform contemporary debate.

Muslims arriving in Britain, from the late nineteenth century to the present day, have been challenged by a wide variety of welfare issues. Initial first-generation migrants, primarily working in seafaring and unskilled or semi-skilled industrial occupations, have sought employment and accommodation, to meet their basic everyday needs. However, as Muslim populations have increasingly settled in Britain following the Second World War, the development of community organisations and infrastructure has emerged, as communities have sought to obtain the necessary resources to raise Muslim families and to embed their roots firmly within the United Kingdom.

Despite significant accomplishments during the second half of the twentieth century in developing such infrastructure, Muslim communities in Britain today nonetheless experience considerable socio-economic disadvantage and face multiple welfare challenges. Academic research during the last decade has highlighted particular welfare concerns in the fields of employment, housing, education, mental health, and the well-being of Muslim youth. During this period, as Muslim communities have begun to express the salience of their faith identities within wider society, so too has academic research increasingly recognised these populations as primarily faith-based communities. The increasing importance of such religious identities, particularly for young, British-born Muslims has been documented by researchers working within multiple academic disciplines, such as Dwyer (2000) and Gale and Hopkins (1999), suggesting it to be a significant resource to facilitate community development and well-being.

³ A definition of key terms used within the thesis, including the term ‘welfare,’ can be found in Chapter 4

Welfare Concerns of First Generation Migrants

Early Arab Seafarer Populations

A contemporary body of literature details the emergence of sizeable Muslim groups in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although small numbers of Muslim individuals had been noted in Britain prior to the late nineteenth century, it was during this period in particular in which significant numbers of Muslim seafarers emerged within port cities such as Liverpool and Cardiff (Ansari, 2004, Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, Halliday, 2010). As Lewis (1994a, p.11) comments, these lascars ‘represent probably the oldest permanent Muslim settlement’ in Britain.

Coinciding with the emergence of South Wales as an industrial player within the international coal trade, there was a significant development in the shipping industries within the Southern cities of Cardiff, Newport and Swansea (Evans, 1980, Gilliat-Ray and Mellor, 2010). Gilliat-Ray (2010a) and Halliday (2010) document the emergence of these early Muslim populations, who were primarily of Yemeni origin, within the city of Cardiff, noting the development of lodging houses for seafarers who were resident within the city between working periods on board ship. Ansari (2004, p.37) comments that by 1881 a ‘Home for Coloured Seamen’ had emerged in Cardiff. Demographic information from the early twentieth century indicates that by 1926 such lodging had expanded to include a total of twenty-two boarding houses which were recorded as ‘Arab’ and which rose by the 1940s to a total of around fifty houses (Halliday, 2010). In addition, Lawless (1995, p.1, 3) highlights the emergence of Arab boarding houses in South Shields in the late nineteenth century, which he suggests were ‘virtually essential’ for these seafarers who were ‘temporary sojourners’ in the city between docking and boarding a new ship. Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.30) also notes the emergence of similar boarding houses in London, such as the ‘Strangers Home for Asiatics, Africans and South Sea Islanders’ established in 1857 by the Church Missionary Society.

These boarding houses were significant sources of internal support which ‘provided a physical, social, religious and economic base for Muslim seafarers’ (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, p.36). Lawless (1995, p.3, 52) describes how such boarding houses offered ‘accommodation and food’, ‘credit’, ‘help and advice’ as well as acting as ‘bankers for the seamen.’ The religious needs of the seamen were also catered for via the boarding houses, with many of them having a room ‘set aside for the five daily prayers’ (Lawless, 1995, p.207). During this

period, the existence of these lodgings suggests that forms of community support were largely internal and that such communities were self-reliant in meeting their own basic welfare needs. As Lawless (1995, p.1) comments, many of the Arab seafarers at this period 'had little contact with British society' with a focus instead on internal support and assistance.

Another significant issue facing these early seafaring communities, besides securing lodging, was the rise in unemployment experienced during the inter-war period (Evans, 1980, 1985). Evans (1980, 1985, p.68) and Halliday (2010) chart how significant levels of unemployment led to rioting in Cardiff in 1919 as British-born workers returning from war jostled with the 'beached and unwanted' international seafarers for jobs. The result of such high levels of unemployment during the inter-war period impacted upon the living conditions of these communities who suffered from 'over-crowding' and 'bad material conditions' (Evans, 1985, p.69). In the midst of this furore, British-born workers pressed the Home Office to intervene and so the 'Aliens Order' was passed, limiting further influxes of foreign seafarers (Evans, 1985, p.74). Although some local funds were made available to temporarily relieve their destitution, by demarcating these communities as 'aliens' it is clear that there was much resistance to their presence. Other labels given to these communities are noted by Halliday (2010, p.xiv) who describes how they were portrayed as 'lascar, negro, Adeni to Arab, Mediterranean... black, Muslim and finally Yemeni.' Evans' (1980, p.5, 1985, p.68) articles describe the events as 'race riots' between 'Arabs, Blacks and the local state.' Overall, within this period, these international communities were not primarily perceived of as Muslims but rather as racial minorities. Despite the decline in the number of Arab seafarers entering Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century, such boarding houses still played an important, although different, role. As Lawless (1995, p.247) observes, by the 1980s the boarding houses had 'acquired a new and equally important role as social centres' for elderly Arab and Somalis populations in South Shields where individuals could 'meet, talk, play dominoes' and 'have a meal.'

Post-War South Asian Migration

The migration of significant South Asian populations into Britain from the 1950s onwards has been documented by a variety of academic authors (Ansari, 2004, Gilliat-Ray, 2010a). In particular, works focusing on Pakistani communities who have settled in various British cities have been penned by Anwar (1996), Badr Dahya (1973, 1974), Saifullah Khan (1976), Shaw

(1994, 2000) and Werbner (1990). These newly arriving communities settled particularly in urban, industrial areas where unskilled and semi-skilled work was readily available, including London, Birmingham, Manchester and Yorkshire. As Geaves (1996, p.53) remarks, 'the first notable Pakistani presence appeared in the 1951 census.' Werbner's (1990) anthropological study discusses the emergence and establishment of Pakistani communities in Manchester, highlighting particular welfare concerns amongst these communities in establishing housing and developing businesses, noting the entrepreneurship amongst these populations. Werbner (1990) highlights the significance of internal systems of support amongst these communities and the distribution of capital amongst kin and familial networks. Such involvement, she argues, helped further processes of chain migration, where new migrants were offered financial assistance and support on arrival by earlier migrants. Werbner (1990, p.20) describes the 'beneficial economic cycle' created by Pakistani migrants in Manchester during the 1950s where a 'bachelor housing' system operated. This provided individual males with 'free lodging' on arrival until work was found and the subsequent provision of an 'interest free loan' to assist them in buying a house, which would then itself become a 'bachelor house' to new migrants (Werbner, 1990, p.20).

Badr Dahya's (1974) fieldwork during the 1970s explored the salience of internal community support amongst Pakistanis in Birmingham and within Northern industrial areas. Dahya (1974, p.100) notes that 'mutual aid is an important aspect of interpersonal relationships among the immigrants.' Shaw's (2000, p.242) research also notes the importance of reciprocal gift giving between families on occasions such as births and marriages, and the establishment of 'rotating credit associations' which provided financial assistance for expensive events such as marriages and overseas travel. In similar fashion to the Arab seafaring migrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such communities appear to be largely self-reliant in meeting their own welfare needs.

Within this literature, such communities are identified primarily in terms of their ethnic identity, first and foremost as Pakistani migrants, rather than as Muslims. Nonetheless, Werbner (1991, p.121) recognises the significant internal diversity within such Pakistani communities, noting differentiation in terms of 'district', 'sub-district' 'location' and 'village' from which the migrants had come, alongside differences in language and dialect. Similarly, within the literature discussing the seafaring migrants who were present in Britain from the nineteenth century onwards, such individuals are portrayed primarily as Arab and Yemini,

rather than as Muslim migrants. Such categorisations may be understood partly to be reflecting the self-perception of these communities who, at the time, perceived themselves as primarily ethnic and national, rather than religious, minorities. Saifullah Khan's (1976, p.36) research with the Mirpuri community in Bradford notes how they were perceived by the British as members of a 'black minority.' As such, these migrant communities were also understood by the host country constituting primarily an ethnic minority grouping, and were not primarily regarded as a religious community.

The stresses and strains faced by Mirpuri communities during their early years in Britain are noted by Saifullah Khan (1976, p.54, 55) who highlights how the migrant men were working in 'declining industries which are characterised by low wages', alongside also working many 'night-shifts' and significant amounts of 'overtime.' Alongside these arduous workloads, Saifullah Khan (1976, P.51) describes how 'settling into a new environment and meeting people of a different culture, often for the first time, involves many forms of stress.' When the migrant men were joined by their wives and families in Britain, the migrant women faced additional challenges too. Saifullah Khan (1976, p.103) also notes the particular welfare needs of Pakistani women who, observing *purdah* yet removed from close female family networks at home, were subject to 'loneliness and anxieties'. This is also noted by Zaynab Dahya (1965, p.320) who describes the impact of isolation and its effect on these women 'when they are faced with situations of stress in which they would normally seek help and advice from other women.' Both male and female migrants therefore faced multiple challenges in adapting to life within their new environ.

Emerging Community Infrastructure

Developments before 1989

Badr Dahya's (1973, p.247) fieldwork with Pakistani communities in Britain during the 1970s reports that the 'myth of return' is evident in discussion with interviewees, signifying that many of the migrants intended to return to their home country and did not initially envisage permanent settlement in Britain. However, during subsequent decades, as these individuals increasingly considered Britain home, scholarly works indicate that Muslim communities in Britain became increasingly engaged in expanding their organisational infrastructure and developing community resources (Ansari, 2004). Gilliat-Ray (2010a) describes how during the 1960s and 1970s there was an increasing development of mosques

in Britain. McLoughlin (1998, p.212) too identifies a ‘mushrooming of mosques’ during these decades as communities sought to firmly establish places of worship. McLoughlin’s (1998) research highlights the pivotal role that some mosques played as sources of support during this period. In his case study of a mosque in Bradford, McLoughlin (1998, p.219) describes how the male members of the community were able to access ‘advice about how to deal with social services or immigration issues’ and that such mosques can be seen as ‘akin to community centres.’ Ansari (2004, p.345) also comments that ‘by the mid-1980s mosques were serving a range of functions’ including ‘funeral services and advice on immigration and social security and counselling services’. Alongside the establishment of these mosques, research has highlighted the development of other forms of community infrastructure emerging during this period, as communities sought to acquire greater representation and to access resources. In Barton’s (1986) study of the Bengali community in Bradford he notes the emergence of the Pakistani People’s Organisation in 1957 and the Bangladeshi People’s Association in Great Britain in 1972. By 1959, the first mosque had been opened in Bradford in a terraced house and during the 1980s Bradford Council for Mosques was established (Lewis, 1994b). Interestingly, within Lewis’ (1994b, p.64) research in Bradford, he also notes the role of the local *hakim* who offered ‘herbal remedies’ and was able to provide the community with alternative treatments.

Emerging organisations, from the 1960s to the 1980s, were established with a primary focus upon ethnic rather than religious identities. Where differences did exist, these were primarily felt to be along national and ethnic, rather than religious, lines. Halliday (2010, p.138) notes that whilst initial early migrant communities were concerned with meeting basic needs along non-sectarian lines, ‘over time separation occurred so that by the 1970s and 1980s there were, alongside ‘Bengali’ and ‘Pakistani’ and various subdivisions of these groupings, Yemeni mosques.’ Badr Dahya (1974, p.87) similarly comments that upon initial migration, ‘traditional attitudes of inter-ethnic/sectarian hostility are temporarily shelved’ yet such differences may begin to re-emerge once communities increasingly establish their permanent presence amongst the landscape. Furthermore, the organisations and associations emerging during this period were primarily operating on a local level and attempts at national level co-ordination and unification were in their infancy.

Developments from 1989 onwards

Scholars have indicated that from 1989 onwards, there was a significant shift in terms of the nature of internal community self-perception, and also external categorisation by wider society. As Ansari (2004, p.9) notes, ‘until the 1980s Muslims were generally subsumed within ethnic categories.’ However, following the Rushdie affair in 1989 during which there was widespread protestation against the publication of the *Satanic Verses*, there was an increasing visibility and assertiveness of Muslim identity amongst communities which had previously been characterised primarily in terms of ethnic, racial and national identities. Lewis (1994b, p.58) notes the implications of this event for academic research and commentary, highlighting that prior to 1989 ‘most discussions of the South Asian presence in Britain paid only the most perfunctory attention to the religious dimension of the settlers’ personal lives.’ Furthermore, following the Rushdie affair, such an increased assertiveness of Muslim identities impacted upon community struggles for recognition, access to resources and social development.

A primary focus concerning welfare during this period focused upon the schooling needs of new generations of British-born Muslims. Ansari (2004, p.321) notes that ‘education occupied a large population of the energy of Muslims throughout the 1980s and 1990s.’ Osler and Hussain’s (2005) work highlights some of the concerns expressed by Muslim communities regarding school curriculum, halal food, dress codes, identity development and religious education. Such a cause can be seen as further indication of increasing assertiveness of British Muslim identities, and as Ansari (2004, p.9) argues, ‘one of the earliest signs of the emergence of British Muslim consciousness was the struggle over Muslim schools.’ Calls for the state funding of Muslim faith-based schools were based upon parental desires that their children should be educated in an environment which fostered ‘the development of Muslim values,’ which was a ‘preparation for life in a multi-cultural society’ and also promoted ‘self-esteem and confidence as Muslims’ (Osler and Hussain, 2005, p.140). However, it was not until 1997, with the emergence of the New Labour government under Tony Blair, that a handful of Muslim primary schools in Britain were allocated state funding. During this period following the Rushdie affair, Ansari (2004, p.353) argues that ‘community identity began to be defined much more strongly in terms of religious institutions’ as these religious identities began to have an increasing importance and salience within the public sphere.

The Role of Women

Despite the challenges faced by first-generation migrant Muslim women, such as ‘isolation’ and ‘culture shock’, these women were not entirely devoid of agency, but certain individuals and groups have actively participated in community development and advancement (Ansari, 2004, p.387). Ansari (2004, p.377) suggests that ‘in the 1980s and 1990s it was generally accepted that in traditional Muslim institutions women had little if any representation.’ Similarly, McLoughlin’s (1998, p.220) research of a Bradford Mosque highlighted that, like many of the mosques in the city, it was ‘a predominantly Muslim male space.’ Despite this, Ahmed (2005, p.196) comments that ‘the absence of a hierarchical family/village system allowed women the opportunity to experiment with their roles.’ Furthermore, as Mohammad (2005, p.382) argues, within this new context, women had greater roles to play as ‘in a non-Islamic society weight is given to the education and transmission of values through the family, particularly through appropriate mothering.’

Muslim women may have been absent from such traditional institutions, but they have nonetheless been active in creating ‘alternative structures’ (Ansari, 2004, pp.378). Ansari (2004, p.378-9) documents the emergence of the An-Nisa Society, which offers advice on ‘contraception, abortion, adoption, rape’ and ‘education’, and also the Muslim Women’s Helpline⁴, set up in 1990, which helped address the issues of ‘domestic violence, forced marriage and mental breakdown.’ Muslim women clearly felt the need to develop spaces that were alternative not only to traditional Muslim institutions but also to mainstream statutory service providers. The emergence of community-specific services such as the An-Nisa Society and the Muslim Women’s Helpline is indicative of the perception that the welfare needs of Muslim women were not being met by mainstream statutory organisations. Although academic literature has identified the emergence of grassroots community groups such as the An-Nisa Society, little detailed work has been done to explore the functioning and significance of such services and their impact upon the communities they serve.

The 2001 census indicated that relatively few British Muslim women were in fulltime employment, although they have often adopted important roles within their families, community-based voluntary work and part time employment (Ansari, 2004, Peach 2005).

⁴ This was replaced with the Muslim Community Helpline in 2007. See <http://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/> [Accessed 09/01/13]

However, Yunus Dudhwala (2006, p.2-3), a leading healthcare chaplain working for the NHS, notes that ‘in an ever changing world... individual priorities have taken over collective responsibilities’ and there is ‘decreased time people can give to others.’ This comment indicates that the informal roles of welfare support which have been prevalent amongst Muslim communities to date may be giving way to a process of professionalization, particularly in relation to care-giving by Muslim women.

From the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, a significant amount of scholarly work has captured the efforts of Muslim communities in Britain to obtain necessary welfare resources and to develop internal infrastructure and community networks which are able to advocate for community needs. Nonetheless, since the turn of the twenty-first century, there still remain significant socio-economic challenges facing these communities and that impact their well-being.

Contemporary Welfare Concerns

Socio-Economic Deprivation

A number of quantitative surveys have documented the significant socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Muslim communities in Britain. Modood *et al.*'s (1997, p.293, 256, 81) *Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* in 1994 explored Pakistani and Bangladeshi community welfare, highlighting ‘poor-quality accommodation’, ‘over-crowding’, ‘worse health’ and significant numbers of young people ‘without qualifications.’ Overall, the findings concluded that ‘Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are consistently at a disadvantage with respect to white people and often with respect to other minorities’ (Modood *et al.*, 1997, p.342). Research regarding the well-being of Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations in Britain also constituted part of the *Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates in the Community* (EMPIRIC) survey in 2002 (Sproston and Nazroo, 2002). The findings of the EMPIRIC survey highlighted that ‘Pakistani groups had higher rates of screening positive for psychosis and for the estimated prevalence of psychotic illness than the White groups’ (Sproston and Nazroo, 2002, p.54). These statistics also showed that ‘Bangladeshi informants were also least likely to report an emotional or stress-related problem’ to their GP and that overall ‘South Asian groups provided more care in their own home, compared with other groups’ (Sproston and Nazroo, 2002, p.104, 86). These findings imply continued reliance on internal forms of community support for mental health issues

and potentially indicate difficulties in accessing mainstream services. Despite the insights derived from these surveys, they only document the experiences of some South Asian Muslim communities. They do not explore whether such disadvantage is characteristic of other, or indeed all, Muslim populations in Britain.

The 2001 census was the first census since 1851 to measure levels of religious affiliation in Britain (Peach, 2006). The inclusion of a question regarding religious identity was particularly championed by Muslim communities in Britain because of the potential to derive social policy issues and needs from the data. In line with the findings of the 1994 survey, the findings of the 2001 census indicated wide-spread socio-economic disadvantage as characteristic of the Muslim population of Britain, with Hussain (2008) and Peach (2005, 2006) highlighting Muslim communities as constituting the most socio-economically disadvantaged faith group in Britain. As Peach (2005, p23) comments, the Muslim population in Britain 'is poor, badly housed, poorly educated, suffers high levels of male unemployment' and also 'has a very low female participation rate in the labour market.' Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.127) also notes that 'compared to other faith groups in Britain, Muslims report the highest rates of ill-health' and have 'the highest rates of disability.' Whilst the 1994 survey had only been able to pass comment on Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, the 2001 census findings confirmed that such socio-economic disadvantage was characteristic of Muslim communities in Britain from multiple ethnic minority backgrounds (Hussain, 2008). Choudhury *et al.*'s (2005, p.13) report, also drawing upon the census statistics, highlighted that 'Muslims in the UK are disproportionately represented in the most deprived urban communities.'

Such disadvantage was further compounded by a lack of legal protection prior to the passing of the Equalities Act in 2010. Before the act was introduced, Muslim communities in Britain were not subject to the same legal protection as other religious minorities including Sikh and Jewish communities who were recognised by law as comprising distinctive ethnic groups (Allen, 2005). Modood, writing in 2009 (p.207), before the introduction of the Equalities Act, argues that 'we should recognise Muslims as legitimate social partners' in order to help address 'the severe poverty and social exclusion of Muslims.' Despite the introduction of the Act, widespread disadvantage still persists; in-depth analysis of the recent 2011 census awaits publication.

Racism and Islamophobia

Within recent decades, there has been increasing attention given to the phenomenon of Islamophobia, its definition, meaning and implications. Of seminal importance was the publication of the Runnymede Trust's report in 1997, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, which propelled the term into the public arena (Allen, 2010). Allen (2005, p.50) describes how this phenomenon led to the portrayal of 'Muslims as chimerical, monstrous others' which has particularly escalated within a post-9/11 climate. Abbas (2011, p.61) suggests that 'since 7/7 the situation has both deteriorated and intensified.' Statistics from the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), noting instances of discrimination associated with Islam in a post-9/11 climate, suggest that Islamophobia has a substantial impact upon the welfare of Muslim communities in Britain (Allen 2005, 2010).

Choudhury *et al.*'s (2005, p.329) policy report indicates that there is 'indirect' evidence including 'accounts given by Muslim welfare service providers, such as the Muslim Women's Helpline and An-Nisa Society' which signal that 'Muslims are not accessing mainstream victim support services.' If Muslims are turning to internal, community-based forms of support, this provides further impetus for research to be carried out within this field, exploring what statutory, mainstream services may learn from grassroots providers in helping them to meet the needs of, and work sensitively with, this population. Given Abbas' (2011) assertion that these acts of discrimination are increasing within a post 7/7/ climate, such a situation is all the more critical.

Community Authority and Religious Leadership

Despite significant community infrastructure being developed during the twentieth century, including the establishment of the Muslim Council of Britain at national level in 1997, various academics have highlighted that there appears to be 'a crisis of religious leadership' within the contemporary context (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, p.165). As Lewis (1994a, p.207) argues, 'a critical issue facing Muslims in Britain is their ability to develop national organisations which reflect the diversity of sectarian, regional and linguistic background of the Muslim community.' Such a challenge represents a significant barrier to the augmentation of community welfare without representative advocacy from all sectors of such a heterogeneous community. Geaves (2005, p.70) locates such an issue as particularly visible following the Rushdie affair, arguing that the protests called for 'a new leadership independent of the mosques and the original settlers' who had the capacity 'to engage with

British civic identity.’ Literature documenting this issue has highlighted the many challenges which Muslim community and religious leaders now face, including an ability to connect to emerging generations of British-born Muslims. As Kabir (2010, p.206) argues, ‘imams need to be enlightened and educated to promote integration’ and to possess the skills and qualities which will enable them to work within a contemporary context.

The community infrastructures developed by first-generation migrant communities are arguably no longer meeting the needs of British-born Muslim generations. A significant challenge, however, is the fragmentation of community authority, particularly given the substantial role the internet now plays in the lives of many British Muslims, the influence of which Bunt (2009, p.3) describes as ‘transformational.’ As Bunt’s (2009, p.278) research illustrates, ‘the internet has reshaped the boundaries of Muslim networks’ and facilitated ‘decentralization from the traditional locations of *‘ulama*’ power.’ Consequently, it is argued that ‘knowledge of Islam is no longer just the domain of Islamic scholars’ (Rozario, 2011, p.286). Alongside this considerable challenge, it can be argued that the emergence of Islamic scholarship indigenous to Britain is still within its infancy.

Muslim Chaplaincy and Youth Work

Despite these challenges surrounding religious leadership, during recent decades the professions of Muslim chaplaincy and Muslim youth work have emerged and can be seen to be fostering a generation of new faith and community leaders who are active in seeking to address the welfare needs of contemporary Muslim communities. An increasing body of literature is emerging which explores the developing role of Muslim chaplaincy, focusing largely upon prison chaplaincy including work by Beckford and Gilliat (1998), Beckford *et al.* (2005) and Gilliat-Ray (2010a). As Beckford *et al.* (2005, p.243) note, in 2003 the prison system decided ‘to designate all Muslim Visiting Ministers as “Muslim Chaplains.”’ By 2009 there were reported to be 203 Muslim chaplains working in the Prison Service alongside numerous others serving in healthcare and the army (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a). In order to train these new professionals, institutions such as the Markfield Institute of Higher Education are now providing Certificates in Muslim Chaplaincy⁵. With approximately 12% of prisoners in Britain identifying themselves as Muslim (Beckford, 2011), such a burgeoning field of activity represents a significant development in the professionalization of internal forms of community support. Furthermore, as Beckford and Gilliat’s (1998) research highlighted,

⁵ See <http://www.mihe.org.uk/cert-chaplaincy> [Accessed 17/12/12]

religious professionals such as Muslim chaplains are becoming increasingly knowledgeable in negotiating access to resources and to working within the bureaucracy of the statutory sector. As mainstream, statutory services are seeking to accommodate the needs of Muslims, likewise professional community support amongst British Muslim communities may be adopting statutory norms, standards and policies. However, there is a need for further research to explore these developments, and to analyse the professionalization of emerging occupations, such as Islamic counsellors and Muslim chaplains.

In parallel to the increasing professionalization of Muslim chaplaincy, the role of Muslim youth work has also significantly developed during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Just as training courses and professional qualifications have been established for Muslim chaplains, so too have diplomas in Muslim youth work been offered by British universities such as the University of Chester (Hamid, 2011). A small body of literature has emerged on Muslim youth work charting the development of the discipline (Belton and Hamid, 2011). The need to develop effective youth work which connects with young British Muslims can be attributed to several factors. Multiple authors including Ahmed (2011), Lewis (2007), Mondal (2008) have commented upon the welfare challenges facing young British Muslims today, which came into particularly sharp focus following the 2001 riots in the cities of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford. Issues such as identity, inter-generational tensions, sexuality and mental health are in many ways similar for all young people. However these issues may be compounded for Muslim youth by experiences of Islamophobia, social exclusion, issues around radicalisation and managing extra-curricular religious activities. Furthermore, given the wide-spread socio-economic disadvantage afflicting many Muslim households in Britain, younger generations may experience over-crowding, poorer health and other barriers to employment. Ahmed (2011) highlights various initiatives which have emerged such as the Muslim Youth Helpline, Muslim Youth Skills, the Muslim Youth Work Foundation and the group Young Muslims UK, aiming to address the needs of these young populations. However, despite the efforts of such groups, obstacles nonetheless remain.

Belton and Hamid's (2011) edited volume explores the emergence of Muslim youth work in Britain. Hamid's (2011) chapter in particular aims to map its development and to define exactly what Muslim youth work might be. Within Hamid's (2011, p.92) analysis of emerging forms of youth work he makes a clear distinction between 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' youth work, the latter being distinguished as 'confessional' and potentially proselytising. In

contrast to Hamid, Hussain (2006, p.108) highlights how many of her non- Muslim youth work colleagues embody an ‘Islamic ethos’ by utilising a ‘child centred approach’ within their work. These varying understandings indicate multiple, contrasting accounts of what is considered an ‘Islamic’ approach by youth work practitioners. There is a clear need for research to explore the role of Islamic approaches to service provision and to analyse exactly what they may entail.

Amongst the academic writing on Muslim youth in contemporary Britain, no topic has perhaps received more attention than the subject of religious identity, its relationship to national and ethnic identities, and its role in the lives of young Muslims. These discussions converge with the themes of welfare and well-being as many publications have highlighted that significant role that identity may play as a resource for young Muslims seeking to assert their individualism and independence within society.

The Salience of Religious Identity

Increasing Visibility

A wide body of multidisciplinary academic literature indicates the salience of religious identities for Muslim communities in Britain today, indicating their potential as a resource for community agency. A significant amount of the writing on identity has emerged from the field of human geography. Two such geographers, Gale and Hopkins (2009, p.15), comment that ‘scholarship on Muslims in Britain draws upon a broad range of disciplinary perspectives’ and this can be seen as a characteristic of the genre. In particular, much qualitative research within this field has explored the lived identities of young Muslim men and women and the way in which they negotiate and construct identities in daily life.

Muslim Youth

Amongst the range of literature exploring Muslim identity, a significant volume of such texts have focused upon the religious identities adhered to by young Muslims, their relationship to ethnic identities, and the dynamic ways in which such identities are shaped, lived and expressed. As Basit (1997, p.437), a qualitative researcher in this field, comments, identities ‘are not some primordial stamp’ which are static and unchanging, but rather as Ahmed (2000, p.200) suggests, they are ‘fluid and multi-layered and are always situational.’ The identities described have often been portrayed as having a significant role in mediating between inter-generational tensions. This agency is described by Geaves (1996, p.54) who notes that some

young British-born Muslims ‘have utilised religion to attack the ethnic customs of their parents as unIslamic.’ Religious identities are suggested to provide a resource enabling young people to transcend the cultural traditions of their elders. Akhtar (2005, p.165) extends this argument, proposing that for some young Muslims Islam presents ‘an alternative ideology, a sense of belonging, solidarity and a means of political mobilisation.’ In similar fashion, Jacobson’s (1998, p.154) fieldwork with young Pakistani men in Britain concluded that ‘the certainties contained within Islam hold so much appeal’ for the people that she studied. Within this literature on the identities of Muslim youths, some texts have focused upon the ways in which identity can be gendered.

Male Muslim Identity

Numerous studies have engaged with the identities of young Muslim men in Britain including those by Alexander (2004), Archer (2001, 2009) and Hopkins (2006, 2007). In particular, Archer’s (2001, p.87) study of young men highlighted the salience of religious identity for these individuals, commenting that ‘across all of the discussion groups, all of the young men identified themselves first and foremost as ‘Muslim.’’ Furthermore, in another study by Archer (2009, p.74) she explored how young Muslim men have been caricatured as ‘the new folk devils of the British imagination.’ This research highlights not only the self-perception of some young Muslim males, but also stereotypes prevalent within wider society. Work by Hopkins (2006, p.349) has aimed to show the variety of such identifications, highlighting ‘the diverse, heterogeneous and multifaceted nature of Muslim youthful masculinities’ and has sought to deconstruct stereotypes. Hopkins’ research has also explored regional and national dimensions to such identities, focusing upon Scottish Muslim masculinities in particular. Hopkins (2007, p.69) reports one interviewee responding with ‘the analogy of a Scottish Muslim being like a “blue square”’ in that the two facets of his identity were complementary and compatible.

Female Muslim Identity

Alongside this wide range of material focusing on young Muslim males’ identities, many qualitative studies have also explored the processes by which young Muslim girls and women negotiate the multiple elements of their identities, within different contexts and locales. Such studies include those by Basit (1997), Dwyer (1999a, 1999b, 2000) Mohammed (2005), Kay (2007) and Tarlo (2010). Dwyer’s (1999a, p.54, p.64) findings from her research with young Muslim girls emphasises the ways in which ‘identities are made within particular contexts

and moments' and the ways in which communities are both 'constructed' or 'imagined.' Mohammad's (2005, p.381) exploration of young Pakistani Muslim girls' identities highlights how 'identification with Islam promotes a sense of empowerment' for this group, enabling them to challenge cultural norms and overcome intergenerational tensions. Dwyer (1999b, 2000) and Tarlo (2010) have explored the use of clothing and dress by young Muslim women to express their identities and attachments. Similarly, Kay's (2007, p.137) study, which explored girls roles in sport, highlighted that they were 'actively creating, a fusion of the traditions of their origins with elements of the majority culture.' Such findings deconstruct any notions of female Muslim identities as static and homogenous but attest to their diversity and transformative potential. For Gardner and Shukur (1994), the assertiveness of such religious identities is, to a degree, related to the experiences of young British Muslim communities as part of a minority grouping in which socio-economic disadvantage is prevalent. Gardner and Shukur (1994, p.162) suggest that these identities can be understood partly as 'a response to the experience of racial and ethnic exclusionism.' However, such an analysis should not detract from the dynamism and innovation which is evident amongst such identity constructions.

Conclusion

From the analysis of this literature, several key themes have emerged. The studies on both early and contemporary Muslim communities in Britain attest to the role that internal forms of community support have played. Such internal support is evident in the establishment of boarding houses by the early seafaring community and is manifest today in the informal forms of support provided by Muslim women acting as care-givers for their families and in their contributions to voluntary and community work. However, the varying abilities of Muslim women to provide such care work alongside the professionalization of community support roles were also noted. Although some studies such as Ansari (2004) have remarked upon the role of initiatives such as the An-Nisa Society, there is no in-depth qualitative research exploring the function and significance of these grassroots services, which might indicate the impact they have in British Muslim communities today. The need for research is strengthened in light of statistical evidence gathered by Modood *et al.* (1997) and Sproston and Nazroo (2002) which highlighted that Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims may have limited engagement with statutory providers and may be in greater need of accessing mental health services.

The literature demonstrated the evolution of community organisations during the twentieth century, moving from small-scale, localised organisations to the emergence of national bodies, such as the Muslim Council of Britain. In addition, there appears to be a shift in the self-identification of these groups, moving from representing themselves as Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Yemeni groupings, to promoting themselves primarily as of Muslim identity. This trend has also been visible in qualitative research with young Muslims which has indicated increasing adherence to religious, rather than ethnic, identities. Overall, the salience of religious identity is shown to be significant for contemporary Muslim communities within many current studies.

Despite the efforts towards community development which have occurred in recent years, it is evident that persistent challenges remain, impacting upon the welfare of Muslims in Britain. Unemployment, social exclusion and health difficulties in particular have been well-documented (Hussain, 2008). This disadvantage means that many young British Muslims grow up with experiences of over-crowding, and barriers to educational achievement, and access to future employment (Choudhury *et al.*, 2005). There is clearly a need for research to explore the impact of the welfare services being provided within Muslim communities, especially those developed by newly emerging professions, such as Islamic counsellors and Muslim chaplains.

Chapter 3: Social Work, Religion and Spirituality

Introduction

This chapter analyses contemporary literature within the social work discipline which engages with the themes of religion and spirituality in theory and practice. In similar fashion to the trends observed within sociological literature relating to Muslim communities in Britain, a shifting focus from the ethnic and racial identity of Muslim communities, towards recognition of religious and spiritual identities is highlighted.

The relatively new engagement with these themes in British social work literature, in comparison to Anglophone social work literature emanating from the United States, is emphasized. Drawing on the work of Henery (2003) and Gray (2008), a particularly dominant focus within this chapter is on critically evaluating the notion of spirituality as it is presented within many current social work texts. It is argued that the conceptualizations of spirituality within these texts may be of limited relevance to service users from minority faith traditions, including Muslim individuals. Analysis of related literature within the discipline of healthcare highlights the wide-spread employment of this problematic concept. An exploration of current literature on faith-based service provision, also stemming largely from the United States, highlights the lack of investigation into services developed by Muslim communities and the need for research in this field.

A significant emphasis within this literature review is on examining the small body of emerging texts focusing specifically on Islam and social work. These have primarily emerged within a post-9/11 context, and are addressed largely to social workers who have received little or no training for working with Muslim service users. As such, this literature often focuses upon imparting elementary information to practitioners about the religion of Islam. A handful of studies exploring Islamic approaches to social work, and Islamic perspectives in counselling, are also examined. However, it is highlighted that there is a dearth of research within the British context exploring emerging welfare initiatives amongst contemporary Muslim communities. Such research would arguably provide valuable input into current discussions regarding the provision of social work services for Muslim individuals and communities.

Ethnicity and Race in Social Work

Social Work with New Migrants

The first British social work texts relevant to Muslim service users emerged during the mid-twentieth century, following significant waves of post-war migration. Texts such as Triseliotis's (1978) *Social Work with Coloured Immigrants* aimed to aid practitioners working in an increasingly diverse social context, and to provide awareness of the needs of new migrants. Within the general category of migrant identity, the main sub-categories for differentiation were based largely upon ethnic, racial and national identities, and the welfare needs of Muslim communities can be understood as subsumed within this framework. Saifullah Khan's (1979) 'Migration and Social Stress: Mirpuris in Bradford', Wallis' (1981) 'Bengali Families in Camden' and Dryden's (1982) 'A Social Services Department and the Bengali Community' evidence the dominant focus placed upon regional and ethnic identities as a means of categorising varying levels of need. Saifullah Khan (1979, p.38) acknowledges the needs of 'Miripuris, Campbellpuris, and Sylhetis' from Pakistan and Bangladesh, yet little reference is made to the Muslim identity of these groupings in her discussion. Ely and Denney's (1987) *Social Work in a Multi-Racial Society* makes brief reference to Muslim service users when comparing varying family structures and naming patterns amongst different groups of migrants. However, in similar fashion to early sociological texts identified in the previous chapter, the focus within this period is largely upon categorising minority groups within an ethnic and racial framework, and welfare needs in relation to religious identities are not overtly emphasised.

Many of the texts from this period, such as Dryden (1982, p.157), Saifullah Khan (1979) and Wallis (1981), aimed to highlight the welfare needs specific to newly migrated groups, particularly given the 'failure of traditional services to meet them.' Stresses due to the family separation in migration, difficulties in obtaining adequate housing and the 'overwhelming needs of women and children' are emphasised in particular (Dryden, 1982, p.158, Saifullah Khan, 1979, Wallis, 1981). Such needs are seen to be compounded by 'cultural and linguistic differences' between communities and service providers, alongside a lack of knowledge about medical and statutory services which inhibit provision (Dryden, 1982, Wallis, 1981, p.83). In this period, the significance of community self-help is documented. For example, Saifullah Khan (1979, p.36, 45) highlights the role of 'traditional institutions in village life which re-emerge in modified form in Britain', including '*biradari*' village networks which

administered support. Within this literature, including texts by Ballard (1979) and Dryden (1982), the emerging forms of statutory welfare provision for newly migrated groupings are contested. Initiatives including the 'Bengali Workers Action Group' and the 'Camden Community Health Project' are highlighted as significant developments (Dryden, 1982, p.155, Wallis, 1981, p.75). However, it is questioned 'why separatist groups?' (Dryden, 1982, p.162).

Changing Approaches

As social work literature charted the changing needs of such minority groups during the mid-twentieth century, there is a discernible shift in how minority identities were engaged with in a social work context (Denny, 1983, Ely and Denney, 1987, Singh, 1992). Ely and Denney (1987, p.69) suggest a transition from a position of 'cultural deficit', where the problems of migrants were seen as related to their cultural inadequacy, through positions of 'liberal pluralism' and 'cultural pluralism,' to a 'structural position' where many challenges facing migrants were seen as due to structural inequality within statutory provision. Such a structuralist approach is proposed by Dominelli (1988) in *Anti-Racist Social Work: A Challenge for White Practitioners and Educators*. She advocates a need for change amongst agencies and practitioners in combating racism and racist practice at organisational level, rather than locating the problem with minority service users themselves. As Denney (1983, p.168) suggests, during this structuralist phase 'problems become not attributes of people but of social situations.'

Social work literature within this period demonstrates an increasing engagement with minority identities and perspectives. Both Ahmad (1992) and Singh (1992) promote the emergence of 'Black perspectives' within social work in responding to structural inequalities and in providing a unified minority voice to advocate for minority communities. Singh's (1992, p.31) definition of the term 'Black' highlights its unifying potential in suggesting that 'the term symbolises the collective approach taken by Asian and Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Britain to their fight against white racism.' Such a 'Black consciousness' which unites non-White groupings under a common collective is felt to be significant for Singh (1992) in promoting a strengths-based approach in which minority voices are given consideration. Within such an approach, the needs of Muslim service users are subsumed within a wider focus on ethnic and racial identities. Nonetheless, such an approach is perhaps significant as a

precursor to later calls that advocate recognition of minority religious perspectives in social work, thereby creating space for 'Islamic perspectives' to emerge.

The Nature of Social Work

Such an emerging range of multiple perspectives within social work refutes any simplistic definition of the profession and its knowledge base. Payne (2005, p.7), argues that there are a 'range of social works' both within the contemporary period and in historical perspective. Hugman (2009, p.1152) similarly renounces any limiting classifications, highlighting that any singular definition of social work must represent a plurality of 'micro and macro perspectives.' Payne (2006, p.188, 179) analyses the identity of social work as being a 'socially constructed' phenomena consisting of 'a collection of competing and interacting sets of ideas.' Similarly, Hugman (2005, p.617) rejects the notion 'that there is a "real" social work somewhere waiting to be discovered' in recognition of the constructed nature of social work thought and practice. It is argued that the nature and identity of social work is not entirely static and unchanging, but is variable and context specific, and that there is space for multiple social work perspectives in thought and practice.

Amongst these multiple social works, Hugman (2005, p.611) also suggests that 'the particular post-colonial circumstances of contemporary Britain' have produced developments unique to a British form of social work, citing 'anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice' as examples. However, Gray *et al.* (2010a) are critical of the limited approach of these initiatives in fully appropriating alternative and indigenous forms of knowledge. For Gray *et al.* (2010b, p.3), emergent 'cross-cultural, transcultural and anti-oppressive' approaches are 'constructed from the perspectives of the dominant Western mind-set wherein the emphasis on internal causality and individual work, dualism and rational determinism, to name a few, tend to marginalize local and Indigenous knowledges.' Midgley (2010, p.42) similarly advocates that as the profession continues to expand during an era of globalization there is a need for 'reciprocal exchanges' to counteract the dominance and hegemony of Western discourses in accommodating diversity.

Within this contemporary context a new space for religious and spiritual diversity within the discipline is emerging. Payne's (2005) discussion of the historical roots of social work highlights the significant role of the Church within the profession's earliest origins. However, he suggests that the drive for professionalization during the twentieth century was often allied

alongside an increasing secularization in practice within which ‘the Church’s influence was progressively displaced’ (Payne, 2005, p.20). Nonetheless, there is evidence of an increasing re-engagement with the themes of religion and spirituality in contemporary social work.

Religion and Spirituality in Social Work

A New Trend

The increasing emergence of social work texts addressing the themes of religion and spirituality constitutes a recent development within the discipline (Furman *et al.*, 2004). Early initiatives within the field, such as Canda (1989), locate the contemporary emergence of interest in religion and spirituality in social work as primarily within the last two decades of the twentieth-century (Canda and Furman, 2010). As Patel *et al.* highlight in 1997 (p.10), ‘it is now recognised that the multiracial nature of our society has within it many multi-faith religions.’ They argue that ‘the time has come for social work practitioners and educators through research, theory building and practice to evaluate the role of religion and its impact for users and social work’ (Patel *et al.*, 1997, p.10). As Patel *et al.* (1997) illustrate, by the end of the twentieth century, the need to engage with the topics of religion and spirituality in social work was becoming increasingly recognised.

The introductory tone in contemporary publications emerging two decades after Canda’s (1989) initial forays, such as Furness and Gilligan’s (2010) *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making a Difference* and Moss’ (2005) *Religion and Spirituality*, highlights that discussion of the religion and spirituality within social work remains innovative within the discipline. While authors in the United States, such as Canda (1989, Canda and Furman, 1999, Canda and Furman, 2010) and Hodge (2001, 2005a, 2007, 2008, Hodge and Bushfield, 2007, Hodge and Dezerotes, 2008) have published extensively within the field, initiatives within British social work, such as those of Furness and Gilligan (2009, 2010) remain comparatively novel.

Competing Definitions

Amongst the issues which these introductory publications seek to address, a primary concern is in negotiating between competing definitions of key terms such as ‘religion’, ‘spirituality’ and ‘belief’ (Furness and Gilligan, 2010). A degree of intangibility is emphasised in relation to such definitions which are seen to defy simple or easy categorisation (Canda and Furman, 2010). The boundaries between terms are seen to be variable and overlapping, with some terms sometimes being used interchangeably. Moss (2005, p.13) suggests that ‘a broader

definition of spirituality... can include religious perspectives.’ Similarly, for Canda and Furman (2010, p.59) ‘spirituality may express through religious forms or it may be independent of them.’ Holloway and Moss (2010) also suggest the possibility of a ‘secular spirituality’ which is divorced entirely from ‘a theistic worldview.’ As such, the concepts of ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ are not portrayed as entirely fixed entities but are regarded as dynamic and, to a certain degree, relative.

In negotiating the utility of such varying terms within social work practice, authors within the discipline including Canda and Furman (2010), Furness and Gilligan (2010) and Moss (2005, p.15) have sought to highlight certain definitions of religion and spirituality which may be ‘useful for human services practitioners.’ Furness and Gilligan (2010, p.3) choose to adopt a ‘phenomenological/interpretive approach’ for ‘pragmatic’ purposes which accepts elements of intangibility as central to the nature of religion and spirituality. For Furness and Gilligan (2010, p.3), the idea that ‘meanings will be varied, inconstant and changeable’ is central to their conceptualisation and must be recognised in practice. For Canda and Furman (2010, p.61), the focus is on a ‘transperspectival approach’ which seeks to ‘find common ground for understanding and communication’ among diverse religions and spiritualities. Such definitions, in which the perspective of individual service users holds significant weight and where fluidity and flexibility are paramount, appear to constitute a postmodern response to the contemporary challenge. In giving equal weighting to a plurality of individual perspectives and in emphasising the potential for multiple viewpoints, these conceptualisations can be comprehended as postmodern in their approach.

Contested Roles

It is not simply the nature of the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’ which are debated within these introductory texts, but whether contemporary social work should address these issues at all. Authors including Amato-von Hemert (1994, p.8-10) fully advocate such engagement, stating that it is necessary for social work to consider religion and spirituality just as it has embraced ‘issues of class, gender and race’, in order to maintain ‘integrity’ and avoid practice which may be otherwise ‘repressive.’ Similarly, Furness and Gilligan (2010) seek to highlight the legislative imperatives in the UK, such as the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2006 and the Children Act 1989, which mandate a consideration of religion and spirituality within provision for service users.

In contrast, Clark (1994, p.14) suggests that incorporating religion and spirituality into social work practice constitutes a 'slippery slope.' Clark (1994, p.13-14) points to debates over the usage of prayer and scripture in practice, and the difficulties in distinguishing between legitimate belief and 'signs of psychopathology', as particularly problematic areas. Moss (2005) similarly warns of such obstacles, citing the theoretical challenges posed by Freud and Marx to the concept of religion, alongside contentious contemporary issues surrounding sexuality, abuse and proselytising which question the validity of engaging with religion and spirituality in social work. Such debates within the literature highlight the variety of 'contradictory roles' which religion and spirituality may play, advocating the need for increasing analysis (Patel *et al.*, 1997, p.2). Although such theoretical issues have been debated for over a decade within the discipline, there is a clear lack of research-based evidence to illustrate the views and experiences of practitioners and service users situated in multi-faith contexts, to further stimulate and advance debate within this area (Modesto *et al.*, 2006)

The Focus on Spirituality

Despite recognition within the literature of a degree of similarity between the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality', it has been argued that a 'spirituality-religion binary' exists which tends to dichotomise and polarise the concepts (Henery, 2003, p.1109). Mathews (2009, p.3) clearly states within the opening pages of *Social Work and Spirituality* that 'I want to be clear with you that this book is not about religion. It is about spirituality and that is different to religion.' For Henery (2003, p.1109), 'the spirituality- religion binary is a defining characteristic of the literature', in which 'religion is theorized as a deeply contradictory social phenomena' in contrast to liberal and encompassing notions of spirituality. Such juxtaposition is highlighted as particularly significant in creating a power dynamic where the spiritual social worker is contrasted with the religious ethnic minority service user who is 'religious first and spiritual second' (Henery, 2003, p.1110). Holloway and Moss (2010, p.2) suggest that 'for ethnic minority service users... religion may well be the main vehicle through which they experience and express their spirituality' and such an example is indicative of the divide Henery (2003) describes. Henery's (2003) critique highlights the challenge to define such key terms within the literature as political in orientation and significantly problematic.

The key words utilised in publication titles within the genre illustrate the varying significance and weight that different authors in different contexts have given to these key concepts.

While Furness and Gilligan (2010, 2009), writing within a British context, opt for ‘religion and belief’ within the titles of their work, the focus for Canda and Furman (1999, 2010), Hodge (2001, 2005a, 2007), Hodge and Bushfield (2007) and Hodge and Dezerotes (2008) writing in the United States is largely upon the notion of ‘spirituality’ alone. There is evidently a variation in approach amongst these Anglophone texts, deriving from different geographical and cultural contexts. A significant number of developments stemming from the United States predominantly focused upon ‘spirituality’ alone, unlike their British or Australian counterparts (Lindsay, 2002).

A particularly dominant trend within publications emerging from the United States places a focus solely upon the concept of ‘spirituality’ as a liberal and inclusive construct, of utility in application within social work contexts, in contrast to its more limited counterpart ‘religion’ (Henery, 2003). Such an idea is embodied in the work of Canda and Furman (2010, p.5), authors of *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping*, who advocate that ‘the term spirituality refers to a universal quality of human beings and their cultures related to the quest for meaning, purpose, morality, transcendence, well-being and profound relationships with ourselves, others and ultimate reality.’ Such texts contain guidelines for ‘designing ritual and ceremony in social work contexts’ and seek to highlight the utility and potential significance of ‘spiritual’ practices such as meditation and deep-breathing (Canda and Furman, 2010, p.347). The transmission of such ideas from the United States to the contemporary British context is evident in publications emerging from Holloway and Moss (2010, p.2) and Mathews (2009) who place a significant weight on the concept of spirituality, suggesting that it is at ‘the very heart and spirit of social work.’

In reaction to the dominant focus of such texts on spirituality, which appear to adopt the ‘spirituality-religion binary’ as an integral feature of their approach, critical voices have questioned the universal applicability of such notions within contemporary multicultural and multi-faith practice (Henery, 2003, p.1109). For Gray (2008, p.175), such understandings of spirituality are rooted within ‘the broad theoretical and epistemological perspectives of late modernity.’ Similarly, for Wong and Vinsky (2009, p.1349) the discourse of spirituality advocated within these contemporary social work texts is an inherently occidental ‘Euro-Christian construct’ and may have limited utility or relevance to service users from minority faith backgrounds. Authors such as Holloway and Moss (2010, p.121) advocate for ‘a transcultural approach’, suggesting that “‘the spirit’” is recognised by and in everyone,

regardless of their culture or beliefs.’ Despite the inferred universality of their approach it nevertheless remains rooted within their cultural context as such a liberal notion of ‘the spirit’ may contrast sharply with the meanings attributed to this concept by other cultural and faith traditions. Clearly, there is a need to investigate the perspectives of minority faith service users vis-à-vis concepts such as religion and spirituality within social work contexts to further evaluate their applicability.

Emerging Models

In an effort to bridge theory and practice, a number of authors have sought to present models and frameworks for incorporating religion and spirituality within social work practice, including Furness and Gilligan (2009, 2010), Hodge (2007) and Hodge and Bushfield (2007). Furness and Gilligan (2010, p.44) present their unique ‘Furness/Gilligan Framework for assessing the significance of religion and belief’ based on ‘nine interconnected key principles.’ Such an initiative is believed to be necessary for Furness and Gilligan (2010, p.44) who assert that ‘there has, to date, been no particular model which ensures that issues arising from religion and belief are adequately addressed in social work or social care assessments or in interventions arising from them.’ Such a rationale further suggests that, despite increasing engagement in the literature with issues of religion and spirituality, such endeavours are largely introductory in nature, and as such there exists a deficit of models and frameworks for engaging with these issues in practice. Recognising that such ideas of spirituality will be new terrain for many practitioners, Holloway and Moss’s (2010, p.111) ‘Fellow/Traveller model’ is based upon the premise that social workers are to assist service users on their spiritual journey to the extent with which they feel comfortable.

Within the United States, Hodge (2005a) and Hodge and Bushfield (2007) present models for use with service users, both to develop the competencies of social workers and to assess the impact of spirituality in the perspective of the service user. Hodge’s (2005a) presentation of assessment methods to analyse the role of spirituality for service users alludes to working with Muslim communities, although this is only mentioned briefly. Similarly, Hodge and Bushfield’s (2007, p.101) model for practitioners to develop ‘spiritual competence’ focuses largely upon working with the dominant cultural group, and there is little reference to developing such ‘spiritual competence’ in cross cultural practice. These models are thus largely orientated for practice with those members of the majority culture for whom such spirituality is perceived to be significant. It is argued that there is a need to further explore

potential models for engaging with religion and spirituality in practice, particularly with minority faith service users.

Strengths-Based Approaches

Incorporating religion and spirituality within social work practice is portrayed by authors including Amato von-Hemert (1994), Furness and Gilligan (2009, 2010), Moss (2005) and Rothman (2009) as constituting a strengths-based approach, with concepts of religion and spirituality represented as resources for social work practice. Moss (2005, p.75) advocates ‘a recognition that for many people a spiritual or religious dimension to their lives is part of the “strengths perspective” which human service works need to take seriously.’ Similarly, Furness and Gilligan (2010, p.2) describe ‘religious and spiritual beliefs as potentially significant resources.’

This appropriation of religion and spirituality within a strengths-based approach arguably constitutes a shift from alternative trends which have formerly equated elements of cultural or religious difference with ideas of ‘deficit’ (Park, 2005, p.11). In Park’s (2005, p.11) discursive analysis of ‘the concept of culture’ within social work, he concludes that such elements of difference have often been perceived as ‘a marker of deficit’ and as inherently problematic within practice. Despite contestation within the literature regarding the precise nature of the terms ‘religion’ and ‘spirituality’, and disagreement about their place within social work practice, these concepts are nonetheless advocated within many current texts within a largely affirmative framework which regard them as an important feature of multicultural social work, and as a potential source of strength and significance.

Religion, Well-being and Mental Health

Whilst the themes of religion and spirituality have only received significant attention within social work literature from the 1990s onwards, earlier research in the disciplines of psychology, psychiatry and medicine has sought to clarify the relationship between religion, well-being and mental health (Koenig, 1998). Koenig (2005, p.43) identifies ‘over 850 studies’ conducted during the twentieth century which have examined this relationship. Bergin (1983, p.170) highlights that there has been a ‘renaissance of psychological interest in religion’ from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. Prior to this religion is argued to have made only a ‘guest appearance’ as a variable within empirical mental health research (Levin, 1994, p.1475).

Such a significant number of studies have highlighted the ‘multifaceted relationships between religious involvement and subjective well-being’ (Ellison, 1991, p.80). Multiple authors, including Idler and George (1998), Levin (1994) and Paloutzin (1996), cite the significance of Durkheim’s work on religion and suicide as pioneering in establishing such connections. Pargament’s (1997, p.288) typology identifies six types of religious coping including ‘congregational’ coping, whereby a congregation may provide social support, and ‘spiritual’ coping in which an individual’s faith may be a source of strength. Koenig (1999, p.105) similarly suggests that religion may impact positively upon well-being by providing a source of existential ‘meaning and purpose’ when dealing with difficulties. He advocates that readers may even ‘consider attending religious services more frequently’ and participate in other related activities, such as bible study groups, in order to bolster mental well-being (Koenig, 1999, p.276). Similarly, it is argued that religion may impact upon physical well-being due to prescriptions regarding alcohol consumption and sexual behaviour, which it is suggested may in turn affect psychological well-being (Koenig, 1999, Levin, 1994).

Such perspectives of the positive influence of religion upon well-being are by no means unanimous. Plante and Sharma (2001, p.247) point to the role of religious content within schizophrenic thought and to anxiety states in which ‘panic patients may overemphasize religious concepts such as sin.’ Similarly, Paloutzin (1996, p.235) notes ‘the common appearance of religious language’ amongst ‘psychotic patients.’ Despite such inferences, Bergin (1983) critiques much early empirical research in which negative and contradictory links were made, arguing that there is a significant need for methodological advancement. As Bergin (1983, p.174) elucidates, ‘one researcher views a worshipful life-style positively in terms of reverence, humility and constructive obedience to universal moral laws, whereas another researcher views the same lifestyle negatively as self-abusing, unprogressive and blindly conforming.’ Plante and Sherman (2001, p.5) indicate how many of these earlier studies only focused upon ‘narrow aspects of religion and spirituality, such as church attendance.’ Furthermore, both the concepts of ‘well-being’ and ‘religion’ are highlighted as problematic in translating into variables for use in empirical research, and difficulties are noted in deciding which elements of religiosity constitute psychological ‘maladjustment’ (Paloutzin, 1996, p.239, Plante and Sharma, 2001). Bergin *et al.* (1988, p.91) conclude that despite a large number of studies about religion and well-being, ‘the overall picture’ is both ‘ambiguous and inconclusive’, demonstrating a need for further research to address such uncertainty, particularly in establishing links of causality.

Despite these difficulties, increasing efforts indicate willingness to engage with religion and spirituality in research. This is a significant shift away from earlier approaches within the discipline of psychology in which dominant Freudian perspectives, where religion was equated with neurosis, prevented empirical advancement regarding religion as insignificant (Koenig, 1999). Koenig (2005, p.258) highlights multiple areas for consideration in future research, including the field of ‘religious interventions’ and how a practitioner may ‘implement a religious intervention that is sensitive and appropriate.’ The need for research is given further impetus by Pargament’s (1997, p. 301, 143) assertion that religiosity may be of greater significance for those with less access to ‘secular resources’ including ‘among blacks, poorer people, the elderly’ and ‘women.’ There is therefore a need to further investigate the relationship between religion and well-being amongst multiple minority communities, particularly as most studies have ‘focused on white Christian participants’ (Plante and Sherman, 2001, p.8).

Faith-Based Organisations

Social work research in the United States is also demonstrating an increasing interest in evaluating the role and efficacy of faith-based organisations providing welfare services, in comparison to their secular counterparts. The rationale for this can be attributed to an increase in levels of government funding being offered to faith-based organisations which has stimulated debate regarding their utility (Smith and Sosin, 2001). As Smith and Sosin (2001, p.651) highlight, funding has been allocated based largely upon ‘hypothesised benefits’ and there is thus a need to explore the current state of provision being offered by faith-based organisations.

Many of the initial studies within this field have sought to construct typologies which map out the ‘spectrum’ of organisational forms and their varying levels of affiliation to religiosity (Jeavons, 1998, p.81). Initial studies are a necessary precursor to more evaluative research as it is essential to explore ‘how religion and faith are really expressed in agencies’ (Smith and Sosin, 2001, p.652). Ebaugh *et al.* (2003, p.414) highlight a multiplicity of areas in which religiosity may be present within a faith-based organisation, including ‘organisational structure’, ‘statement of mission’, ‘leadership’ and ‘organizational culture’ alongside company names, logos and staff affiliation. Similarly, Sider and Unruh (2004, p.109) present a continuum of organisations ranging from those which are wholly ‘faith permeated’ to those which are entirely ‘secular’, highlighting the differences which may also exist between the

religiosity of organisations themselves and of their program content. Whilst typologies such as those by Smith and Sosin (2001) acknowledge variations between organisations in relation to their different denominational attachments, there is a paucity of reference to minority faith-based organisations outside of Christian traditions. Whilst this perhaps corresponds largely to the demography of organisations within United States, the context within which such research is produced, there is nonetheless a lack of research exploring the characteristics of organisations across the diversity of faith groups.

Alongside emerging typologies, a number of empirical studies provide tentative data regarding the role and efficacy of faith-based organisations. Monsma's (2006, p.175) comparative evaluation of a range of secular and religious 'welfare-to-work' programs indicated that effectiveness was neither more evident nor absent in either type of program but that 'different types of program seemed to be especially effective in certain specialized areas.' Similarly, Netting *et al.*'s (2006, p.267) interviews with faith-based service providers about program efficacy did not identify straightforward factors which entailed effectiveness but promoted a need to identify 'less visible ways in which sets of beliefs guide faith-based organisations and their programs.' These initial studies suggest that there is a need to further consider the methodological challenges inherent to such research which did not provide a series of decisive, neat conclusions. For example, Monsma (2006) suggests that any outcome-based comparisons must be mindful of the differing aims and resources of faith-based and secular organisations, and that one must decide whether effectiveness rests on service user satisfaction or financial factors. Grettenberger *et al.* (2006, p.228) argue that faith-based organisations may focus upon 'spiritual and emotional transformation' of service users, making outcome comparisons with secular organisations unfeasible. Von Furstenberg (2006, p.41) explains that within outcome evaluations it is problematic to attribute success to 'the faith factor'. Clearly, current efforts to understand the role and significance of faith-based organisations are in their 'infancy stage' and there is scope for work with organisations that reflect the religious diversity in society (Boddie and Cnaan, 2006a, p.287)

A small body of British literature has explored the experiences and challenges faced by Jewish faith-based organisations providing welfare services. Kahn-Harris and Gidley (2010, p.4) remark upon the 'extensive network of welfare institutions' established by Jewish communities in Britain, noting the organisation Jewish Care in particular which had an income of 'over £50 million' in 2008. Harris (1997, p.7) highlights some of the contemporary

challenges facing the Jewish voluntary sector, including the shrinking size of the British Jewish community and the need for ‘maintaining a ‘Jewish’ character.’ To date, Harris *et al.* (2003, p.108) indicate that a ‘relatively low dependency of Jewish voluntary organisations on government funding’ has facilitated ‘maximum freedom to set their own strategic objectives.’ However, demographic changes to the Jewish population in Britain are identified as a cause for concern if current levels of philanthropic donations are to be maintained (Harris, 1997, Harris *et al.*, 2003). A policy paper published by the Jewish Leadership Council (2010, p.6, 23) notes the potential challenges for faith-based organisations as a result of ‘new equality laws’ as well as the difficulty in widening the scale of service provision ‘without compromising their missions.’ The report indicates the turbulent times that faith-based welfare organisations in Britain may be experiencing as a result of contemporary government policy. Despite this small body of literature exploring Jewish faith-based organisations and the Jewish voluntary sector in Britain, no such parallel literature has emerged in relation to the Muslim community. It is argued that research in this area would provide valuable input into the debate regarding the nature of social work provision for contemporary Muslim communities

Islam and Social Work

Initial Calls for Enquiry

A growing body of literature, including Barise (2005), Crabtree (2008a, 2009), Crabtree *et al.* (2008), Graham *et al.* (2008, 2009a, 2009b), Hall (2007), Haynes *et al.* (1997) and Hodge (2005b,) questions the applicability of existing social work models and practices in responding to and addressing the welfare needs of Muslims living in Britain, the United States and Canada. Various authors cite the emergence this trend as gaining impetus since 2001, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, following which Muslims became increasingly visible, with rising numbers of reported attacks on individuals (Augustine, 2002, Crabtree, 2008, Graham *et al.*, 2009a, Hall, 2007). For Crabtree (2008a), this situation is particularly significant within a British context where Muslims experience considerable socio-economic disadvantages and are deemed less assimilated than their American counterparts, as is also evidenced in a study by Kohut (2007). As such, there is a call for increasing research to explore the matrix of issues affecting Muslims within a British social work context (Crabtree *et al.*, 2008).

Initial research within the field has focused on the views of practitioners about the barriers Muslims experience in accessing services. Graham *et al.* (2009b, p.392-396) identify ‘language barriers’, ‘cultural assumptions’ of staff, alongside a range of ‘structural and systematic barriers’ as reported by social workers in Canada. While this preliminary research has explored the perceptions of Muslim and non-Muslim social work practitioners, no work has explored the experiences of Muslim service users themselves. As Crabtree *et al.* (2008, p.4) exhort, there is a need to address the ‘serious dearth of social work texts’ focused upon the needs and perceptions of Muslim service users. Despite growing numbers of articles exploring the field of Islam and social work, these developments remain relatively novel within the discipline. Crabtree *et al.*’s (2008) *Islam and Social Work: Debating Values, Transforming Practice* remains the sole published book in the field.

Islamic Perspectives in Social Work

In adapting social work to be of greater utility in working with Muslim service users, a variety of authors, including Al-Dabbagh (1993), Augustine (2002), Barise (2005), Crabtree and Baba (2001), Crabtree *et al.* (2008), Haynes *et al.* (1997) and Hodge (2005b), have highlighted values and principles which may be significant, aiming to create awareness of ‘Islamic perspectives.’ Many texts, such as those by Barise (2005), Crabtree and Baba (2001), Crabtree *et al.* (2008), Haynes *et al.* (1997) and Hodge (2005) offer a basic introduction to Islam for social workers, exploring beliefs such as monotheism, the role of the Prophet Muhammad, the place of scripture, the notion of *ummah*, and the pillars of faith and practice.

In discussing ‘Islamic perspectives,’ texts including Augustine (2002), Barise (2005), Crabtree *et al.* (2008) and Hodge (2005b) focus particularly upon ideas relating to cosmology, family and gender as such are issues perceived to be particularly significant by these authors in a social work context with Muslim service users. As Barise (2005, p.114) elucidates, Islam can be understood as a ‘complete way of life’ for many Muslims and as such it is imperative that social workers are aware of the significant role it may play in shaping service users’ worldviews. For Crabtree *et al.* (2008, p.67-69), knowledge of issues surrounding ‘gender roles, sexuality, marriage and attitudes towards children’ alongside understandings of ‘*izzat*’ are particularly important given the nature of the social work role in working with women and families. When presenting core beliefs and practices common to many Muslims, authors often emphasis the diversity of theology and religious practice within

Muslim communities. There are suggestions that ‘one must be careful not to assume that a single approach is suitable to all Muslim clients’ and that practitioners should avoid a ‘generic recipe-book approach’ (Barise, 2005, Crabtree *et al.*, 2008, Hodge, 2005, Graham *et al.*, 2009a, p.550, 553).

Islamic Social Work Models

Exploring how practice models may be of greater significance to Muslim service users, Barise (2005) and Haynes *et al.* (1997) suggest how social work methods may be adapted to incorporate Islamic values and principles. For both authors, this endeavour is potentially possible given the ‘striking similarity between the teachings of Islam and core social work values’ (Barise, 2005, p.120). Despite suggestions by Hodge (2005b, p.169) that ‘value conflict’ may occur between Muslim service users and Western social work practices in relation to ideas of ‘individualism’, ‘separateness’ and ‘self-determination’ which underpin many social work ideals, there is nonetheless seen to be a compatibility between Islam and social work due to a shared focus on ‘human dignity, social justice, helping the needy, and integrity’ upon which co-operation can be based (Barise, 2005, p.120).

For Haynes *et al.* (1997, p.265, 270), a potential model of ‘Islamic social transformation’ is presented which is rooted in values found in Islamic scripture, focused upon ‘the five pillars,’ which it is suggested provide ‘the mechanism for change or social transformation.’ Whilst Haynes *et al.* (1997) presents a potential epistemological and value base for a model, the relationship of these values to existing social work practice methods is not developed further and remains largely speculative. Barise (2005) takes such suggestions one stage further in a unique integration of Islamic ideas, based on concepts found in scripture, with existing social work practices and principles (see Fig 3.1).

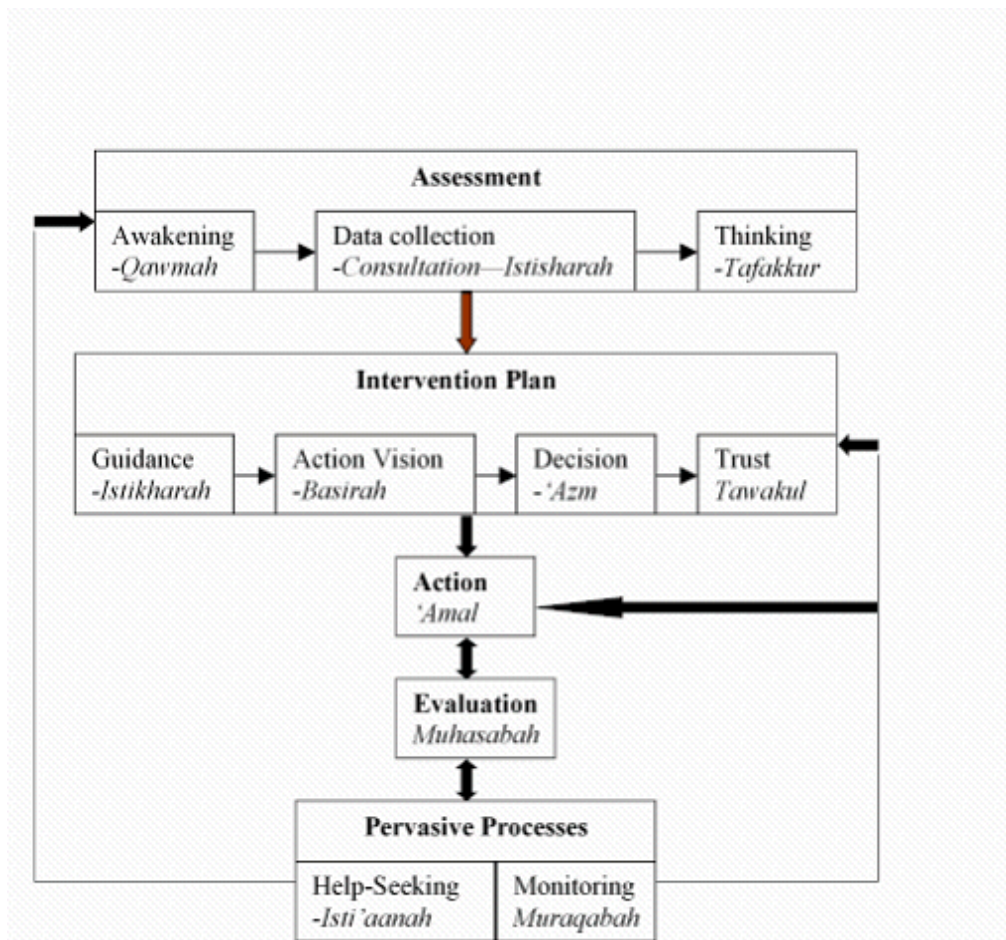


Fig 3.1 'Islamic Social Work Practice Model' (Barise, 2005, p.127)

Within his model, Barise (2005) presents the Islamic equivalent of a variety of contemporary social work processes and key terms, highlighting how they may be made relevant to Muslim service users. For example, the concept of 'data collection', in which the social worker begins to document data and information about the service user, is allied to the Quranic verse 42:38 which discusses the practice of 'mutual consultation' (Barise, 2005, p.124). Barise's (2005) model illustrates the scope for making social work practice of greater utility and relevance to Muslim service users, while also indicating the need for further research in this area.

Barise (2005) and Haynes *et al.*'s (1997, p.265) endeavours are similar to those of Furness and Gilligan (2009, 2010) and Moss (2005) in promoting a strengths-based approach to incorporating religion and spirituality within social work practice, with religion seen as a resource for engagement and 'transformation.' As Barise (2005, p.121) clearly states, 'Islam-based social work would be strengths based.' Despite such a model appearing to be of widespread utility to Western Muslim communities, there is a need to consider the unique

circumstances of differing Anglophone Muslim communities in greater depth. Hussain (2008) highlights the distinctive socio-economic circumstances of British Muslims, in comparison to their American counterparts, and this is indicative of the need for further localization. With the majority of these Islamic models emanating largely from the United States, their utility and relevance in the British context needs to be carefully evaluated. In addition, Barise (2005, p.121) suggests that ‘the uniquely comprehensive view of spirituality in Islam is significantly different from the dominant viewpoint in mainstream social work.’ There is a therefore need to further explore what spirituality means for contemporary Muslim social work professionals and service users and the implications of such definitions for social work theory and practice (Scourfield *et al.*, 2013).

Parallel Developments within Psychology and Counselling

As with social work, the fields of psychology and counselling are also beginning to recognise the needs of Muslim service users, and the lack of guidance for practitioners is noted by Springer *et al.* (2009). Also predominantly emanating from the United States, an increasing range of Anglophone texts, including those by Al-Issa (2000), Ashy (1999), Daneshpour (1998), Haque (2004), Hodge and Nadir (2008), Husain (1998), Inayat (2002) and Williams (2005), seek to highlight ‘Islamic’ and ‘Muslim’ perspectives in psychology and to suggest relevant approaches, models and theories for counselling Muslim service users. In similar fashion to many of the social work texts, Haque (2004) and Springer *et al.* (2009) locate the impetus for such developments within a post-9/11 climate in which the needs of Muslim communities are increasingly recognised, yet there is little contemporary research. Particular causes of mental health problems for Muslim populations are noted by Al-Issa (2000, p.256) and Haque (2004, p.51) who highlight difficulties in relation to ‘acculturation’, ‘alientation’ and the effects of ‘media-bashing.’ In similar vein to the introductory nature of many social work texts exploring practice with Muslim service users, counselling and therapy texts including Carolan *et al.* (2000) and Springer *et al.* (2009, p.229) seek to provide ‘foundational information’ for practitioners, focusing upon family structure, gender and the centrality of faith.

Increasing recognition of ‘Islamic’ and ‘Muslim’ perspectives in psychology is typified within works such as Ashy’s (1999) ‘Health and Illness from an Islamic Perspective’, Haque’s (2004) ‘Psychology from Islamic Perspectives’, and Husain’s (1998) ‘Religion and Mental Health from the Muslim Perspective’. Indeed it was the seminal publication of

Badri's (1979) *Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists* which heralded a call for Muslim mental health professionals to critically examine the validity and applicability of their theories and methods when working with Muslim service users, in particular denouncing the supremacy of Freudian psycho-analytic thinking. Similar to the texts on 'Islamic perspectives' within the social work genre, a significant focus in contemporary publications such as Daneshpour (1998), Haque (2004) and Husain (1998) is upon introducing Muslim belief and practice to non-Muslim practitioners, and in providing a demographic overview of Muslim communities living in the United States. Additionally, Ashy (1999, p.241), Al-Issa (2000), El Azayem and Hedayat-Diba (1994), and Haque (2004, p.48) seek to introduce non-Muslim mental health practitioners to models of 'Islamic Psychology' and psychiatry based upon elements including 'the *ruh* (spirit), the *qalb* (heart) and the *aql* (intellect)' which are seen to constitute a significant part of an 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' perspective.

In responding to the challenges of providing relevant and appropriate mental health services to Muslim service users, Hodge and Nadir (2008), Haeri (1994) and Inayat (2002) have proposed potential adaptations to counselling models which may render them of greater significance, given recognition that 'American-made instruments may lack validity with Muslim clients' (Springer *et al.*, 2009, p.233). Hodge and Nadir (2008, p.30-31) propose that cognitive therapy counselling models may be particularly suitable for being 'modified with content from Islamic Tradition' and they present a list of 'cognitive statements modified with Islamic tenets' as an example of such compatibility. Similarly, Haeri (1994, p.14), describes her method for working with victims of child abuse 'based on a model of the self according to the Qur'an, Islam and Sufism' which is 'rooted in unity.' In exploring the congruence between Islamic and clinical counselling models, Inayat (2002) investigates 'The Relationship between Integrative and Islamic Counselling', highlighting the similarities and disparities between the two models, and indicating the elements of particular models which make them useful to Muslim individuals. Overall, many endeavours within the fields of psychology and counselling are parallel to those of Barise (2005) within the social work genre. Both are critically examining models and frameworks in relation to Muslim service users, and both explore ways to take greater account of Islamic concepts and principles, thereby making these models of greater utility for Muslim service users. The themes emerging within academic writing on social work with Muslims are clearly similar to those developing within other health and social care disciplines, and typify a broader trend within the genre.

A recent anthology edited by Ahmed and Amer (2012) also focuses upon counselling Muslim service users, giving particular consideration to sub-groups including converts, refugees and adolescents. Dharamsi and Maynard's (2012, p.143) chapter within the volume introduces a range of Islamic counselling models including one based on '*tibb an-nawabi* (prophetic medicine)' which draws on 'a range of techniques, including nutrition and herbalism.' They also introduce their '*tasawwuf*-based psychotherapeutic model' based on an Islamic model of the self (Dharamsi and Maynard, 2012, p. 144). Although the significance of their model is alluded to in discussing a case study of service user Khalid, no feedback is provided from service users themselves. There is a significant lack of counselling publications that draw upon the perspectives of Muslim service users themselves.

One article by Shafi (1998, p.301) does discuss survey feedback from four Muslim Asian women whom she had counselled, analysing whether 'racial similarity affected the therapeutic alliance.' Shafi (1998, p.312) concludes that 'racial similarity is not necessarily a factor that engenders positive and effective counselling outcomes' and instead highlights the qualities of 'warmth, genuineness, empathy, respect, care and support.' Although an interesting study, the focus of the article is upon racial and cultural identities, and is not based upon feedback relating to faith-based counselling. Overall, there is a clear need to develop a greater body of contemporary research exploring the views of Muslim service users. In particular, there is a considerable absence of literature analysing the experiences of individuals who have participated specifically in Islamic counselling sessions.

Spirit (Jinn) Possession

A small body of interdisciplinary literature has explored belief in spirit (*jinn*) possession among Muslim patients with particular reference to the diagnosis and treatment of mental and physical illnesses. Many authors affirm the need to recognise the aetiological beliefs of Muslim patients and service users as a means of augmenting cross-cultural practice.

Within medical literature, Sheikh (2005, p.339) highlights the importance of recognising such beliefs in mental health care given that 'from my experiences both in Britain and abroad, *jinn* possession is a not uncommon lay 'differential diagnosis' in those with an altered mental state.' Similarly, Ali's (2008, p.57) research in Oldham evidences the salience of beliefs in *jinn* and black magic in relation to 'perceptions and experiences of mental well-being' among

Pakistani and Bangladeshi elders. Dein *et al.*'s (2008, p.31) and Eneborg's (2012) research amongst Muslim communities in East London also illustrates a readiness in appealing to such beliefs 'at times of psychological disturbance and unexplained physical symptoms.' Sheikh (2005) and Khalifa and Hardie (2005) highlight that, despite the reported widespread nature of these beliefs, they remain largely unacknowledged within medical literature. The implications of such beliefs for patients and service users are highlighted by Meah (2007) and Maule *et al.* (2007) who report the potential for misdiagnosis amongst staff who are not fully aware of the ways in which these beliefs operate. Such beliefs are not limited to mental health and may also shape understanding of physical well-being. Literature by Ismail *et al.* (2005a, 2005b) and Rozario (2009) has documented the prevalence of aetiological beliefs amongst some Muslim communities in relation to epilepsy and other genetically-determined physical conditions. It is therefore becoming increasingly acknowledged within medical and related anthropological texts that there is a need for awareness of Muslim perspectives regarding *jinn* in providing appropriate cross-cultural care within a plurality of healthcare contexts.

Al-Krenawi and Graham (1997, 1999) explore beliefs surrounding possession amongst Bedouin service users and the roles of 'Arab Muslim healers' performing exorcisms. International social work evidently began to engage with such ideas amongst Muslim populations earlier than Anglophone or Western social work literature. Furness and Gilligan's (2010, p.92, 159) *Religion, Belief and Social Work: Making a Difference* contains vignettes relating to 'Tariq' and 'Abida' and their experiences of *jinn* possession. Their work is perhaps the first British social work publication to explore these issues within a practice context. These developments on this topic, within a variety of disciplines, suggest that the role of *jinn* possession within contexts of service delivery is a potentially important topic for future research.

Healthcare

Muslim perspectives have also emerged in healthcare literature. In response to census statistics reporting high levels of ill health and disability amongst British Muslim communities, Sheikh (2007, p.13) advocates that 'these needs will most effectively be met by faith specific healthcare initiatives.' Inclusion of Muslim perspectives is also promoted by Johnson (2001) and Mayet (2001), who highlight the areas of hospitalization which may require revision for Muslim patients, from birth rituals to *wudu* and prayer facilities. Such concerns have been discussed within a selection of nursing articles, including those by Al-

Oraibi (2009), Mughees (2006) and Rassool (2000) which, alongside brief introductions to Islam for nursing staff, provide guidelines for working with Muslim patients. Of particular concern to these authors are the topics of diet (both in relation to provision of halal food and fasting during Ramadan), prayer, hygiene, gender and modesty. Despite these initial enquiries, Gilliat-Ray (2001, p.140-142) highlights how such a recipe-book approach produces 'a very stereotyped picture of the needs of patients' often containing 'inaccurate information' and significant generalisations. Even then, these works constitute a tiny proportion of the literature, certainly compared to the preoccupation with spirituality in nursing publications (Gilliat-Ray, 2003). A focus on 'secularised, individualistic, humanistic definitions of spirituality' is as problematic in healthcare as it is within social work; both fields neglect minority perspectives while proclaiming a 'universal' appeal (Gilliat-Ray, 2003, p.337). There is therefore a need for to consider how service providers may engage more meaningfully with Muslim perspectives in practice.

International Social Work in Muslim Countries

The emergence of social work literature focusing on adapting practice with Muslim minorities living in Europe and North America has been mirrored by the development of publications about social work in Muslim countries. As Barise (2005, p.115) notes, there is a developing 'worldwide literature on Islamic indigenization of social work' following the international export of the profession. This literature displays both similarities and differences compared to texts derived from Western contexts.

Publications by Al-Krenawi and Graham (2001, 2003, p.75) highlight the difficulties of using imported social work models in countries including 'Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.' In similar fashion to counterpart Western texts, such as Crabtree *et al.* (2008), Al-Krenawi and Graham (2003, p.79) and Abu Baker (2003) note particular difficulties in relation to varying gender and family norms and highlight the salience of faith as 'most clients constructed problems and their solutions with strong reference to religion.' There is a comparative call for 'an Islamic reorientation of social work' to those advocating for Muslim perspectives within Western social work (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2003, p.78). Such initiatives are in the early stages of development and 'social work theory has yet to elaborate on how to extend and apply this agenda' (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2003, p.78). Similar to Graham *et al.*'s (2009, p.391) assertion that 'no single practice technique could be suggested' in social work with Muslims in the West, calls for an 'explicitly Pakistani

approach' by participants in Al-Krenawi *et al.*'s (2007) study indicate international diversity in approaches to social work with Muslims.

While contemporary British social work texts, including Crabtree *et al.* (2008), focus wholly upon Muslim identity, in comparison to an earlier ethnic focus in texts such as Dryden (1982), Saifullah Khan (1979) and Wallis (1981), international texts such as Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000, 2001, 2003) and Abu Baker (2003) concentrate largely upon Arab identity. In relation to such Arab identity, Al-Krenawi and Graham (2003, p.81-83) highlight the significance of issues such as 'polygamy' and 'blood vengeance' alongside a consideration of 'traditional healing and religion.' Hall's (2007) paper on social work with Arab families in the United States and Dwairy's (2006) work on counselling Arab Americans also indicates that such an identity is of some salience within Western writing. Given the focus on Arab identities within these publications, they arguably have limited relevance to social work with Muslims in Britain as the majority of British Muslim communities are of South Asian rather than Arab ethnicity (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a).

Conclusion

Despite an emerging body of literature about social work with Muslims, discussion of 'Islamic perspectives in social work remains a highly neglected area' (Crabtree, 2008b, p.66). Despite initial endeavours, Graham *et al.* (2009a, p.547) conclude that there is 'a deficiency of literature' and thus a significant need for further research. While there is increasing engagement in Anglophone social work literature with the themes of religion and spirituality, focusing upon spirituality in particular, there is a clear need to critically investigate the utility of such a concept when working with Muslim service users. The lack of attention given to current welfare initiatives being developed by Muslim communities in Britain indicates that such a study would arguably make an important original contribution to further debate. There is thus a clear need for empirical investigation to address this paucity of research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

So far, it has been highlighted that there is a distinct lack of research exploring emerging welfare initiatives being developed by British Muslim communities and the significance of such services for Muslim individuals. Texts emerging within the social work discipline which consider service provision for Muslim communities focus largely on how statutory services may become increasingly sensitive and relevant to Muslim service users. But these texts are informed predominantly by the perspectives of statutory social workers, lacking reference to those working in Muslim community organisations, or indeed Muslim service users themselves. Consequently, there is a need to explore the emerging voluntary sector welfare organisations being developed by Muslim communities in Britain and to analyse how they are meeting the needs of Muslim service users at grassroots level.

The establishment of a voluntary sector Islamic welfare organisation in the city of Bridston⁶, referred to here as the Islamic Welfare Organisation (the IWO)⁷, presented a significant opportunity to explore these questions further. A preliminary case study took place in 2009 and it was during this stage that the Director explicitly identified the organisation as an Islamic welfare organisation underpinned by an Islamic model (Warden, 2009). Following this small-scale preliminary research, this doctoral project sought to expand this case study by asking two main research questions:

Research Questions

- 1. How is the Islamic identity of the organisation constructed, manifested and contested?*

This research question aimed to explore the organisation's self-understanding in terms of its 'Islamic' identity. What kind of Islamic model shaped the organisation and its services, and how was this manifested on an everyday level, within an organisational context? In particular, what kind of theological and scriptural influences underpinned the Islamic model?

⁶ Name has been changed

⁷ Name has been changed

Furthermore, it was analysed how the model was contested and negotiated by various individuals, including staff members, service users, volunteers and referring agencies.

2. How is the Islamic identity of the organisation understood to be significant for service users as a welfare resource?

Where the first question mainly explored the perceptions of the organisation's staff members, volunteers and referring agencies, the second question was directed towards the perspectives of the IWO's service users. Why did they access the IWO, and to what extent was it useful and relevant for them? What did the service users understand the Islamic elements of the organisation and its services to constitute and why were they significant?

Ontological and Epistemological Position

Underpinning the research questions is a social constructionist approach which assumes that 'there can be no such thing as an objective fact' or any approach to social knowledge which discounts the significance and impact of subjectivity (Burr, 2003, p.6). Such a position contrasts considerably with positivistic approaches which dominate the natural sciences and focus upon 'neutral observation language' (Hughes, 1990, p.37). Within a social constructionist approach, the focus is upon eliciting the perspectives and understandings of individuals within a certain locale and on 'particularity and context' (Moses and Knutson, 2007, p.223). Within this approach it is recognised that one cannot 'penetrate "the real" with our imperfect perceptions and constructions' (Burr and Butt, 2000, p.198). Instead, the focus is upon a phenomenological understanding of how 'individuals interpret the world' and 'the meaning it has to them' within a subjective context (Thompson and Woodward, 2000, p.51). Berger and Luckmann (1966, p.78) highlight how social construction is an on-going feature of everyday life in which social actors continually objectify and legitimise social 'knowledge' in a continuous, creative 'dialectical' relationship with the social world.

Within this research, the focus was on how knowledge is produced and re-produced within an organisational context, and the way it shapes institutional narratives, identities and authority. In this social constructionist approach, 'data are not collected but produced' during the course of interaction between researcher and participant (May, 2001, p.28). The collection of data does not seek to uncover impartial, independent fact but focuses on an approach which 'assumes that reality is not fully knowable and that truth is impossible to define' and that 'there are many realities and many truths' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.27, Liamputtong, 2007,

p.15). The aim of social constructionist research is therefore to understand and explore ‘the perspective of the people being studied’ and how such perspectives are created and maintained (Bryman, 2004, p.279). In line with Geertz (1973, p.9), it is argued that ‘our data are really our constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to.’

This approach is particularly suitable within cross-cultural research which explores the role and application of religious knowledge within a social setting. In contrast to positivistic perceptions, which may reject the veracity of religious knowledge, a social constructionist position does not devalue or seek to delegitimize claims made through religious knowledge. Instead, the focus is ‘how religion works... and its social impact’ (Thompson and Woodward, 2000, p.46). Khawaja and Mørck (2009, p.40-41) argue that social constructionist perspectives can be considered to be somewhat political research approaches in their attempt to overcome ‘normative discourses’ which involve the othering of certain communities or sub-communities, in their case ‘young ethnic minoritised Muslim boys’. Utilising a social constructionist approach within social research can therefore be particularly pertinent in attempting to address the power dynamics of conducting research as an outsider within minority communities.

This approach is influenced by Foucault’s (1967) recognition of the constructed nature of categories such as ‘health’ and ‘illness’. This is of particular significance when working in a cross-cultural mental health context. Manifestations, symptoms and understandings of mental illness are argued to vary between cultural groups and across contexts, and dominant medical perspectives can be regarded as ‘an Enlightenment product’ (Fee, 2000, p.3). Marsella and White (1982, p.3) highlight how ‘expressions of psychiatric illness in thought and behaviour are of necessity mediated by the symbolic forms of language and culture.’ Furthermore, differing conceptions about the nature, aetiology and manifestations of mental illness are underpinned by varying notions of selfhood and personhood across cultures (Marsella, 1982). As Marsella (1982, p.362) indicates, ‘mental disorders cannot be understood apart from the concept of self’ which is prevalent within a group as it is that concept of selfhood which determines what constitutes normal/abnormal states and which constitutes health/pathology. In researching the IWO it was necessary to be mindful of such cultural and religious variations in order to fully explore the rationale and significance of the services. Documenting the organisation’s understanding of individual selfhood, a part of their

Islamic model, helps to explain why their services are felt to be significant, appropriate and unique.

Discourses

In aiming to explore the Islamic identity of the organisation, its influences and boundaries, the concept of discourse is particularly significant. Burr (2003, p.66, 75) suggests that ‘a discourse can be thought of as a kind of frame of reference’ and that discourses are ‘intimately connected to institutional and social practices.’ In aiming to understand how the identity of the IWO is constructed, manifested and contested, a focus was on examining how the discourses of Islamic identity, social work and mental health shaped organisational life. A particular focus was upon discursive boundaries and contestations, and how the ideas of the Director and IWO staff were comprehended by other people interacting with the organisation, such as service users and referring agencies. Analysing the nature and effects of such discourses is significant for exploring the power relationships within the organisation and in understanding how authority, particularly religious authority, is constructed and contested.

Use of Key Terms

Religion and Spirituality

Undertaking research about religion requires some consideration of ‘what counts’ as religion in the first place. Following Woodhead (2011, p.138), there are clearly multiple conceptualisations of religion and ‘very often the use of one concept assumes, or opens up to, one or more of the others.’ Following the social constructionist epistemology underlying the research as a whole, Beckford’s (2003) work is of particular relevance here. Beckford’s (2003, p.4-7) social constructionist definition suggests that religion is ‘a complex and variable category of human knowing, feeling, acting and relating’ which ‘varies in meaning across time and place.’ Such an understanding eschews any static categorizations and instead hypothesises that ‘the social construction of religion is... an inescapable feature of everyday social interaction’ (Beckford, 2003, p.196). As such, the boundaries of religion are a shifting phenomenon and are negotiated by individuals in varying localities within daily interaction. This is particularly prominent in relation to the construction, maintenance and performance of religious identities. As Hall (1996, p.4) comments, identities are ‘constantly in the process of change and transformation’ and are ‘produced in specific historical and institutional sites.’ It is argued that religious identities are subject to negotiation and alteration and it is this interplay which the research seeks to explore. Complementing this social constructionist

approach, religion is also regarded as a form of discourse. Woodhead (2011, p.127) argues that religion as discourse potentially ‘has the power to inform much richer conceptions of religion.’ As shown later in this chapter, this conceptualisation is a central component of the theoretical analysis of the data. Engaging with religion, and of faith communities, as constituting a resource is also of particular relevance to this study given the prominent role of these ideas in contemporary literature (Dinham and Lowndes, 2008, Koenig, 2005, Ni Raghallaigh, 2011).

It was necessary to consider the indicators of religion to be utilised during the fieldwork period prior to beginning data collection. In attempting to create a typology of the religious characteristics of faith-based organisations, Boddie and Cnaan’s (2006b) anthology recognises the diversity which may exist between organisations as to what constitutes a faith element. Bielefeld (2006) argues that a religious element may be evident in various ways, including the organisation’s name, affiliations, sources of funding, religiosity of staff, services provided and the use of religious texts. In other words, religion may be apparent in both explicit and implicit ways, and upon a spectrum, ranging from the potentially tokenistic organisational name to the provision of services imbued with religious content. Within this research, it was recognised that religion may operate on a variety of levels within the organisation and it was this multidimensionality which the study sought to explore. In quantitatively analysing the significance of religiously orientated support services, von Furstenberg (2006, p.39) warns that one should be wary of attributing successful interventions and outcomes to an entirely elusive ‘faith factor.’ Following such a warning, it is necessary to consider the impact of other variables on the context of service provision; one should not to assume that successful service outcomes are solely due to an intangible religious influence. Therefore, it was particularly important to consider factors, such as ethnicity, age and gender, in exploring the perceived significance of the IWO’s services and not to automatically attribute any successful service user outcomes as being due to religious identity alone.

Overall, the main emphasis during data collection and analysis was upon participants’ definitions, conceptualisations and constructions of religion, and the related term spirituality. The social work literature review highlighted some of the conceptual problems which authors such as Gray (2008) and Henery (2003) have identified when discussing the term spirituality in a social work context. Following Guest’s (2007, p.181) assertion that ‘definitions of spirituality are notoriously slippery’ the focus was upon exploring the multiple ways in which

such a definition was constructed by the research participants. Primary focus during the research has been given to the research participants' conceptualisations. This includes IWO staff members, service users, and referring agents and volunteers. How do their understandings of religion and spirituality compare with dominant definitions within current social work literature?

Islamic

Inherent within the research questions is recognition that defining what is 'Islamic' is subject to negotiation and contestation and that the term is open to multiple subjective interpretations within varying contexts. The contemporary quest for authenticity is discussed by Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.54) who notes that 'intense competition exists among Muslims in Britain today about what counts as the most authentic and authoritative interpretation and practice of Islam.'

Within heterogeneous Muslim communities these processes are further complicated through the increasingly prominent role of 'mass communications' enabling a diversity of theological opinion to be offered (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, p.56). This study of the IWO explored how different individuals constructed and utilised Islamic identity within a context of service provision, with recognition that this may be variable and changing. It was acknowledged that identities are fluid, dynamic and localised, especially within an emerging organisation. Exploring these dynamics was at the heart of the research.

The anthropological critiques of El-Zein (2011) and Varisco (2011) regarding the nature of Islam are also relevant. For El-Zein (2011, p.78) it can be questioned whether 'a single true Islam exists at all' which anthropologists can objectively capture. Similarly, Varisco (2011, p.336, 322), suggests that 'a pre-given, ideal-typed and essentialized idea of Islam has little heuristic value as an anthropological concept' and instead suggests that 'anthropologists cannot observe Islam, but only Muslims, as they articulate and express themselves in their practices and discourses.' Asad's (2011, p.104) notion of Islam as a 'discursive tradition' is of particularly relevant for understanding issues of identity construction, manifestation and contestation. Asad (2011, p.104) suggests that:

'A tradition consists essentially of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice... An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to concepts of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present.'

In line with Asad (2011), a focus in data analysis was upon exploring the theoretical construction, manifestation and contestation of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse.

Culture

It was also necessary to consider the concept of culture, particularly organisational culture, and its relationship to religion. Geertz (1993, p.5) suggests that 'the concept of culture... is essentially a semiotic one' and that the analytical approach towards such a concept should be 'an interpretive one in search of meaning.' Furthermore, Geertz (1993, p.90) suggests that religion constitutes a cultural 'system of symbols' which influences the 'moods and motivations in men' and articulates a 'general order of existence' which has 'an aura of factuality.' Of primary concern in this research is deciphering the notion of culture as it is understood by participants, and how they negotiate and distinguish between what is cultural, religious and Islamic.

Alvesson (2002, p.5-7) suggests that within organisational research, culture may be understood to be a 'cohesive system of meanings and symbols in terms of which social interaction takes place' and as the 'glue holding the organization together.' However, it is not unanimously agreed whether such an organisational culture pre-dates the establishment of the organisation and exists independently to it. As Schwartzman (1993, p.33-34) argues, within organisational research, culture can be viewed either 'as an external variable imported into the organization through its members' or as 'something that develops within an organization.' In line with the second position taken by Schwartzman (1993), Alvesson (2002) suggests an understanding of organisations as constituting cultures in themselves. This research engages directly with these ideas by considering the organisational cohesiveness of the IWO, especially in relation to the influence of external organisations, particularly regarding the notion of professionalism.

Welfare

Numerous authors have sought to define the concept of welfare. Midgley (1997, p.4) differentiates between the idea of welfare in its broadest sense, relating to 'a state or condition of well-being', and the notion of welfare 'in a narrow sense' which refers to 'to charitable activities or government social programs for the poor.' Midgley (1997, p.8) also suggests that 'social work is the best example of a *professional social welfare institution*.' O'Brien and Penna (1998, p.7) define 'social welfare' in three ways. Firstly, they identify it as relating to 'well-being', and to 'levels of health, security, material prosperity and

participation' (O'Brien and Penna, 1998, p.7). Secondly, they define it as 'a system of social and institutional relationships through which people secure or maintain their individual or collective welfare' (O'Brien and Penna, 1998, p.7). Thirdly, they describe social welfare as 'a discourse', a 'matrix of knowledges' and a 'culturally constructed and politically sanctioned framework for defining experience' (O'Brien and Penna, 1998, p.8). Jawad (2012, p. 14) argues that there is a need to re-evaluate the notion of well-being and to consider 'what a religious perspective brings to our understandings of social welfare.' Jawad (2012, p.228, 238) proposes a focus on '*way(s) of being*', as a 'broadening of the concept of wellbeing or welfare', in order to move beyond 'utilitarian assumptions about the maximisation of individual pleasures.'

The definition of welfare utilised within this research draws upon the works of these authors in various ways. A particular focus is upon exploring welfare in Midgley's (1997) narrower sense, in relation to the operation of organisations providing support and assistance, with recognition that social work represents a professionalised form of social welfare provision. In analysing the role of the IWO in particular, O'Brien and Penna's (1998) notion of social welfare as discourse is also pertinent as an analytical lens to explore the relationship and interaction between mainstream and Islamic approaches to social work theory and practice. Jawad's (2012, p.238) critique is also relevant to this study in highlighting the distinctive values which may underpin the rationale and provision of social welfare services by religious groups and individuals. For example, Azmi (1991, p.172) argues that 'traditional Islam has a distinct understanding of the notion of "welfare" itself' which he concedes to be 'in an entirely different matrix altogether from the modern one.' This is as it based on a different 'conception of the nature of man' and his needs (Azmi, 1991, p.172). Drawing upon notions such as *zakat* and *sadaqah*, Dean and Khan (1998, p.399) suggest that Islam presents 'an intellectual challenge concerning the basis on which human welfare is to be conceptualised.' This is because Islam 'eschews the dualism of the Western enlightenment' and distinctions made 'between the secular and the religious', 'between politics and morality' and 'between public obligation and private belief' (Dean and Khan, 1998, p. 399). Analysing the role of the IWO aimed to explore how they engaged with these epistemological challenges in seeking to provide professional social welfare services.

Multi-Method Case Study Approach

Micro-Ethnographic Case Study

Having established the central research questions, Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.209) advocate that within methodological selection ‘the key is to choose the method that fits the problem.’ In researching this particular organisation, a micro-ethnographic case study utilising multiple methods, predominantly qualitative but also quantitative, is suitable for several reasons. A focus upon qualitative ethnographic methods, involving participant observation and interviewing, facilitates the production of nuanced ‘descriptions and explanations of particular phenomena’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.25). As Silverman (2000, p.8) suggests, an ethnographic approach recognises that ‘there are areas of social reality which statistics alone cannot measure’ yet which qualitative methods may explore. Ethnographic fieldwork, producing data in the form of ‘fieldnotes, tape recordings, pictures and artefacts’, allows the researcher to comprehend ‘key concepts in terms of the insider’s perspective’ (Spradley, 1980, p.63, Jorgensen, 1989, p.35). An ethnographic approach is consistent with the social constructionist methodology in facilitating exploration of the multiple ways in which Islamic identity is significant in the research setting for the individuals involved with the organisation. Combining predominantly qualitative methods with limited quantitative data collection and analysis may help ‘capitalize on the strengths’ of different methods and ‘plug the gaps’ within the data set (Punch, 2005, p.240, 242).

Shaw and Gould (2001, p.138) suggest that an ethnographic study may be identified as ‘micro’ when focusing upon ‘the forms of life of a social sub-group or an organization such as a team in a welfare agency.’ Concentrating on a single organisation (the IWO) defines the ethnographic research as micro in nature. The adoption of a case study method facilitates the generation of ‘in-depth, contextualised understanding of the lives of individuals’ through focusing on a single locale in rich detail and depth (Greene *et al.*, 2010, p.327). Case studies are particularly relevant when investigating a social context in which ‘the case represents an extreme or unique case’ (Yin, 1989, p.41). The IWO is a relatively unique organisation in relation to the array of local voluntary-sector BME organisations in Bridston which prioritise ethnic and racial identities within their self-definition (Warden, 2009). A case study method aligns with a social constructionist positioning as it does not aim to generalise ‘to populations or universes’ but focuses instead upon localized meanings (Yin, 1989, p.20).

Participant Observation and Interviews

Participant observation is particularly significant as a 'strategy and method for gaining access to the interior, seemingly subjective aspects of human existence' (Jorgensen, 1989, p.21). As Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.215) highlight, participant observation allows the researcher to focus upon 'interactions, group processes, talk and evolving situations' within multiple contexts. In combination with interviewing, it is possible for the researcher to 'reconstruct stories of what happened' during observation and to benefit from the 'trust' and 'rapport' developed during observation within the interview context (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.3, Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, p.210). As Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.221) suggest, the use of multiple methods within qualitative ethnography may enable interviews to 'confirm, cast doubt on, enrich or make unexpected discoveries' related to earlier observations. This 'triangulation' of methods can be particularly significant for a researcher embodying an outsider identity within the research context (Punch, 1998, p.247). For Schwartzman (1993, p.4) the focus within ethnographic research is upon 'both what people say and what people do' and the combined use of participant observation and interviewing may facilitate this.

Participant observation took place in a variety of contexts during the everyday life of the organisation, including at volunteer training sessions, funeral training sessions held for Muslim women, a women's social support group, a mother and toddler group, evaluation team meetings and at two presentations given by the IWO's Director at Bridston's Third Sector Conferences in 2010 and 2011. By conducting observations in a variety of settings, I was able to meet a wide range of people associated with the organisation, including staff, volunteers, and service users. Participant observation initially began only with staff members and volunteers before moving on to more sensitive research contexts (such as the women's social support group). Information sheets and opt-out forms were supplied to those who contributed to the participant observation. I also introduced myself to participants and explained about the research at the beginning of these events and meetings to gain verbal consent. As a result of the University evaluation (see section below on 'The Evaluation'), participant observation primarily took place at activities relating specifically to the Tranquility Project, such as the volunteer and funeral training sessions. Before beginning the participant observation and interviews, I attended meetings with Tranquility Project staff to discuss the proposed research as part of the pre-research phase of negotiating access (see section below on 'Access').

During the evaluation team meetings, training sessions and at the Director's conference presentations I was able to take notes whilst observing; many other attendees were doing the same. However, I did not take notes during observation of the women's social support groups. These were written up afterwards, to avoid creating discomfort for the service users. Most of the women attending the social support group did not have English as a first language. In this case, a staff member helped to explain the nature of the research and to establish verbal consent. Following consultation with the IWO staff members, it was agreed that participant observation would not occur during service user assessments and counselling sessions. Despite potentially being of utility to the research, it was agreed that observing these individual sessions may be detrimental to the well-being of the service users; this ultimately took precedence. Following Quraishi (2008, p.458) I felt that 'there is a positive onus not to inhibit the functioning of the institution' in which research is conducted.

In parallel with my fieldwork I also attended other Muslim community events in Bridston, including *halaqas* led by the organisation's Director, Arabic classes and a Muslim Families Activity Afternoon. Attending these events often enabled me to interact with the staff and volunteers of the organisation, thereby developing my relationships with them outside the IWO's office. One attendee of the Arabic classes also later attended the mother and toddler group which was observed. Attendees of the *halaqas* also participated in volunteer and funeral training sessions, thus strengthening my relationships within and beyond the organisation. Furthermore, attending the *halaqas* allowed me to gain greater understanding of the theological perspectives of the organisation's Director. Specific *halaqas* on the subject of mental health and well-being provided particularly relevant insights.

Semi-structured interviews⁸ took place, initially with 12 staff members during the beginning stages of the fieldwork, before moving onto interviews with volunteers, referring agencies and service users. A generic list of staff interview questions was pre-prepared although interview participants were encouraged to elaborate on certain topics depending on their experience in different areas such as counselling and advocacy. The staff interviews varied in length, the longest being just over an hour and the shortest being half an hour. The shortest interview was with a staff member who had only been working at the organisation for a few months and was unable to comment on several questions, especially about changes which had occurred during the life-span of the organisation. Furthermore, this participant did not have

⁸ Interview schedule available in Appendix 1

English as a first language and so did not give the lengthy answers that other staff members were able to provide. During the fieldwork period, the IWO Director's *shaykh* visited Bridston and I was invited to attend an audience with the *shaykh* to ask about the influences underpinning the IWO's model. Quraishi (2008) notes that employees within an organisation may feel compelled to participate in research when their employer has consented to the project. As such, it was stressed to staff members within the information sheets that if they did not wish to participate that no-one other than myself would know. Although given the option to opt-out of the research, no staff members chose to do so.

Interviews took place with five volunteers working in different areas including administration, advocacy and befriending. The project manager acted as a gatekeeper, suggesting names of volunteers who could be interviewed. While this facilitated access, the manager was also able to be selective in who was not interviewed. The IWO administrator telephoned the selected volunteers to check they were happy to be interviewed before passing on their contact details to me. Interviews took place at the interviewee's choice of location and lasted for an average of forty minutes each. To try and overcome any potential bias in selection by the project manager, informal conversations also took place with volunteers at the IWO's volunteer and funeral training sessions.

Similarly, in order to interview staff in referring agencies, IWO personnel acted as gatekeepers by composing a list of 26 individuals whom I could contact, to whom they had already written a preliminary e-mail introducing the research. These individuals reflected a wide spectrum of organisations, including local voluntary sector BME organisations as well as mental health professionals from Community Mental Health Teams in and near Bridston. These individuals received an e-mail from me, asking if they would be willing to be interviewed, along with a copy of the information sheet and consent form. By offering interviewees a telephone rather than a face-to-face interview it was hoped to encourage participation for people who could not spare the time for a face-to-face interview. A total of nine people from referring agencies were finally interviewed. Interviews with referrers varied in length as some had referred greater numbers of service users to the IWO than others and there had been differing levels of contact between the referrers and the IWO during this process. Interviews typically lasted for half an hour.

I was able to interview eight service users. These were people who had left contact details on a service user satisfaction survey and agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview by the

researcher. Further information about the process of interviewing these individuals is described below (see the section below on ‘Ethical Issues’). The opportunity to survey and interview these individuals came about largely as the result of an organisational evaluation which was commissioned by the IWO from Cardiff University following the commencement of the PhD study.

Service User Satisfaction Survey and Database Analysis

A satisfaction survey, consisting of 11 questions, was sent out to a sample of the IWO’s service users in June 2011.⁹ The aim of this survey was to measure levels of satisfaction with the services provided, to ask service users to note any changes in their well-being, and to ask what elements they felt were most important in providing an Islamic welfare service. One main aim of the survey was also to find service users who were willing to participate in a follow-up interview, especially as I anticipated that the response rate to the survey may be too low to draw significant conclusions, due to potential linguistic barriers. However, service users did not have to leave contact details on the survey, allowing them to participate anonymously. Czaja and Blair (1996, p.35) highlight how postal surveys that allow for complete anonymity are of particular utility in researching ‘sensitive topics’ and in attempting to maximise response rates. The overall response rate was just under 25%.

Where possible, questions used in the survey were adapted from existing surveys. Question five’s¹⁰ scale regarding service user well-being was drawn from the British Social Attitudes Survey and Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, and question six’s¹¹ scale regarding satisfaction was adopted from the SCOPE (Social and Community Opportunities Profile) questionnaire developed at Swansea University. Difficulties arose in trying to find an existing measure of ethnicity which contained a ‘Middle Eastern’ category. It was felt that such a category was necessary to add to the questionnaire as participants may not feel they fitted into White, Asian or Black categories. Existing questionnaires aimed at the BME community, such as the Fourth Survey and the EMPIRIC (Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates) Survey were checked but neither included this variable. Having redacted the ethnicity scale from these questionnaires, a ‘Middle Eastern’ category was also added.

⁹ See Appendix 19 for a copy of the survey covering letter, Appendix 20 for a copy of the satisfaction survey, and Appendix 22 for further information regarding sampling and response rates

¹⁰ Question five asked: ‘Do you feel that the help from the IWO has improved your well-being?’

¹¹ Question six asked: ‘Overall how do you feel about the help you have received from the IWO?’

The content and wording of the survey was developed in conjunction with IWO staff members during the course of several e-mails and evaluation team meetings. One particular discussion was over the use of the term *ruqyah* as a tick box provided in possible answers for the first and third questions.¹² Initially this tick box was listed by the researcher as ‘Treatment for *jinn (ruqyah)*’ but it was requested by staff members that I changed this to ‘Treatment with *ruqyah (spiritual healing with Quran and Sunnah)*.’ They noted that the majority of service users do not receive *ruqyah* treatment or have *jinn*-related problems and would be surprised to see this written on the questionnaire. It was also acknowledged from the outset that difficulties would be encountered in producing a survey due to the multiplicity of languages spoken by the IWO’s service users. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that even for those service users who spoke languages other than English, they may not have the ability to complete a questionnaire in their spoken language. To attempt to address this, a covering letter was developed which offered copies of the satisfaction survey in alternative languages, such as Arabic and Urdu, by telephoning the IWO’s office. The covering letter, signed by the Director, aimed to encourage participation by stressing that the responses to the survey would help develop the organisation for the benefit of future service users and would inform the organisation’s funders.

It was decided that the survey would be sent out to a sample that included both ‘live’ and ‘archive’ service users who had either begun accessing or stopped accessing the IWO’s services within a one year period from June 2010-June 2011. By including archive service users it was agreed that they would perhaps be more able to identify long-term changes to their well-being. However, IWO staff members indicated that archived service users prior to June 2010 would be problematic to include; many may have changed address. Following the agreement to include archive service users within the survey, an additional eleventh question was added which asked whether the individual was a current or former service user. This was to aid analysis of question five’s measure of well-being in helping explain why some service users may indicate greater changes to their well-being than others. In order to establish whether the questionnaire was user friendly, a draft copy of the questionnaire was sent to five service users, consisting of three archive and two live service users. The covering letter stressed that it was a draft copy intended to establish ease of use with space at the end of the questionnaire given for further comments. After the first week only one questionnaire had

¹² Question one asked: ‘Which service(s) at the IWO do/did you access?’ and question three asked ‘Which of the following do you think it is important for an Islamic welfare service to provide?’

been returned. As the returned questionnaire was anonymous, the IWO's administrator telephoned all five service users to request the return of the questionnaire if they had not already done so. However, in total only one of the questionnaires during the pilot was returned. To accommodate this, Muslim colleagues and fellow postgraduate researchers at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK at Cardiff University were asked to look over the questionnaire and assess its ease of use.

Following the piloting, I participated in the administration of the survey by filling envelopes for the IWO's project administrator who then wrote on the service users' names and addresses. Return envelopes were included which were addressed to the 'Evaluation Team' at the IWO's address. It was stressed within the covering letter that staff members would not open the returned envelopes. To try to ameliorate an initially poor response rate, I subsequently telephoned those live IWO service users within the sampling frame to try and complete extra questionnaires via the telephone. In doing so, I followed the IWO's organisational policies which prioritised calling service users' mobile phones in the first instance, rather than a landline. If phoning a landline and a friend or family member answered, I asked to speak to the individual in question 'regarding a survey.' I did not disclose the topic of the survey. To carry out these phone calls, a mobile phone belonging to the IWO team was used, rather than the IWO's landline itself. Additional letters were also sent to a sample of 30 service users from the Tranquility Project's database of live service users in April 2012, who had been referred to the organisation within the set time scale, inviting them to be interviewed if they wished, in order to boost responses/participation.¹³ Unfortunately none of these 30 service users responded to the letter.

Alongside the survey, I analysed an anonymised database of 495 of the IWO's service users via SPSS in order to map their demographic profile, and to explore any statistical links between the ethnicities and ages of service users, their sources of and reasons for referral, and the frequencies with which each individual service was accessed.¹⁴ These were service users who had accessed services provided by the Tranquility Project at the IWO. Names, addresses and contact details of the service users were removed by the IWO's administrator prior to sending me the database in Excel (later imported into SPSS). Analysing the database in SPSS aimed to contribute primarily to the second research question focusing upon service user

¹³ A copy of this letter is provided in Appendix 21

¹⁴ Further detailed information about the results from this is presented in Appendix 24

perspectives, and to help complement the small-scale satisfaction survey and contextualise the service user interview feedback.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can enable ‘complementarity’, overcoming ‘the limitations of any particular method’ (Alexander *et al.*, 2008, p.128, Greene *et al.*, 2010, p.329). As Gilgun (2010, p.297) suggests, ‘social work is a complicated endeavour that requires a wide range of methods that generate knowledge about policies, problems and practices.’ The sequential use of qualitative and quantitative methods within the fieldwork ensured that discussions regarding the questionnaire content took place during initial qualitative fieldwork. Thus, the ‘qualitative research facilitates quantitative research’ (Alexander *et al.*, 2008, p.131, Punch, 1998, p.247). In overcoming potential ‘epistemological and methodological barriers’ to using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Padgett, 1998, p.139), Mason (2006, p.9, 10) advocates ‘mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way’ through the use of ‘qualitative thinking.’ For Mason (2006, p.10, 22) such an approach recognises that ‘social experiences and lived realities are multidimensional’ and that the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods can allow for ‘richness and nuance.’

Organisational Research

There are both opportunities and challenges in conducting fieldwork in an organisational context. Schwartzman (1993) highlights the potential for observation of team meetings as a particularly rich source of data for a researcher. As she notes, meetings can be viewed as ‘communication events’ in which the researcher can observe the nature of interactions between members of the organisation, ‘channels of communication’, ‘spatial arrangement’, and the use of ‘proverbs, jokes, [and] prayers’ (Schwartzman, 1993, p.64-65). As such, attendance at these meetings can constitute a valuable source of data for research focused on exploring organisational culture.

During fieldwork, both Gabriel (2000) and Schwartzman (1993) advise that the researcher focus upon eliciting stories constructed by participants in the organisation. As Gabriel (2000, p.2) argues, ‘stories open valuable windows into the emotional, political and symbolic lives of organisations, offering researchers a powerful instrument for carrying out research.’ Similarly, as Schwartzman (1993, p.44) contends, stories ‘shape and sustain individuals’ images of the organisation in which they work.’

One particular challenge in undertaking organisational fieldwork is to recognise and see through the ‘performances’ of staff members toward the researcher (Goffman, 1959, p.28). As Goffman (1959, p.210) elucidates, ‘within the walls of a social establishment we find a team of performers who co-operate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation.’ However, such fronts are not wholly problematic. They constitute a rich source of data in themselves, particularly from a social constructionist perspective. By adopting an ethnographic approach, there is scope to engage with these fronts and to explore how they change (if at all) as respondents become increasingly familiar with researchers.

The Fieldwork Process

Access

Many researchers working with Muslim communities in Britain have documented the potential difficulties that may arise in trying to secure physical and social access to particular research contexts (Bolognani, 2007, Gilliat-Ray, 2005, Jacobsen, 1998). Reflecting upon fieldwork undertaken in 2005, Bolognani (2007, p.290, 285) suggests that the post-9/11 and 7/7 political context has created a climate of wariness and mistrust which has resulted in a situation in which ‘ethnography as process may be... the only option that can guarantee access’ and through which the outsider researcher may be considered ‘halal.’ Lee and Renzetti (1993) suggest that any research involving religious topics can be considered sensitive and such sensitivity can be understood as particularly magnified in the contemporary context. Within the early stages of research, during a pre-fieldwork phase, securing access for the study was a key focus.

Before beginning formal data collection, a pre-research phase of discussion and negotiation with key gatekeepers within the IWO, including the Director and project management staff, was necessary to ensure physical access, and to develop the direction of the research. As Padgett (1998, p.46) comments, such a process is an ‘essential first step’ in order to secure entry into a ‘hierarchical organisation.’ During the preliminary months of the PhD study, this initial phase entailed several meetings between senior IWO staff members and myself, alongside the exchange of letters, e-mails and telephone conversations, in which the nature of the research and potential further developments were discussed and agreed.¹⁵ This pre-research phase also aimed to develop relationships with staff members at the IWO to

¹⁵ One of these letters is included in Appendix 2

encourage research access. As Coffey (1999, p.56) notes, ethnographic 'fieldwork pivots on personal relationships'. It was necessary to develop these relationships before beginning observations and interviewing. During this stage fieldnotes were written to document the access process, with particular reference to issues such as reflexivity. As May (2001, p.158) notes, reflecting upon the processes of negotiating access in the elementary stages of a research project is 'fundamental to the aims of enhancing, understanding and explaining social relations.' This is particularly pertinent when attempting to access a 'sensitive' and closed research setting and in 'limited-entry social situations' (Lee and Renzetti, 1993, Spradley, 1980, p.49).

To foster co-operation with the organisation, an open approach to the focus of the research was adopted in these initial meetings. During these conversations concerns regarding service user contact came to the fore. As Spradley (1980, p.18) suggests, within the bargaining stages of ethnographic research, one should 'begin with informant-expressed needs, then develop a research agenda.' By adopting this approach, I hoped that the developing research questions would be of interest and value to the organisation and that this would maximise willingness to participate. As Schwartzman (1993, p.54) comments, within the initial stages of research ethnographers should 'not automatically assume that they know the right questions to ask.' Due to the demanding schedule of the IWO's Director, meetings would often last for about thirty minutes, and were sometimes interrupted by service user appointments overrunning or individuals arriving early. Rather than being a set-back, this allowed me to spend extra time in the IWO's waiting room developing relationships with other staff members. During initial refinement of the research topic it was necessary to balance the interests of the Director with the capabilities of the researcher, alongside the usual practicalities that shape fieldwork. An initial enthusiasm on the Director's part for quantitative methods involving non-English speaking respondents posed methodological difficulties for an English speaking researcher trained primarily in qualitative research methods. However, by integrating the interests of the Director as far as possible, an agreeable compromise of interests was reached.

The Evaluation

Towards the end of the first year of preliminary research in 2010, the IWO commissioned research staff at Cardiff University to undertake an evaluation of the outcomes of the mental health support services provided by their Tranquility Project. One of the University staff members commissioned was also a member of my supervisory team. This provided scope for

me to assist with the evaluation through the inclusion of the qualitative data collection which I had already proposed for my PhD, as well as some additional quantitative research. Alongside these elements, the evaluation also aimed to monitor service user recovery, rehabilitation and relapse and to evaluate whether the IWO was meeting its project aims.

By overlapping the PhD research and the commissioned evaluation, physical access to the research field was consolidated and this potentially provided further incentive for co-operation by the staff of the organisation. Inevitably perhaps, the power dynamics appeared to shift and I felt it was more justifiable to ask to interview service users and to attend at service user support groups. Lee and Renzetti (1993, p.125) highlight that ‘the completion of a piece of research *for* the gatekeeper’ may be agreed ‘in return for access.’ However, this development had potential implications for the nature of the interview discussions and for the social access granted. During the interviews, some staff members were perhaps slightly less inclined to talk about difficulties or challenges in using an Islamic approach to service provision as they were possibly concerned about creating a positive impression, knowing that the evaluation feedback would be sent to their main funding body. Had the purpose of the interviews been solely for the PhD research then staff members may have been more willing to disclose self-critical reflections, although there may still have been some reluctance. On balance, however, the physical access provided by the University evaluation was felt to outweigh these potential issues.

Field Roles

A body of literature has already documented the roles that outsider researchers working with British Muslim communities have adopted in the field in order to help foster access and diminish their position as entirely ‘other’. Within McLoughlin’s (2000) fieldwork he was able to teach children at a local mosque and so assumed an identity as a teacher as well as researcher. Similarly Barton (1986, p.16) described how he was viewed as embodying a wide spectrum of identities including ‘friend of the imam, journalist, Christian priest, student’ and ‘new convert to Islam’ which helped contextualise his presence within the research setting. Barton (1986, p.17) highlighted the potential long-term advantages in embodying such an outsider status as ‘at the point where confidence is established, the status of an outsider is of advantage, for he is not seen to be partisan.’

During my study, I embodied multiple identities, from student, to member of the evaluation team, to being called a 'team member' by the IWO's Director. Not being a social worker or mental health professional was potentially beneficial, perhaps lessening any sense of feeling scrutinized by my presence when observing and interviewing. When present at the IWO's office, for example, to participate in evaluation team meetings, I was invited to enter in to private staff work spaces not normally accessible to other individuals. In this sense, I took on a role more akin to other IWO staff members. However, at other times, when visiting the office for interview appointments with IWO staff members, I sat in the waiting room area in a role more akin to the IWO's service users.

Alongside the embodiment of these identities, the degree to which I engaged in participation and observation varied according to context and circumstances. For example, during the funeral training observations, I was relatively inconspicuous, in direct contrast to my active role as interviewer in other research environs. By embodying an 'outsider status' within the interview contexts, Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.212) suggest that this enables researchers to ask 'probing' questions which it may be not be possible for an insider to ask. Within this particular research context, I was able to include questions regarding the efficacy of other welfare services provided within the Muslim community, such as the local mosque, during staff interviews. Age seemed to be a significant factor in maximising rapport during some interview encounters. The longest interview was with the Tranquility Project administrator who was close in age to myself.

It may be assumed that religious or ethnic identity may be the most salient characteristics of the researcher in building successful rapport with research participants in contexts such as the IWO. However, the significance of gender when researching Muslim communities should not be underestimated (Bolognani, 2007, Sands *et al.*, 2007). As Bolognani (2007, p.281) notes, whilst conducting fieldwork in Muslim communities, non-Muslim female researchers have found that they may be permitted greater access than non-Muslim males limited by the constraints of *pardah* yet may also transcend such limitations by assuming the status of 'honorary male' in the eyes of Muslim men. In the context of the IWO, I was able to attend female-only events organised by the IWO, such as the funeral training sessions for Muslim women. Furthermore, interviews conducted with female members of staff often felt more relaxed, open and informal. During one interview, a participant removed her *niqab*, allowing me to see her reactions to my interview questions, whether looking quizzed or amused or

thoughtful, and it is unlikely that a male researcher would have been permitted to observe these reactions. For Sands *et al.* (2007, p.369), it can be understood that shared characteristics such as gender may serve as ‘cultural bridges’ which can overcome some of the limitations of not sharing a religious or ethnic identity.

Within all of these circumstances, it was necessary to consider the impact of bodily dynamics, with conscious observance and maintenance of gender norms as far as possible for a non-Muslim researcher, manifest particularly through clothing worn within the fieldwork context (Gilliat-Ray, 2010b). As Coffey (1999, p.65, p.23) notes, ‘clothing can establish a particular sort of embodied image’ which may be significant within the ‘crafting of ethnographic selfhood’ by researchers. I wore modest and smart clothing when visiting the IWO office, although more informal (but equally modest) clothes were worn at the *halaqas*, similar to those worn by the other individuals attending. Adherence to these norms, however, did not extend to wearing hijab. I felt this would create a misleading impression of my identity.

Ethical Issues

In order to address the potential concerns of the IWO regarding my research, ethical issues were discussed with key gatekeepers from preliminary meetings in early 2010 onwards. Additionally the research proposal, information sheets, opt-out forms and consent forms were approved by Cardiff University’s School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee prior to conducting the research.¹⁶ There were two distinctive ethical challenges in conducting this project. One centred on research with service users. The other concerned the anonymity of the organisation participating in the research.

Service User Research

The involvement of service users in the research was raised as an initial concern by members of staff during preliminary meetings, with a need for reassurance of exactly what this contact would involve. In order to facilitate a sensitive approach to research with service users, a two-stage strategy of fieldwork was employed. The first stages of the fieldwork focused solely upon qualitative interviews and participant observation of staff and volunteers. Following the emergence of the evaluation, there was greater focus on research with the

¹⁶ Copies of the information sheets, opt-out forms and consent forms are provided in Appendices 7-18

IWO's service users. The service user satisfaction survey was developed in conjunction with the organisation's staff members. It was agreed with the IWO staff members that interviews would be allowed to take place with those service users who willingly left contact details on their completed questionnaire. The questionnaire covering letter stressed that service users need only leave contact details on the questionnaire if they were interested in being interviewed, allowing them to participate anonymously if they wished. The covering letter also emphasised that service users could answer as few or as many questions as they wanted. Furthermore, in the interview information sheet given to those service users who left contact details on their completed questionnaire it was stressed that they were under no compulsion to participate in an interview and that there would be no loss of access to the IWO's services should they choose not to take part. As such, there was no coercion for service users to take part in the research. In order to reassure the IWO staff, I also obtained an enhanced CRB check for working with vulnerable adults. It was also agreed that interviews with service users would only take place using a pre-agreed list of questions which staff members had confirmed beforehand.

In order to ensure that no individuals suffering significant mental distress would be interviewed, the identity of those service users nominating themselves for interview was checked with IWO staff members prior to interview. Interviewees were made aware of this prior to interview during an initial telephone call to arrange the interview and on the interview information sheet. In order to address safeguarding concerns, a clause was also added to the interview information sheet informing service users that should they disclose anything which indicated that they, or any other individual, may be at risk, that this information may be passed on to IWO staff members. As Quraishi (2008, p.458) notes, 'confidentiality is not absolute but conditional' and a disclosure clause can be significant in protecting participants and researcher.

Interviews were arranged at a time and location of the service users' choice, with seven out of the eight interviews being conducted via telephone. Interviews took place in the medium of English and it was suggested in the information sheet that interviewees could ask for family members or staff members to be present to help translate if desired. One service user interviewee who did not speak fluent English participated in a telephone interview in conjunction with her support worker who was able to translate and provide additional feedback. After their interviews, service users were given an information sheet containing contact details of other support services and organisations aside from the IWO in the Bridston

locale.¹⁷ Attending volunteer training sessions and hearing about the experiences of the IWO staff members during qualitative interviews helped me prepare for working sensitively with service users. Interviews varied in length relating to the different levels of contact each service user had had with the IWO and typically lasted for thirty minutes each. I was mindful as to how far to probe service user interviewees for extra details given the sensitive nature of the discussions. The longest interview was with a service user who had been in contact with the IWO for several months regarding an on-going advocacy case and the shortest was with a service user who had only had brief contact with the organisation via telephone.

Liamputtong (2007, p.120) advocates that ethnographic and qualitative methods are particularly 'well-suited to carrying out research with vulnerable people in cross-cultural arenas' in facilitating sensitivity and providing an avenue for participants' perspectives. As Liamputtong (2007, p.7) explains, 'qualitative research methods are flexible and fluid, and therefore, are suited to understanding the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of vulnerable groups.' It was hoped that the follow-up qualitative interviews would allow service users to contribute their understandings, experiences and perspectives to the research, beyond the limitations of the quantitative satisfaction survey.

Politics of Naming

Questions regarding the anonymity of the organisation were raised from preliminary meetings onwards and it was agreed that the identity of the organisation (including its name and location) would remain anonymous within the thesis. Pseudonyms were used within fieldnotes and in interview transcripts. Despite this, there were certain practical difficulties when discussing the research project with the wider Bridston Muslim community. Hearing about the research, people would sometimes ask if I was working with the IWO. This was to be expected, given that it is a comparatively unique organisation in Bridston. It was a paradox. The organisation was an interesting site for research because it constituted a new development within the voluntary sector. But it was also visible and identifiable for this very reason. In providing an answer to those enquiring, I responded that I had liaised with the IWO but did not confirm that they were the primary object of study. Despite every effort being made to preserve anonymity, it was not always in my control. One particular challenge came when networking with delegates at a conference in another city. One Muslim delegate asked me to disclose the name of the organisation because her son had recently been

¹⁷ This sheet is not included in the appendices to preserve the anonymity of Bridston

sectioned with schizophrenia, and she was seeking appropriate assistance for him. In this instance, I felt that disclosing the name and location of the IWO was the ethically correct thing to do, based on a recognition that the ‘ethical conduct of qualitative research is much more than following guidelines provided by ethics committees’ (Ezzy, 2002, p.51).

Further complications stemmed from the need to conceal the location of the organisation within the PhD thesis. The history of Muslim migration to Bridston, and the distinctive ethnic composition of Bridston’s Muslim communities, is potentially relevant in analysing the emergence of the IWO within the city, particularly in relation to other local BME organisations. However, due to the need for obfuscation of the organisation’s identity this discussion becomes problematic. This posed a challenge as to what would constitute an acceptable pseudonym for the organisation, and the city, in fieldnotes and interview transcripts. This was particularly the case when the organisation’s name changed during the course of the research. The name change represented a significant event in the life of the organisation yet it posed an ethical challenge as to how this would be represented within the data. Similar difficulties arose around an appropriate pseudonym for the Director of the organisation. At different times he was referred to as ‘*Shaykh*’ or as ‘Dr Rahman’ by participants. The issue of ‘internal confidentiality’ also had to be addressed when writing up the research findings in order to ensure that research participants were not able to work out the identities of other participants (Guenther, 2009, p.414). Guenther (2009, p.318) notes the inadequacy of ‘thin veiling’ when writing up ethnographic research which can sometimes be ineffective in protecting participants’ identities. Careful consideration was given when including details such as the ethnic background, age, and occupation of different research participants within the main body of the thesis and to include such details only when pertinent to analysing particular quotations and events. It is hoped that the pseudonyms used within this thesis have found an acceptable midpoint in negotiating these tensions.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis began from the earliest stages of data collection onwards. As Ezzy (2002, p.65-66) describes, initial qualitative data analysis begins with ‘transcribing’ recordings of interviews, followed by ‘reading and coding’ which can lead to ‘the addition of questions’ to interview schedules. At these early stages, such coding was in the form of ‘open coding’ to determine key themes before leading to later analysing the ‘relationships between codes’ (Fielding, 2008, p.348). Such a process is described by Punch (2005, p.198) as beginning

with ‘editing, segmenting and summarizing the data’ before ‘coding and memoing’ to find ‘themes, clusters and patterns’ before finally ‘conceptualizing and explaining.’ In conducting such analysis of the interviews and fieldnotes, the focus was upon ‘thematic analysis’ which ‘aims to identify themes within the data’ (Ezzy, 2002, p.88). After initial tentative coding and memoing throughout the fieldwork period, interview transcripts and fieldnotes were uploaded to NVivo 10 during the formal stage of data analysis which began at the end of the fieldwork period in early 2012.¹⁸

Quantitative analysis of the IWO’s database of service users took place using SPSS 20 software. After cleaning the data¹⁹ the SPSS software was used to produce frequencies, cross-tabulations and to conduct chi-square tests between the categorical variables (Pallant, 2010). In order to conduct the chi-square tests for independence between variables, further editing of the database was required, involving collapsing categories within variables in order to ensure that no more than 20% of cells had expected frequencies of less than five and to help ensure the validity of any statistical links found (Pallant, 2010). Given the poor response rate of the service user satisfaction survey, it was only possible to produce basic frequencies as the data set was too small to ensure any validity in running statistical tests.

The Findings Chapters

The first three findings chapters focus upon research question one, which asks: *How is the Islamic identity of the organisation constructed, manifested and contested?* In answering this question, the chapters explore the role of the Islamic social work discourse developed by the IWO staff members and negotiated by other social actors within the field. This idea of discourse draws upon Foucauldian theory in which it is suggested that ‘everything is constructed and apprehended through discourse’ (Mills, 2003, p.55). A key element in analysing the IWO’s Islamic social work discourse is the recognition that ‘discourses should not be seen as wholly cohesive’, but are negotiated by multiple social actors during everyday life (Mills, 2003, p.64). Furthermore, as Danaker *et al.* (2000, p.36) argue, the concept of ‘discourse has implications for understanding the operations of institutions’ and this is of significance in analysing the role of the IWO. The findings chapters do not present a discourse analysis as is used by some critical linguists (Mills, 1997), but the thematic analysis

¹⁸ See Appendix 25 for further information on the NVivo thematic coding nodes

¹⁹ See Appendix 23 for further information regarding how the data were cleaned

of the data highlights the ways in which the IWO's Islamic social work discourse was constructed, manifested and contested by multiple individuals interacting with the IWO.

Chapter 5: The Theoretical Construction of the Islamic Social Work Discourse

This chapter focuses upon exploring the theoretical construction of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse and its influences, as described by IWO staff members during individual interviews and at two conference presentations given by the IWO Director. The chapter is underpinned by Morgan's (2011, p.2) suggestion that one may distinguish 'between 'theory' and 'practice'', citing Bourdieu's distinction between 'the rules of the card game and actual play.' The chapter explores the similarities between the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO and professional statutory social work discourses, identifying potential overlaps. In particular, the chapter focuses upon the Islamic model of the IWO which is central to the Islamic social work discourse, as well as the themes of spirituality and of being non-judgemental. Furthermore, the chapter explores the influence of the Director in constructing this discourse, analysing the role of charisma as a source of legitimacy for his constructions.

Chapter 6: Manifesting the Islamic Social Work Discourse in Everyday Practices

This chapter focuses upon how the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO is manifested within everyday practices, drawing upon ideas and critiques of everyday religion and Morgan's (2011) definition of practices. For Morgan (2011, p.69), 'discourses are not produced in a vacuum. Discourses themselves draw upon practices.' In explaining the notion of practices, Morgan (2011, p.17) suggests that one definition may be 'the actual application or use of an idea, belief or method, as opposed to the theory or principles of it.' As such, the chapter explores how the IWO's practices draw upon the theoretical constructions of the Islamic social work discourse as described by the organisation's staff members in Chapter 5. The practices explored in this chapter include the IWO's service user assessments, provision of Islamic counselling, advocacy and community chaplaincy, and the delivery of volunteer training sessions. It is also important to recognise the role that such practices have in contributing to the process of constructing the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO itself. As Burr (2003, p.21) highlights, construction occurs 'within everyday discourse between people in interaction.' Furthermore, Beckford (2003, p.197) suggests that 'the social construction of the meaning of religion' is 'a continuous process of negotiation, reproduction and challenge.'

The chapter is also influenced by ideas of ‘everyday’, ‘lived’ and ‘vernacular’ religion, which scholars such as Ammerman (2007), McGuire (2008) and Bowman (2005, p.165) use for ‘locating religion in everyday life’. The affinity between ideas of ‘lived’ religion and ‘everyday practices’ are described by McGuire (2008, p.208) who highlights that an ‘individual’s lived religion is experienced and expressed in everyday practice.’ For Ammerman (2007, p.5), exploring such ‘lived’ religion involves ‘looking for the many ways religion may be interwoven with the lives of the people we have been observing.’ Ammerman (2007) and McGuire (2008, p.12) suggest that the focus in exploring ‘everyday’ religion should be upon ‘ordinary people’ not ‘official spokespersons.’ It is debateable as to whether the IWO members of staff are ‘official spokespersons’ of or for Islam in their roles as Islamic counsellors, advocates and community chaplains, which are not traditional Islamic religious leadership roles (such as those identified by Gilliat-Ray (2010a)). However, it is worth noting Bowman’s (2005) comment that even an official spokesperson may practice ‘vernacular’ religion in the context of their everyday life.

In drawing upon these ideas, the chapter recognises Orsi’s (2012) critique of documenting everyday religion, in which he argues that one must acknowledge the agency of individual subjects within an everyday context in the process of construction. He refutes the dichotomy of ‘thinking persons’ who construct and ‘disciplined subjectivities’ who are subject to such constructions. This also draws upon Dillon’s (2001, p411) critique of Bourdieu’s theory of the religious field, in which she argues for ‘the autonomy of human agency in creating meaning’ during everyday religious practices. As Dianteill (2003, p.535) argues, ‘Bourdieu’s sociology of religion is, first and foremost, a sociology of Catholicism.’ It is important to recognise that the Islamic context in which the IWO operates does not have a parallel ecclesiastical structure to Bourdieu’s twentieth century Catholic milieu. This individual agency within the context of everyday religion is also recognised by Woodhead (2012a, p.7) who suggests that by viewing religion in this manner, it ‘ceases to be treated as some ‘thing’ but as a set of patterned practices, objects and relations.’

Using the term ‘manifestation’ aims to make everyday practices visible. The chapter does not simply explore the theoretical perceptions of staff members (as in Chapter 5), but also aims to explore the experiences of service users, referring agencies and volunteers and the degree to which they recognise Islamic elements (or a lack thereof) during the IWO’s everyday practices. This consideration of practice also extends to analysing the multiple spaces at the

IWO itself, based upon Nasser's (2003, p.26) articulation that 'place' may also be seen to be a 'practice.'

Chapter 7: Contesting the Islamic Social Work Discourse

This chapter explores how the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO has been contested by those both inside the organisation and those external to it, such as service users and referring agencies, within the wider field of service provision, and the impact such contestations may have for the organisation in legitimising their presence within the field. As Jenkins (2002, p.86) comments, referring to Bourdieu's work, 'the field is a crucial mediating context wherein external factors... are brought to bear upon individual practice and institutions.' In particular, the chapter explores the subject of *jinn* possession and beliefs in the evil eye and black magic. Within the IWO's Islamic social work discourse, these ideas are subject to particular contestation by external service providers within the field. The chapter also draws upon service users' critiques of the Islamic approach of the IWO. It becomes clear that there are limits as to how inclusive an Islamic social work discourse can be in providing a relevant service to diverse Muslim communities. Finally, the chapter explores contestation surrounding the name of the IWO which, it is argued, represents a challenging of the role of the organisation and of the Islamic social work discourse within the field of service provision.

Chapter 8: The Significance of the IWO's Islamic Approach to Social Work for Service Users

This chapter focuses upon the second research question which asks '*How is the Islamic identity of the organisation understood to be significant for service users as a welfare resource?*' Drawing upon qualitative interviews with service users, responses to the satisfaction survey and quantitative analysis of the Tranquility Project database, the chapter largely focuses upon the impact of the counselling service, one of the most frequently accessed services at the IWO. Cross-cutting themes explored during the chapter as a whole centre upon provision of services for Muslim women, issues surrounding authority and authenticity, and a comparison to the services being offered by British mosques. The chapter highlights the difficulty of evaluating the impact of such services and considers the role of other factors such as language, culture, ethnicity and gender alongside the potential benefit of a 'faith factor' (von Furstenberg, 2006, p. 39). Exploring the narratives of these IWO service users highlights the complex interplay of such factors, recounting positive experiences as

well as shedding light upon challenges which the IWO faces in providing appropriate services to Muslims.

Chapter 5: The Theoretical Construction of the Islamic Social Work Discourse

Introduction

This chapter has two main aims. Firstly, it presents an introduction to the Islamic Welfare Organisation (the IWO), depicting its emergence within the voluntary sector in Bridston, and outlining the services provided for service users by their Tranquility and Helping Hands projects. There is also an analysis of the profiles of the IWO's staff members and volunteers and this is rooted within academic discussion surrounding the professionalization of informal care-giving roles amongst Muslim communities in Britain. The role of charisma in relation to the authority of the IWO is also discussed.

Secondly, the chapter focuses on the theoretical construction of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse by IWO staff members, primarily by analysing the underlying model described by staff members, but also analysing the concept of spirituality, ideas of spiritual capital, and the importance of being non-judgemental, as highlighted by staff members during interview. The chapter also discusses two presentations given at the Bridston Third Sector Conferences by the IWO's Director in 2010 and 2011 which focused on the psycho-spiritual and multicultural elements of the IWO's Islamic model respectively. It is argued here that while the 2010 presentation sought to emphasise the Islamic elements of the IWO's theoretical model as being of unique and novel value, to help establish the organisation's legitimate presence in the competitive Bridston voluntary sector, the 2011 presentation focused on emphasising that the Islamic elements of the IWO's model sit within a conventional theoretical framework in order to achieve the same aim. Although the reasons underpinning this will be also be explored in Chapter 7, it is argued here that such negotiations are indicative of the difficulties that a faith-based group such as the IWO may experience in seeking to build links with external, secular service providers working in the fields of mental health and social work.

The Islamic Welfare Organisation

How did the IWO emerge?

The establishment of the Islamic Welfare Organisation in the city of Bridston was first proposed by members of the local Muslim community shortly after the millennium, crystallizing gradually into a voluntary sector organisation which acquired its own premises several years later. Three IWO members of staff were especially active in the establishment of the organisation, including the Director Dr Fadil Rahman²⁰ and two members of managerial staff. Prior to the organisation's establishment, Dr Rahman was working with various local mosques and organisations in the area including the Bridston Islamic Society. The two other members of managerial staff were working at other social welfare organisations in the Bridston locale. The IWO emerged as an initiative of the Bridston Islamic Society and began with just three members of staff before expanding to employ further project workers.

Bridston is a city with a diverse ethnic minority population and has an established BME voluntary sector, with a multiplicity of organisations offering welfare services including women's aid, advocacy, refugee mentoring and support for disabled youth. While some of the voluntary sector BME organisations in Bridston are open to individuals from all BME backgrounds, there are also specific initiatives for members of particular ethnic communities. Within this matrix of service provision, the emergence of the IWO as an overtly Islamic organisation was felt to constitute a new development. Discussing other organisations serving the Muslim community in Bridston during interview, one IWO staff member commented that:

'I think a lot of them are just ethnic minority organisations, they're not actually coming with the faith-based aspect, I don't think there's any other welfare service for the Muslim community set up with an Islamic kind of base' (Marwa)

This sentiment was shared by a fellow IWO staff member:

'They serve the Muslim community from an ethnic, cultural place. So they deal with us as part of the BME community but not as a religious community. Whereas with the IWO we specifically come from

²⁰ Referred to by research participants as 'Dr Fadil', 'Dr Rahman', 'the Director' and 'Shaykh'.

a religious community. We don't care what the ethnicity is, to be honest, that's not our main focus. Our main focus is on the religious element' (Soraya)

Staff members at the IWO therefore understood their organisation as constituting a unique development within the voluntary sector in Bridston.

What services does the IWO provide?

The work of the IWO is split into two main projects, each with its own avenue of funding and project aims.

Tranquility Project²¹

The Tranquility Project primarily focuses upon mental health and well-being, offering services including Islamic counselling, befriending, mediation, advocacy, Islamic divorces (including *khul*) and *ruqyah* healing²². This project was the first of the IWO's two projects to emerge and it is supported through funding from charitable sources. Tranquility Project workers also provide volunteer training sessions, funeral training workshops for Muslim women and offer mental health training to other organisations and community groups. The project staff includes a manager, co-ordinator, several project workers specialising in fields such as counselling and advocacy, an administrator and a pool of volunteers. The project staff described the aims of the project as being to provide an appropriate and accessible mental health service to the Muslim community, to increase awareness of mental health issues amongst the community and to foster positive relationships with external service providers.

Helping Hands Project

The Helping Hands Project is a community chaplaincy project which offers practical support and assistance to Muslim men in Bridston who are due to leave prison in the near future or who have recently left prison. In particular, the community chaplains help individuals obtain accommodation and employment and to deal with any issues affecting their settlement back into the Bridston community. The Helping Hands Project is a pilot scheme, based upon a successful community chaplaincy project which has already been developed in North America. The Helping Hands Project is funded by governmental sources, unlike the Tranquility Project. The project began at the IWO with the employment of a project co-ordinator who was already volunteering with the IWO in a chaplaincy capacity and grew to

²¹ Names of both projects have been changed

²² Defined by the IWO Director as 'spiritual healing using the Quran and *Sunnah*' (Fieldnotes 2011)

include an administrator and several other community chaplains working in partnership with prisons around the Bridston area. The project aims to support Muslim ex-offenders settling back into the community thereby reducing rates of reoffending.

Who works for the IWO?

The IWO staff members come from a diverse range of ethnic and professional backgrounds but all are Muslim. All of the employees on the Tranquility Project have degrees in higher education in a range of fields including counselling, psychology, sociology and law. In addition, one project worker who helps the Director with Islamic divorces is a graduate of an Islamic theological seminary. All of the staff on the Tranquility Project are female, although several of their volunteers are male.

The Helping Hands community chaplaincy staff are all graduates from international Islamic theological seminaries (except for the project administrator). During an interview, the Helping Hands project co-ordinator described how *'the team was selected painstakingly... every single individual has a theological training background.'* He also highlighted how, in addition to their qualifications as Islamic scholars, it was essential to recruit individuals for the Helping Hands team who had significant experience of life in the UK and knowledge of the welfare challenges experienced by British Muslims. All of the community chaplaincy staff on the Helping Hands team are male.

During interviews with the staff members, they were asked what had attracted them to working at the Islamic Welfare Organisation and to their particular career field. Responses ranged from wanting to serve God, to a wish to serve the community, and to feeling a sense of belonging in working for the organisation. One interviewee, when asked what in particular influenced his/her career choice, commented *'to be perfectly honest, God.'* Similarly, another staff member commented that upon hearing about the services at the IWO being developed she had felt that *'this is like a Godsend to me.'* Several interviewees highlighted an element of service in their work. In particular, Marwa suggested a dimension of religious servitude in discussing her role, commenting that:

'Through serving the people you're serving God. So you're serving Allah and you're doing it for the sake of Allah and not for yourself' (Marwa)

Ideas of service were also present in interviews with other staff members but instead focused upon serving the community. As Soraya remarked:

'It's just been part of my life's journey, I just want to get out and help people. I want to help people, Muslims or non-Muslims, but I guess specifically within our own community it's helping people to deal with their problems' (Soraya)

Similarly, Leila highlighted that:

'I think it was really the fact that it was a Muslim organisation and I feel happy that I'm working and doing something for the Muslim community' (Leila)

One staff member highlighted how she felt a sense of belonging to the organisation due to its particular values:

'With the IWO because there is a kind of spirituality. I don't know how to explain it but... you know, because it is based on faith or on spirituality and here I found more, you know, a sense of belonging to the values of the organisation' (Zainab)

In addition, one female staff member commented that she was attracted to working at the IWO as it gave her the opportunity to work with women only.

Who volunteers for the IWO?

The IWO has been recruiting volunteers since its inception, with volunteers focusing in particular on activities including befriending, advocacy and administrative tasks. The corpus of Tranquility Project volunteers is largely young and female, although there are also several male volunteers. In addition to these project volunteers, several individuals volunteer in a professional capacity as psychiatrists and psychologists on the IWO's Advisory Committee.

Similarly to the staff members' comments, there were a range of views regarding the purpose and value of volunteering for the organisation. One volunteer in particular highlighted that through volunteering she felt she was giving to charity:

'You're still giving time. It's not just about money; it's whatever you can give really. So I haven't got money to give... but I've got time' (Asma)

Religious overtones were evident during interviews with volunteers Hafsa, Syed and Yafiah who spoke about their roles as akin to worship and *dawah*. Hafsa spoke about how:

'I really felt I didn't have time to do anything else but I felt being a Muslim and being the IWO I thought 'here's an organisation that's obviously going to help Muslims' and I felt I had the skills and it was my duty to be able to pass on those skills and help those people' (Hafsa)

Similarly, Syed explained how:

'If I'm very, very honest it's more of a religious vocation, that's why I do it, it's for that sort of sake, for God's love and stuff like that.... It is worship.' (Syed)

In discussing her rationale for volunteering, Yafiah commented how:

'Also I'm doing my dawah responsibilities 'cos obviously as Muslims we have to do dawah and we have to give the right message about Islam' (Yafiah)

For Yafiah, such *dawah* was not necessarily in the form of proselytization but focused on giving a positive impression of the Bridston Muslim community and of Islam to the wider non-Muslim community. In contrast to the other volunteers, when interviewee Yasser was asked the role of volunteering in relation to religion, he commented that:

'I'd just say that it's nothing to do with the religion, it's nothing to do with dawah so therefore it's not attached with God at all actually' (Yasser)

Further expanding upon this comment, Yasser indicated that he hoped in future to volunteer with individuals from different faith backgrounds and was not seeking solely to work with Muslim individuals.

American and European research exploring volunteering and religiosity has also suggested a potential link between the two variables. In Garland *et al.*'s (2008, p.260) study of Protestant Christian groups in the United States, the authors argue that 'volunteers scored significantly higher than non-volunteers on all measures of faith maturity and practice.' Similarly, in van Tienen *et al.*'s (2011, p.379) analysis of volunteering activity in a survey of the Dutch

population, the authors concluded that ‘religious attendance is the main determinant of formal volunteering’ in the Netherlands. However, van Tienen *et al.*’s (2011, p.365) study also found that ‘having a more religious worldview decreases the likelihood of formal volunteering’ which they argue is due to a focus upon the ‘otherworldly.’ As such, the relationship between religiosity and volunteering is not straightforward, but varying by context and cohort. However, specifically within a British context, Jawad (2012) and Dinham and Lowndes (2008, p.819) cite the findings of the Home Office’s Citizenship Survey in 2003, concluding that ‘those who actively practice a religion are more likely than others to volunteer.’

The demographics of the IWO’s volunteers, being largely a female group who have, or are currently going through, higher education corresponds with studies by Garland *et al.* (2008) and Wilson (2000), who reported greater levels of volunteering amongst females and amongst those who had accessed higher education, perhaps due to a perception of having more to offer in terms of resources and skills. Wilson (2000, p.228) suggests that female volunteers are more orientated to volunteering in ‘caring, person-to-person tasks’ rather than ‘public, political activities’ and this could, in part, explain why the predominant number of the IWO’s volunteers are female, given the services provided by the organisation. Knott’s (1994, p.204-205) writing on women’s unseen work in faith communities suggests that they ‘form the backbone of religious communities’ through their work in their home and in the community and as ‘nurturers’ and teachers etc. Specifically in relation to Muslim women, Gilliat-Ray (2010, p.211) notes that they have often been involved in the ‘care of dependants’ and an involvement in welfare organisations arguably represents an extension of this activity. The emergence of formal volunteering roles at an organisation such as the IWO potentially represents the developing professionalization of these tasks for British Muslim communities, especially for young Muslim women.

Whilst such volunteering aims to be of benefit to the service users and community, it can also be acknowledged that the experience of volunteering may be useful for the volunteer in developing their skills and in supporting entry to the labour market. As Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.213) highlights, ‘undertaking voluntary work has been a useful intermediate route for some British Muslim women in their transition into the labour market.’ During the interview with IWO volunteer Asma, she highlighted how volunteering in an advocacy capacity was ‘*good for my experience as well*’ as she was aiming to pursue a career in that particular field after graduation. Similarly, during his interview, Yasser commented that ‘*for me volunteering is*

part of my work experience.’ Whilst some of the volunteers spoke of the faith-based motives to their volunteering, they also hoped in addition that such participation would be of future benefit to their own careers. The IWO can also therefore be seen as a site offering valuable work experience for young local Muslims. Helping the community may bring the dual benefit of career support.

The Role of Charisma

The Spiritual Guide

The Director of the IWO, Dr Fadil Rahman, is an Islamic scholar who trained as the *murid* of a North African Sufi *shaykh*. While Dr Rahman acknowledges his Sufi *shaykh* as his principal advisor, he does not publically promote a theological affiliation or membership to any British-based organisation, other than the Bridston Islamic Society, in his capacity as Director of the IWO. Nonetheless, this long-standing relationship with his North African *shaykh* arguably adds legitimacy to his Islamic authority as Director of the IWO by providing ‘authorisation’ through the Sufi chain of *silsilah* (Geaves, 2000, p.35). In addition to these Sufi credentials, Dr Rahman also has academic qualifications in psychology and holds a senior position on the committee of the Bridston Islamic Society. He has two main roles at the IWO, both as a member of the management team and also in direct work with service users, primarily offering Islamic counselling, mediation and *ruqyah* healing.

Many of the interviews with staff members and referrers reflected upon the role of Dr Rahman as leader of the organisation and the personal qualities he brings to his position. During interview, staff members of the Tranquility Project often referred to Dr Rahman using the reverential title of ‘*Shaykh*’ and discussed how they perceived him to be the supreme Islamic authority within the organisation and to be their ‘*spiritual guide*.’ During an interview with Marwa, she reflected upon Dr Rahman’s character, remarking that ‘*he’s developed himself so spiritually.*’

Due to these perceptions of Dr Rahman’s status, staff on the Tranquility Project emphasised his supervisory role in overseeing their work, particularly in finalising *khul* divorce procedures. As Zahra commented, ‘*when it comes to faith he tends to have the final say in that respect.*’ In discussing this authority, project staff indicated that their reverence for Dr Rahman was shared by some of their service users. In particular, Marwa noted that:

'A lot of people come just specifically for Dr Rahman and they don't want to see anybody else 'cos they get that true spiritual support' (Marwa)

Similarly, project worker Soraya commented that:

'Very often we'll find people, they come here for help, general help, and then they might ask to see Dr Rahman because they just want a bit of a spiritual boost, something nice from the Quran or Sunnah just to give them a bit of patience and help in their life' (Soraya)

Sometimes these needs and preferences were factored into casework allocations when new service users approached the organisation. As Robina commented:

'If I see, like, an issue where something's, I don't know... spiritual and I feel that Shaykh will be able to address it better then I'll say "ok that one can go to Shaykh"' (Robina)

In some cases, external referrers also preferred to direct their service users to Dr Rahman. For example, Nadia who worked at a local BME voluntary sector organisation directed service users to Dr Rahman when they were in need of:

'The spiritual sort of treatment that none of us can provide, where they need certain prayers to be done for them and certain treatments that come with the spiritual treatment' (Nadia)

During her interview, Nadia elaborated that such '*spiritual treatment*' included *ruqyah* healing for service users whom it was believed were subject to the influence of *jinn* and black magic. Nadia reflected on how service users had responded to their contact with the Director and she was concerned that some individuals had become reliant upon his advice and guidance:

'My worry is that, which I did mention earlier on, the negativity, is sometimes we think when people start forming a relationship with Dr Rahman, clients, they only want that service, they don't want the befriending, they don't want the advocacy. Sometimes there is a critical issue which only Dr Rahman can deal with which we make that referral for. I mean we try and minimise the level of contact people are having with him because sometimes what happens is he comes in for a crisis whether it's divorce or whether it's the spiritual, he's providing that intensive support because it requires that intensive

support, the treatment and the regular meetings for a period of three weeks or about six weeks or whatever it may be. But then when he wants to pull back that client has a dependency on him' (Nadia)

Nadia's reflections upon the contact some service users have had with Dr Rahman indicate the intensity of some of these relationships with the suggestion that '*dependency*' can occur. Such a dependency perhaps represents a potential difficulty in integrating the roles of Sufi *shaykh* and professional counsellor. A *murid* is encouraged to establish some reliance upon their *shaykh* for guidance (Geaves, 2000), but service users will need to recognise the limitations of professional counselling relationships.

Theory of Charisma

The reverence and esteem with which certain staff members, referrers and service users view Dr Rahman is indicative of a type of charismatic authority, and that, for these staff members, this charismatic authority is a central component in their construction of the IWO's Islamic identity. Theoretical analyses of the notion of charisma have suggested it to be a multi-dimensional and multifaceted concept, compromising recognition of the unique qualities of an individual, as well as a specific type of relationship between the individual identified as being charismatic and his/her supporters. Dekmejian and Wyszomieski (1972, p.194) analyse Weber's notion of charisma, defining it as constituting 'the leader's possession of a 'gift of grace'' as well as 'a relationship between leader and followers.' Turner (1974, p.23-24) expands upon this Weberian analysis by defining a charismatic individual as 'a person of imputed holiness, heroism or some extraordinary quality', whose charisma is legitimated through 'magical acts or miracle working.'

In the case of Dr Rahman, IWO staff members spoke during interview of his spiritually developed character in a fashion analogous to Turner's (1974, p.24) concept of an 'extraordinary quality.' For example, the ability of Dr Rahman to offer a '*spiritual boost*' to service users as described by Soraya indicates that Dr Rahman alone possess this capability amongst the Tranquility Project team. Staff members' references to their '*shaykh*' and '*spiritual guide*' are also suggestive of a charismatic relationship between Tranquility Project staff and Dr Rahman, indicating a respect and reverence for his spiritual authority. Referrer Nadia's description of the close relationship formed between some of her service users and Dr Rahman suggests a significant level of intensity, such that a service user may have a '*dependency*' on him. As a result, Nadia spoke of her need to '*try and minimise the level of*

contact people are having with him.’ According to Wallis and Bruce’s (1986, p.130) understanding of Weber, the concept of charisma relates to ‘an interactional process’, and is ‘essentially a relationship born out of interaction between a leader and his followers’ rather than the possession of an inherent quality. The responses of Nadia and the Tranquility Project staff can be seen as indicative of such a relationship.

Turner’s (1974, p.24) proposition that charisma may be legitimate through ‘magical acts’ seems significant, given the recognition by Tranquility Project staff members, and some Muslim referring agents (such as Nadia), that Dr Rahman alone at the IWO can diagnose whether an individual is suffering under the influence of *jinn* or black magic, and can subsequently perform *ruqyah* healing and ‘*spiritual treatment*’ to service users if necessary. In relation to these diagnoses, Zahra explained how:

‘There’s a certain client group that specifically comes with these issues to see Shaykh.’ (Zahra)

Similarly, Marwa commented that:

‘If there is a spiritual influence, again, that’s something that’s very specialised and only people like Dr Rahman can assess that in a person and realise if they could be possessed.’ (Marwa)

The acquisition of charisma is regarded by scholars as involving a process of recognition and also, potentially, the inheritance of charismatic authority from one individual to another individual/institution. As Weber (1968, p.54) argues, charisma ‘cannot remain stable’ and in some cases may be a ‘hereditary’ quality wherein it becomes ‘an objective transferable entity’ and so becomes ‘the charisma of the office.’ Dr Rahman’s charisma is evidently bolstered by his relationship with his *shaykh* in North Africa whom he regards as his own religious advisor. In terms of the continuity of this charismatic authority within the context of the IWO, it is questionable as to whether such authority would remain without the presence of Dr Rahman as Director, and whether it could in future be transferred in the manner in which Weber indicates. These issues will be explored to a greater degree at the end of the chapter in relation to the notion of spiritual capital.

The Islamic Model

During the course of the research from 2010-2012, references were often made by participants to the IWO's Islamic model, its nature, influences and significance for Muslim service users. Analysing the constructions of this Islamic model over the course of the fieldwork indicates that the model, a central part of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse, should not be understood as a wholly static entity. Instead, the precise nature of the model appeared to be undergoing a degree of negotiation.

Psycho-Spiritual Elements

In 2010 the Director Dr Rahman gave a presentation at the Bridston Third Sector Conference. The presentation was titled '*The IWO's Psycho-Spiritual Model*' and focused upon informing audience members about the theoretical Islamic model underpinning the IWO's work. Fieldnotes were taken during the course of the presentation describing how:

'It was highlighted that the IWO model is an integrative, person-centred approach which draws upon Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT). The IWO model was shown to be based upon the fundamental division of the person into physical body (jasad) and spirit (ruh) and the elements of the human being as constituting of a hierarchy of ruh (spirit), qalb (heart), aql (intellect) and nafs (self)...Psycho-spiritual disorders were explained as being due to lower faculties of the human being (nafsa/ego) regulating higher faculties (aql and qalb). Disorders were categorised into those of the nafs (often caused by desire), aql (caused by irrationality) and qalb (often caused by submission to lower faculties)' (Fieldnotes 2010)

The presentation slides also contained diagrams which visibly indicated the hierarchical nature of the elements of the human being (*ruh, qalb, aql* and *nafs*). Dr Rahman clarified the diagrams by explaining how it is the job of each higher faculty to regulate the lower faculties, and that disorder occurs when a lower faculty instead regulates a higher faculty. Disorders of the *nafs* were said to result in anxiety, depression and grief and disorders of the *qalb* were described as causing low self-esteem, lack of confidence, phobias and obsessions.

During the presentation, Dr Rahman referred to spiritual disorders relating to the potential influence of the evil eye, black magic and *jinn*. The effect of the evil eye was defined within the presentation slides as '*harm caused by the evil of envy*' and Dr Rahman discussed the need to counteract it by praising Allah to bring blessings. Black magic was defined within the

presentation as *'the chemistry of the spiritual'* and as affecting *'the spiritual component of the object through certain sets of material, words or both.'* In addition, *jinn* were highlighted as *'metaphysically intelligent spirits'* which are capable of afflicting an individual, with a need for counselling and prayers to bring about healing. Quranic verses verifying the existence of all three spiritual disorders were mentioned and, in relation to *jinn* possession, an *ayat* from *Surah al-Baqarah* (2:275) was quoted which states that *'those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom Satan by his touch hath driven to madness'* (Fieldnotes 2010).

An interview with Dr Rahman which took place after the 2010 conference (and additional interviews with IWO counsellors on the Tranquility Project) sought to elaborate further upon the IWO's psycho-spiritual model, its influences and originality.

Influences to the Psycho-Spiritual Model

Exploring the Islamic model advocated by Dr Rahman in greater detail, it appeared that particular influences of importance to the model were the theories of Carl Rogers, Sufism and cognitive-behavioural therapy.

Carl Rogers and Sufism

During discussion with Dr Rahman he highlighted the significance of the work of Carl Rogers, an American therapist who developed the concept of a person-centred approach to counselling during the 1940s (Rogers, 1980). Central to Rogers' (1980, p.115-116) theory is a focus upon having 'unconditional positive regard' for the service user alongside 'empathetic understanding' and a genuine 'realness' on the part of the counsellor, which facilitates a context in which the individual is able to find self-acceptance and develop 'a more caring attitude towards themselves.' The focus for Rogers is upon promoting the persona of the counsellor as a crucial component in creating a therapeutic environ. As Rogers (1951, p.19) himself states, 'in any psychotherapy, the therapist himself is a highly important part of the human equation.' For Dr Rahman, such an approach which advocated a non-judgemental 'unconditional positive regard' for the service user, was understood to be compatible with an Islamic approach:

'We believe actually that in itself is Islamic because in Islam there is a principle which is around the, first of all, the freedom of belief, freedom of faith and freedom of expression as well' (Dr Rahman)

Another facet of Rogers' thinking which was felt by Dr Rahman to make his theory particularly apt was seen to be his openness to spirituality. Although not a part of his earlier works, Rogers (1980) himself acknowledged a shift in his beliefs regarding spirituality towards the latter part of his career (Purton, 1998). Thorne (1992, p.100, 40) acknowledges a 'spiritual thread in Rogers work' and, in particular, quotes a passage where Rogers' (1986, p.198) reflects upon his experiences within therapeutic consultation in which 'it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other.'²³ Purton (1998, p.24), seeking to develop Rogers' theory further in this area, goes so far as to propose that 'the concept of unconditional positive regard cannot properly be employed without taking a view of the person that is essentially "spiritual."' Purton (1998, p.29) argues that in order for an unconditional positive regard to be possible with individuals from all walks of life, one must imagine that inside every individual resides an 'essential self', which is 'the self in its primal state where it is unclouded, undistorted by extraneous defects.' It is this self which deserves to be unconditionally respected and valued, regardless of any external actions which an individual may have committed. Dr Rahman converged this idea of a pure 'essential self' with the Islamic idea of *fitra*, suggesting that:

'This fitra is the pure nature of God's creation and I think that is the pure self, and to actualise this, that is the purification of the self in the Sufi terms, going back to the pure, to the origins of purity in the creation of God' (Dr Rahman)

The openness of Rogers' work to spiritual and mystical ideas was discussed during interview with Dr Rahman in relation to Sufi notions of self-development and purification, in which an affinity was noted in regard to Rogers' (1980, p.118) ideas concerning an 'actualizing tendency' present within every individual. The affinity between Rogers' notion and Sufi conceptions of self-purification were discussed during an interview Dr Rahman where he commented that:

'We can say that the self-actualization of Carl Rogers is in fact in a lot of agreement with the purification of the self from the Sufi perspective in the Islamic model' (Dr Rahman)

²³ Rogers' person-centred approach is also noted in Thorne's (1998) other works as being of relevance and compatibility when counselling in a Christian context

For Rogers (1980, p.117), this ‘actualizing tendency’ is present within every individual and constitutes ‘an underlying flow of movement toward constructive fulfilment of its inherent possibilities.’ Such a notion can be seen as akin to the Sufi aim of purifying the soul so that it develops ‘onward from stage to stage until at last it reaches the goal of perfect knowledge’ (Shah, 1990, p.180). Dr Rahman highlighted the potential to integrate these similar ideas within the IWO’s psycho-spiritual model with only a need for slight modification of Rogers’ ideas:

‘This actualization of the self I can see, I can give myself, say, just a little bit of freedom to define the self from my perspective and then all his theory will still hold’ (Dr Rahman)

The Sufi influence to the model is also evident in Dr Rahman’s discussion of the faculties of the human being, the disorders of the *nafs*, and the need to regulate its functioning by higher faculties. Winter’s (1995) translations of sections of Ghazali’s opus *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* evidence the historical influence of Sufi scholarship into the model discussed by Dr Rahman. Winter’s (1995, p.233) translation of Ghazali provides ‘an exposition of the meaning of soul (*nafs*), spirit (*ruh*), heart (*qalb*) and intellect (*aql*).’ Within this exposition, the *nafs* is identified as ‘the principle which unites the irascible and appetitive faculties’ and which may exist in various states ‘in relation to God’ (Winter, 1995, p.233). The *ruh* is located within ‘the cavity of the physical heart’ as an element which ‘knows and perceives’ (Winter, 1995, p.233-234). The *qalb* is identified as constituting a physical entity as well as ‘a spiritual, divine subtlety’ which ‘perceives, knows and intuit’s’, and the *aql* is defined primarily as ‘knowledge’ (Winter, 1995, p.234). In addition, the translation discusses ‘diseases of the heart’ which consists of the inability to partake in ‘the acquisition of knowledge, wisdom and gnosis’ or of ‘love of God and His worship’ and ‘using all one’s other desires and members for the sake of His remembrance’ (Winter, 1995, p.46). Abu-Raiya (2012, p.217) also identifies four such ‘psychospiritual structures’ stemming from Ghazali’s work and comments that ‘their interplay is what eventually determines the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of the individual.’ Inayat (2006, p.7-8) locates the discernment of ‘three states of the Self’ as rooted in the Quran, consisting of the ‘*Nafs Ammarra* (the commanding or lower Self)’, the ‘*Nafs Lawwamma* (the self-reproaching Self)’ and the ‘*Nafs Mutma’inna* (the peaceful Self).’

Counsellor Soraya discussed the oscillation of these faculties during her interview:

'Well, with the Islamic model, it talks about how the soul fluctuates between sometimes really doing, following the base desires and sometimes it's a bit stronger and you'll do what's better for yourself and other people and then you work your way up and sometimes you move back down and it's all the details like that' (Soraya)

Another Sufi text which Soraya identified as particularly influential to the model is Al-Shabrawi's (1997) *The Degrees of the Soul*. This particular text identifies a hierarchy of seven different 'spiritual stations' of the *nafs*, beginning at a base level with 'the inciting soul' and reaching up to 'the perfect soul' at level seven (Al-Shabrawi, 1997, p.v). In relation to the uniqueness of the IWO's psycho-spiritual model, the impact of earlier Islamic scholars was noted by Soraya who commented that:

'I mean if you look back to, probably, the thirteenth century it's similar principles' (Soraya)

While acknowledging these historical influences on the contemporary IWO psycho-spiritual model, Dr Rahman emphasised that the convergence of these ideas with contemporary Western psychological theories was of novel value. As Dr Rahman explained regarding the psycho-spiritual model:

'It's got a long history. However, it was going parallel, almost, to the Western approach. And what is new in this model is that they're becoming closer, trying to see where they can actually overlap and function together' (Dr Rahman)

For Dr Rahman, the uniqueness of the IWO's psycho-spiritual model he advocated was its ability to reconcile contemporary Western approaches to counselling with long-established Sufi perspectives on self-development.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

During the interview with Dr Rahman, he also elaborated upon how cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is also influential to the IWO's psycho-spiritual model. McLeod (1998, p.62) defines CBT as a theory of counselling underpinned by behavioural psychology, with a 'change-focused approach' which considers monitoring and adapting the 'cognitive processes' of the individual as a key part of the therapeutic activity. During an interview with Dr Rahman he highlighted how:

'As to the CBT, in fact, we borrowed from that the concept that thoughts affect feelings and emotions and these also affect the behaviour, like, the actions... If, for example, the problem of the client falls in the area of the thoughts then we use the model that changing or... modelling the behaviour from either the emotions or the actions so as to adjust the thoughts.' (Dr Rahman)

Dr Rahman highlighted the *'flexibility'* of the IWO's model which is integrative in allowing for the inclusion of a CBT-based approach where necessary with particular service users. The compatibility of utilizing CBT within the psycho-spiritual approach was highlighted during Dr Rahman's presentation at the Bridston Third Sector Conference in 2010 where:

'CBT was shown to be linked to an Islamic perspective as both emphasise a thought-behaviour link and that changing thoughts modifies behaviour, with it being highlighted that there is a wealth of guidance in Islam on controlling thoughts' (Fieldnotes 2010)

Further expanding upon what integrating a CBT-based approach into the psycho-spiritual model entailed during practice, Dr Rahman explained how this approach may be used with service users with phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder as a means of:

'Overcoming these controlling thoughts with actions, which is borrowed from the Muslim faith, which is repeating the names of God, remembrance of God... like, a string of beads and they say, just say to help you with any problem, to say, for example, Subhan Allah, glory be to Allah, God is the greatest, just a phrase to be repeated and you think about it' (Dr Rahman)

By integrating the well-known theories of Carl Rogers and CBT with an Islamic approach based predominantly upon Sufi psychology, the outcome may be a model of greater credibility to the wider professional community, as well as being potentially of increased relevance to the IWO's service users, who may be sceptical about what a faith-based approach to service provision may offer. Such a model, which aims to ground its Islamic elements firmly in relation to widely known and accepted psychological theories and therapeutic models, emphasising their overlap, can be seen to represent a distinctly different approach from other informal forms of community support, such as may be found in mosques, and elevates the status of the organisation in the eyes of other statutory and voluntary service providers. By locating the approach of the model as being compatible with mainstream services, yet tailored to be of specific relevance to the Muslim community, the

IWO are arguably aiming to justify their standing as a professional organisation operating within a well-established BME voluntary sector.

Although Dr Rahman's presentation at the 2010 Bridston Third Sector Conference discussed the compatible nature of these Islamic and mainstream approaches, his presentation in 2011 arguably sought to do so to an even greater degree.

Multicultural Elements

In 2011 Dr Rahman gave another presentation at the Bridston Third Sector Conference which was titled *'The IWO: Working with Muslims.'* The 2011 presentation focused upon emphasising the multicultural elements of the IWO's Islamic model. Fieldnotes taken about the presentation highlighted that:

'It emphasised that "multiculturalism is the approach" and that "Muslim culture" was inclusive of Muslim faith in all its variations and so more suitable than a purely faith-based approach. He (Dr Rahman) argued that "faith is not sufficient to define Muslims as a group... they can be described as a cultural group." As culture, by his definition, includes "shared thoughts, beliefs, values, customs and behaviours", he emphasised that it "hits upon areas that are very much in the area where we deliver."' (Fieldnotes 2011)

In addition, the fieldnotes recall how Dr Rahman's presentation explored the IWO's counselling model:

'The final part of the presentation focused specifically on "multicultural counselling." Dr Rahman emphasised that "Islamic counselling is a multicultural model, not a faith model." He emphasised that "we have clients from all the spectrum- Christians, Jews, Hindus, atheists, and the model works very nicely for them" as "our counsellors, for each client, they adapt the model to the client." The extent of this liberal approach was emphasised when Dr Rahman stated that "someone may come to me and say his name is Mohammed. I still have to ask him 'do you follow a specific religion?'" (Fieldnotes 2011)

This presentation appeared to have a differing focus compared to the previous year's presentation. Less overt reference was given to Sufi thought with one of the presentation slides noting one of the aims of multicultural counselling theory as being *'the liberation of consciousness.'* A copy of the diagram of the elements of the human being (as had been

discussed during the 2010 presentation) was distributed in the Bridston Third Sector Conference packs, however there was no discussion of Islamic ideas surrounding spiritual illnesses. Whereas the 2010 presentation emphasised the Islamic elements of the IWO's model as of unique and novel value, the 2011 presentation gave greater emphasis to highlighting that the Islamic elements of the model were located within a conventional theoretical framework in aligning them to multicultural approaches. Further analysis of the reasons underpinning this shift in emphasis will be given in Chapter 7, where the focus is upon analysing contestations of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse. However, it is proposed here that such negotiations are indicative of the difficulties that faith-based providers may have in marking out their role within the field of service provision. While the presentation in 2010 arguably stressed the unique elements of the IWO's Islamic model as a means to legitimise their organisational presence in the competitive Bridston voluntary sector, the presentation in 2011 gave greater weight to emphasising the conventional and professional dimensions of the organisation's Islamic approach to service provision to try and achieve the same goal.

Helping Hands Model

During 2011, interviews were undertaken with two members of the Helping Hands team in order to ascertain the nature of the model employed within the community chaplaincy project and its relationship to the model underpinning the Tranquility Project. When asked about potential differences between the two models, community chaplain Yusuf commented that they are 'different' but 'not night and day.' Further elaborating on this, Yusuf explained how:

'The model is the same, the model is the same. However, what we have found with the nature of our clients, for example, one in four in the community from reports suffer from some sort of mental illness, mental health issue. Within the prison system that's almost three times more, from 80-90% of prisoners suffer from some sort of mental condition, mental health illness, disorder. And what we have found from our services for the Helping Hands Project is that a lot of it can be immediately reduced if we can address the social needs, a lot of the social needs that they are suffering at that particular moment' (Yusuf)

During this interview, Yusuf suggested that his service users have pressing social needs which need to be addressed before considering discussing any spiritual concerns. He also emphasised that the Helping Hands community chaplains did not seek to be 'zealous' in any

way and was keen to stress that they were not there to ‘proselytize’ or to be a ‘missionary service.’ Community chaplain Nadim also emphasised these immediate social needs during interview and highlighted that:

‘The practical needs would be addressed first and then the underlying spiritual needs would surface after you have addressed the practical needs...So once those have been addressed, once somebody knows, ok they’ve got a place to sleep, they’ve got food, you help them in getting them food, if they have broken relationships you try to see how far you can help in that. Then now they start speaking to you about some other shortcomings, that they need for them to be able to go to the mosque’ (Nadim)

Despite the community chaplains describing their everyday work as focusing upon helping ex-offenders deal with social problems including debt, employment, housing and relationships, the identity of the community chaplain as an Islamic scholar was highlighted as being significant in giving the service user confidence and in enabling the chaplain’s to help the service users integrate back into the community. As Nadim clarified:

‘The ideal person to work on the project is someone who has the Islamic studies training because that’s what gives confidence to the client, that the person that they’re dealing with is somebody who knows what he’s talking about. As well as because it involves going back into the community, speaking to the imams and to the leaders within the Muslim community’ (Nadim)

Being Non-Judgemental

In discussing the Islamic approach, ethos and values of the IWO, many of the staff members referred to the principle of being non-judgemental when working with service users. This was emphasised by individuals working on both of the IWO’s projects as a key principle underpinning their work, and was constructed as an intrinsically Islamic approach to service provision. As Marwa commented:

‘The non-judgemental attitude, I think that’s really strong in the Islamic ethos. Whereas traditionally I think, a lot of the time, people wouldn’t come to a Muslim organisation just for the fact of getting judged. A lot of people have that fear, especially if, you know, they’re struggling with social issues, maybe drinking, maybe smoking, or things which are not traditionally accepted within Islam. We’re not saying that they are accepted but it’s just that at the IWO we will support people through it so that we won’t judge them. No matter what they come with, you know, the Islamic, like Dr Rahman, that really helps that he’s an Islamic scholar and he’s our director and he’s our kind of guide. And he’s

kind of taught us that only God is the judge and I think that's a very strong ethos within the IWO that whatever people do is between them and God and we're not to judge them but we should be there to help them. And about the Prophet (Peace Be upon Him), that his nature was so kind and gentle and merciful and very approachable' (Marwa)

Similarly, Robina described a non-judgemental approach as being innately Islamic, linking it to concepts of being merciful and to the sole authority of Allah:

'As well as in our work not to judge people, wrong or right, you are trying to help them, not to judge them in any way. So that's part of Islam that we have to be merciful and being merciful means you can't, you know, say "you are wrong, you are right", it's not your job, it's God, up to God to judge people' (Robina)

During an interview with Yusuf, he highlighted that this principle was so important that it is taught to all workers at the organisation:

'So non-judgemental is a major, major one. Because all our workers, they are taught that let all judgement, leave it to God, leave it to Allah. We're not there to judge any person. We are going there on the basis of one human being to another human being, not as a scholar and a tyrant' (Yusuf)

Whilst Yusuf has undergone traditional scholarly training in an Islamic seminary, he clearly differentiated his role within the IWO as a community chaplain as being distinct from an Islamic scholar. Embodying a non-judgemental approach in practice was seen to constitute a key part of being a practitioner within a professional Islamic social work context. This was seen to contrast other forms of support available to the Muslim community, which were characterised by staff member Zahra as being less professional and more '*cultural*' in their ethos than the Islamic approach of the IWO. As Zahra explained:

'We get clients, like for example, who suffer from alcohol problems or drug problems. And if we were to go round saying to them "haram!" and stuff, you know, it would completely put them off! We're not supporting them, we're not getting to the root cause as to why they have their drinking problem. And I think that is the difference that the IWO provides and maybe this is why we successfully manage to work with other organisations that.... we don't have that kind of traditional cultural approach that maybe some places do' (Zahra)

In constructing the IWO as a professional Islamic organisation that stresses non-judgemental approaches, staff were also marking the ways in which it was distinctive in comparison to forms of community support, such as mosque-based imams, who were sometimes regarded as less professional. As Zahra commented:

'Going to maybe an imam who might be, like I'd, this is my personal view from before the IWO, I probably thought they'd probably give me like a strict opinion in which I'll probably get a telling off, you know? And that's the honest truth, I know it's bad! (Laughs)' (Zahra)

A similar view was also shared by staff member Leila who added that:

'I'm not generalising but generally the community, they're not well equipped to deal with such queries around maybe, for example, Muslims drinking alcohol or something like that. So I think that back here you get a non-judgemental approach whether you're on drugs or alcohol or whatever the issues may be we take it on board without judging people and whereas in the community there's a huge issue with confidentiality as well, you don't know whether other people, it's like close-knit communities they know each other quite a lot. So would they feel comfortable or confident enough to go to the imam or to the mosque or discuss their issues knowing that maybe they may go on and discuss it and its out in the community?' (Leila)

For Leila, this non-judgemental approach, combined also with the principle of confidentiality, was what distinguished the service in particular as being both professional and Islamic, compared to other forms of community support. Staff member Hamza further highlighted the differences between the staff at the IWO and those working in less professional welfare support contexts, commenting that:

'While in the IWO we have different staff who are trained, we understand issues about child protection, not to be judgemental, all this, unfortunately it's not trained for imams or people who are in the mosque' (Hamza)

Despite Hamza and other staff members also giving their time to supporting activities in the mosque, including educational activities and *khutbah* sermons, these roles were clearly distinguished from their work at the IWO through appropriating a professional, non-judgemental approach.

While the focus upon emphasising a non-judgemental attitude in service provision was constructed as inherently Islamic by the staff members at the IWO, such an approach within service provision is also identified by Pattison (2000) as emerging within a contemporary Christian pastoral care context. As Pattison (2000, p.33-34) explains, some individuals working within a contemporary Christian pastoral context ‘prefer to see themselves as representing the love and compassion of God’ and focus upon ‘developing a warm relationship based on valuing those cared for, understanding them and refusing to judge them.’ For Pattison (2000), such an approach is highlighted in particular as constituting a contemporary development in increasingly professionalising pastoral care. Soraya’s comment that ‘*traditionally I think, a lot of the time, people wouldn’t come to a Muslim organisation just for the fact of getting judged*’ also seems to suggest that the prevalence of such a non-judgemental ethos at the IWO represents a contemporary development and is one which distinguishes the IWO as professional in contrast to other grassroots forms of welfare provision in the community.

The primacy given to such a non-judgemental ethos is also evocative of mainstream social work discourse regarding the autonomy of the service user and of the respect to which every service user is entitled, regardless of their actions. Although the precise values and ideals underpinning mainstream social work practice are not wholly fixed and uncontested, Banks (2006, p.1) highlights that social work values have traditionally been conceived of as compromising the ‘self-determination of the service user, acceptance, non-judgementalism and confidentiality.’ Furthermore, promotion of the autonomy of the individual is reflected in the General Social Care Council’s Code of Practice as identified by Beckett and Maynard (2005, p.78), particularly under the subheading that such practice should ‘promote the independence of service users.’ Zahra’s comment regarding the non-judgemental ethos of the IWO, that ‘*maybe this is why we successfully manage to work with other organisations*’, also seems to suggest that she recognises such a principle as a central ethos within professional welfare provision.

The focus upon non-judgemental social work practice, advocated within both mainstream social work and by the staff at the IWO, appears to represent a particular point of convergence between the two approaches. A similar convergence was identified by Bunn and Wood (2012) in their study of Faithworks, a Christian faith-based welfare movement

composed of churches, organisations and individuals with an inclusive ethos.²⁴ Bunn and Wood (2012, p.8) argue that a ‘hybridization of Christian and government discourses’ is evident as Faithworks hybridize the notion of Jesus advocating ‘equality and diversity’ with the policy of providing an inclusive non-proselytizing service to the community. Such hybridization, Bunn and Wood (2012, p.9) argue, resulted in Faithworks being ‘accepted as legitimate partners for dialogue and resources.’ By advocating a non-judgemental ethos with an Islamic justification, the IWO are arguably aiming to appeal to a wide-ranging audience within the Muslim community and also to increase their ability to engage with other bodies within the field of service provision.

Spirituality

Throughout the interviews with the IWO staff members, many of them referred to spirituality as a key feature of the organisation’s ethos and as a key feature in distinguishing their organisation from other service providers working with the local Muslim community.

Varying Definitions

Although many of the staff did refer to the term ‘spirituality’ during interview, their understanding of spirituality, and its relationship to Islam, was not entirely uniform. For Marwa, the Islamic element in her work was directly equated with being spiritual:

‘The Islam is like the spiritual aspect within the work, knowing that it’s... it’s an Islamic service which means that the service should be friendly, should be accessible, should be confidential, all these sort of things which aren’t usually associated with Islam but if you look at the real Islam that’s what it’s about’ (Marwa)

Similarly, for Soraya, the Islamic element of the IWO’s services was understood as being spiritual in nature. She described how in her work as a counsellor, her previous training in Islamic studies has enabled her to help her service users with their spirituality:

‘I think from the counselling it’s all been about the skills that I’ve learned about how to listen to people, how to help them, to help themselves more than anything else and without always giving the advice and I think from the Islamic it’s the, like, the spiritual stu-... the spiritual things that we’ve

²⁴ <http://www.faithworks.info/about-us> [Accessed 20/01/13]

studied about how to help people better themselves by accessing their own spirituality. That's probably been the most important things' (Soraya)

In contrast, staff member Hamza appeared to make a distinction between the 'spiritual' and the 'Islamic', commenting that:

'And so we have counselling, mediation, we do befriending for those who feel isolated, so we provide friends for them. We give spiritual and Islamic advice as well' (Hamza)

Community chaplain Yusuf made a further distinction between the 'religious', the 'spiritual' and the 'pastoral' in highlighting that:

'As a chaplain, generally as a chaplain, you have three areas of expertise or knowledge. One is the religious side, one is the spiritual side and one is the pastoral side. The pastoral side usually can be provided by any individual, the listening skills, the non-judgemental, the actual empathy. And the spiritual side to a certain level can be provided by any indiv- any trained chaplain, to a certain degree. But after a certain amount or a certain level you probably need a faith-specific individual to continue that spiritual development. And as the area sort of denotes, religious means they know that particular area or that faith-specific individual' (Yusuf)

For Yusuf, these three components of providing 'religious', 'spiritual' and 'pastoral' care appear to be hierarchical in the degree of professional competency needed to provide them, highlighting that comprehensive spiritual care can only be provided by a 'faith-specific individual.'

In order to understand why these varying definitions were given, it is useful to consider each individual's position within the organisation. Marwa and Soraya, who both equate the Islamic element of their work with spirituality, are both project workers on the Tranquility Project which is largely influenced by the psycho-spiritual approach of Dr Rahman, and this is echoed in counsellor Soraya's comment regarding spirituality helping develop the self. In contrast, Hamza is not primarily involved in work with service users, and Yusuf's work is focused upon the Helping Hands Project model and upon the specific role of community chaplain. The various ways in which staff understand spirituality and its relationship to Islam, appear to be relative to their position within the organisation and the job role each individual occupies.

Theistic Spirituality

During interviews with several staff members, direct reference to ‘theistic spirituality’ was made, contrasting the notions of secular spirituality often dominant within mainstream social work discourse. During an evaluation team meeting, Dr Rahman explained:

‘That spirituality for him is “viewed as the connection with the divine and the effect on everyday life”- quite a contrast to the secular forms of spirituality being promoted within social work literature’ (Fieldnotes 2011)

Such a definition was also promoted during an audience with Dr Rahman’s North African *shaykh*, who proposed that the origin of spirituality lies in the divine breath. Zahra also indicated that the spiritual element to the IWO’s work related to discussion of God within counselling sessions:

‘I look at counselling, for example, their counselling procedures are probably exactly the same as what happens outside there, it’s just in the counselling session they mention God and giving them reassurance and hope through that aspect of stuff. But the actual structure, the actual procedure is exactly the same’ (Zahra)

Marwa hinted at such a theistic spirituality, talking about how her Islamic approach to service provision was underpinned by a selfless desire to work for the ‘greater good’:

‘I guess just... you don’t need to be, like, practising so much into your faith but as long as you believe in spirituality or you believe in that kind of spiritual dimension I think that helps as well within your work at the IWO because you believe that you’re doing it for the greater good and it’s not about you, it’s about your clients, and I think that’s your spiritual element coming into it, that you feel for your clients and they’re the reason that you’re operating is for them, not for yourself’ (Marwa)

Whilst the Director sought to emphasise spirituality as primarily referring to the divine, the other project workers comments indicate that the term was also more subjectively constructed. This finding is potentially evocative of the wider social usage of the term. As Guest (2007, p.181) suggests, ‘definitions of spirituality are notoriously slippery’ and have been applied differently in varying contexts with a wide assortment of meanings. The focus upon spirituality, evident in many staff members’ accounts, is arguably intended to be of

utility in appealing to the diverse Muslim communities in Bridston. Promoting the idea of spirituality potentially allows space for each service user to interpret the term as they wish. This arguably opens the organisation to a wider range of service users, including members of the community who are not practising Muslims.

While the theistic definition of spirituality given by the Director indicates a different understanding of the term compared to dominant definitions within the social work discipline, the function of such spirituality in practice with service users appears to echo a hybridization of faith-based and professional, mainstream approaches. During one evaluation team meeting, when talking about the topic of spirituality:

‘The Director emphasised that “we don’t address that directly” but that it is up to the service user and “we don’t bring it”’ (Fieldnotes 2011)

Such a person-centred, non-proselytizing manner links to the approaches advocated by some social work texts such as Hodge (2008, p.179) who emphasise that ‘respect for client autonomy is a central ethical principle in many social work ethical codes.’ This individualistic, person-centred approach was also echoed during an interview with Yusuf, who commented that:

‘I and my spiritual needs are different to your spiritual needs and religious needs. But I can’t say “this is what you need” because that maybe is what I need, not what you need’ (Yusuf)

The focus on spirituality by the staff at the IWO in constructing their Islamic social work approach is arguably also partly due to their appropriation of discourses within mainstream social work which advocate spirituality as a particularly appropriate and significant way of engaging with religiosity in a professional social work context. Dinham (2009, p.203) in particular suggests that concentrating on ‘the idea of “spirituality” may help lend respectability to faith as a public category.’

References to spirituality by the IWO staff members also potentially reflect a recognition of the wider social milieu in which the organisation is operating, being situated in a ‘late modern advanced commercial’ society in which ideas of spirituality have particular resonance (Heelas, 2002, p.357). Heelas *et al.* (2005, p.78) propose the ‘subjectivization thesis’ in order

to explain the contemporary popularity of spirituality, suggesting that those faith-orientated activities which promote the subjectivity of the individual are of greater significance to the consumer than more congregational, 'associational' forms of faith-orientated activity which are argued to be in decline. The popularity of such a subjective approach, the authors argue, is evident in the emergence of a significant 'subjective well-being culture' which promotes particular activities such as yoga, aromatherapy and homeopathy (Heelas *et al.*, 2005, p.84). The primacy given to the notion of spirituality by the staff at the IWO arguably reflects an awareness of popular consumer behaviour, with individuals seeking spiritually-orientated services in which the subjective is prioritised. As Heelas (2002, p.369) comments regarding Western society, 'spirituality is a growing force both within and beyond institutionalized religion.'

Spiritual Capital

The spiritual qualities and competencies of the Director, as a learned Sufi *shaykh*, already alluded to in the discussion on charisma, are also argued to constitute an embodied form of spiritual capital. Drawing upon Bourdieu's (1986) definition of cultural capital (which Bourdieu sub-categorizes as either embodied, objectified or institutionalized), Verter (2003) proposes that spiritual capital may be understood as one such form of embodied cultural capital. Verter (2003, p.159, 167) describes embodied spiritual capital as consisting of 'the knowledge, abilities, tastes and credentials an individual has amassed in the field of religion' which can be acquired through inheritance or achieved via 'accumulation through devotional practice.' Although Bourdieu's (1991) writings refer to the notion of religious capital, it has been argued by scholars including Guest and Davies (2007, p.188) that such a concept was largely 'shaped by an appropriation of French Roman Catholicism.' Verter (2003, p.151) agrees with this in suggesting that Bourdieu's (1991) writings specifically on religious capital, which primarily focused upon the institution of the Roman Catholic Church, are 'too rigid to account for the fluidities of today's spiritual marketplace.' Instead, Verter (2003) argues that it is necessary to engage with Bourdieu's theory through the development of a concept of spiritual capital. Furthermore, Guest (2007, p.181) suggests that the idea of spiritual capital 'also lends itself to descriptions of mysticism, and of the more experiential dimensions of mainstream religion.'

The notion of spiritual capital is of relevance here in considering the uniqueness of the IWO's services provided by Dr Rahman, in comparison to welfare services available at other Islamic

institutions in the locale, such as mosques, and in comparison to secular service providers. IWO staff member Leila made a distinction in relation to secular service providers, commenting that:

'Most places would actually just cater for mainstream counselling because we get many calls saying, you know, the person is Muslim, would you take them on for counselling because they're looking for something a bit more spiritual. So we are different from other organisations' (Leila)

This distinction is also implicit within IWO staff member Marwa's comment, when she makes a contrast between Dr Rahman and other imams within the Bridston community:

'With the imams, I don't want to judge but a lot of them are very close minded, they've kind of been cocooned in a certain way of thinking, they don't actually know the real world' (Marwa)

Marwa's comment indicates that Dr Rahman's spiritual knowledge and competencies are distinctive in comparison to other imams due to his ability to negotiate with faith-based issues in a contemporary context. Zahra also appears to identify Dr Rahman as possessing spiritual capital which he was able to impart to other IWO staff members. As Zahra commented:

'When I started here... the main knowledge, the main bulk of the whole Islamic aspect of stuff, the foundation, did come from him. Because naturally he's got the knowledge' (Zahra)

Through teaching and instruction this embodied spiritual capital may in time become partly institutionalized, as Dr Rahman shares his knowledge with the IWO staff. In the competitive voluntary sector the possession of spiritual capital may result in the accumulation of other forms of capital by the IWO. As Verter (2003, p.168) comments 'spiritual capital is a valuable asset' which may lead to 'social and economic advancement' through the 'reconversion of capital.' Such spiritual capital may be of utility to the organisation in ensuring financial sustainability. However, as the following chapters will demonstrate, the organisation also faces contestations regarding the precise nature of its Islamic identity which it must negotiate in order to secure such advancements.

The limitations of the concept of spiritual capital, however, must also be acknowledged. Recent work by Dinham (2012) and Montemaggi (2011, p.67) has sought to problematize the increasingly frequent and uncritical usage of the term spiritual capital, highlighting the

‘fuzziness of the concept’, and noting the implications of such a popular term becoming embedded in government policy regarding faith communities. In particular, Dinham (2012, p.83) critiques the work of Baker and Skinner (2005) who identify spiritual capital as the value base underpinning a ‘religiously-orientated version of social capital.’ He argues that their definition, which sees spiritual capital as constituting the values inspiring faith communities’ social action, sits in contradiction to the principles of capitalism which focuses instead on the economic ‘instrumentality of faith communities’ (Dinham, 2012, p.175). Montemaggi’s (2011, p.74) concern with Baker and Skinner’s (2005) efforts centres on the proposed relationship between spiritual capital, as a value-base and source of ‘religious motivation’, and religious capital as the directly ensuing social action. Montemaggi (2011) suggests that such a mechanistic equation does not adequately reflect the complex interrelationship between belief and social action. She concludes that such definitions of spiritual capital foster ‘a rosy picture of social life that chooses to ignore hierarchies, influence and exclusions’ (Montemaggi, 2011, p.79). The critiques of Dinham (2012) primarily focus upon attempts by scholars to locate spiritual capital as a form of social capital, unlike the notion of spiritual capital as an embodied form of cultural capital being proposed here. In light of Montemaggi’s (2011) critique, the notion of spiritual capital being attributed to Dr Rahman here is not limited by being defined simply as a value base underpinning action.

Despite Verter (2003) and Guest and Davies’ (2007) suggestions that ‘spiritual capital is embodied in the habitus’, the criticisms of Mahmood (2011) are recognised here regarding the concept of habitus. Mahmood’s (2011, p.129) critique of Bourdieu’s idea of the habitus suggests that the concept ‘lacks attention to the pedagogical process by which a habitus is learned.’ As it is argued here that Dr Rahman attained his spiritual capital through his long-standing role as a *murid* of a Sufi *shaykh* in North Africa, such a process of capital obtained via the *silsilah* operates at a more conscious, pedagogical level than implied in Bourdieu’s concept of habitus.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the emergence of the IWO, the services provided by each of the projects, as well as exploring the profiles of those who work for and volunteer at the organisation. The diverse backgrounds and professional training of the IWO staff members and volunteers was highlighted. It was argued that the predominance of female

volunteers at the IWO may be indicative of the increasing professionalization of care work in the community which has traditionally been the task of Muslim women (Knott, 1994, Gilliat-Ray 2010a). Both staff members and volunteers at the IWO spoke of the themes of serving God, the community and feeling a sense of belonging, as underpinning their desire to be involved with the organisation. However, engaging in such activities by volunteers was also shown to potentially assist them in enhancing their career prospects. The concept of charisma clearly has value in exploring the authority of Dr Rahman, as it is constructed by Tranquility Project staff members and also some referring agents and service users. This was explored both in relation to the personal qualities of Dr Rahman as a Sufi *shaykh* and also in relation to his relationships with Tranquility Project staff members, referring agents and service users.

A focus within this chapter was upon analysing the IWO's theoretical Islamic model, noting the psycho-spiritual and multicultural elements of the model described by Dr Rahman's presentations at the Briston Third Sector Conferences in 2010 and 2011 respectively. The theoretical coherence between Rogerian person-centred approaches and Ghazalian psychology, advocated by Dr Rahman as underpinning the psycho-spiritual model, was also explored. It was highlighted that whilst there is a long history of Islamic scholarship on the subject of psychology, the approach of Dr Rahman at the IWO was perceived to be unique due to the fusion of these Ghazalian ideas with contemporary, mainstream approaches to person-centred counselling and cognitive-behavioural therapy.

In addition, the chapter explored the dominance of non-judgementalism within IWO staff members' accounts of their Islamic approach to social work. It was argued that such a theme has been appropriated more broadly within contemporary pastoral care, and represents the professionalization of these activities. In analysing the theme of spirituality within IWO staff members' narratives, the varying definitions of the term among staff members' were explored. Whilst Dr Rahman advocated that the term spirituality wholly related to connections with the divine, it was also inferred that there may be several reasons why other IWO staff members constructed it differently in multifarious ways. Finally, the chapter discussed the utility of the concept of spiritual capital in seeking to distinguish between the services offered by Dr Rahman at the IWO and other informal welfare services provided to the Muslim community. While the idea of spiritual capital was recognised as having some limitations, it was argued that it is a helpful tool in thinking about the differences between the range of organisations and institutions offering services to the Briston Muslim community.

Chapter 6: Manifesting the Islamic Social Work Discourse in Everyday Practices

Introduction

This chapter will explore the everyday practices at the IWO and how they manifest the organisation's Islamic social work discourse as outlined in the previous chapter. It will analyse how these everyday practices reflect the synthesis of Islamic and statutory social work approaches constructed in the staff members' depictions of the IWO's discourse, examining the relationship between these approaches in a variety of social work activities.

Firstly, the '*Islamic environment*' of the IWO's office space will be considered, drawing upon Nasser's (2003, p.26) suggestion that "place" may also be seen to be a 'practice.' This section will explore the multiple spaces at the IWO and how they manifest the notion that the IWO is an Islamic place in which social work is practised. Secondly, the chapter will analyse the nature of the IWO's service user assessments, examining their relationship to assessment practices advocated in social work literature for use with service users who may be religious or spiritual. Thirdly, the practices involved in providing three of IWO's key services, namely Islamic counselling, community chaplaincy and advocacy will be considered, with comparisons drawn between the three services. Finally, the chapter will explore the IWO's volunteer training sessions and the experiences of Tranquility Project volunteers, to analyse what the practice of volunteering for the IWO involves. In exploring these activities, the chapter analyses a wide range of the IWO's social work practices in which staff members, service users, referring agencies and volunteers participate within an everyday context.

An Islamic Environment

The notion that the Islamic Welfare Organisation constitutes an '*Islamic environment*' first emerged within the data during an interview with a female service user discussing her experiences of visiting the organisation. As Aisha explained:

'I wear hijab, I wear a headscarf when I go out, so do all the other girls who are working there, they do the same thing, they wear hijab, the scarf... And it's a very relaxing environment. And not many of the men are involved there and they respect that... They do work together as well... they don't work separate all the time, they do work together. But it's just you feel the Islamic environment. So that's why it's more comfortable for me' (Aisha)

For Aisha, such an *'Islamic environment'* seems to be based primarily upon her perception of the IWO as adhering to practices of gender separation (*purdah*), regarding the degree to which male and female members of staff interact. This idea of such a distinct environment was also drawn upon by the IWO's community chaplain Nadim, who commented that:

'When you walk inside the door, you know, ok, everyone who is going to be inside of there, most of the people inside there, are Muslim. So it's a totally different environment' (Nadim)

Whilst Nadim also suggests that the environment is in some way *'Muslim'*, he does not explicitly refer to any particular practices to support his assertion, but seems to suggest that such a perception is due to the majority of people at the organisation being Muslim. In order to unpick the nature and significance of such ideas, it is first necessary to explore the theoretical notions of space and place.

Theories of Space and Place

Various scholars, including postmodern and post-colonial writers, have challenged the definitions of terms such as 'space' and 'place'. In distinguishing between the concepts of space and place, Massey (1994, p.5) suggests that space may be understood as being 'formed out of social interrelations' and that, more specifically, 'a place is a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings.' For Massey (1994, p.5), it is essential to recognise the transient nature of such identifications, highlighting that 'the identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple.' Ashcroft (2001, p.156), in agreement with Massey, argues that 'place is in a continual and dynamic state of formation, a process intimately bound up with the culture and the identity of its inhabitants.' Knott and Franks (2007, p.7) advocate the multidimensionality of space, highlighting the 'interconnected dimensions of physical space, socially constituted space and imagined, mentally conceived space' and suggest that a place may consist of 'a cluster of heterogeneous, contested and overlapping spaces.' For Knott and Franks (2007, p.9) it is essential to recognise that 'spaces of all kinds are infused with and generated and transformed by power.' As such, in analysing space it is important to consider the themes of authority and control, and their influence upon the identity of any particular space.

In aiming to identify 'what constitutes a Muslim space?' Metcalf (1996, p.4) suggests the presence of 'sacred words', proposing that 'if there is a recurrent visual clue to a Muslim presence... it is above all those Arabic words... Arabic is most telling.' Similarly, Geertz's

writings suggest that ‘Islamic buildings are primarily spaces where the faithful engage with sacred words, whether in prayer (the mosque), education (the *madrasa*) or meditation (the *khanaqah*)’ (Metcalf, 1996, p.5). McCloud (1996, p.70) highlights that ‘there is only one requirement for Muslim space- a place for prayer’, and with no religious requirement for consecrated land in order to enact Islamic rituals, the boundaries between a Muslim and non-Muslim space may be more fluid than those experienced by other religious traditions. The temporal character of such spaces is also intimated in McCloud’s (1996, p.65) assertion that ‘fasting makes demands of mental and spiritual space, while altering temporality.’ In McCloud’s (1996, p.68-70) depiction of the indicators of a Muslim home, she highlights religious symbols such as ‘a sign on the door’, ‘cleanliness’, ‘Islamic texts and calligraphy’, ‘bronze plates engraved with various Quranic *suras*’, ‘Muslim newspapers, journals and pamphlets’, a ‘wall plaque’ indicating the *qiblah*, and the presence of the Quran on the highest shelf. McCloud (1996, p.71) also suggests that in a Muslim home, ‘window shades, curtains and drapes are always closed to exclude the view of neighbours.’ Qureshi (1996, p.46-47) also advocates that in analysing the spatial, one must also consider the ‘aural and oral’ as well as the ‘visual’, of particular relevance in exploring ‘Sufi invocational phrases and hymns.’ For Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.182), mosques in Britain can also be understood as constituting ‘places for the production of Islamic discourse.’ It is argued here that the spaces at the IWO are a site for the production, manifestation and reproduction of their Islamic social work discourse through the organisation’s everyday practices.

IWO Spaces

Following these considerations about the identity of space and place, the multiple physical, social, aural and temporal spaces at the IWO are shown to define it as a place in which Islamic social work is practiced. These spaces manifest the theoretical synthesis of Islamic and statutory social work approaches brought together in the IWO’s Islamic social work discourse and, in turn, help reproduce the discourse within an everyday context.

Firstly, the physical exterior of the organisation manifests the synthesis of approaches to those who enter the IWO, shaping their first impressions of the organisation. Upon arriving at the physical premises of the offices one sees the sign ‘Bridston Islamic Welfare Organisation’ written in a bold font. However there are no Arabic words present, which Metcalf (1994, p.4) suggests would be characteristic of a ‘Muslim presence’. In the waiting room are paraphernalia which one may expect to find in any professional, voluntary-sector waiting

room, such as a health and safety poster and directions to a safe point in the case of a fire. An array of information and leaflets advertising other social welfare and voluntary sector services are also on offer and included amongst them are Muslim community newspapers and information about upcoming events at the Bridston mosque. This selection of materials presented in this waiting room space visually manifests the synthesis of statutory and Islamic approaches to social work as advocated by the IWO. In particular, a lack of devotional calligraphy adorning the walls, which McCloud (1996) suggests as being particularly customary within Muslim spaces, arguably represents the non-proselytizing person-centred nature of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse.

The physicalities of where and when staff members prayed while at work were described during several interviews. In these interviews, the staff members highlighted how they preferred working for the IWO as they were given sufficient opportunity to pray privately at the correct prayer times. As Leila commented, at her previous job:

'I didn't get an opportunity to pray because they had glass rooms... it was an office which was completely glass from each side so the rooms were transparent' (Leila)

Hamza and Nadim also highlighted how, when possible, male staff members pray together in the IWO's upstairs office spaces. It was only in these particular private office spaces that staff members chose to pray, rather than public areas such as the waiting room. This distinction between the public parts of the IWO and the more private areas is evocative of Goffman's (1959, p.93-97) notion of 'front regions' and 'back regions' with variance occurring between the two. It is within the 'front regions' such as the waiting room that the staff members presented the inclusive, non-proselytizing dimension of the Islamic social work discourse, whilst overtly Islamic religious practices, such as the five daily *salat* were confined to the 'back regions' which only staff members can freely access.

During an interview with one administrative staff member, she described how part of her role at the IWO involved acting as a PA to the Director, co-ordinating his diary and allocating appointments to service users when available. Such control of physical and social access to the Director by the staff at the organisation arguably contributes to his charismatic authority by regulating the levels of contact that service users and visiting agencies may have with him. This potentially helps in reproducing and legitimising the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO by verifying Dr Rahman's scholarship and status. It is also evocative of Werbner's (2004, p.224) anthropological account of the Sufi *shaykh* Zindapir, and the grassroots welfare

provision offered at his lodge based in Pakistan, where physical access to the *shaykh* is mediated and controlled by those working at the lodge. The administrator's role as PA to the Director is arguably a professionalization of such tasks described in Werbner's (2004) account.

Secondly, such a synthesis of Islamic and statutory approaches is manifested in an everyday context through the gendered space discernible at the IWO offices. Drawing upon the theme raised in Aisha's comments, Marwa also described during her interview that:

'You'll probably also notice about the sort of segregation of the genders as well, you'll notice that the men sit together and the women are together. So there's not always that sort of free mix. I mean we work together and we understand that even if we are one-to-one man and woman that's fine, it's for professional reasons and we're open to that. But it's just those kind of modest kind of boundaries within the IWO' (Marwa)

Marwa's comment that she is 'open' to men and women working together at the IWO 'for professional reasons' highlights the influence of statutory norms into this aspect of the Islamic approach, which for some individuals may be seen as religiously contentious. Zahra acknowledges this potential contention in a remark where she explains that:

'Like, working with men, technically it's OK, we work with men in the office you know. But I think some people's backgrounds have been a bit more, you know... 'No' (shakes finger) I think! (Laughs)' (Zahra)

This synthesis of Islamic and statutory norms within the workplace arguably represents an area in which there has been some compromise in reconciling the two approaches. Such a spatial division between male and female working zones is less overtly an identifiable Islamic feature than the visual Arabic signs identified by Metcalf (1996) and McCloud (1996), but nonetheless indicates the consideration given by the organisation in trying to develop a halal working environment. Marwa's comments regarding female project workers being seated separately in different office spaces may also be regarded as significant. Mohammad (2005, p.194) in particular notes the propensity for some young British Muslim women to seek employment in 'relatively open' contexts as within such settings they may be more visible to family and community members.

Thirdly, it was also possible to identify distinct 'oral and aural' spaces, indicating that the IWO's environment is one in which Islamic and statutory social work practices are blended

together within an everyday context (Qureshi, 1996, p.47). Specifically relating to the confluence of statutory and Islamic practices, Marwa commented that one particular IWO policy was that:

'We don't actually answer the phone saying "salaam alaykum" because often that's often seen as a Muslim greeting but we're kind of trying, you know, cater for all, so we just say "Hello, the Islamic Welfare Organisation, how can I help?" But then if we were calling a Muslim client then we would say "salaam alaykum"' (Marwa)

Marwa's comment highlights the staff members' ability to manifest an inclusive ethos by using a non-religious greeting, yet also an ability to use religious phraseology where appropriate. Marwa spoke about the benefits of being able to use such phrases, when appropriate, which helped distinguish the IWO from other voluntary sector organisations:

'So I guess those kind of things are different to maybe if the client was accessing the service from somewhere else, always saying 'oh insh Allah' and giving prayers to your clients, you know "may God help you" and things like that which can sometime be really encouraging' (Marwa)

Such a synthesis of Islamic and statutory practices is thus manifested in the spoken practices of the organisation within an everyday context. Marwa also noted that Tranquillity Project staff team meetings also often began with 'short prayers', adding an Islamic touch to an everyday organisational practice.

Fourthly, several of the staff members interviewed described the impact of particular times and dates of the Islamic calendar upon the everyday spaces at the organisation. These temporal spaces add to the perception that the IWO constitutes an Islamic social work environment. As Marwa explained:

'I think it was the month of hajj, which is a time when they also fast quite a bit, and um, everyone was kind of bringing a dish and opening the fast together, breaking the fast, which was good kind of team bonding and team building thing' (Marwa)

This custom by staff members of opening and breaking fasts together is highlighted by Marwa as being one of the ways in which team building may occur in an Islamic social work environment, adding an Islamic element to a common workplace activity.

Fifthly, reflective comments by the staff members regarding their working environment also acknowledge a perception that the IWO's spaces do not constitute a homogenous Islamic social work environment, but instead depict it as one in which multiple Muslim identities are

manifest. Commenting on the dress worn by his fellow colleagues, Yusuf remarked that:

'I mean there's many different colours and codes of dress within various Muslim communities and you probably see it when you come into the IWO everyone's dressed slightly differently' (Yusuf)

Similarly, such differences were also mentioned by Leila, in describing how:

'We may all be Muslims in the office but we may pray slightly different and stuff but that is ok. You know, there's maybe differences but we just get on with it really without questioning each other' (Leila)

Such a variety of Muslim identities being manifested and recognized at the IWO locates the organisation as being situated within a particular sociological context. Cesari (2004, p.83-85) explains that, for globalized Muslim communities in the West, 'different ways of being Muslim emerge' with 'new levels of individual choice in the course of religious observance.' Similarly, Fadil (2005, p.145) suggests the emergence of 'a process of individualization in the way that Muslims in Europe practise their faith' with greater focus being placed upon individual agency and interpretation. By accepting these individual differences in everyday practice amongst the staff members, the inclusive and person-centred ethos of the IWO's theoretical Islamic social work discourse is visibly manifested.

Overall, an analysis of the multiple, multi-dimensional spaces manifested at the IWO helps locate the organisation as a place in which Islamic social work is practiced, where professional and Islamic approaches are synthesised together in everyday interaction.

Service User Assessments

Service user assessments are a routine practice within every statutory or voluntary sector social work context and are often one of the first points of contact between a service user and an organisation before the service user is signposted to receiving a specific service. Several of the emerging texts on social work, religion, and spirituality, such as those by Canda and Furman (2010) and Holloway and Moss (2010) have presented models and frameworks which are advocated by the authors as representing particularly appropriate methods for assessing the religious and spiritual needs of service users within a social work context.

Within Canda and Furman's (2010, p.267) model in particular, the authors suggest that a faith-sensitive assessment may include the questions: 'What helps you to experience a deep sense of *meaning*, purpose, morality, hope, connection, joy or peace in your life?' and 'Are

spirituality, religion or faith *important* to you? Please explain why or why not?’ Rahiem and Hamid (2012, p.54) suggest that when conducting a mental health interview with a Muslim individual, clinicians may wish to ask questions such as ‘How do your religious beliefs affect your day-to-day life?’, ‘Do you find comfort in prayer and/or fasting?’ and ‘Do you find that your connection with religion is distressing to you?’

Given the emphasis within these texts upon developing and applying particular models in order to facilitate religious and spiritually sensitive assessments, the subject of the IWO’s service user assessments was a feature of the interview with IWO staff member Robina, who conducts many of the initial assessments with new service users who have been referred to the IWO, to explore what the IWO’s service user assessment practices entail.

IWO Service User Assessments

In discussing initial service user assessments as an everyday practice at the IWO, it was highlighted by staff members that there were no set questions used on the topics of religion and spirituality used during this process. In deciding which staff member would provide the most appropriate support for each service user following an assessment, Robina described how:

‘If I see, like, an issue where something’s, I don’t know... spiritual and I feel that Shaykh will be able to address it better then I’ll say ‘ok that one can go to Shaykh’ (Robina)

In relation to Islamic counselling in particular, and in ascertaining at what stage a service user would be signposted to specifically Islamic counselling, Robina additionally commented that:

‘It could be at the initial assessment stage or it could be three sessions down the line they’re like “ok...”, because I can’t impose on them and like I said we get non-Muslims coming as well so I have to follow them’ (Robina)

Initially, such data may appear surprising as Robina’s remarks suggest that there is no detailed assessment of religion and spirituality completed with each new service user as a standard practice, despite the organisation offering services such as Islamic counselling and spiritual guidance. There are several potential reasons underpinning the decision not to use a set list of questions, or to refer to religion or spirituality at all, when conducting each new service user assessment.

Firstly, Robina suggests that by not completing a detailed assessment of religion and

spirituality within the initial assessment, this approach is a manifestation of the person-centred ethos of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse. The lack of detailed religious assessment thus appears to be a practice coherent with the policies of the organisation as described by the Director in reference to the Rogerian theory underpinning the IWO's model. Robina's comments indicate that such a policy advocates the autonomy of the service user in deciding at what stage during their contact with the IWO they may wish to discuss religious and spiritual beliefs, if at all. Paradoxically, by not asking about religion and spirituality during an initial service user assessment, Robina implies that this practice may be particularly sensitive when working with Muslim service users, manifesting the non-proselytizing ethos of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse. Furthermore, this practice arguably relates to Islamic principles itself, given the Director's focus upon the religious principle of '*freedom of faith*' within Chapter 5, which he identifies as drawing from the Quranic [2:256] proclamation that there should be no compulsion in religion.

Secondly, Robina's comments demonstrate an intuitive ability as an experienced practitioner to identify when themes of religion and spirituality are particularly salient for a service user, without resorting to a standardised process of questioning. As Robina herself commented, '*if I see, like, an issue where something's, I don't know... spiritual and I feel that Shaykh will be able to address it better then I'll say 'ok that one can go to Shaykh.'*' Robina's remarks indicate she has an ability to discern when a service user's needs may be best addressed by being referred to a particular staff member to receive a faith-based service. The assessment models described earlier, such as the approach advocated by Holloway and Moss (2010), are arguably developed primarily for statutory practitioners, the majority of whom have had little formal training in engaging with religion and spirituality within a social work context and who may only have an elementary knowledge of minority faith group beliefs and practices. Robina's assessment practices suggest that carrying out a good assessment of a Muslim service user's religious or spiritual needs at the IWO is not dependent upon utilising a detailed or comprehensive schedule of questions but is based upon the professional competencies of the assessor.

In considering the rationale behind the IWO's decision not to implement a routine assessment of religious and spiritual beliefs with new service users, it is also relevant to consider the different context the IWO inhabits in contrast to statutory social work or clinical psychiatric environments. Robina's comments highlight how a service user may not begin to discuss their religion or spirituality within a counselling context until '*three sessions down the line.*'

By offering a flexible counselling service with a Muslim practitioner, where faith may or may not be engaged with depending on the will of the individual, there is the potential to discuss religious and spiritual issues at the pace of the service user, not at a juncture specified by the practitioner. Whereas a statutory social worker or clinical psychiatrist may be required to assess and refer a service user within a specific time frame, the set-up of the IWO services allows for service users' religious and spiritual needs to unfold at a pace which is comfortable and preferable for them. When assessing service users within an overtly Islamic organisation such as the IWO, Robina's comments indicate that there is a more explicit need to adopt a person-centred and less formalised approach to measuring an individual's religious and spiritual needs in order to facilitate a non-proselytizing assessment.

Collaborative Service User Assessments

During interviews with the nine referring agencies, it emerged that two of the referrers, named Jenny and Daniel, had conducted collaborative assessments with IWO project workers. Both Jenny and Daniel were working in the statutory sector and had conducted the assessments with IWO project workers at their service users' homes.

Jenny

Jenny's service user was a socially isolated elderly South Asian woman whom she was having difficulty communicating with. Jenny contacted the IWO after hearing about them from a colleague as she felt that:

'I wanted the IWO to be involved to give her some form of socialization, so that she could talk to somebody in her own language and hopefully maybe tell us if there's something that maybe we can help her with' (Jenny)

During the collaborative assessment, Jenny described how the IWO project workers were able to give her advice and information about working sensitively according to the religious beliefs of the service user. For example:

'With the lady her Quran was very important to her and it was hanging up on a bag and it was very important that I didn't touch it and all these sort of things I wouldn't have known' (Jenny)

Despite IWO project workers visiting the service user several times, Jenny's assessment of the situation was that:

'The service user wouldn't really engage with them. And I don't know whether that was cultural or age difference, 'cos of course she's in her fifties and those girls are in their twenties. And I don't know, culturally, whether an older South Asian woman would say anything to a young girl' (Jenny)

Jenny's account highlights that whilst the project workers were able to give her some useful advice regarding the service user's religious beliefs, the shared South Asian identities of the project workers and service user might have been a barrier, rather than a bridge, to conducting a more successful assessment of the service user's needs. Therefore, whilst the IWO staff did facilitate a religiously sensitive assessment by offering Jenny advice about the service user's Quran, it should not be assumed that when conducting an assessment with a Muslim service user that a faith-sensitive approach guarantees a successful outcome irrespective of other factors such as age, ethnicity and gender.

Daniel

Daniel's service user was a young man suffering from serious mental health problems but living in the community. Daniel contacted IWO project workers for assistance as he was having difficulty communicating with the service user and his family, and was therefore experiencing obstacles to arranging an appropriate care package for the service user. As Daniel explained:

'I wanted to use an agency that understood that the family's side of things' (Daniel)

Daniel described how, during the assessment, the IWO project workers discussed with the young man how he might begin to socialise more. Daniel's analysis of this discussion was that:

'They were going with what the client wanted to do more so than what they wanted then... I mean if he said he didn't want to go to the mosque they wouldn't have taken him, you know, so that's it, they seemed very flexible which I think is good again' (Daniel)

Daniel's analysis corresponds to the descriptions by the IWO project workers of their person-centred approach, manifesting the ethos of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse described by IWO staff members in Chapter 5. In contrast to the collaborative assessment

between Jenny and IWO project members, Daniel's service user met with IWO project workers who were older than the service user. Daniel's collaborative assessment with the IWO workers was potentially more successful than Jenny's assessment due to the age differences between the project workers and service users, rather than being due to adopting a faith-based or faith-sensitive approach.

Overall, a successful service user assessment by IWO project workers does not appear to be based upon a comprehensive schedule of questions about religion and spirituality as some contemporary social work texts suggest. Instead, at the IWO, there is a focus on the skills of the individual practitioner in recognising when a religious or spiritual theme may be salient within a service user case. The findings regarding collaborative assessments also indicate that engaging with religious or spiritual themes may not be the most significant factor in conducting a successful assessment of a Muslim service user and that equal consideration should be given to factors such as age and ethnicity when engaging in assessment practices.

Key Services

Translating it into Practice

Staff members who facilitate support sessions with service users spoke not only about the theoretical Islamic social work discourse underpinning the organisation but also identified that such an approach to service provision was necessarily translated into practices when providing key services. This was particularly emphasised during an interview with Dr Malik who commented that:

'You have to translate it into practice. And in translating it into practice then of course you talk about the little things. That simply smiling is charity. Going out of your way is charity. Things like that. So I think that when you translate it, it becomes different' (Dr Malik)

Dr Malik's observation appears to distinguish between the theoretical approach underpinning the organisation and a more visible manifestation in the form of practices for use during service user support sessions. In making this comment, Dr Malik appears to recognise a distinction between theory and practice.

Interview data regarding these everyday practices particularly focused on three key services: Islamic counselling, community chaplaincy and advocacy. It is argued here that despite Islamic counselling and community chaplaincy stemming from two different IWO projects

there nonetheless appears to be greater similarities between these two services in practice, than between the practices of Islamic counselling and advocacy which both stem from the same IWO project.

Islamic Counselling

Interviews with the Tranquillity Project's counselling staff explored the Islamic social work discourse as manifested within the IWO's counselling sessions. In reflecting upon her own practice, and that of her fellow counselling colleagues, Robina commented that:

'I think the group of us are very, very, different. And the clients will find that, you know. 'Cos our training has been different I suppose' (Robina)

Robina indicates that even within a single organisation, there is variation amongst the counselling practices of the different practitioners, suggesting that Islamic counselling is far from a static enterprise (Dharamsi and Maynard, 2012).

For Dr Malik, the focus within the practical model of Islamic counselling was in offering service users relevant advice and guidance from the Quran, the *Hadith* and *Sunnah*:

'I think that in operational terms, in practical terms, of course what you do is you bring in a specific guidance from the Quran and statements from the Quran and from the life of the Prophet (Peace Be upon Him). I think that is the basic practical interpretation and that's what I would use, the model of life that one can see as described by God and by his Prophet' (Dr Malik)

Giving a particular example in which he had utilised scripture within a therapeutic context, Dr Malik reflected upon one case where:

'Sometimes what can happen is that people can feel despondent and they can feel that there's no hope for them and 'I have been so bad, what's the point of me trying now? I can just carry on being as I am.' And so I was, then I was able to explore with him that, look, God says and the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) says that the gates of forgiveness are open until the moment of death and that any effort we make can help us to become better' (Dr Malik)

This choice of scripture by Dr Malik's appears to manifest the non-judgemental element of IWO's Islamic social work discourse in the practice of Islamic counselling. Soraya also spoke about her utilisation of Quranic verses within a counselling context, emphasising how she interwove 'normal' as well as 'Islamic' practices into a session:

'Sometimes I actually use Quranic verses as well and the clients have found it really helpful. I also,

like, if someone were to come with anger issues I would go through the normal route with counselling, you try and explore the anger and all of that, but I would also give the Islamic perspective. Maybe five minutes at the end explaining that, ok, in Islam we've been told that when you're angry you should recite this, it's recommended to use water to do ablution, 'cos water cools fire and anger's from fire' (Soraya)

Soraya's comment implies a level of compatibility in using 'normal' and 'Islamic' approaches alongside each other complementarily within practice, as well as awareness that the practice of Islamic counselling involves a process of synthesising two different approaches. Such a recommendation to perform ablution when experiencing anger links directly to a *Hadith* in Abu Dawud in the book *Kitab al-Adab* (General Behaviour) No. 4766 in which it is discussed how Atiyah as-Sa'di narrated that:

'AbuWa'il Al-Qass said: We entered upon Urwah ibn Muhammad ibn as-Sa'di. A man spoke to him and made him angry. So he stood and performed ablution; he then returned and performed ablution, and said: My father told me on the authority of my grandfather Atiyah who reported the Messenger of Allah as saying: Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution.'²⁵

Soraya also highlighted the practical flexibility and person-centred ethos of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse during counselling practices in her comments that:

'Little things like this they do come in but it's as much as the person wants 'cos some of my clients come in and they don't even want to acknowledge that they're Muslim and that's fine. So it's up to them what they want really' (Soraya)

In describing the approach of the Director during counselling sessions, Robina emphasised that due to Dr Rahman's extensive knowledge of traditional Islamic sources, he is able to provide service users with multiple different scriptural interpretations on certain issues (should they request it) suiting the diversity of the IWO's service users:

'Masha Allah he's very knowledgeable so, you know, a lot of it he's like, ok, Shafi madhhab believe this, Hanafi believe this, you know, so sometimes you can give them the four' (Robina)

It can be argued that in doing so, Dr Rahman's style of counselling is able to engage with multiple Muslim identities in practice, offering advice to service users who come from a

²⁵<http://sunnah.com/abudawud/43#12> [accessed 04/12/12] Efforts were made to obtain an academic translation of this *Hadith* however an academically approved English translation was not readily available

variety of theological backgrounds.

Referring to her own practice, Robina put a slightly different emphasis upon her approach to Islamic counselling, suggesting that the focus for her was not necessarily upon referring to scripture, but centred upon exploring an individual's relationship with Allah:

'If somebody comes in and they want to have counselling maybe using the Islamic model then it's very much about their relationship with Allah, how is that, what's going on with them, their situation, how is that a reflection on Allah' (Robina)

In particular, Robina highlighted how she incorporated the practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) into counselling sessions, in which service users were able to reflect upon the different names of Allah:

'We might use Allah's 99 names, we might use one of the names that might be relevant to them, like merciful' (Robina)

In suggesting a focus upon Allah's attribute as merciful, Robina intimates that her counselling approach corresponds to the non-judgemental element of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse.

Robina also described how she may incorporate a breathing exercise into counselling sessions in which herself and the service user will *'recite 'Allah' breathing in and (exhales) out and just try and empty your mind'* and also commented that if service users wished her to pray with them that she would do so. The use of *dhikr* within a therapeutic context with Muslim service users has been described by scholars including Hamdan (2008, p108) to 'have a calming effect on the individual's body, mind and soul.' The suitability in particular of reflecting upon Allah's nature of mercy has been advocated by Vasegh (2001) in helping individuals overcome feelings of guilt, and in reminding them that no human individual is fully free from sin. A focus upon *dhikr* rather than scripture within Robina's practice as a counsellor is potentially due to her route of academic training, having not attended an Islamic theological seminary or been formally trained as the *murid* of a *shaykh* (like some of the other IWO counsellors) but having instead having studied mainstream counselling.

Soraya also mentioned during her interview that she sometimes incorporated one particular form of *dhikr* into her practice with service users, involving:

'Sometimes, like, some people we'll do music... we have a specific music CD which has got remembrance of God to the music' (Soraya)

Although Soraya did not elaborate specifically upon the style of such music more fully, it can be noted that some Islamic scholars have argued that certain styles of music are religiously prohibited (Butler Brown, 2010), and it may be possible that some Muslim service users would not find such a practice appropriate. Interestingly, however, Carter and Rashidi (2004, p.154) suggest that 'music therapy' was advocated by Ibn Sina as 'he believed music calms the faculty of emotion and restores the harmony of the person.' It can be noted that there are Islamic justifications both for and against the incorporation of music into a therapeutic context. The flexibility in involving music into a session or not, depending on the will of the service user, again suggests that the service is able to engage with multiple Muslim identities in practice.

Both Robina and Soraya also spoke about incorporating mindfulness practice within their counselling sessions. As Robina explained:

'I've done sessions where we've had twenty minutes of mindfulness, that's really like kind of getting re-tuned to the whole body, how it's feeling right now, when they're sat in the chair. And then we'll probably go into a bit of visualization, like visualize walking through a forest' (Robina)

The process of cultivating mindfulness is described by Germer (2005, p.6) as being about concentrating upon 'moment-by-moment awareness' and being focused about upon one's actions and thoughts in the present moment, avoiding dwelling upon future and past anxieties and difficulties. Although it was not identified specifically by Robina and Soraya as being an Islamic practice, the notion of mindfulness can be understood as having its roots in Buddhism, and in particular as being linked to the Pali term *sati*, connoting 'awareness, attention and remembering' (Brown and Ryan, 2003, Germer, 2005, p.5, Siegel *et al.*, 2009). Although the practice of mindfulness has been somewhat distanced from these Buddhist roots in its appropriation by the mainstream disciplines of counselling and psychotherapy, it is nevertheless interesting to find it being promoted within the counselling practices of an Islamic organisation. Such a practice of mindfulness being advocated by the IWO counsellors appears to represent openness to non-Islamic spiritual practices within counselling sessions, as well as identifiably Islamic spiritual practices such as *dhikr*. This is arguably a manifestation in practice of the varying definitions of spirituality given by staff members in Chapter 5, which displayed openness to the differing spiritual needs of each individual.

Alongside placing a focus upon offering scriptural guidance and *dhikr* as part of the practical Islamic model, some members of the counselling staff, and service users too, emphasised the need for an Islamic counsellor to be a physical embodiment of certain modes of behaviour. In particular, Dr Rahman commented that:

'From the Muslim perspective, in fact that is one of the styles of the Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him, he used to allow people to express themselves without interruption in whatever they want to say until they finish and then he'd come across' (Dr Rahman)

For Dr Rahman, such a practice was also seen to be the embodiment of adopting a person-centred Islamic approach, in giving full attention to the expressions and disclosures of the service user. The significance of embodying certain characteristics was also highlighted by one service user who accessed the counselling service, who described the Islamic counsellor she spoke with at the IWO:

'He is very, very calm. To me, he will not look into your eyes when he's talking to you and they should do that... the way he acts while he is giving you counselling, that's how a Muslim man should do it... And he's very confident in his answers, in his knowledge and he's very calm. He's not loud. He's very understanding and he gives you so much respect. So he acts as a Muslim man should act' (Aisha)

The need for Islamic service providers to be reflexive about their behaviour was also emphasised by Dr Malik who highlighted the potential difficulties that may arise when providing professional welfare services to Muslim communities:

'You have to be very careful in the sense that... because there is so much weight put in the religion on friendliness and of invitation, of the honour that guests bring to your house if they come. Because of all these concepts, I think people, clients also want to be very friendly with you and you have to be very careful about professional boundaries' (Dr Malik)

Dr Malik appears to suggest that whilst it is important to embody Islamic principles when working as an Islamic counsellor, it is also essential that one should adhere to statutory boundaries in doing so.

In comparison with a non-Islamic context of service provision, the issues of transference and counter-transference, when working with a service user, are discussed by Watkins (1998), particularly in relation to a counselling context. Watkins (1988, p.74-79) comments that 'positive transference reactions' may involve the service user perceiving the counsellor to be

an ‘ideal person’, who ‘does everything right, without flaw or error’, or as a ‘nurturer’ upon whose advice and guidance the service user may feel they are dependent. A difficulty may therefore arise whereby such a bias may impede the self-development of the service user by impacting upon the helping relationship as a ‘fixed bent in perceptions and feelings’ (Watkins, 1988, p.75). Such an issue, already alluded to by referrer Nadia in relation to her service user’s dependency upon Dr Rahman in Chapter 5, may be an issue which the IWO staff may need to engage with in ensuring that their Islamic approach to service provision fully promotes the self-development and individual agency of each service user.

Community Chaplaincy

While the IWO’s Islamic counselling service is offered by the Tranquility Project, the community chaplaincy services are offered by the Helping Hands team, identified by Yusuf as having a ‘*different*’ focus in Chapter 5. Despite Yusuf’s distinction between the two projects, the services of Islamic counselling and community chaplaincy appeared to draw upon the IWO’s Islamic social work discourse in several similar ways in practice.

Despite the Helping Hands project model theoretically focusing upon primarily addressing the practical needs of their service users, such as housing and employment, Yusuf highlighted that in practice:

‘A lot of issues coming up ranging from... you know, about anxieties about what they have done, “Is God gonna forgive me? What is my position now in Islam for what I have done? Is there a chance for redemption? How do I deal with my anger, you know, I’ve been to all these anger management courses, I’m stressed, but it’s not working because there’s something missing in there, because they’re not hitting the nail on the head in regards to myself. What does Islam say about this issue? I’ve got a girlfriend, is that ok for me? Am I sinning, am I damned destined for hell?” So many of these issues are always being asked’ (Yusuf)

As a result of encountering such queries, community chaplain Nadim explained how Islamic advice, including appropriate and relevant prayers, was sometimes given to service users on request, although this was done in a very carefully considered manner:

‘Depending on the circumstances, the prayers are either for giving them strength or that which they would rely on so that at least when they wake up in the morning, so at least they can be able to look forward towards the day. Or at the end of the night, what prayers that they will need so at least they know they will have a good night’s sleep. Prayers for when they are during their times of anxiety, there are different prayers that people will require at that time. So you’re trying to give them as much,

even though you don't want to change the sessions for them to be more religious sessions because then for some of them, depending on the individual, if you do that then they will close down' (Nadim)

Nadim's description of these activities is akin here to the role of Tranquility Project's Islamic counsellors. His comment that providing such prayers depends 'on the circumstances' of the service users appears to manifest of the person-centred ethos of IWO's Islamic social work discourse in practice, in a similar style to the practice of the Islamic counselling staff. Despite the project theoretically focusing on addressing service users' practical and social needs, the need to engage with such issues explains why the Helping Hands project seeks to employ community chaplains who have undergone theological training.

The issue of mainstream mental health and welfare professionals engaging in prayer with service users has been debated within literature by Dein *et al.* (2010, p.64), with the authors suggesting that 'the issue of prayer with patients will always be contentious' and that 'extreme caution' must be given when 'in responding to a patient's request to join with them in prayer.' Nadim's comments regarding the careful incorporation of prayer into his role as community chaplain highlights that this issue is not simply a concern for professional working in mainstream contexts but must be cautiously negotiated in the practice of some Islamic welfare professionals too. Writing by Rose (1999) and Lynch (1999) suggests that such challenges are not simply being experienced by Muslim religious professionals but practitioners in other faith groups too when seeking to professionalize counselling services provided to their congregants.

Just as counselling service user Aisha described the need for an Islamic male counsellor to embody certain characteristics in practice, Yusuf and Nadim also described their aim to manifest a certain Islamic demeanour in practice, in the style of the Prophet Muhammad. As Yusuf highlighted:

'At the end of the day the Prophet was never harsh, he always went down to the level of that particular individual and that's why from the history you have those who loved him, who never had any bad things to say against him' (Yusuf)

Such a focus on the importance of the physical demeanour of Muslim professionals working in a chaplaincy context has also been noted by Gilliat-Ray (2010b, p.419) who highlights 'the "embodied performances" of Muslim chaplains' as they undertake their work and which she

suggests ‘are the outcomes of discourses’ and can indicate their ‘successful socialization as Muslim religious scholars.’

Whilst the IWO’s Islamic counsellors spoke about offering service users quotations from Islamic scriptures as part of their everyday practices, Nadim highlighted that in his practice as a community chaplain:

*‘I don’t try to quote verses or the Hadith, because you try to get them to get the confidence to live a good Islamic life and they normally would be picking from you from the way you conduct yourselves’
(Nadim)*

Whilst Yusuf described the Helping Hands project as constituting a ‘*different*’ approach to the Tranquility Project, there were nonetheless many similarities in practice, with the provision of Islamic prayers and advice at service users’ requests, based on a person-centred ethos, with great weight being given to embodying certain characteristics of the Prophet in everyday practice. Analysing the similarities between these two services, it can be inferred that Yusuf’s rationale for identifying the Helping Hands project as constituting a ‘*different*’ approach to the Tranquility Project may not entirely be due to significant distinctions between the projects’ practices. Instead, it is worth reflecting upon Yusuf’s comments noted in Chapter 5 where he sought to stress that the Helping Hands community chaplains do not seek to be ‘*zealous*’ or to ‘*proselytize*.’ By constructing the approach of the Helping Hands Project in such a fashion, Yusuf is arguably aware of potential sensitivities surrounding external perceptions of social welfare projects which accommodate for faith identities in practice.

Advocacy

The practice of providing advocacy services at the IWO is suggested to be significantly different from that of providing Islamic counselling and community chaplaincy services, despite it constituting part of the same project as the Islamic counselling service. Staff member Leila explained that the bulk of her advocacy work focuses upon dealing with issues regarding the British legal system, such as immigration, benefits and civil divorce proceedings. As she explained:

‘I generally get the legal side of things so, say for example, there’s a case on child protection or “What are my rights?”, you know, “I want custody of my kids how do I legally go about doing that”, “I’m divorced Islamically but do I need to get a civil divorce.” I just deal with those legal aspects of

things' (Leila)

Leila highlighted that if an individual came to the IWO with a particular question regarding their rights in Islamic law rather than British law, they would be signposted at the assessment stage to other members of the Tranquility Project team who have received theological training:

'That would be something that the person who's managing the referrals will actually signpost that this part is for you, the advocacy side, but the spiritual side or the Islamic side will actually go to Dr Rahman or it will go to Soraya' (Leila)

Leila makes a distinction here between the practices of working on '*the advocacy side*' and the practice of dealing with '*the spiritual side or the Islamic side.*' Whilst the IWO counselling staff clearly talked about engaging in Islamic counselling, no such claim was made by Leila to be engaging in Islamic advocacy. Instead, it was highlighted that the IWO offers citizen advocacy. Citizen advocacy, different to legal and collective advocacy, can be understood as the efforts of trained volunteers 'to foster respect for the rights and dignity of those whose interests they represent' by voicing and supporting their service users 'concerns and aspirations' and helping them obtain 'social, recreational, health and related services' (Butler *et al.*, 1988, p.2).

However, despite Leila's distinction between providing assistance for '*the advocacy side*' and '*the spiritual side or the Islamic side*', she also hinted that during the practice of providing advocacy services for Muslim service users, such a distinction may occasionally become less clear-cut. As Leila explained:

'Even with advocacy with certain clients if they did say, if they do say to me "I'm having issues with my husband etc. etc." then you know, there might be, depending on what type of relationship you have with that particular person, I would maybe, as an advocate, I don't know whether this is something that should be said, but I would say "look I will give an Islamic point of view on it" and just say, you know, like, that it does happen and you just have to bear it with patience and why don't you try a different approach if that's going to work. But obviously I'm not a counsellor, I'm only trying to reassure a client whose come to me for advocacy but at the same time they're crying or they're telling me a lot more than I need to know as an advocate. So then I have to, I have done at the past, where I've reassured them and maybe give them some tips that this really does work and Islamically this is the way that, if you can do it, this is better and if it's not working change your approach.' (Leila)

Whilst the IWO staff members may make a distinction between *'the advocacy side'* and *'the spiritual side or the Islamic side'* at assessment stage, this recollection by Leila indicates that, in practice, the boundaries of the two may become slightly blurred. This blurring of boundaries is arguably a reflection of the expectations some Muslim service users may have in accessing an Islamic service provider, rather than a practice advocated by the IWO. As Al-Abdul-Jabbar and Al-Issa (2000) comment, some Muslim service users' expectations of receiving professional welfare services may include a desire to be given direct instruction and direction, in contrast to statutory professional approaches which advocate the self-reflection and autonomy of the service user. It is interesting to note Leila's comment, that *'I don't know whether this is something that should be said'*, as she implies that engaging in giving Islamic advice is something that perhaps should be questioned in the practice of providing advocacy services at the IWO. Just as statutory service providers may be unsure about when it is appropriate to engage with religious and spiritual topics with a service user, even in an Islamic organisation Leila's comment suggests that this is also a concern in her practice.

A consideration of the three practices of Islamic counselling, community chaplaincy and advocacy highlights the multifarious ways in which the IWO staff members drew upon the IWO's Islamic social work discourse, and its theoretical model, in an everyday context of service provision. As the analysis highlights, within the provision of Islamic counselling the staff members adopted different practices depending on their level of theological training and expertise, and according to the wishes of certain service users. This diversity of practices shows how IWO staff members aim to engage with a diverse array of Muslim identities in service provision, whilst also adhering to professional policies and procedures.

Volunteering Practices

Part of the fieldwork involved attending a variety of IWO volunteer training sessions, including those focused on advocacy, befriending and mentoring, and also several workshops on the topic of funeral training as part of an initiative being developed by Tranquility Project staff. Five Tranquility Project volunteers also participated in semi-structured interviews talking about their experiences of volunteering.

Based upon the fieldwork findings, this section will explore the practice of volunteer training provided by the IWO staff members, followed by an analysis of volunteers' experiences of practicing everyday volunteering, discussing the activities they carried out in order to assist

service users. Consideration will then be given to the funeral training being offered by the IWO to Muslim women in Bridston and, in particular, will highlight Islamic approaches to grieving and bereavement discussed at the training.

Volunteer Training Sessions

The training sessions run by project workers from both the Tranquility and Helping Hands teams focused upon the topics of advocacy, befriending and mentoring. During these sessions, the project workers highlighted the Islamic perspectives underpinning each of these volunteering practices. In relation to befriending, it was emphasised that:

'Befriending has its roots in Islam in the example of the Prophet "pairing up ansar and muhajirun" in Medina' (Fieldnotes 2010)

Similarly, regarding the practice of advocacy:

'The role of advocacy was shown as Islamic in upholding equality and the slide made reference to the Prophet's last sermon' (Fieldnotes 2010)

In relation to the Islamic perspectives underpinning the practice of mentoring, the IWO project worker presenting the session drew upon a particular *Hadith*:

'Whoever relieves a worldly difficulty from a Muslim Allah will grant him relief of his difficulties on the day of judgement. Whoever eases the burden of an insolvent Allah will ease him in the world and the hereafter. Whoever protects a Muslim Allah will protect him in the world and the hereafter. Allah is in the aid of a servant as long as he is in the aid of his brother (Al-Bukhari)' (Fieldnotes 2010)

However, while the project workers facilitating these sessions highlighted such scriptural passages of relevance, and made reference to the *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, a significant focus during the training was also on discussing the need for volunteers to adhere to the IWO's policies, manifesting a professional approach to service provision. The project workers drew attention to particular issues that volunteers may face when volunteering within the context of the Muslim community. For example, part of the session involved:

'Discussing issues which may arise during befriending (including whether it is appropriate to give a client their medication and what you should do if they ask you for money to buy food). The focus was

upon practical concerns and emphasising professional relationship boundaries' (Fieldnotes 2010)

Similarly, in a subsequent volunteer training session:

'The presenter then moved on to discuss boundaries and guidelines for mentors including the need for punctuality, confidentiality and personal safety. One issue included giving your mentee and their friends a lift. The presenter joked that "if you're Asian then 5, 6 or 10 people in a car is normal" but in this instance is "risky" as you don't know the identity of your mentee's friends' (Fieldnotes 2010)

By emphasising such concerns, the training sessions manifested a professional approach to service provision as being of significant importance to the organisation. It is interesting to note that the presenter discussed the 'risky' practice of putting too many people in a car as being an 'Asian' rather than Islamic or Muslim custom, suggesting it was a cultural practice, rather than a religious practice, which was not compatible with a professional approach to social work.

In understanding such a stress on professional practices, policies and procedures, an excerpt from Marwa's interview is particularly illuminating. As Marwa commented:

'It's different to say you work for an Islamic organisation 'cos everyone just thinks it's a bit wishy-washy, if something's Islamic, I think it carries that perception sometimes. So I was keen to kind of get involved in, you know, we can have an Islamic organisation, it can be professional and it can be to the same standard. And we can be working to policies and procedures like any other organisation out there' (Marwa)

Marwa's comment highlights that one aim of the IWO is to refute any assumptions that external individuals or organisations may have about the implications of the IWO being an Islamic service provider. The challenge that Marwa identifies constitutes one part of the process of institutionalizing and professionalizing informal internal forms of community support which operate amongst British Muslim communities. This process of institutionalization can be identified as part of the increasing organisational expansion and infrastructure being developed by contemporary British Muslim communities to meet diverse welfare needs. Whilst significant efforts in bygone decades have sought to address welfare issues, including the development of mosques and the provision of Muslim faith schools, the challenge which Marwa identifies constitutes a contemporary concern which the Bridston

community is seeking to address.

Experiences of Tranquility Project Volunteers

Interviews with five Tranquility Project volunteers focused upon discussing the volunteers' experiences of working with their assigned service users, getting feedback about these encounters, and also ascertaining the role that religion or spirituality had played during these volunteering practices, if at all. All of the volunteers who were interviewed had participated in befriending and/or advocacy, as well as some general office work. In discussing his experiences of volunteering in an advocacy capacity, Syed described how he had helped a service user by researching 'about benefits' and organising 'a meeting with the refugee council.' Syed's comment suggests that in his role as an advocate he was not providing advocacy relating to the service user's religious or spiritual needs, but focused instead upon helping by getting information relating to the British legal system.

Ruksar, Syed and Yasser also talked about their experiences of befriending IWO service users. For Ruksar, the focus of her volunteering was primarily helping out with shopping. As Ruksar explained:

'Originally she [the service user] just wanted somebody to talk to because she was feeling sort of lonely and depressed so it started off like that and then she was having problems with her shopping, she was finding it really difficult to shop, so she said 'what I would like to use my volunteer for is actually shopping' so that's what we generally tend to do and then we'll have a little bit of time obviously talking about her problems and things. So mainly it does tend to be shopping' (Ruksar)

Syed also discussed helping with cleaning and gardening as part of his role as a befriender:

'One point I remember I was in the back garden just mowing the lawn, I was doing that. Just cleaning the house, helping him clean the house' (Syed)

For Yasser, the focus of his befriending was that 'we just accompany them like a good friend.'

The practices described by the volunteers did not seem overtly religious or spiritual; none were involved in taking their service user to the mosque, reading scriptures or praying with

them, or engaging in any other sort of overtly religious or spiritual activity. Such befriending was not described during the volunteer training or by any interviewees as constituting Islamic befriending, and can be seen to involve similar activities to befriending offered by other statutory and voluntary agencies. Mead *et al.* (2010, p. 96) describe befriending as ‘an intervention that introduces the service user to one or more individuals whose main aim is to provide the service user with additional social support through the development of an affirming, emotion-focused relationship over time.’ Similarly, Bradshaw and Haddock (1998, p. 717) identified a range of identities that befriending may involve, such as having a ‘chat and a cup of tea’, ‘going to cafés’, ‘cooking’ and ‘shopping.’ On the surface, the everyday practices which befrienders and service users engaged in did not seem to incorporate any overt dimension of religion or spirituality.

However, there were subtle elements identified by the volunteers in which an Islamic or cultural approach to social work was manifested in their volunteering practices, particularly regarding which service users they were matched with. For Yasser, being a male volunteer, it was necessary for him to be matched with a male service user due to what he identifies as being ‘*religious*’ reasons. As Yasser explained:

‘I am a male so therefore I have to deal with the males, you know, from a religious point of view, so males with the males, females with the females’ (Yasser)

Similarly, Syed described how his ethnicity was significant in terms of which service user he was paired with. As Syed elucidated:

‘I think when he [the service user] asked for someone to see him, he didn’t want someone of his own sort of cultural community, he’s originally from the sub-continent and I’m not so he preferred to see me than anybody else’ (Syed)

Syed explained that this service user in particular had been concerned with potentially being matched up with a South Asian volunteer from his own ethnic group as he wanted to ensure total anonymity within his own ethnic community. As highlighted during the section on service user assessments, a faith-based or faith-sensitive approach should not overlook the significance of other factors such as ethnicity, age or gender when working with Muslim service users in order to facilitate a positive outcome.

All volunteers who were interviewed had the ability to speak one or more community languages, such as Bengali, Urdu or Arabic, in addition to being fluent in English. This also influenced which service user they were paired with for befriending, as Asma explained:

'I could translate for certain people. I could obviously understand their culture as well, what kind of context they're talking about, it's not completely detached from their situation' (Asma)

Asma's comment implies that one of the main ways she may be able to help her befriending and advocacy service users is through her linguistic abilities and cultural knowledge rather than being due to any religious or spiritual reasons.

Analysing the roles of the volunteers, it appears that by participating in activities such as befriending and advocacy, the volunteers did not engage in any practices which required particular religious or spiritual competencies or training, such as Islamic counselling, community chaplaincy or spiritual guidance. By consigning volunteers to offering these specific volunteering practices, this further highlights that being an Islamic counsellor or community chaplain constitutes a trained profession which only certain qualified individuals can provide.

Funeral Training Volunteer Workshops

A series of funeral training workshops were organised by Tranquility Project staff for Muslim women in Bridston to attend, with the aim of training a bank of volunteers to draw upon to help with certain Islamic funerary practices. The majority of the workshops involved presentations by external visitors, such as the Bridston coroner, but IWO project workers presented a workshop on bereavement counselling.

The bereavement counselling workshop began with a recitation of *Surah al-Fatiha*, noted as being particularly pertinent during times of distress, followed by a presentation which introduced various models relating to the different stages of grieving. While the presentation was focused upon secular models of grief, this was supplemented with a discussion of verses in the Quran and *Hadith*, which related to the process of dying, grieving and suffering:

‘These included a Hadith narrated by Al-Tirmidi: “value five things before five: youth before old age, health before sickness, wealth before poverty, leisure before preoccupation and life before death.” Another Hadith narrated by Al-Tirmidi was: “the greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When God loves a people, he tests them. Whoever accepts this wins His pleasure.” The verse “verily we belong to Allah and to Allah we return” was also highlighted. The discussion emphasised that people should be patient and submit to the will of Allah and to trust him as we don’t know what will come of it later on. It was highlighted that “even our beloved Prophet went through so many losses, he’s our example to follow”’ (Fieldnotes 2012)

In similar fashion to the construction of the IWO’s psycho-spiritual model, the presentation of the Islamic material regarding dying and grieving was shown as augmenting an existing secular model of the various stages of grieving (although the two approaches were not intertwined to the same extent as those within the IWO psycho-spiritual model).

Regarding how one may manifest such an approach to bereavement counselling in practice, one staff member facilitating the session highlighted particular excerpts from the *Hadith* which may be used to console a bereaved individual. These included:

‘In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah; there is no might and no power but in Allah’ (Abu Dawud Book 41, No.5075)’ (Fieldnotes 2012)

And:

‘Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (May Peace be Upon Him) as saying that Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, thus stated: I am near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him. (Sahih Muslim Book 35, No. 5076)’ (Fieldnotes 2012)

While the training sessions on advocacy, befriending and mentoring did not include scriptural material for use with service users, this was a feature of the training session on bereavement counselling being given to the bank of female funerary volunteers. As these women were undergoing a more extensive period of volunteer training than those offering advocacy,

befriending and mentoring volunteering services, they potentially occupy more of a mid-position between the IWO staff and other younger volunteers in terms of their level of training and ability to engage with religious and spiritual issues in practice.

One particularly interesting part of the first bereavement counselling session was a discussion concerning authentic Islamic grieving practices, particularly in relation to crying and wailing. In particular:

'It was highlighted that grieving and crying doesn't indicate low iman as the Prophet cried. It is simply wailing and eulogising which is not allowed. They discussed a narration where the Prophet spoke at the death of Ruqayyah: "go ahead and cry but avoid the crying of Shaytan"' (Fieldnotes 2012)

Furthermore, it was also highlighted that whilst grieving that:

'It is important to be careful in not pondering 'what if?' as saying this opens the door to Shaytan' (Fieldnotes 2012)

Such Islamic prohibitions against wailing are also identified by Hedayat (2006) who relates such a proscription to a *Hadith* narrating the Prophet's actions following the death of his son Ibrahim. As a result, Hedayat (2006, p.1289) emphasises that 'weeping, wailing and self-flagellation are not encouraged' within an Islamic bereavement context. In relation to asking the question of 'what if?' following a bereavement, Rubin and Yasien-Esmael (2004, p.149) highlight that 'Islamic practice... places great value on the acceptance of God or Allah's will with restraint or understanding.' As such, asking this particular question is not recommended by the authors as may be seen as questioning the will of Allah. This discussion during the training, regarding the ascertainment of correct Islamic grieving practices, can be situated as part of a broader sociological trend amongst some contemporary Muslim communities. Roy (2002, p.156) highlights that for some Muslim individuals, 'passage to the West offers a good opportunity to rethink an Islam rid of cultural and national particularities.' This discussion regarding correct grieving practices is potentially a manifestation of this particular sociological trend. Dwiary's (2006, p.86) comments, however, can also be noted here as he states that for some Muslim communities, such as Shia Iranians, 'displays of extreme sadness and sorrow' may be encouraged. This questions the extent to which the narrations discussed

on authentic grieving may be felt to be appropriate by some minority communities within the wider Muslim community. This topic will be further expounded upon in Chapter 8, where consideration will be given to service users' perceptions of what constitutes an authentic Islamic approach to social work.

Conclusion

The data analysed within this chapter explored the IWO's everyday practices, highlighting how they manifest the theoretical Islamic social work discourse and may engage in reproducing it. A consideration of the IWO's multiple spaces indicated the ways in which the organisation was seen to constitute an '*Islamic environment*' and a place in which Islamic social work is practiced. The theoretical synthesis of approaches was shown to be manifest through physical, gendered, oral and aural spaces. In particular, control of access to the space inhabited by the Director Dr Rahman was shown to legitimise his authority and potentially assist in reproducing the Islamic social work discourse.

An examination of the IWO's service user assessments observed that the lack of set questions about religion and spirituality manifested the person-centred approach underpinning the psycho-spiritual model in practice. The differences for faith-based practitioners conducting assessments in comparison to statutory professionals were also emphasised in analysing the reasons behind this.

Exploring the everyday practices of Islamic counselling, community chaplaincy and advocacy documented the similarities and differences between the three services. The discussion of Islamic counselling highlighted the differing abilities and skills of the IWO's Islamic counsellors which resulted in the IWO model being manifested in different ways. It was also argued that despite the community chaplaincy project being described by staff members in Chapter 5 as constituting a '*different*' approach, many of the challenges encountered in everyday practice were similar to those experienced by the Tranquility counselling staff. The discussion of the advocacy practices, which were highlighted here as distinct from the Islamic counselling and community chaplaincy, will also be further explored in the next chapter.

Lastly, the chapter considered the role of the IWO's volunteers. It was emphasised that the limited engagement of volunteers in dealing directly with religious or spiritual issues in practice served to further accentuate the competency of the IWO staff as trained welfare

professionals. Key issues regarding Islamic authenticity, discussed during volunteer training, will also be further explored in the following chapter which explores contestation of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse.

Chapter 7: Contesting the Islamic Social Work Discourse

Introduction

This chapter will explore several ways in which the Islamic social work discourse of the IWO was contested by individuals during the course of the research. Focusing particularly on three specific areas, the chapter will begin by exploring the first theme of *jinn* possession, spiritual illness and *ruqyah* healing. It will be argued that this particular topic poses a challenge to an organisation such as the IWO in terms of negotiating the boundaries of their Islamic social work discourse and has implications for their ability to foster partnerships with external statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

Secondly, the chapter will consider the theme of authority and inclusivity, reflecting upon findings in the data which question how far one Islamic organisation can accommodate the significant theological, ethnic and cultural diversity present amongst British Muslim communities in the context of their everyday practices. Despite the aim of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse to engage with multiple Muslim identities, it will be shown that such an endeavour is a particular challenge within the context of UK service provision given the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and theological heterogeneity of British Muslim communities.

Finally, the chapter will analyse the significance of the name changes undertaken by the IWO several times during the course of the fieldwork, due to contestation by a variety of social actors. It will be argued that such a process of renaming is symbolic of the difficulties faced by some contemporary faith-based organisations in attempting to strike a balance between the expectations of service users, other statutory and voluntary sector service providers, and potential funding bodies, in trying to find an appropriate and relevant way of engaging overtly with religiosity within the context of service provision.

Jinn Possession, Spiritual Illness and Ruqyah Healing

Analysis of the construction of the Islamic social work discourse in Chapter 5 highlighted the differences between the Director's presentations at the Bridston Third Sector Conferences in 2010 and 2011. While the 2010 presentation gave great weight to emphasising the unique and novel psycho-spiritual elements of the IWO's Islamic model, the 2011 presentation focused on highlighting the conventional, multicultural dimensions of the IWO's Islamic approach. Such a change in emphasis is argued to be largely due to the result of contestation by external

service providers at the 2010 conference regarding the status of *jinn* possession, spiritual illness and *ruqyah* healing, and the legitimacy of their incorporation into the sphere of professional welfare provision. Following Dr Rahman's presentation at the 2010 conference, several conference delegates asked questions requesting clarification about the content of his presentation in relation to this element. In responding to this:

'The IWO Director emphasised that we should start with the Quran where a whole chapter highlights that these phenomena are real and jinn should not be relegated to the supernatural just because science can't explain it. It was emphasised that cases of possession are rare but that they may be treated by ruqyah healing' (Fieldnotes 2010)

This contestation is indicative of the difficulties that external service providers may have in working with organisations which engage with such views regarding the existence of these phenomena. Although Dr Rahman highlighted during his presentation that '*cases of possession are rare*', such an issue potentially represents a barrier to be overcome in promoting future partnership working. As a result of this contestation, the focus on highlighting the conventional multicultural dimensions of the Islamic model at the 2011 conference is suggested to represent the efforts of the IWO to engage with these challenges. Johnsen (2012, p.296) notes that some faith-based organisations may 'emphasize or de-emphasize their project's faith affiliation or history according to their audience.' It is argued here that the 2010 conference presentation had sought to overly emphasise the unique elements of the IWO's theoretical Islamic model in order to establish a rationale for the organisation in the competitive Bridston voluntary sector. However, following the contestation by some delegates regarding beliefs in *jinn* and spiritual illnesses, the emphasis on the multicultural dimensions of the Islamic model in 2011 aimed to facilitate 'bridging' and the development of positive relations between the IWO and other local service providers by highlighting the Islamic elements of the model as being rooted within a conventional theoretical framework (Dinham, 2009, p.104).

During subsequent interviews following the 2010 conference, several staff members discussed the contestation that the presentation had caused, and sought to add clarification about the issues raised from their own perspectives. One staff member in particular sought to highlight that whilst there was a certain degree of acceptance regarding the existence of *jinn* and spiritual illnesses at the IWO, the prevalence of such phenomena amongst their service

users was not as pertinent as may have been implied at the 2010 conference. As she explained:

'We don't want other agencies to see us like that, like we're an organisation that think mental health is jinn 'cos we don't, we see mental health as a social, bio psycho-social I guess, approach. It could be biological, it could be psychological factors and social factors and then there's a spiritual side as well. So we see... we don't dismiss that either, that it could be, but in 95% of cases it's not, it is just a mental illness, it's a mental health issue. So it just depends. I mean, these cases are very rare and there's only a few that we work on but, again, they're referred to Shaykh, they've got to be referred to a specialist, not just any of us'

While such ideas of *jinn* and spiritual illness were a central part of the 2010 presentation, she sought to further emphasize that in everyday practice at the IWO they are *'very rare.'*

Although she did not disagree with the existence of these phenomena, she contested the impression that conference delegates may have been given. Similarly, another staff member discussed the 2010 conference presentation, commenting that:

'I don't feel we put ourselves across as we are. I think the way that we showed ourselves to be that day wasn't the way that we practice here. So, the great emphasis on the jinn, the great emphasis on the IWO model. Actually the way that I would practice day to day is probably, obviously I've got the added Islamic thing which is there most of the time, with most clients. But most of my other work it's just the same as anybody else if I was working in any other job'

Alongside these clarifications, however, one IWO staff member presented a more forthright contestation of the notion that there may be any relationship between the symptoms of mental health problems and the influence of *jinn* or any such spiritual factors, commenting during interview that *'I don't think there is a type of Islamic psychiatry diagnosis, I don't believe in that.'* For this individual, there was no scope given to reconciling ideas surrounding *jinn* possession and spiritual illnesses with dominant psychiatric and medical narratives regarding the causation of mental ill health. This comment indicates that the role of *jinn* possession and spiritual illness, and their influence into the IWO's social work discourse, were not entirely uniformly agreed upon by IWO staff members. Despite the aim of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse to be inclusive, this particular theme constitutes a challenge to the unity of the Islamic social work discourse amongst some of the IWO professionals, testing the limit to which certain Islamic elements may be included within a professional welfare context.

Concern regarding these issues did not occur only in relation to the Bridston Third Sector Conferences but in the preparation of a questionnaire to be sent to the IWO's service users as part of the IWO evaluation and PhD research. In particular, upon viewing an initial draft of a questionnaire prepared by members of the University evaluation team, it was requested that the phrase '*treatment for jinn possession*' be removed from the questionnaire and replaced with the term '*treatment with ruqyah healing*.' This requested change in terminology reflects awareness amongst the IWO staff members that the subject of *jinn* possession is not simply contested by non-Muslim audiences, but may also be seen as surprising for some of the IWO's service users. Discussing this change in terminology with one member of the evaluation team in a subsequent interview, they remarked upon how '*I knew if clients saw it then they'd be like "oh my gosh, they work with jinn, they work with possessions."*'

The difficulties faced in defining the role of such beliefs and practices surrounding possession within the context of professional welfare support is arguably further compounded by the lack of Islamic scholarly consensus regarding whether *jinn* may be capable of possessing human beings (Dein *et al.*, 2008, Phillips, 2007). As Dein *et al.* (2008, p.37) highlight, 'most Islamic scholars accept that *jinn* can possess people' however a minority of scholars argue that '*jinn* can only influence mankind' and so for them a potential diagnosis of *jinn* possession is not consistent with Islamic teachings. Whilst there is a lack of Islamic scholarly agreement upon the issue, IWO staff member Yusuf nonetheless spoke about the pervasiveness of these beliefs amongst the communities that the IWO works with:

'Within Bangladeshi culture, or Asian culture in general, Pakistani, if they have anything that's wrong, if you've got a headache or even some pains in your back it must be a jinn... Everything's a jinn... You can't get married, it's a jinn. If you get married, it's a jinn. Everything's a jinn!' (Yusuf)

Although the IWO staff members sought to stress that genuine cases were rare in practice, the need to acknowledge the role of such beliefs was nonetheless advocated given their widespread nature amongst the community. Discussing the impact of these ideas for the work of the Helping Hands team, community chaplain Nadim explained that:

'Well most of my clients they would know they're involved in substance misuse and this would have consequences for them so that's something which any practitioner would say "well that needs to be addressed first." And that having been addressed then if they still have a mental health issue and they

think that it might possibly be jinn-related, then at least you could try to help them from there... When you sit down and go through analytical questions then you end up saying “well, there will be some other issues which maybe you yourself need to address before you start blaming the poor jinn!” (Laughs)’ (Nadim)

Such recourse to identifying *jinn* as the source of human hardship has also been identified by Dein *et al.* (2008) and Eneborg (2012) in their research amongst Bengali communities in East London, particularly in relation to individuals identifying the source of their psychological and physical maladies. Also supporting Yusuf’s perceptions are the findings of a survey by Khalifa *et al.* (2011) of Muslims in Leicester in which 80% of respondents were reported as believing in the existence of *jinn*, and 60% of respondents were highlighted as believing humans could be possessed by *jinn*. Whilst some delegates at the 2010 conference objected to facilitating these beliefs within a professional context of service provision, there is nonetheless a clear need to acknowledge the prevalence and embedded nature of these beliefs, if they are as widespread as Yusuf suggests, in order to provide an accessible and relevant support service to the local community (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 1999, Khalifa *et al.* 2011).

The main tension in attempting to achieve this appears to be the degree to which the IWO staff members are allowed to perpetuate and sustain such beliefs (and their possible links to mental health problems) when working in a professional context with service users. In discussing the provision of *ruqyah* services at the IWO with one staff member in an interview after the 2010 conference, they highlighted that:

‘It’s just something that we call spiritual guidance rather than jinn, we don’t see it as exorcism and things like that because it’s not, it’s spiritual guidance. So if somebody’s got a spiritual influence on them it’s giving them practical tips and guidance on maybe how to protect themselves’

In defining the IWO’s *ruqyah* services as ‘*spiritual guidance*’, the IWO are potentially aiming to neutralise any negative associations that individuals may make between the practices of *ruqyah* healing and exorcism and are hoping to make such a service more agreeable to other service providers.

Furness and Gilligan’s (2010) writing on the topic of religion and social work identifies beliefs and practices surrounding spirit possession as constituting a potential professional dilemma for social workers, acknowledging that such beliefs are held by a wide range of

cultures and communities throughout the world, and that, in the most serious instances, may arise in a social work context in relation to episodes of mental, physical or financial abuse. In particular, the authors suggest that instances of service users' family members 'carrying out an exorcism without the person's consent is abusive' and may 'exacerbate any mental health symptoms' (Furness and Gilligan, 2010, p.115). Similarly, Leavey and King (2007, p.98), writing within the discipline of psychiatry, cite the case of Victoria Climbié whose family's beliefs in witchcraft and possession ultimately contributed to the young girl's abuse and subsequent death. For Leavey and King (2007, p.98) such instances indicate the necessity to 'examine the form and parameters of partnerships between faith-based organisations and psychiatry.'

Cases such as that of Victoria Climbié highlight that these issues are not simply a challenge for Muslim communities alone but other faith and cultural groups too. Furness and Gilligan (2010) note the emergence of the organisation AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse)²⁶ who aim to tackle child abuse in African communities, which in some cases is linked to beliefs in possession and witchcraft, by offering training courses, counselling, assisting in interventions and producing informative publications. The Victoria Climbié Foundation is also active in campaigning, training and seeking to develop child protection policy. Gilligan (2009, p.97) notes the emergence of guidelines for social workers from the Department for Education and Skills (2007), following the death of Climbié, discussing how to respond to child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession. The DfES (2007, p.10-11) guidelines state that 'beliefs in spirits and possession are widespread' however 'the key feature in cases of abuse is not the beliefs of a family, but that the perpetrator of abuse uses these beliefs as a justification for abuse of a child.' It should be clearly emphasised here that no such issues regarding cases of abuse linked to beliefs in possession arose during the course of the research with the IWO. However, the issues experienced by the organisation in relation to accommodating such beliefs in a social work context can be understood as being part of a wider challenge within the discipline.

The need to engage with these issues in relation to British Muslim communities is further highlighted by Al-Krenawi and Graham (1999) and Dein *et al.*'s (2008) research findings which evidence the widespread usage of unregulated healers by some Muslim groups, who

²⁶ See <http://www.afruca.org/> for more information [Accessed 21/01/13]

often charge significant sums of money from vulnerable individuals. During an interview with IWO referrer Nadia, she referred to the existence of this practice amongst Muslim communities in the Bridston area:

'Unfortunately we have a lot of witchdoctors in the country who are making thousands and thousands of pounds through ruqyah. I mean, one family in Bridston before they knew about the IWO and before we knew about them, they had a genuine case of spiritual illness within the family and they were going to Millford and spending £500 at a time paying for ruqyah, you know, and the ruqyah was obviously not really proper ruqyah because when the girl told me about what the witchdoctor was giving I said "this is not Islamic, it's not part of the ruqyah rules." I said "you need to see Dr Rahman" and since the family have seen Dr Rahman, obviously it's a free service you know, they only give a certain amount of charity if they... for their protection, you know, and that could be £1, could be 50p, it could be 10p, it could be a penny! There's no money stipulated in it, it's only after the cure you go and give the charity' (Nadia)

By offering a free *ruqyah* service, the IWO is potentially preventing the financial exploitation of vulnerable community members by individuals whom Nadia identifies as 'witchdoctors.' Nadia's comments also raise a further issue regarding what constitutes the administration and provision of 'proper *ruqyah*' services, as she contests the service experienced by one individual outside of the IWO as 'not Islamic.' It can be noted that issues regarding the regulation of Islamic practices in Britain do not simply pertain to the practice of *ruqyah* healing but also links to challenges surrounding legitimising the role and authority of *Shariah* councils and is thus part of a wider challenge facing Muslim communities in Britain (Douglas *et al.*, 2012).

Interviews with IWO staff members, service users and referring agencies also sought to explore what the provision of *ruqyah* services as an everyday practice at the IWO involved. Two of the nine referrers interviewed commented that they had referred individuals to the IWO for *ruqyah* services, and both of these individuals were Muslim professionals working for BME organisations in the voluntary sector. In discussing what such *ruqyah* healing involved, referrer Batool commented that:

'He [Dr Rahman] gave her some, he gave her and the children, literature and on there it had information on how to protect themselves. And he went through that with the children and with the lady as well' (Batool)

When interviewing *ruqyah* service user Jamal, he also spoke about what his family's experiences of receiving treatment from Dr Rahman involved:

'He told us certain things to read at various times of the day, various prayers and things and he actually read them for us as well. One other thing that the shaykh suggested was he actually visited us... So that was really good of him, to do certain prayers in our house' (Jamal)

A small number of Anglophone academic sources, such as Al-Krenawi and Graham (1999), Eneborg (2012), Phillips (2007), and Johnsdotter *et al.* (2011), have focused upon documenting the process of *ruqyah* treatment amongst a variety of Muslim communities throughout the world. Al-Krenawi and Graham's (1999) account in particular focuses upon healers working in Israel and Palestine. A particularly important part of the *ruqyah* process, they argue, is the recitation of certain *surahs* and *duas* in the presence of the afflicted individual(s), similar to the practices which Jamal and Batool describe (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 1999). The authors explain that 'the reading of Koranic verses agitates the spirits in the individual's body, allowing the healer to communicate with the spirits and ultimately to entice them to leave the body' (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 1999, p.59). Phillips' (2007) research, involving interviewing *ruqyah* healers in a multitude of countries within the Middle East and South Asia, lists particularly commonly used Quranic verses employed within such healing, which include *Surah al-Fatiha*, *Surah al-Baqarah* (especially *Ayat al-Kursi*), the *Bismillah* and the *Adhan*. Whilst Jamal and Batool did not specify which prayers and verses were given, it is possible that they included some of the phrases Phillips (2007) mentions.

The importance of referring to such scripture during the course of *ruqyah* treatment is advocated by Phillips (2007, p.131) who states that in order for the treatment to be in accordance with Islamic guidelines it must involve 'Allah's words' and the belief by all participating that 'it is Allah who causes it to have effect.' Similarly, Johnsdotter *et al.* (2011, p.747) describe these practices amongst Swedish Somalis, noting that 'the words used have their power only when spoken in Arabic', and also citing the practice of 'blessed water' being applied to the skin of the afflicted individual. Eneborg's (2012, p.4) research in East London notes the influence of reformist thinking amongst some younger generations of Muslims when seeking to identify legitimate forms of *ruqyah* healing which are perceived to be 'acultural and ahistorical.' Despite the perspectives voiced by participants in Phillips (2007),

Johnsdotter *et al.*'s (2011) and Eneborg's (2012) research, a more liberal viewpoint was promoted during an audience with Dr Rahman and his North African *shaykh* who advocated that a central focus should be upon the intentions of the healer and their high level of spiritual strength needed to render the treatment effective.

In addition to these sources, there is a large body of international anthropological literature exploring multifarious forms of spirit possession and trance (Huskinson and Schmidt, 2010), and the works of Boddy (1989, 1994), Kenyon (2010) and Makris (2000) in particular explore episodes of possession amongst a variety of Muslim populations. Boddy's (1989, 1994) ethnographic fieldwork with Hofriyati women in North Africa documents their experiences of participating in *zar* ceremonies involving possession by spirits which are believed to include Islamic *jinn*. These anthropological analyses of possession have taken a variety of approaches, which have included 'functionalist' analyses, exploring issues of individual agency and social structure within the context of possession, 'physiological' analyses, which seek to explain the causes of suggested episodes of possession in relation to underlying medical factors, and 'psychoanalytic' analyses which focus on exploring the psychological elements of possession (Dawson, 2010, p.4, Huskinson and Schmidt, 2010). Boddy's (1994, p.411) analysis of the Hofriyati women embraces a variety of these approaches in suggesting that possession and participation in the *zar* ceremonies can be seen to constitute 'a healing rite and a parodical means to domesticate male and alien powers.' Whilst the data collected during this research does not allow for any such similar grandiose claim to be made regarding the impact and significance of the *ruqyah* treatment amongst the IWO's service users, it is nonetheless important to note Boddy's (1994) inference of the potential therapeutic and emancipatory values that such practices may offer. Given the reservations of some external service providers, however, this topic presents a subject for further debate, challenging the legitimacy of establishing professional organisations which facilitate these practices.

However, the need for service providers to engage with these issues can be highlighted as being potentially important for Muslim women, whom Al-Krenawi and Graham (1999) and Lebling (2010, p.81) identify as being particularly prone to diagnoses of possession, as *jinn* are identified by some Muslim groups as the cause of 'menstrual irregularities, heavy bleeding, infections and infertility' in women. Al-Krenawi and Graham (1999, p.56) also highlight that such a belief is particularly pertinent as 'Islamic teaching holds that women are

more readily influenced by *Iblis* than are men.’ Furthermore, Khalifa *et al.*’s (2011, p.74) research found that Muslim women rather than men ‘were more likely to believe in black magic and the evil eye.’ Analysis of the IWO’s service user database²⁷ highlights that their service is accessed by greater numbers of females than males, which may indicate that it is female members of the Bridston Muslim community who are currently already experiencing greater social vulnerability and isolation. The prevalence of such beliefs suggests a need for service providers, either Islamic or secular, to be able to intervene professionally and appropriately when issues relating to ideas of *jinn* possession occur in practice.

Overall, these issues present not only a practical but an epistemological challenge to the values underpinning mainstream contemporary social work, particularly in relation to its understanding of the concept of the individual self. As Keller (2002, p.8) declares, ‘if religious bodies seem to be anachronistic in these days of science, the possessed body is the paradigmatic example in that it challenges all the norms of contemporary Western evaluations of proper subjectivity.’ Such a challenge chimes with Foucault’s (1967) analysis of the construction of madness, which highlights the dominance of Western bio-medical models within modern psychiatry. Although the social work discipline is showing an increasing willingness to engage with spiritual and religious beliefs, practices relating to treatment for spiritual illnesses clearly push at the boundaries and arguably go beyond a level with which mainstream practitioners are comfortable. If the IWO is to continue to expand and develop as a professional faith-based service provider for contemporary Muslim communities, there is a need to engage with such contestations and challenges at a meaningful theoretical level, and to potentially develop policies surrounding safeguarding to allay the reservations of external organisations and to encourage increasingly close working relationships with other statutory and voluntary bodies in the locale. Whether the provision of such *ruqyah* treatment within the context of a professional welfare organisation is a sustainable practice remains to be seen. Nonetheless, those advocating for the cessation of such provision must consider the alternative scenario, in which the unregulated provision of *ruqyah* treatment which Dein *et al.* (2008) describe, will likely be perpetuated.

²⁷ Further information about the IWO’s service user database is provided in Chapter 8

Authority and Inclusivity

The data presented in previous chapters have highlighted some of the theoretical compatibilities in the IWO's attempt at combining Islamic and statutory approaches to social work, exploring how their Islamic social work discourse may engage with multiple Muslim identities in the context of service provision, facilitating inclusivity. The significance of inclusivity as a key value of the organisation was stressed at multiple events hosted by the IWO, which were observed during the course of the fieldwork. For example, at one of the volunteer training sessions, a staff member emphasised that:

“We are here not only to serve Muslims, that doesn't make sense, Allah created all of us. A doctor wouldn't say 'are you a Muslim or not?'” This impetus to serve the whole community was further expounded in the presenter's comment that “we're dealing with human beings. They're not a separate category of beings” (Fieldnotes 2010)

A key aim of the IWO therefore is to provide an inclusive service which aims to meet the needs of a diverse community of individuals, including some non-Muslims who may also choose to access the service. Despite aspiring to such inclusivity, some interviews with the IWO's service users highlighted what they perceived to be potential impediments to the successful implementation of this in practice. In particular, contestations were presented by service users regarding the Islamic authority of the organisation, and of Dr Rahman as an Islamic scholar, which ultimately challenge the boundaries of the IWO's inclusivity and their ability to engage with multiple Muslim identities in practice. These interviewees' comments can be shown to raise broader questions concerning how Islamically authoritative the IWO is as an organisation, and to what extent it is possible for an Islamic organisations to be perceived as such, in the context of considerable cultural, ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity amongst contemporary Britain's Muslim communities. Such a debate raises questions about how inclusive any Islamic welfare service may actually be, despite every effort being made by staff members to enable this.

It has already been suggested from the data that some interviewees viewed Dr Rahman as a charismatic *'spiritual guide'* of the organisation, providing religious authority and credibility to the services. Whilst such views were held by many of the individuals who participated in the research, they were not shared by all, and there was even some acknowledgement by

IWO staff members that this was the case. Whilst discussing the character of Dr Rahman with one staff member, she commented that:

'So he's well recognised by a lot of people but there's always the side that he's well recognised for having a... his viewpoints are... called progressive, modern viewpoints, which don't tally with everyone. So not everyone would agree with his thinking... It is a good thing in many ways, but not always'

The notion of a '*progressive*' approach to Islam is advocated by Safi (2003, p.3) who suggests that progressive Muslims are those who advocate 'a vital, fresh and urgently needed interpretation of Islam for the twenty-first century.' Key to such an approach, Safi (2003) argues, is the perpetuation of on-going *ijtihad*, deciphering how Islamic scriptures, principles and values may be meaningfully interpreted and applied within a contemporary context. In Western Europe, the scholar Tariq Ramadan (1999, 2005, 2010) is particularly well-known amongst both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences for espousing such viewpoints. Specifically in relation to the context of the IWO, issues and practices surrounding child custody (*hizanat*) and female-initiated divorces (*khul*) were highlighted by some service users as constituting particularly progressive Islamic approaches to social work, which did not go entirely without contestation from service users' family members, or indeed the service users themselves.

IWO's Approach to Hizanat

Suleiman, a South Asian service user, contacted the IWO in order to obtain support from the advocacy service in pursuing an on-going case with his local authority regarding the custody of his children, who had been taken into foster care following his divorce. Suleiman was particularly concerned about having custody of his children as they had been placed with non-Muslim foster carers, and he believed that it was his right under *Shariah* law to ensure that his children had an Islamic upbringing and received regular religious instruction. Suleiman had hoped that in accessing the advocacy service of an Islamic organisation, such as the IWO, that they would support his claim and on-going legal battle, and they would act as intermediaries between him and the local authority, offering an expert opinion on Islamic child-rearing practices. During an interview with Suleiman, he acknowledged that the IWO had written a letter to the local authority, advising them about particular issues regarding the provision of foster care services for Muslim children. However, when Suleiman pressed the

IWO to further intervene, in the hope of obtaining some contact time with his children, if not full custody, he was informed by IWO staff members that it was necessary to abide by the decision of the local authority which took legal precedence. Suleiman appeared to be very disappointed with this outcome, commenting that:

'These organisations, basically they are working with an Islamic name like the Islamic Welfare Organisation, whatever, so they have to think about the perspective of Islam and the Muslims which they did not' (Suleiman)

Suleiman appears to be suggesting that the IWO's approach to dealing with his case had not given enough consideration to Islamic imperatives regarding parental child-rearing rights, particularly those practices he believed to be enshrined within *Shariah* law. As he commented:

'If they are running a service on the name of Islam or in the name of Islam then they have to give the priority for the ethos and the doctrine of Islam, which we call it in other words Shariah' (Suleiman)

Suleiman firmly believed that as a Muslim father, it was his Islamic duty to have custody of his children, and that the IWO were not recognising this religious right, instead favouring of the rulings of the British legal system. As he elucidated:

'In Shariah it's not allowed to keep the kids away. This organisation or any other organisation should fight for the right of the Muslims... They are just sitting there and following, you know, "this is the British law"' (Suleiman)

Suleiman contested the IWO's approach to dealing with the local authority, which he believed did not prioritise Islamic legal prescriptions over British law, and thus does not constitute an acceptable Islamic approach to social work.

Such a situation is particularly complex given that there is no uniform Islamic legal ruling regarding *hizanat* across the spectrum of Sunni *madhabs* (Syed, 2004), and in the Quran itself there is 'no mention of which parent should have custody of the children in the case of divorce' (Roald, 2001, p.230). As Syed (2004, p.78-79) explains, for *Hanafi* scholars, maternal custody is advised until a son 'is capable of eating and dressing himself and can

perform his *istinja*.' This contrasts with *Maliki* law which allows maternal custody of a son 'until he begins to talk' and of a daughter until she marries. According to *Shafii* and *Hanbali* scholars, however, maternal custody is guaranteed until the age of seven, after which point a son is allowed to decide whether to live with their mother or father. Despite these four opinions, Syed (2004, p.49) notes that some South Asian law courts have denied *hizanat* to a mother, in favour of paternal custody, if it is believed that she has become 'an apostate' or is leading 'an immoral life' and is thus incapable of giving her child a correct Islamic upbringing. It is potentially these South Asian legal rulings which have contributed to Suleiman's belief that he is entitled to custody of his children according to *Shariah* law. Furthermore, as Crabtree *et al.* (2008, p.96) point out, 'in patriarchal traditions children are considered to 'belong' to the father.' Ebrahimi (2005) also notes there is on-going controversy in Iranian Shia law regarding *hizanat* following the divorce of a child's parents. In particular, an Iranian Parliamentary Bill in 2002 granting *hizanat* of children of both sexes to the mother until the age of seven was regarded as 'highly controversial' as it represented 'a departure from the majority view of the *Shi'a* scholars' who argue that sons should remain with their mothers for a shorter period of time than daughters before custody is granted to the father (Ebrahimi, 2005, p. 468).

Suleiman's contestation of the IWO's approach to Islamic social work appears to centre on his critique that they have adopted a progressive stance towards *hizanat*. As he comments:

'The problem is particularly the individuals who are working for the IWO are born and brought up here. They cannot understand certain things which they need to... And ideas of Islam is totally changed because the way his approach is that first is Britain and then we can bring Islam in if we can, otherwise you cannot' (Suleiman)

Whilst Suleiman is critical of the overall outcome of his experiences with the IWO, his appeal for the organisation to contest the local authority's decision is arguably somewhat over-ambitious and unrealistic. As an intermediary body between local authorities, statutory agencies and Muslim service users such as Suleiman, the IWO appears to be trying to find an acceptable midpoint in trying to meet the expectations and requirements of their service users whilst also adhering to professional policies and procedures in practice. Suleiman's critique is potentially indicative of a 'lack of clarity' about the IWO's identity as a faith-based

organisation and what this actually entails in everyday practice, which Dinham (2009, p.16) notes has been experienced by other similar organisations.

Nonetheless, the issue of appropriate foster care and adoption for British Muslim children is one which certainly needs further consideration, as Crabtree *et al.* (2008) recognise. For Crabtree *et al.* (2008, p.119-120), such a situation is particularly problematic given that ‘the need for black, Asian and mixed-race foster and adoptive parents far outweighs supply’ and that ‘it is not uncommon to be told that adoption for Muslims is *haram*.’ However, they highlight that one potential way forward is recognition that the Prophet Muhammad was himself an orphan and is well-known for advocating for the care of orphans within Islamic scriptures (Crabtree *et al.*, 2008).

IWO’s Approach to Khul

Alongside Suleiman’s critique of the IWO’s purportedly progressive Islamic approach towards the issue of *hizanat*, other interviewees also reported similar critiques being voiced regarding the legitimacy of the *khul* divorces being issues by the organisation. Unlike a *talaq*, which constitutes divorce proceedings initiated by a Muslim husband, a *khul* comprises of divorce proceedings wherein ‘the desire to separate comes from the wife’ (Syed, 2004, p.67). Syed (2004) highlights the rights of a wife to request a *khul* as stemming from the Quranic verse in *Surah al-Baqarah* [2:229] and from two of Bukhari’s narrations in which the Prophet Muhammad granted divorces at the requests of Jamilah and Umaina. Yet as Carroll (1997, p.101) notes, there is ‘considerable divergence among the schools of Islamic law’ regarding ‘the precise grounds which would entitle a Muslim wife to judicial dissolution of her marriage.’ Amongst the Sunni law schools, Ali (2003, p.168) highlights that *Hanafi* scholars have decreed that a *khul* may only be allowed in the case of the husband’s ‘impotency or possibly leprosy.’ For *Maliki* scholars, the grounds for a *khul* are considerably more generous, permitting them on the grounds of the husband’s ‘failure to support and the broad category of “harm” (*darar*, also “cruelty”)’ (Ali, 2003, p.168). Despite the status of the *khul* as being permissible according to these schools of Islamic law, such a practice was nonetheless contested by some of IWO’s service users’ families as constituting a progressive approach to Islamic social work.

During the course of the research, one interview took place with support worker Samia, who worked for a BME women’s organisation, who had aided her service user Khalida in

obtaining a *khul* from the IWO via a referral. At the time of the interview, Khalida was residing in a refuge for BME women escaping from domestic violence, which was located in a different part of the country to the IWO. Samia spoke about the difficulties she had experienced in obtaining a *khul* for Khalida from any mosque or *Shariah* Council within her vicinity, unless Khalida (who was living on state benefits at the time) was prepared to part with a significant sum of money. In addition to this, Samia highlighted that further complications had arisen due to a lack of recognition by male Muslim religious leaders of the permissibility of a wife to obtain a divorce in the case of domestic abuse, which her service user Khalida had endured. As Samia commented:

'A lot of people they do judge and they tend to favour the men, especially when you go to these independent mosques... They tend to favour men and "oh no you must go back" because a lot of the mosques are run by men and they kinda like say "oh it's the man's right" but it's not the man's right to put his hands on his wife and to treat her and what they do is they say "no you must go back" and they tend to twist what the law, Shariah law, says. Women are allowed to get divorced from their husbands but these men... they say "it's the husband's right, the wife can never say no, she must please him, she must obey him, she must return back to the marriage"... Most of these organisations like mosques, independent mosques, they think that domestic violence is when a man hits you. They disregard the emotional, the mental, the financial, the sexual abuse. But the sexual abuse doesn't even come into it, it's a man's right. Whereas the IWO took all of that on board' (Samia)

In explaining why Khalida's experiences of domestic abuse and requests for *khul* had been disregarded by other mosques and *Shariah* councils, Samia attributed these attitudes as being caused by an adherence to cultural, rather than authentically Islamic, attitudes and practices. As she elucidated:

'What they do with culture, they forget it's culture and they turn it into religion, they say "no it's religion, it's religion," when it's not, it's cultural ways because when you look at the true Islamic way women do have rights, it's their cultural interpretation but they say it's religion when it's not. So it's wrong, you can't go to these organisations, you can't go to, you know, a Pakistani Women's Association because it's run by all these aunties that aren't educated, that won't branch out, it's that village mentality that they have. And the IWO is fresh and rolls with the modern times, like I said, it understands the pressures. Because we get young girls, British-born girls, that are suffering from DV [domestic violence]. They can't go to the mosque, they can't go to their own community, like the Pakistani community, because somebody will identify them, somebody will judge them' (Samia)

Such a preference for cultural interpretations may be contextualised by Syed's (2004, p.67) comment that, despite there being a legalistic basis in *Shariah* law for *khul* divorces, 'the courts of law in the Indian subcontinent were reluctant to grant this fundamental right to women.' These attitudes towards *khul* have potentially migrated from the subcontinent with contemporary British Muslim communities, and have not been substantially queried by religious leaders and scholars (Bano, 2007). Jawad (1998, p.81) consolidates this view in suggesting that the *khul* is 'hardly ever practised these days... the majority of Muslim women are not aware of its existence, let alone allowed to make use of it.' Bano's (2007, p.56) research with British Pakistani Muslim women found that several participants 'expressed surprise upon discovering that under Islamic law they had the right to instigate divorce proceedings against the wishes of their husbands.' As such, Samia appears to be praising the IWO's progressive approach as particularly emancipatory for Muslim women in suggesting that:

'The IWO I think rolls with the modern times, it's not stuck in the dark ages, whereas some of these institutes are, some of these mosques are. And the fact that there is a female member. When you go to these mosques there are hardly any females, there are none, it's all men, men, men, men, men!'
(Samia)

Douglas *et al.*'s (2012, p.147) study of the *Shariah* Council at Birmingham Central Mosque, which involved observing 27 hearings of *khul* cases in particular, noted that five of these cases involved women who had experienced domestic violence. However, as Samia commented, services such as that provided by Birmingham Central Mosque do not come for free and this mosque in particular charges £250 per *khul*.²⁸

Despite Samia and Khalida's satisfaction with such a 'modern' approach, interviews with several IWO staff members and referring agencies highlighted dissatisfaction voiced by some service users' families upon regarding the *khul*. For example, referrer Batool, who works for a BME voluntary sector organisation, and has referred service users to the IWO for counselling and a *khul*, commented that:

²⁸See http://centralmosque.org.uk/downloads/652_Divorce-Procedure.pdf [Accessed 19/11/12]

'We've had a couple of people whose husbands have said "well women can't get divorces and I don't believe in that piece of paper." But then they've gone through the civil process as well, obviously then they get the civil divorce, and they have come back and said to them and said "this is nothing", you know, "women can't get divorces in Islam"' (Batool)

Tucker (2008, p.97) highlights the lack of Islamic scholarly consensus on whether 'the husband's agreement' is necessary to obtain a *khul* and notes that this issue has been taken up by some reformist thinkers. *Khul* divorces issued to Muslim women without spousal consent, as indicated in Batool's case, may have been associated with such reform efforts by some Muslim husbands and therefore critiqued as such.

IWO staff member Robina also related her experiences of service users' husbands contesting the IWO's Islamic authority in offering a *khul* service, but inferred that she believed such a practice was rooted in the Quran and the actions of the Prophet:

'We have people that come and say "what makes you so Islamic? What are you?" You know, and kind of questioning our opinion... Because if the wife has come for a divorce, which is called a khul, and the husband doesn't like it, then he will come knocking on the door, like you know how. But obviously we have to follow the Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him, so we try to stick to what he said, the teachings of the Quran, you know we have to, it can't be our own opinions' (Robina)

The perceptions of some IWO service users' husbands of the service as being Islamically unauthentic or progressive may stem from a lack of knowledge regarding the legal validity of the divorces, as has been voiced by some Muslim women in studies by Bano (2007) and Jawad (1998), yet also potentially represent a pejorative dismissal of a service which does not favour their interests. Bano's (2007, p.53) research findings are in accordance with the experiences of several of the IWO's *khul* service users, highlighting that Pakistani women accessing *Shariah* councils 'often had to struggle against the prevalence of conservative attitudes endemic within such bodies' and she recounted similar experiences of women being compelled to reconcile with abusive spouses. As such, Bano (2007, p.58) suggests that 'the autonomy of the women who use these services may be undermined.' In offering such a service to Muslim women, the IWO appears to have created a supportive space, in contrast to the male-dominated mosques and *Shariah* councils which support worker Samia identifies. The importance of such spaces may become increasingly significant, given the 2001 census

findings which indicated ‘high levels of family breakdown’ amongst Muslim communities in Britain (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, p.142). Support worker Samia highlights the valuable role that the female IWO scholar played in handling Khalida’s case, and Bano (2007) too advocates for the increasing role of female Islamic scholars in developing the services provided by *Shariah* councils and mosques.

There is a clear need for social workers interacting with Muslim families to be aware of the interplay of cultural and religious factors which influence such familial disputes, in the cases of both *hizanat* and *khul* disagreements. While some social work practitioners may consider referring service users to religious professionals in order to receive appropriate advice and guidance, it is important for social workers to be knowledgeable of the impact that some religious professionals and institutions may have for Muslim women, particularly in safeguarding cases of domestic violence. Furthermore, the importance of recognising such contestations regarding the *khul* is also advocated following Bolognani and Mellor’s (2012) assertion that despite much academic research noting the construction of an Islam/culture binary as a strategy adopted by young Muslim women, there is a need to explore whether such strategies have actually led to the desired outcomes which the young women had hoped for.

Progressive Approaches: Wider Significance

Contestations of the IWO’s Islamic social work discourse by some service users, which identified it as progressive, may also have been influenced by the fact that the Director Dr Rahman is a Sufi, and thus may not be perceived to be a legitimate religious authority by some individuals from different Islamic traditions. Whilst Chapter 5 highlighted the compatibility between Sufi notions of the self and some mainstream psychology and counselling theories, Sufism remains a phenomenon contested by various other Islamic denominations. As Geaves (2000) notes, Sufis have come under particular critique from *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* corners, which are strongly opposed to ideas surrounding prophetic and saintly intercession and the practice of devotional shrine attendance. As Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.68) highlights, concern amongst the adherents of the *Salafi* ideology regarding doctrinal and ritual ‘purity’ has led to ‘the denouncement of other expressions of Islam, and accusations that followers of different schools of thought are unbelievers.’ Whilst some Sufi concepts do present a significant opportunity for theoretical convergence between religious and mainstream social work theories, the legitimacy of such an approach may present a

particular obstruction in garnering widespread support amongst diverse British Muslim communities.

Beyond the implications of such a progressive approach specifically for the IWO's service users, various authors have pointed out the wider sociological and political significance of adopting a progressive or 'moderate Muslim' identity in the contemporary context (Haddad and Golson, 2007, Modood and Ahmad, 2007, p.191, Safi, 2003). For Modood and Ahmad (2007, p.192), this approach 'can be seen as an explicit and reasoned struggle to create a hybrid position' between Western and Islamic thoughts and behaviours. Such a moderate approach may be particularly significant in developing important relationships with national bodies and in facilitating partnership working. Haddad and Golson (2007, p.488) note that in recent years various national governments have promoted the emergence of such a "moderate" European Islam.' Whilst orbiting within this space may add further statutory credence to the IWO's identity as a professional organisation, it may also be the source for further community contestation. As an interview with IWO service user Suleiman highlighted:

'Like, [the] Muslim Council or Britain when they started with a noble cause their aim was the same. And nowadays you speak to them, I mean first of all it's totally shattered. There's a few people working and they don't want to do anything because it is so much, they involve the Labour Party so much they became part of the Labour Party, politicized, everything. Because they wanted to look good in the eyes of the government. So I mean all the ethos, on the basis of which their governing document or constitution, it has gone out of the window' (Suleiman)

Whilst being an affiliate of the Bridston Islamic Society has aided the emergence of the IWO in ascertaining financial, administrative and structural support, there is a potential for future contestations regarding this close relationship. In relation to this, Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.109) highlights that 'the extent to which British Muslims perceive the MCB [Muslim Council of Britain] to be representative has fluctuated over the first decade of its existence.' The difficulties that a national organisation such as the Muslim Council of Britain faces in acting as a representative body for British Muslims appear to also operate in a microcosm for smaller-scale organisations such as the Islamic Welfare Organisation, in trying to represent the Bridston Muslim community, whilst also gaining statutory and professional credibility.

Name Changes²⁹

By the closing stages of the fieldwork period, the IWO had undergone two organisational names changes during its life-span. Having started out as the ‘Islamic Social Work Organisation’ when initially established, the first name change occurred when the organisation switched to being called the ‘Islamic Welfare Organisation.’ Over a year later, the second change occurred, with the organisation being renamed as the ‘*Inayat* Welfare Organisation.’ The following section will explore why such changes took place, arguing that the contestations underlying such changes are symbolic of wider unresolved debates regarding the role of faith-based social work organisations in contemporary society. Each of the two name changes will now be explored in turn.

From Social Work to Welfare

The first name change centred upon altering the ‘social work’ element of the IWO’s name to ‘welfare’, following contestations by external service providers. In interviews with IWO staff members they indicated that the rationale for such a change emerged following confusion amongst some external service providers regarding the organisation’s precise role, responsibilities and relationship to other bodies. As Zahra commented:

‘I guess some people thought that we were stepping on their toes which wasn’t the case at all’ (Zahra)

Dr Malik also explained that that:

‘In an organisation like the IWO we need to be very careful because we should not usurp the responsibilities of the statutory agency. So if there’s someone already working with a problem then we need to be careful that we could explain, we could advise and sometimes we might be able to go with the client to their appointments with the statutory agency, but we should not undermine the statutory agency’ (Dr Malik)

It was highlighted by interviewees that the words ‘social work’ within the organisation’s initial name were a source of contestation regarding who exactly the organisation were and what services they provided; Were they trained and qualified social workers? What level of statutory authority, if any, did they have? Were they seeking to replace or complement existing service provision? By altering the name from ‘social work’ to ‘welfare’ it was

²⁹ The names of the organisation given here are pseudonyms. However efforts have been made to reflect the nature of the changes which took place through the use of these pseudonyms.

indicated by Dr Malik that this more aptly reflected the role of the IWO as a complementary, non-statutory organisation seeking to work within the existing system of service provision. The uncertainty caused by using the initial name for the organisation was brought up by referrer Jenny, working in the statutory sector, who commented upon the IWO's first name, stating that *'I think the name causes a little bit of confusion.'*

The contestation voiced by several external service providers is potentially indicative of a wider questioning of the exact role of contemporary faith-based welfare organisations and their relationship to other bodies which requires clarification (Dinham, 2009). It also indicates that the practice of social work is a regulated activity, and not just any group may be accepted as being legitimately practising social work by statutory providers unless operating within certain strictures and adhering to particular principles. As Furness and Gilligan (2012, p.601) highlight, "charity" and "welfare" are not the same thing as "social work".

The first name change can be further identified as a measure to appease external concerns, given a remark by Zahra which indicated that the name change had not impacted the organisation at the level of service provision:

'It hasn't impacted the services as such, well not as far as I've realised. Maybe the management might say something different from what they've experienced. But being just as staff, ground level staff, I haven't noticed, apart from me changing the logos' (Zahra)

Similarly, Dr Rahman commented that:

'The main work the IWO was established to do, that is not going to be affected at all with the change of the name. And moreover, actually, is going to give us more freedom. When we say "welfare organisation" that in fact is quite elastic' (Dr Rahman)

This explanation from Dr Rahman suggests a degree of optimism that in changing the IWO's name there is greater potential for the organisation to expand into a multitude of new and diverse areas of service provision. Despite such optimism following this change, however, the IWO's name continued to be subject to contestation, leading to a second name change.

From Islamic to Inayat

A year later, the IWO decided that it was necessary to further alter their name, this time focusing on changing the word 'Islamic' to '*Inayat*'. An interview with staff member Robina after the first name change took place had involved discussing external contestations surrounding the 'Islamic' element of the organisation's name:

'It's sad that we had to change it because we had so much, it got people's backs up and people were getting confused. It was mostly organisations that weren't happy with it so you just think 'oh gosh', it's almost like changing your identity just because people aren't happy. Alhamdu Llilah it hasn't caused problems and we've been fine and we've been able to change just one little minor thing but to think that, gosh, just by that one word you weren't willing to send referrals to us. Even the word 'Islamic' gets people's backs up because, a few calls I've just, you know, recently made, "oh you're Islamic, right ok, so you're faith-based yeah?"' (Robina)

Here Robina clearly indicates that by naming themselves to be an Islamic organisation this was seen by some individuals as problematic, and that these individuals sought to challenge the ethos and practices of the organisation. The choice to change their name to '*Inayat*' at this stage may also be due to an awareness of the difficulties faced by faith-based organisations in securing funding. During interviews with IWO staff members, they highlighted that a key ongoing priority for the IWO was focusing on '*sustainability*' and applying for '*funding grants*.' As referrer Nadia working in the BME voluntary sector commented:

'I think one of the reasons people tend to stick to the BME titles again is to do with funding. You have more ways, you have more avenues to explore funding if you're not faith-based. So as a result a lot of us tend to go towards that approach...the funders out there unfortunately are not as culturally aware as we'd like them to be because I think you've got to be so careful how you word things because they might think it's... it's an approach that you're imposing people on certain ways of living but you're not you're just providing a service of the lifestyle they already lead. And I think that's the thing that's not fully understood' (Nadia)

Dinham and Jackson (2012, p.276) note that there exists a 'mistrust of faith-based providers among funding bodies' and Chapman (2009, p.213-218) also adds that faith-based organisations may experience 'possible funding discrimination' due to a 'lack of understanding' about the practices of such organisations, and underlying fears surrounding potential 'proselytization' or the exclusion of 'women, young people, gays or people with no

faith affiliation.’ Such arguments potentially provide a clearer insight into why such a second name change was felt to be beneficial, in opening up more avenues of future funding, including from funding bodies that may be reluctant to engage with faith-based organisations. The choice of the term ‘*Inayat*’ by the IWO can be regarded as a particularly appropriate one. It is an Arabic term defined by Milton Cowan (1979, p.762) as meaning ‘care’ or ‘concern.’ Whilst the term may be sufficiently secular in the eyes of external agencies, Muslim service users will be likely to recognise the term as being an Arabic term relating to Islamic virtues of compassion and caring. Through the careful choice of such a name, the IWO appears to be learning how to operate more expertly in negotiating the challenges of working in a context of service provision in which the articulation of religiosity remains contested, yet in also attempting to meet the needs of the Bridston Muslim community. It can be debated to what extent such a name change is indicative of ‘institutional isomorphism’ (Vanderwoerd, 2004, p.241). Cormode (1998, p.117) explains how ‘institutional theory predicts that organisations in a field will become more alike over time’ as a result of either ‘coercion, normative pressure or memesis.’ Swartz (1998, p.325) also notes the pressures of ‘market competition, state regulation or professionalization’ which can lead to ‘strikingly similar forms of practice’ amongst organisations. To this extent, it appears that the identity of the IWO is becoming more akin to other BME organisations by losing the explicit reference to religion within their name, which Ebaugh *et al.* (2003) suggest may be one of the indicators of the faith-based identity of an organisation. However, as staff member Zahra commented, the initial name change did not impact significantly upon the everyday work of the IWO. Whether this continues to be the case remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The findings explored in this chapter highlight the multiple on-going contestations faced by the IWO, with various challenges being posed to their Islamic social work discourse by some external service providers as well as certain service users and their families. The analysis emphasises that even an organisation which aims to accommodate for multiple Muslim identities in practice, adopting a comparatively liberal and inclusive ethos, has still endured contestations in everyday practice from a variety of individuals. During the course of the research, the IWO appears to be perfecting a balancing act, trying to meet the needs of Muslim service users *as* Muslim individuals on the one hand, yet also trying to address the concerns and requirements of external organisations and funding bodies regarding the role of faith-based services on the other.

Through the varying conference presentations and name changes, the IWO appears to be aiming to encourage ‘bridging’ between themselves and external non-Muslim agencies and funding bodies who have concerns regarding the role of religiosity within professional service provision (Dinham, 2009, p.104). However, in doing so, the IWO may also need to negotiate the potential effects of ‘institutional isomorphism’ in seeking to retain their Islamic identity whilst also meeting external expectations and pressures (Vanderwoerd, 2004, p.241). If aiming to continue as a faith-based organisation meeting the needs of Muslim service users there is also a need for the IWO to focus upon ‘bonding’ activities to strengthen their relationships with the Muslim communities they seek to help, addressing any concerns regarding the Islamic identity of the services (Dinham, 2009, p.104).

The questions raised within this chapter also support broader critiques which have been levied concerning the status of ‘faith communities’ as a homogenous category within public policy (Dinham 2009, 2011, Dinham and Lowndes, 2008). As Dinham (2009, p.9-11) notes, such homogeneity is a ‘discursive construction of policy makers’ and there is a need for recognition of ‘the diversity within and between faith traditions and of the contest and debates which inhere.’ There is clearly a need for greater dialogue between faith-based organisations such as the IWO and external associations and funding bodies in order to engage with some of the uncertainties which currently cause contestations. Whether a wholly unified Islamic social work discourse, free from contestation, is possible remains to be seen.

Chapter 8: The Significance of the IWO's Islamic Approach to Social Work for Service Users

Introduction

This final empirical chapter focuses upon the second research question which seeks to explore the perspectives of the IWO's service users regarding the utility, relevance or significance of the services they accessed at the IWO. The data explored within this chapter draws upon three key sources: analysis of a database of service user details, the findings of the service user satisfaction survey and follow-up interviews with eight service users. All of the data presented here relate to service users who accessed the Tranquility Project at the IWO, given the practical and ethical constraints which prevented working with Helping Hands Project service users who were not part of the commissioned evaluation. In addition, the majority of the data gathered from the service users relate to the Tranquility Project counselling service, and the main part of this chapter therefore focuses upon this particular service. Since counselling is the Tranquility Project's second most frequently accessed service (after advice and information) this potentially explains the predominance of these perspectives within the data. In this chapter reference is also made to data gathered from referring agencies, to attempt to include the experiences of service users who were unable or less willing to take part in the research directly (e.g. under 18's and non-English speakers).

Within the findings presented here, consideration is given to the multiple sub-groups within the heterogeneous Bridston Muslim community such as women, young people, asylum seekers, and the broad spectrum of ethnic affiliations. In doing so, the chapter aims to add further nuance and depth to any assertions made about the potential impact of the services for these individuals, avoiding a simplistic equation between any positive outcomes and a potential 'faith factor' (von Furstenberg, 2006, p.39). A variety of intersecting themes predominate throughout the chapter, including authenticity, culture, language, gender and the role of the IWO in comparison to the kinds of activities and provision offered by British mosques. By exploring individual service user narratives the chapter aims to highlight the interconnecting nature of these themes and also the variation between individuals. Reference is also made to any similarities or disparities between service user perspectives regarding the significance of the services and those proposed by the IWO staff members in preceding chapters. Overall, it will be argued that the data highlight multiple ways in which the services

were perceived to be of some significance for different service users. However, the feedback also highlights some important challenges facing Islamic welfare organisations in their quest to deliver sensitive and professional services to the community.

Service User Statistics

Tranquility Database of Service Users³⁰

An analysis of the database provides a demographic overview of the 495 individuals who have accessed the services of the Tranquility Project from its initial inception until mid-September 2011. Such an analysis was carried out primarily as part of the University evaluation of the Tranquility Project. However, the findings are also informative here in helping contextualise some of the themes raised within the qualitative interviews. The database analysis reveals the heterogeneity of this group of service users, noting a total of 31 different languages being spoken by the service users who identify with a total of 39 different ethnic identities. The four most frequently spoken languages by service users were English (71.5% of service users, $n=354$), Urdu (21.6%, $n=107$), Arabic (16.4%, $n=81$) and Bengali (9.3%, $n=46$). Service users were also listed as communicating in Bargo, British Sign Language, Hinko, Sarani, Slovakian, and Swahili. The largest ethnic group listed in the database is Pakistani (30.9%, $n=153$), followed secondly by Bangladeshi (13.3%, $n=66$). There are also notable numbers of Arab (5.3%, $n=26$), Somali (3.8%, $n=19$) and Sudanese (3.6%, $n=18$) service users. In total almost half (47.8%, $n=237$) of the service users are of South Asian ethnicities, either of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Other Asian (3.6%, $n=18$) backgrounds. The ethnic composition of this group of service users therefore differs slightly from the overall Muslim population in Britain of which approximately three-quarters are of South Asian ethnicity (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a). Despite this difference, the 2001 census recorded a figure of approximately 12,000 Muslims living in Bridston and a total of around 7,000 Pakistanis and Bangladeshis³¹. If it can be assumed that the majority of these Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are also Muslim then they would constitute just under 60% of the Bridston Muslim population. The differing ethnic make-up of the Bridston Muslim community, in contrast to

³⁰ Greater detail and in-depth information about the demographics and the coding of each variable is presented in Appendices 23 and 24. Appendix 23 notes that certain categories within several of the variables were collapsed prior to running the cross-tabulations and chi-square tests in order to ensure the validity of any statistical links found.

³¹ See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html> [Accessed 05/12/12]

the overall nationwide figures, may therefore account for part of the reason why there are a lower number of South Asian service users than may be expected.³²

For the majority of service users in the database (82.2%, $n=407$) their religion is listed as Islam. Whilst this may seem a surprisingly low figure for an Islamic organisation, it is worth noting that for 17.2% ($n=85$) of service users listed in the database their religious affiliation was recorded as ‘unknown’, and it is possible (indeed likely) that many of these individuals would identify themselves as being Muslim. Only 0.6% ($n=3$) of service users are listed as following other religions (two Hindus and one Jew). In terms of age profile, the largest age group is of service users aged 25-39 (37.4%, $n=185$). Only 3% of service users ($n=10$) were listed as being over 65. These findings can be contextualised by looking at the wider British population where ‘only about five per cent of Muslims in Britain are over the age of sixty’ and ‘around 50 per cent are under the age of twenty-five’ (Gilliat-Ray, 2010, p.121). Such a figure of 3% is perhaps lower than may be expected, particularly given the greater care needs of those aged 65 and over. However, as Hallett (1989, p.6) notes, although elderly women are ‘the largest group of users of the social services departments’ this is primarily involving services relating to ‘residential, day care and domiciliary services.’ As the Tranquility Project largely does not offer these types of services, it is possible that this may account for the low numbers of service users aged 65 and over accessing the project.

In relation to reasons given for referral to the Tranquility Project, service users were recorded as being most frequently referred for issues surrounding marriage or divorce- in total, almost a third of all Tranquility Project service users (29.1%, $n=144$). One-fifth of Tranquility service users (20%, $n=99$) were referred for reasons relating to mental health. 13.9% ($n=69$) of service users were referred for reasons relating to advocacy, including reasons of housing and tenancy, immigration and asylum, or other advocacy issues. Furthermore, 11.3% ($n=56$) of service users were referred for reasons relating to family and parenting and only 9.5% ($n=47$) were referred for reasons to do with Islamic guidance³³. Whilst the percentage of service users recorded as being referred for specifically Islamic guidance seems rather low for an Islamic welfare organisation, this does not rule out the interplay of religious or cultural

³² In addition, the ethnicity of 16.2% ($n=80$) of service users in the database was listed as ‘unknown.’ It is possible that some of these service users were of South Asian ethnicity.

³³ ‘Islamic guidance’ was coded to refer to include any reasons listed (aside from marriage/divorce) which overtly relate to religion. This includes reasons listed in the original data set ranging from ‘would like a prayer time-table’, ‘Islamic will’, ‘spiritual intervention’, ‘struggling to fast during Ramadan’ and ‘requires certificate of declaration of Islam.’ The term ‘*ruqyah*’ does not appear at all in the original unedited service user database.

factors potentially underpinning the other reasons for referral to the organisation. In the original unedited database, 21 service users were referred specifically for the reason of 'spiritual intervention' and it is suggested that this relates directly to *ruqyah* healing, particularly in light of Marwa's comments in Chapter 7 that the IWO staff members preferred to call *ruqyah* healing '*spiritual guidance*.' Almost half of all referrals (49.5%, $n=245$) to the Tranquility Project were either self-referrals or via family or friends. Only 9.5% ($n=47$) came from statutory sources and only 2.4% ($n=12$) were listed as being from a mosque. Whilst this level of referrals from the mosques may seem rather low, it can perhaps be contextualised by the fact that 7.3% ($n=36$) of referrals came from IWO staff members and volunteers and, given that many of the IWO staff work part-time or volunteer at local mosques, it is possible that some referrals made via the mosque have been recorded in the database as being by staff members rather than the mosque itself.

Statutory sources of referral are listed as being the largest source of referrals both for service users aged under 18 (28.8%, $n=42$) and over 65 (40%, $n=4$). The chi-square test indicated a higher than expected frequency of referrals from statutory sources for reasons of serious mental health ($X^2=72.25$, df^{12} , $p<0.001$). In addition, the chi-square tests also showed a significant association between service user ethnicity and source of referral ($X^2=79.34$, df^{10} , $p<0.001$), with a higher number of referrals of Bangladeshi and Arab service users from statutory sources, and a lower number of referrals of Pakistani service users from statutory sources. The qualitative data later in this chapter add further insight into potential reasons why Arab service users are more likely to have statutory sources of referrals, and also why there are higher levels of statutory referrals amongst younger service users, in discussing the category of young asylum seekers. For Pakistani service users, the lower rate of referral from statutory sources may be linked to another chi-square test finding which showed lower number of statutory referrals for Islamic guidance and marriage/divorce services ($X^2=72.25$, df^{12} , $p<0.001$). Of the 153 Pakistani service users listed in the database, a total of 43% ($n=66$) are listed as accessing spiritual guidance, divorce/*khul*, and marriage/*nikah* services combined. If almost half of the Pakistani service users in the database are accessing services which statutory referrals do not frequently refer to, this may underpin the lower frequency of statutory referrals of Pakistani service users.

The most frequently accessed Tranquility Project service was the advice and information service, which assisted 38% ($n=188$) of service users listed in the database. The second most frequently accessed service was counselling (27.7%, $n=137$) and the third was advocacy

(18.6%, $n=92$). The least frequently accessed services listed are marriage/*nikah*³⁴ and chaplaincy³⁵.

Table 8.1 Percentage of service users accessing each service offered by the Tranquility Project

Type of Service	Received	Not received	Unknown	Total
Advice/Info	38% (n=188)	59% (n=292)	3% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Counselling	27.7% (n=137)	69.3% (n=343)	2.8% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Advocacy	18.6% (n=92)	78.6% (n=389)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Divorce/ <i>Khul</i>	17.2% (n=85)	79.8% (n=395)	3.0% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Spiritual Guidance	14.1% (n=70)	83.0% (n=411)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Mediation	10.3% (n=51)	86.9% (n=430)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Marriage/ <i>Nikah</i>	4.2% (n=21)	92.7% (n=459)	3.0% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Chaplaincy	3.6% (n=18)	93.5% (n=463)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)

In the process of the dataset being copied into Microsoft Excel by the IWO staff for the purposes of analysis, the gender variable was not transferred. However, analysis of an earlier data set³⁶ by another member of the IWO evaluation team showed that 28% ($n=66$) of the service users were listed as male and 72% ($n=172$) as female. This is in accordance with commentary upon service usage by the population overall which notes that ‘women are the principal users of the services provided by social services departments’ (Hallett, 1989, p.12, Davis, 1996). Whilst 17.2% ($n=85$) of service users are listed as accessing divorce or *khul* services, the original unedited dataset lists 38 individuals as being referred to the IWO specifically for the reason of seeking a *khul*. In addition, the original data set lists 11 individuals as being referred for reasons specifically of domestic abuse or domestic violence. It can be inferred that all of the service users referred for a *khul* and perhaps the majority (if not all) of the service users referred due to domestic abuse and violence are women. In addition, the majority of the qualitative data relate to female service users and goes some way towards accommodating for the lack of statistical insight.

³⁴ This low number may be due to the relative availability of *nikah* services provided at many local mosques.

³⁵ It could be suggested that such a low number may be due to the informal nature of chaplaincy visits by Tranquility project staff and volunteers during which service user data may not be routinely collected.

³⁶ Data set of 238 ‘live’ service users who were referred to the IWO between 01/04/09 and 30/06/11.

The statistics presented suggest that the top three services accessed most frequently by service users (advice, counselling and advocacy) appear to be similar to the types of services offered by many other mainstream voluntary sector welfare agencies, both BME and non-BME alike. Engaging in the practices of advocacy, counselling and offering advice and guidance also often forms part of the traditional social work role. It can be noted that the IWO are not involved in providing services surrounding fostering and adoption which are often typically associated with the role of statutory social work services. However, they have participated in advising local authorities about the needs of Muslim foster children (See Chapter 7). The extent to which the IWO's services can be described as constituting social work, according to UK policy and law, is thus debatable, as highlighted by the deliberation surrounding the name of the organisation in Chapter 7. Whilst these frequencies do give some insight into the daily engagement of the IWO with its service users, they do not show in any depth the interplay of religious and culture factors in the provision of these services, to which the qualitative data add further nuance later in the chapter.

Service User Satisfaction Survey³⁷

A total of thirty-six service users participated in the service user satisfaction survey (a response rate of just under 25%), of which exactly half were female and half male. Nearly half (45.9%, $n=17$) of the respondents had accessed the counselling service and nearly one-sixth had accessed the divorce/*khul* service (13.5%, $n=5$). The majority of the respondents were of South Asian ethnicity (60.9%, $n=22$) and over half of the respondents (52.7%, $n=19$) were aged 25-39.

Questions three to six of the survey aimed to get an insight into the type of support the service users prefer and their levels of satisfaction with the service they received at the IWO. Question three of the survey asked service users: *'Which of the following do you think it is important for an Islamic welfare service to provide?'* (See Table 8.2). 72.2% ($n=26$), almost three-quarters, of respondents considered it 'very important' that the organisation provided 'religious knowledge/guidance' and this attribute received the greatest amount of respondents selecting it as 'very important' out of the five attributes. This was closely followed by 'Islamic Counselling' which was seen to be 'very important' by 66% ($n=24$) of service users. Only 38.8% ($n=14$) of respondents thought it 'very important' that services were provided in service users own languages.

³⁷ Further information about the sampling strategy and response rate is available in Appendix 22

Table 8.2 ‘Which of the following do you think it is important for an Islamic welfare service to provide?’

Attribute	No. respondents who considered it ‘Very Important’ (%)	No. respondents who considered it ‘Quite Important’ (%)
Muslim Staff Members	19 (52.7%)	12 (33.3%)
Services in Own Language	14 (38.8%)	13 (36.1%)
Religious Knowledge/Guidance	26 (72.2%)	6 (16.6%)
Islamic Counselling	24 (66.6%)	5 (13.8%)
<i>Ruqyah</i> Treatment	18 (50%)	3 (8.3%)

Question four of the survey asked service users: ‘*What, if anything, did you find helpful about the IWO?*’ (See Table 8.3) Respondents were asked to tick as many boxes as they felt were relevant. Over half of respondents (56.6%, $n=20$) ticked that confidentiality had been helpful yet less than one-fifth (16.6%, $n=6$) had found the ability to speak in their mother tongue helpful. Equal numbers of respondents found the IWO helpful as they felt ‘they understood my culture’ and because they felt ‘I could talk about my religion.’

Table 8.3 ‘What, if anything, did you find helpful about the IWO?’

Category	No. respondents (%)
I could talk in my mother tongue	6 (16.6%)
I could talk about my religion	19 (52.7%)
I received religious guidance	17 (47.2%)
They understood my culture	19 (52.7%)
The service was confidential	20 (56.5%)
The service was not helpful	2 (5.5%)
Other	9 (25%)
Question left blank	2 (5.5%)

One service user who selected that ‘the service was not helpful’ completed the questionnaire via telephone and so enquiries were made about this response. The service user commented that the service was not helpful as they had been unable to arrange the required appointment yet with the appropriate staff member.

Question five in the survey asked: *‘Do you feel the help from the IWO has improved your well-being?’* 78.2% (n=28), over three-quarters, of respondents selected ‘agree strongly’ or ‘agree.’ Two of the service users who selected ‘disagree strongly’ gave further comments about their dissatisfaction whilst completing the satisfaction survey over the telephone. They reported that they had not had much contact with the organisation so were unable to report significant changes to their well-being.

Question six in the survey asked: *‘Overall, how do you feel about the help you have received from the IWO?’* 77.7% (n=28) of respondents to the question, over three-quarters, indicated that they were either ‘delighted’, ‘pleased’ or ‘mostly satisfied’ about the service they had received. Two individuals who selected ‘terrible’ both completed their questionnaires via telephone. One respondent selected ‘terrible’ as they had not been able to get an immediate appointment with the staff member of their choice and disliked that it was up to the service user to arrange their own appointments. The other respondent who selected ‘terrible’ suggested that the staff member they saw was not wholly interested as they are not a Muslim.³⁸

Overall, the feedback from the survey identifies the theme of confidentiality and the provision of religious knowledge and guidance as of particular importance to these service users. Whilst the survey findings suggest the ability to talk in one’s mother tongue as of lesser importance, it must be acknowledged that all service users who completed a questionnaire were fluent and literate in English. Given the poor response rate, an exploration of the themes emerging within the qualitative data adds further insight.

Counselling

Nearly half of the completed survey questionnaires came from service users who had accessed the counselling service. As follow-up interviews took place with survey respondents who chose to leave contact details on their completed questionnaire, much of the qualitative data also focuses upon feedback about the counselling service. The qualitative data regarding

³⁸ Although service user Susie did comment in her interview that: *‘it was made quite clear to us that being a practising Muslim wasn’t part of the criteria. You didn’t have to be practising to use the service.’*

the counselling service gathered from Tranquility Project service users relate to two particular sub-groups of service user: women and young asylum seekers. The chapter discusses the experiences of the service users within each of these groups in turn and also questions to what extent there is any uniformity within the sub-groups. In doing so, the analysis aims to highlight the complexities underlying the category of the ‘Muslim service user.’

Women

The data in this section focus upon five service users (Hamida, Aisha, Ahmed and wife Asma, and Safia³⁹) and is complemented by feedback from interviews with two referrers (Shabnam and Batool) who work in the BME voluntary sector and have referred women to the Tranquility Project for counselling. A range of themes can be identified within the narratives including the topics of Islamic authenticity, the significance of language and the role of the mosque and other community institutions. Analysis of these themes will consider their implications for the provision of support services to the Muslim community.

Hamida

Hamida is a young woman of South Asian ethnicity who described her experience of having several sessions of counselling at the IWO after hearing about the organisation from a friend. On her completed service user satisfaction survey form she ticked that she was ‘delighted’ with the service that she had received and ‘agreed’ that the help from the IWO had improved her well-being. In the follow-up telephone interview, Hamida was asked why she had chosen to access the service and explained that:

‘It’s because the IWO kind of deal with mainly Islamic guidance so I think that was the main reason why I contacted the IWO. Just to kind of get their Islamic point of view’ (Hamida)

Hamida explained how she had sought advice about a personal issue for which she wanted a specifically Islamic perspective. In narrating her experience of the counselling sessions, Hamida explained how her counsellor had suggested several possible solutions, which were ‘backed up by evidence’, which she was then free to follow (or not) at will. Hamida described the approach of her counsellor, stating that:

³⁹ Hamida, Aisha and Ahmed participated in interviews. Ahmed’s interview focuses upon his experiences of accessing the service with his wife Asma although she did not take part in the interview. Safia only took part in the service user satisfaction survey but left qualitative comments on her completed questionnaire.

'She gives you the information and then it's up to you to make that choice. It's not like, you know, she says "this is what it is you have to do." She gave me a few options and then it's up to me to choose what I wanted to do' (Hamida)

When asked whether the advice given by the IWO counsellor was felt to be in line with Hamida's denominational beliefs, she commented that:

'I think the advice that I've been given personally, it's been kind of a more general kind of thing which has been backed up by other verses from the Quran and from the Hadith and things... I don't think she deals with any school of thought in particular' (Hamida)

The description given by Hamida of a denominationally-neutral, non-proselytizing Islamic counsellor appears to correspond to the accounts given by the IWO staff members themselves regarding their everyday counselling practices (see Chapter 6). When asked whether she was satisfied with the service she had accessed at the IWO, Hamida highlighted how she had valued the *'sound Islamic knowledge'* which she felt she had been offered:

'I was really impressed with the fact that when I was given the evidence that it was always backed up. It wasn't something that, you know, my counsellor said "this is what I think" or this is, you know. It was always backed up with evidence from the Quran and from the Sunnah like I said so that kind of really, really impressed me in that this organisation, this person knows what they are actually talking about' (Hamida)

Hamida's satisfaction with the service was therefore due to her perception of the counsellor as a knowledgeable individual who was able to offer her valid Islamic advice and guidance, alongside the freedom she felt to accept or reject the counsellor's suggestions. In further contextualising the significance of the counselling, Hamida juxtaposed the guidance she had received at the IWO with her experience of seeking advice from some imams in the wider community:

'I went to different imams and things and they often gave a more cultural perspective on a certain topic. And I found the IWO gave an Islamic answer, you know, to what I was looking for.... the main reason I went to the IWO is because, you know, of the Islamic guidance aspect. I mean, imams, especially in our Asian community, they kind of tend to follow cultural aspects of it. So I found that the IWO was very much, you know, this is the Islamic thought and it's up to you what you want to do then' (Hamida)

With this comment, Hamida appears to dichotomise the ‘*cultural*’ approach of the imams within the ‘*Asian community*’ in contrast to the ‘*Islamic answer*’ which she feels she was offered by the IWO’s counsellor. Underpinning all of Hamida’s remarks is a concern with the entangled issues of interpretation, authenticity and authority. Her rationale in accessing the IWO’s counselling service, and her subsequent satisfaction, appear to centre upon her desire to receive what she perceives to be authentic Islamic advice, based upon valid scriptural comprehension, from a knowledgeable individual. These comments from Hamida also have resonance with the feedback from referrer Samia (in Chapter 7) regarding the *khul* service, where Samia spoke of her dissatisfaction with the advice and services offered by certain imams whom she perceived to be confusing culture and authentic Islam, claiming that the imams ‘*forget it’s culture and they turn it into religion.*’ In addition, this theme relates to the feedback from service user Jamal regarding the Spiritual Guidance service (see below). Interestingly, one IWO staff member Zahra had also spoken about this during her interview, commenting how:

‘What I’ve found before working here was that people tend to mix faith with culture a lot. So their views on how to go about a certain issue is very different to what is actually, you know, what is actually mentioned in Islam. So it’s like, really like, helping clients with that as well. They get quite surprised, I get quite surprised, I’m like ‘oh I never knew that!’ (Laughs) But it does, it has a huge impact’ (Zahra)

This relationship between culture and religion, as negotiated by young British-born Muslims, was explored within Jacobson’s (1997, p.240, 243) research with second-generation Pakistanis which highlighted how participants made a ‘religion-ethnic culture distinction’ and sought to ‘to establish greater orthodoxy in their beliefs and practices by purifying Islam of its cultural accretions.’ Bolognani and Mellor (2012, p.213) also identify ‘the religion versus culture demotic framework’ which they define as ‘a revivalist discourse’ focusing on ‘the idea of an orthodox Islam in opposition to its mediation through any cultural capital’ other than that of ‘the “original” Arab matrix’ and which ‘uses “culture” with an automatic negative connotation’ and ‘focuses on reputation and family ties.’ Exploring the agency of young British-born Muslims to negotiate between religious and cultural identities relates to wider questions regarding the contemporary status of Islamic scholarly authority and the impact of the processes of migration and globalization (Peter, 2006). Mandaville (2001, p.173) suggests that the diasporic context in particular is ‘one in which Islamic meanings shift, change and transmute.’ Furthermore, Geaves (1996, p.73) argues the multi-ethnic

Muslim milieu in Britain has intensified such processes for individuals as it has ‘resulted in their encountering other modes of Islamic cultural expression which have equally strong claims to validity as their own’ which he suggests ‘creates questions concerning the “true” form of Islam.’ Bolognani and Mellor (2012, p.221) similarly highlight how such a distinction between culture and religion is ‘a significant cognitive tool emerging from specific historical circumstances.’

Eickelman (2000, p.16) also notes the impact of ‘the unprecedented access that ordinary people now have to sources of information and knowledge about religion’ creating a shift in the hierarchical structures which traditionally governed and controlled the access to such knowledge. However, it is important to note, as Brown (1996, p.1) highlights, that questions regarding authenticity and authority have been present since the earliest days of Islamic thought and, furthermore, that such contemporary questions are not unique to Islam and Muslims but relate to broader uncertainties in ‘the relationship between religion and modernity.’ Mandaville (2001, p.102) highlights that in Islam ‘there has never existed a situated, singular source of authentic Muslim knowledge.’ Whether such contemporary processes have created a ‘liberalization of Islam’ or a ‘relative stability of dogma’ is debated by Peter (2006, p.107), and Mandaville (2001) also highlights that one should not assume that the role of traditional scholars has been entirely usurped.

It is argued that this complex relationship between cultural and religious identities may impact upon the support services which young Muslims may feel are appropriate, relevant and able to meet their needs effectively. In particular, an organisation which they feel prioritises a non-sectarian Islamic ethos may be felt to be more relevant than other cultural institutions, including some mosques, which are aligned with particular ethnic groups. Bolognani and Mellor (2012, p.223) suggest that the dichotomisation of Islam and culture by young British-born Muslims is likely to have ‘the potential of influencing British Muslim family dynamics in very substantial ways’ and this suggests it is something that social workers will need to be mindful of. By describing their organisation as providing ‘multicultural counselling’ at the Bridston Third Sector Conference in 2011, the IWO may need to consider the potential impact of this for attracting service users. Whether this actually leads to a variation in the levels of counselling service uptake, however, remains to be seen. Mukadam *et al.* (2010, p.18) suggest that ‘one of the relatively new tasks of faith leadership is to help young people navigate their way through the plethora of comment, claim and

competing interpretation available nowadays at the click of a mouse.’ The ability of an Islamic counsellor to engage with the theological perspectives of a variety of different denominations effectively may therefore also be of significance. This is in contrast to the traditional role of an Islamic scholar or religious professional, such as a *Deobandi* imam, who would primarily only be trained in the *fiqh* of their own theological denomination (Gilliat-Ray, 2006)

In relation to females in particular, Brown (2006, p.427) speaks of young Muslim women ‘adopting an Islamic identity as a strategy to realise rights’ although she suggests that such strategies are ‘only really available to middle and upper classes’ and to ‘2nd and 3rd generation migrants who have benefitted from UK education.’ Dwyer’s (2000, p.482) interviews with young women similarly reported the views of young Muslim women that ‘it is not Islam that oppresses them, it’s the culture that oppresses Muslim women.’ Samia’s comments regarding the significance of the *khul* she obtained through the IWO for Khalida hint that these theories have some resonance for her too. However one must be very careful in avoiding generalisations when talking about the ‘Muslim woman’ and implying that she has any need to be ‘saved’ (Abu-Lughod, 2002, p.783). Theoretical questions can also be raised regarding whether it really is possible to disentangle and wholly separate the concepts of culture and religion in the manner in which Hamida appears to attempt. The main focus for service users such as Hamida, however, appears to be searching for a ‘deculturalised’ Islam free from the cultural baggage inherited from older generations (Roy, 2004, p.23).

Aisha

Aisha is a young woman of South Asian ethnicity who had several sessions of counselling at the IWO after hearing about the organisation from a friend. Her feedback on the satisfaction survey indicated that she was ‘delighted’ with the service she had received and she ‘agreed’ that it had improved her well-being. In the follow-up interview, Aisha’s narrative highlighted the significance of a counselling service which she felt combined legitimate Islamic advice with a person-centred focus. Speaking about her experiences of participating in the sessions with her counsellor, Aisha commented that:

‘He doesn’t just give you advice from the top of his head. If you ask him a question, he’ll say “this” or “that” is an answer to your question. He will give you examples of different schools of thought, “ok this group of people say this and that group of people say that, this is stronger, this is weaker,” you

know. He talks about verses from Quran, “this verse is saying this, this verse is saying that and your answer is from this verse which is more strong but you can follow this as well”’ (Aisha)

In similar fashion to Hamida, Aisha also dichotomised the concepts of culture and religion when speaking about the role of the IWO in relation to other cultural organisations. As she commented:

‘I think in terms of Muslim organisations, if you talk about Pakistanis, Indians, Bengalis, and Somali, and Sudanese, and Chinese, you’re talking about culture. We’re talking about different countries, we’re not talking about one religion and Islam is one religion. And we, all Muslims, every single Muslim, no matter where you’re from, you follow the same rules, the same way of reading the prayers, the same way of reading Quran, the same understanding. But we need one Muslim organisation; we don’t need a cultural organisation’ (Aisha)

Here Aisha is suggesting the salience of being united by a religious identity rather than a cultural identity. Unlike Hamida, Aisha didn’t identify the imams at local mosques as offering cultural perspectives. However, she did suggest that the services provided by the IWO were those which mosques themselves should be offering but were not doing so:

‘Mosques in this country don’t provide any service; they don’t apart from prayers, apart from if someone dies. Or apart from if you need to hire a mosque or a big room, a hall room, for some celebration, for religious celebration. That’s it, that’s what the mosque provides in this country. The IWO is doing much more... Actually mosque means not just praying, it’s guidance as well and there’s no-one to guide us in the mosque so that’s why we run to the IWO. The IWO is doing much more than what the mosques should do. Or I should say the IWO is doing what the mosques are supposed to do and they’re not realising their responsibilities’ (Aisha)

A variety of studies of mosques in Britain have also commented upon the perceived shortcomings of some of these institutions. As Maqsood (2005, p.3) comments, ‘some mosques do not seem to have an adequate community role. They are only seen as ‘prayerclubs for men.’’ Whilst there has, in recent years, been the development of institutions such as the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre⁴⁰, offering facilities including religious advice and counselling, women’s services and support for new Muslims, these large institutions have not yet been uniformly developed by Muslim communities across the UK.

⁴⁰ See <http://www.eastlondonmosque.org.uk/services> [accessed 05/12/12]

Gilliat-Ray (2010a, p.204) comments that the East London mosque ‘sets a new standard for the kind of religious facility that British Muslims aspire to.’ The credentials of imams in Britain has also come under scrutiny, with Birt (2006, p.687) commenting that ‘the good imam is now to embody civic virtues, interfaith tolerance, professional and managerial and pastoral skills.’ An appraisal of training schemes for Muslim faith leaders by Mukadam *et al.* (2010, p.66) commented that ‘there is a need to expand and develop the courses, programmes and modules in Islamic pastoral care and counselling which already exist and to integrate these with the study of theological and spiritual issues.’ Initiatives have been developed in recent years to try and address such concerns, including the establishment of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) based at the Muslim College in London (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a).

Aisha’s comments did not equate her dissatisfaction with the services provided by the mosques as being due to her gender. However, one referrer Shabnam, who works for a BME voluntary agency in Bridston, spoke about referring a female service user to the IWO for counselling, commenting that:

‘I wouldn’t have even thought about the mosque being approachable for her sort of issues. Because the mosque is usually on the whole male-dominated and so that actually didn’t come onto my agenda where it was actually sort of said normal counselling’s better than going there’ (Shabnam)

Academic writing about British mosques has also commented that ‘the predominant experience of Muslim women in relation to British mosques has been one of exclusion and marginalization’ (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a, p.201). Similarly, Brown (2006, p.474) notes that ‘only forty per cent of mosques currently have provisions for female worshippers.’ In this light, the IWO may be viewed as an alternative space in the community for Muslim women. The Tranquility Project is primarily staffed by women and perhaps provides a contrast to the ‘male-dominated’ space of local mosques which Shabnam describes. The potential for welfare services to be provided for Muslims outside of mosques is also advocated by the An-Nisa Society (2012, p.15) who note that many mosques do not have the ‘capacity’ to provide enough space or the ‘capital’ to secure premises and develop facilities. Mondal (2008, p.147) also discusses the ‘the isolation of many mosques from British life’ and suggests that ‘young British Muslims are increasingly turning to other organisations and institutions for guidance.’ Studies of Muslims in Britain have noted the emergence of *halaqas*, female-only Quranic

study circles led by Muslim women in their homes or in mosques, which provide an alternative, supportive space for studying and socialising (Gillat-Ray, 2010a). However, such gatherings are relatively informal and may not provide an adequate intervention for women seeking professional assistance and support.

Ahmed and Asma

Ahmed is a retired man who migrated to the UK with his wife Asma from South Asia. Ahmed and Asma attended several counselling sessions at the IWO after Asma was diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Their completed satisfaction survey, filled out by Ahmed, noted that they were ‘pleased’ with the services received and ‘agreed’ that it had helped their well-being. During the counselling sessions the couple were able to speak in their mother tongue. In discussing their reasons for accessing the IWO’s service, Ahmed explained that:

‘It was my son who decided that it would be the best counselling service because of my wife being very religious. She would not talk to anybody else apart from somebody in the Islamic community... She didn’t want to go through the normal counselling services in this country, she wanted somebody to be Islamic, somebody who could understand Islam so that she could explain her problems’
(Ahmed)

When asked whether Asma had thought of speaking to someone at the local mosque, Ahmed commented that:

‘I don’t think my wife would have wanted that. She preferred what my son said. My son-in-law encouraged us that the counselling service at the IWO might be a good place because if she wanted a lady to talk to her or a gent to talk to her it could be arranged. But my wife said she is not fussy about that, as long as it’s not in the mosque where there is a priest or anybody else, you know... She felt uneasy going to an imam or the mosque because of her own reasons. I don’t know that’ (Ahmed)

Whilst not identifying any particular reason for not wanting to go to the mosque or imam, Ahmed’s comments chime with those of the other service users in suggesting that any possible help available at the mosque was not appropriate. Ahmed explained how he and Asma had sought advice and guidance to try and improve the relationships between family members. When asked whether he felt the counselling sessions had any identifiably Islamic content, Ahmed highlighted how:

'There was a mention of Allah and, you know, the rasul, in regards to what should be done, how it should be done, what are the obligations of a husband, what are the obligations of a wife... [The counsellor] was trying to explain that, look, you know, when our daughters get married, this happens, when our sons get married, this happens, they become part of the other family and we have to take the daughter-in-law as our family. You know, so many things were nice, yeah? And they were all connected with Hadith' (Ahmed)

Ahmed seemed positive about the Islamic references to the *Hadith* which had been discussed during the counselling session. In addition, he commented that they valued the confidentiality which the service at the IWO offered, highlighting that:

'Speaking confidentially is a very, very definite item isn't it? I mean no-one's going to open heartedly go and say "this is what my wife is doing" or "this is what my husband is doing", it's got to be somebody that you can confide in' (Ahmed)

When asked what they had found most helpful out of all the different aspects of the service he'd described- the ability to speak in their mother tongue, the reference to *Hadiths*, the confidentiality- Ahmed commented that:

'I think there was a combination of all these things that you have said. You know, there was a lot of confidentiality, there were parts of religion, there were parts of Hadith which came into the equation during our conversation. Because don't forget conversation can take different angles and different concepts where the problems could be highlighted when discussing. So on each point where he [the counsellor] felt he could contribute from the Islamic point of view he did that. And that made us understand a bit better. So you can't just say there was one specific thing, that it was the Islamic culture or the Islamic Hadith which helped us. It was the combination of many things being contributed during the course of conversation, there were different concepts of problems coming up' (Ahmed)

Ahmed's depiction of this combination of factors suggests that it was not simply a 'faith factor' which made the counselling approach helpful (Von Furstenberg, 2006, p.39) although he suggests that contributions during the session '*from the Islamic point of view*' by the counsellor did help him and his wife '*understand a bit better.*' In contrast to Hamida and Aisha, Ahmed talks positively about '*Islamic culture*' and does not appear to dichotomise the concepts of culture and religion. As Ahmed is a retired migrant, rather than being born and

brought up in the UK, this factor may be of some significance in understanding why he views the concept of culture differently. It should also be noted that as Asma herself did not participate in the interviews, her perceptions may not wholly correspond with those portrayed by her husband. However, Ahmed's comments do add some insight into why the service may be significant for some older Muslim migrant women.

Safia

Safia is young woman of South Asian ethnicity whose completed questionnaire contained qualitative feedback about her experiences of accessing the IWO's counselling service. She had ticked that she felt 'mixed' about the service that she had received and that it had 'not improved' her well-being. The qualitative comments stated that:

'The counselling service was somewhat helpful, I received spiritual/religious guidance but I could not relate when it was drummed down to me to pray namaz as the answer to everything. Zikar [sic] works in my life and having a conversation with Allah also works for me but the counsellor did not teach me how to interact or relate to namaz to solve my problems' (Safia)

This account by Safia highlights a particular challenge for practitioners providing Islamic counselling in negotiating to what extent sessions should incorporate explicitly religious or spiritual elements, such as references to *namaz* and *dhikr*. Whilst the IWO staff members emphasised the person-centred focus within their approach in Chapters 5 and 6, the implementation of this clearly requires very careful negotiation and application which may not always be wholly successful from the perspective of the service user. Safia's use of the phrase '*drummed down*' implies she felt that the counsellor's advice to pray *namaz* was over-emphasised and there was a need for further elaboration by the counsellor upon how to engage with *namaz* in a problem-solving capacity. Whilst Hamida and Aisha gave positive accounts of being offered Islamic advice which they felt free to follow at will, Safia's comments highlight that the counsellor's input of religious or spiritual guidance may not always be felt to be effective by the service user.

In addition to the feedback from these four counselling service users, one project worker from the BME voluntary sector, Batool, spoke about her experience of referring a non-Muslim service user to the Tranquility Project for counselling. As Batool explained:

'For one of my clients that I referred, she's not a Muslim and it was just that she was at a high risk safety and she was referred to us and our support. She had accessed, like, mainstream counselling and, you know, I said ok let's take a different turn and see whether she benefits from counselling from the IWO. And she found it very beneficial, she gave me really good feedback, you know... It's counselling from an Islamic perspective so I thought well, you know, it's different, she might benefit from getting from or receiving counselling from a different perspective... And she did say it was helping her a lot, it did help... Often when I've talked to her, when I've talked to her about things, religion and things like that, she's always thinking of a different perspective' (Batoool)

Batoool's feedback's hints at how the counselling service may be of benefit to a non-Muslim service user in offering them *'a different perspective'* when other mainstream services have not been successful.

Young Asylum Seekers

The chi-square tests performed with the database highlighted a greater number of service users aged 0-24 who were referred to the IWO for reasons of serious mental health (X^2 68.04, df^{24} , $p < 0.001$). In addition, the database frequencies showed that almost half of all service users aged under 18 (46.7%, $n=7$) who are referred to the IWO are referred for reasons relating to mental health, either serious mental health problems (26.7%, $n=4$) or general mental health issues (20%, $n=3$). The tests indicated a higher frequency of service users aged 0-24 accessing the counselling service at the IWO (X^2 9.651, df^4 , $p < 0.047$). In addition, a greater number of referrals of Arab service users were shown to come from statutory sources (X^2 79.34, df^{10} , $p < 0.001$). The qualitative data regarding the counselling service shed further light on some of the reasons why these young people were being referred to the IWO and the ways in which the counselling service was perceived to be of assistance to them. In particular, an interview took place with service user Susie, who had attended an IWO counselling session with her asylum-seeking foster child. The data here are also supplemented with interview material from referrer Irene, a statutory services worker, who had referred two asylum seekers aged under 18 to the IWO's counselling service.⁴¹ These two interviewees highlight the combination of cultural, religious, spiritual and practical factors which were perceived by Susie and Irene to be significant in the IWO's counselling service.

⁴¹ Due to ethical concerns it was not possible for any service users aged 18 or under to take part in the interviews, including the young asylum seekers whose experiences are related here.

Susie and Sami

At the beginning of her interview, Susie described why she and her husband had sought the services of the IWO in order to assist their foster child Sami who was an Arab asylum seeker aged under 18. As Susie explains:

'He was having some problems with depression that we weren't really getting. He didn't feel that he was getting what he wanted from his GP with English not being his first language... He was a complex young man and I don't think he knew quite how he needed help' (Susie)

Susie's initial comments suggest the salience of the language barrier between Sami and his GP, and a lack of knowledge on Sami's part about how to resolve the emotional problems he was experiencing. Although there were no IWO staff members able to offer counselling in Sami's mother tongue, he still attended a counselling session at the IWO as Susie felt that *'just having that cultural awareness we thought might be beneficial.'* Susie went on to explain that:

'I went into the counselling session as well and we talked through a lot of ideas and talked through a lot of possibilities. So, you know, Sami could go off with a lot of things he could do himself to try and help, you know, help with his mood' (Susie)

When asked whether any of the ideas discussed by Sami and the counsellor involved religious ways of coping, Susie replied:

'No not really because Sami was quite adamant that that was something that he didn't want to do. It was things, like make sure his diet was healthy, exercise, mixing with other young people, his own age group, explore his journey to the UK.... We did speak about religion, you know, he [the counsellor] did ask whether Sami was attending the mosque and he said no, that's something that he didn't want to do. And that was fine, I didn't feel there was any pressure on Sami or any guilt or anything like that, not at all' (Susie)

Here Susie's comments correspond to IWO staff members' descriptions of the person-centred, non-proselytizing approach which is utilised during counselling sessions. When Susie was subsequently asked if it was a culturally sensitive service which Sami had needed, she answered:

‘Yes, yes. And, you know, we spoke about spirituality and the cultural aspect of it ‘cos you know Sami still identified himself as a Muslim although he wasn’t going to the mosque at that time... I think had we approached the local mosque, or he felt that if we approached the local mosque, there might be pressures on his part about practising and it is quite a small community so whether he wanted to keep it private and confidential’ (Susie)

In analysing Susie and Sami’s experiences of the IWO, it appears that the counselling service was perceived by Susie to be of some benefit to Sami due to the counsellor’s understanding of Sami’s cultural background, despite Sami not being a practising Muslim and not being able to talk in his mother tongue during the session. In addition, there was a perception that the services provided at the IWO would be within a more professional, confidential context than potentially available at the local mosque, with perhaps less pressure to participate in religious activities. Interestingly, Susie does mention that during the counselling session there was discussion of what she perceived to be ‘*spirituality*’, although caution should perhaps be taken in assuming her exact meaning of the term and whether it equates directly to the notions of spirituality described by the IWO staff members in preceding chapters. Towards the end of the interview, Susie also added that:

‘Our GP, he was very open, and [the counsellor] said very similar things to the GP but I’m not sure that because it came from a British, White doctor it maybe wasn’t taken on board the same as it being said from a Muslim doctor. Because it was very similar things that were being said but I think it was taken on board far greater because it was a Muslim doctor’ (Susie)

With this comment, Susie implies that significance of the service was potentially not due any overtly Islamic content within the counselling session itself, but due to Sami’s perceptions of the counsellor as being a knowledgeable and respected Muslim doctor who was able to offer him relevant advice. Overall, there are to be a mixture of factors which Susie attributes to Sami’s decision to access the counselling service and to the potential benefits received. A combination of cultural sensitivity, confidentiality, non-proselytization, consideration of spirituality, and Sami’s perceptions of the counsellor’s identity as a Muslim doctor are all prevalent within Susie’s description. The service also appears to be useful for non-Muslim foster parents, like Susie, who are supporting young Muslim asylum seekers who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

Irene

Irene is a statutory services worker who works partly with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young adults. During her interview, she discussed her experiences in referring one of these individuals to the IWO counselling service, who was a young Arab, and her reason for doing so:

'He really needed, you know, to explore some issue about his past, about loss, about, his present situation, and he was a practising Muslim. And, you know, when you look around in Bridston to refer these young people, the only way that we can do that is through CAMHS.⁴² And I have some experience of CAMHS and, you know, the waiting list is very, very long. And I shouldn't really make any judgement about their services; they are good once young people receive their service. But I just wanted to explore these services because their sensitivity towards young people from multicultural counselling and people who have that knowledge and understanding of Islam which is a way of life... I just felt that that is something that could benefit these people who are Muslim and who come from different backgrounds' (Irene)

Irene appears here to give several reasons for her choice to refer the young individual to the IWO. She identifies the service user as being a practising Muslim who was experiencing issues to do with loss, and recognises Islam as being '*a way of life.*' In addition, Irene highlighted the relative availability of the IWO's counselling service, in comparison to the long CAMHS waiting lists. It is interesting that Irene mentions the term '*multicultural counselling*' and it is possible that her discussion of the IWO's services as being multicultural reflects the descriptions offered by staff members of the service in the latter part of the first findings chapter.

In discussing the significance of the counselling experienced by the young individual referred to the IWO, Irene commented that '*the young person was quite happy*' with the service received. According to Irene's perspective, a further reason for seeking the services of the IWO for the young asylum seeker was that:

⁴² CAMHS refers to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services which are the NHS-provided mental health assessment and treatment services available for individuals up to the age of 18 in the UK. See <http://www.camhscares.nhs.uk/> [accessed 17/12/12]

'Counselling doesn't exist as a concept in their own country. So to make it accessible to them you need somebody who really understands the wider circumstances of them being Muslim and then them needing counselling as a way of addressing some issue and problems and stuff' (Irene)

With this comment, Irene highlights that not only is there a need for the counsellor to understand the service user's Muslim identity, but also a need for the counsellor to make the process of counselling comprehensible to an individual who may not be aware of its function. When asked to clarify whether the young asylum seeker Irene referred to the IWO received specifically Islamic counselling, Irene commented that:

'Well I don't know that Islamic counselling exists, I would never refer to Islamic counselling. I just believe that people who are from this organisation understand Islam as a way of life. So I personally would never refer someone to Christian or Islamic or this kind of counselling and I don't think that they, you know, they... I believe that they use counselling as a general, you know, counselling, not Islamic counselling' (Irene)

This remark by Irene is arguably more telling about her perceptions of Islamic counselling as a non-Muslim statutory services worker than about the nature and impact of the service itself. Irene seems to display a perception of Islamic counselling as constituting a proselytizing endeavour which she feels would be an inappropriate service to signpost to. Overall, there are multiple factors influencing Irene's decision to refer the young individual to the IWO's counselling service, including a need for '*multicultural*' awareness of Islam as a way of life for her service user whom she understands as being a practising Muslim. Unfortunately Irene was not able to give further information about the reasons behind the service user's satisfaction with the service as, unlike Susie, she had not attended the session with him. Nonetheless Irene suggests that the IWO counselling service may be of significance to young Muslim asylum seekers in the Bridston area, particularly given the limitations she has experienced with mainstream statutory mental health services.

Other analyses of the role of religion and spirituality and their potential salience for asylum seekers and refugees have highlighted that they may provide 'a source of support' and can be 'instrumental' in helping individuals cope with 'migratory stress' (Ahmed and Aboul-Fotouh, 2012, p.295). Ahmed (2012, p.261) describes how these individuals may experience a range of adversities, even after gaining refugee status, including 'lack of trust, social isolation,

difficulties maintaining peer relationships, developmental delays’ as well as ‘symptoms of depression, anxiety and distress due to survivor’s guilt.’ Ni Raghallaigh’s (2011, p.539) study of unaccompanied minors in Ireland, including both Muslims and Christians, indicated that ‘religious faith and practice served as a source of continuity in their lives.’ Relating specifically to Muslim refugees, McMichael’s (2002, p.171) study of Somali women in Australia similarly found that ‘Islam provides an enduring ‘home’ that is carried throughout displacement and resettlement.’ Shoeb *et al.*’s (2007, p.240) study of Iraqi refugees in the U.S. also argued that ‘the identity of *Muhajir* serves as a centripetal anchor for Iraqi men.’ The findings of these studies, along with the narratives of Susie and Irene, indicate that young Muslim asylum seekers are one particular group which the IWO can be of assistance to. Susie and Irene highlight a myriad of factors which influenced their use of and satisfaction with the IWO’s counselling service, and it is not possible to pinpoint an individual and exclusive ‘faith factor’ (von Furstenberg, 2006, p.39). The need for welfare services throughout Britain to accommodate for the needs of Muslim asylum seekers is increasing, given current UK policies regarding the dispersal of incoming asylum seekers across the country, ‘often to locations with far less ethnic diversity and with underprepared social welfare and health services’ (Summerfield, 2001, p.161).

Other Services

Although the majority of the qualitative data focuses upon the counselling service, there are some indicators towards the significance of other services provided at the IWO for their services users. This section will focus upon data relating to the advocacy, spiritual guidance and *khul* services. Feedback from individuals (Suleiman, Jamal and Khalida) accessing these three services has already been touched upon in Chapter 7. However, further elaboration about these services will now be given.

Advocacy

The analysis of the IWO’s database revealed higher numbers of services users aged 40 and over being referred for, and accessing, the Tranquility Project’s advocacy service. The chi-square tests indicated a greater number of individuals aged 56 and over being referred for reasons of advocacy ($X^2=68.03$, df^{24} , $p<0.001$) and a higher frequency of individuals aged 40 and over accessing the advocacy service ($X^2=22.39$, df^4 , $p<0.001$). In addition, less than half (47.8%, $n=44$) of service users accessing advocacy services at the IWO are recorded in the database as being able to speak English. The figures therefore indicate that the advocacy

service may be of particular utility to individuals aged 40 and over and to those who are unable to speak English. Three men aged between 40 and 55 (Simon, Anwar and Suleiman)⁴³, although all English speakers, gave extra comments about their experiences of accessing the advocacy service. Simon is a non-Muslim male who answered that he was ‘pleased’ with the service he had received when he contacted the IWO for help in relation to an Asian tenant in a house he rented out. He ‘agreed’ that the service had helped his well-being and described the organisation as ‘*a great interface between Muslims and non-Muslims*’ and as a ‘*very positive reflection of Islam.*’ Simon’s comments indicate that the IWO’s services may be of benefit to those outside of the Muslim community in helping them build effective relationships with Muslim individuals. Unlike Simon, however, Anwar and Suleiman’s experiences with the service were felt not to be as positive.

Anwar is a South Asian man who also required the IWO’s assistance in relation to a tenancy issue. However, he answered that he was ‘mostly dissatisfied’ with the service he had received and attributed this as being due to the failure of the organisation to communicate with him effectively. Similarly, for Suleiman, whose story is explored in Chapter 7, this issue of poor communication also contributed to his dissatisfaction with the advocacy service. Suleiman had sought help from the IWO in relation to the custody of his children who had been placed with non-Muslim foster carers by the local authority. Suleiman spoke about how staff members did not always phone him back when requested and he had to chase certain individuals. During his interview, Suleiman commented that:

‘In Islam it is a social crime if you do not respond to another human being, let alone, another Muslim’
(Suleiman)

Such a remark indicates the potential importance that Muslim service users, such as Suleiman, may attribute to effective communication. During interviews with some staff members, the issue of ensuring that robust systems were in place within the organisation was raised, alongside contextualising this issue in relation to the fact that the IWO is a small organisation only recently established. These comments from Anwar and Suleiman indicate a potential lack of resources and the impact that this has upon service users on a practical day-to-day level.

⁴³ Anwar and Simon completed their questionnaires via telephone but Suleiman participated in an interview.

The IWO database indicated that the service users accessing the advocacy service were seeking advice on issues primarily relating to tenancy and housing, immigration and asylum, as well as other concerns regarding ‘benefits’, ‘help with form filling’, ‘fraud’, ‘British citizenship’, and ‘advice regarding employment.’ It can be questioned to what extent such a service constitutes ‘Islamic’ advocacy and therefore what the potential role of a ‘faith factor’ may be in leading to service user satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Von Furstenberg, 2006, p.39). Suleiman’s comments in Chapter 7 highlighted how, when accessing the advocacy service, IWO members of staff had informed him that it was necessary to abide by the decision of the local authority in relation to the appropriate care for his Muslim children. Suleiman felt that such an outcome prioritised civil law over *Shariah* law and thus did not constitute an adequate response for an Islamic organisation. Furthermore, IWO advocate Leila described her everyday practices in Chapter 6, and distinguished between services at the IWO dealing with ‘*the advocacy side*’ and those provided by other IWO staff members focusing upon ‘*the spiritual side or the Islamic side.*’ As a result, any satisfaction with the advocacy service is perhaps less likely to be the result of any ‘faith factor’ (Von Furstenberg, 2006, p.39). As no Muslim interviewees spoke about a positive experience with the advocacy service it is not possible to elaborate upon these suppositions further.

Spiritual Guidance (Ruqyah)

An interview took place with one service user, Jamal, who had accessed the spiritual guidance service at the IWO. The analysis of the IWO database showed, rather unsurprisingly, that no service users were referred by statutory services for spiritual guidance ($X^2_{72.25}$, df^{12} , $p < 0.001$). However, referrers Batool and Nadia, working in the BME voluntary sector, had referred service users to the IWO for this (as discussed in Chapter 7), and Jamal had contacted the IWO himself after hearing about the organisation from a friend. Jamal is a young South Asian man whose wife had been experiencing fertility problems and so they both attended an appointment at the IWO to receive *ruqyah* treatment. On his completed satisfaction questionnaire Jamal stated that he was ‘pleased’ with the service received and ‘agreed’ that the service had helped his well-being. During the follow-up interview, Jamal was asked whether he’d had any reservations in approaching an Islamic service, and commented that ‘*it depends on whether I understand that it’s authentic or not.*’ When asked to elaborate upon this further, he explained that:

'There's beliefs that people call Islamic which necessarily aren't, which aren't necessarily Islamic, so it's establishing that. And on meeting Dr Rahman and talking to him, we were content that what he was suggesting and telling us was in accordance with the religion' (Jamal)

This focus upon Islamic authenticity as described by Jamal suggests that his satisfaction with the service may be underpinned by similar reasons to those voiced by counselling service user Hamida. Like Hamida, Jamal seemed to disregard the importance of culture within an Islamic service, commenting that *'it wasn't really a factor, the culture.'* Hamida's reasons for being satisfied with the IWO's counselling service are therefore potentially relevant in analysing the significance of other services offered by the Tranquility Project. The appeal of 'acultural' forms of *ruqyah* healing is proposed by Eneborg (2012, p.4) who argues that they may have greater resonance with younger British-born generations. Jamal's description of culture not really being a significant factor indicates that Eneborg's (2012) suggestions have some salience here.

When asked what potential difference he thought the IWO makes to the Muslim community, Jamal commented that *'it offers them good spiritual guidance and an understanding of their religion.'* Although Jamal does identify a 'spiritual' factor here, it arguably relates specifically to the practice of *ruqyah* healing which the IWO staff members called *'spiritual guidance.'* Similarly to Anwar and Suleiman, Jamal also commented on the difficulties he had experienced regarding efficient communication, noting that his experience with the organisation *'was positive except for having to chase up on a number of occasions unsuccessfully.'* Again, the issue of effective communication was raised, surfacing in accounts from individuals accessing a range of services.

Interestingly, Jamal mentioned that he and his wife were also accessing mainstream medical help for their infertility and had sought the help of the IWO as they felt it was *'complementary.'* As Jamal explained, *'the two aren't mutually exclusive so we felt that it's worth trying this as well.'* This co-usage of medical services, as well as treatment involving religious or spiritual healing practices, has also been identified in studies of contemporary British Muslim Bangladeshi populations by Dein *et al.* (2008), Eneborg (2012) and Rozario (2009). As Dein *et al.* (2008, p.42) comment, co-usage of these services occurs particularly in situations *'when western medicine is not perceived to be effective.'* Jamal's case suggests that it should not be assumed that IWO service users are not also co-users of statutory

services, but instead may be attempting to access several different avenues of help in order to resolve their emotional, social or medical problems. Such a trend has also been noted by Davie (2007, p.230-231) who discusses ‘the seeking of healer rather than, or as well as, a medical practitioner’ and the ‘de-differentiation’ of individuals in relation to religion, spirituality and well-being. The co-usage of services is therefore not a phenomenon occurring simply amongst Muslim communities in Britain but amongst other groups in society.

Khul

The chi-square tests run on the IWO database did not highlight any significant findings in relation to the *khul* service. However, two main points emerged from the qualitative data which indicated why the service may be significant for service users. Firstly, as mentioned in Chapter 7, the IWO *khul* service was felt to be one which acknowledges domestic violence as a legitimate reason for divorce, unlike some other institutions in the Muslim community. As referrer Batool commented:

‘I think some women have approached mosques and there have been times where maybe when there’s been mutual agreement they have obtained it from mosques. But our sort of situation in domestic violence situations where the husband is objecting to giving a divorce or to separating and the continuous harassment, I think that’s when the IWO comes in’ (Batool)

This was also expressed by BME project worker Samia whose service user Khalida had obtained a *khul* from the IWO. Samia pinpointed a second significant factor in commenting how difficult it had been to find a service offering a free *khul* as other Islamic councils and scholars whom she had approached had been charging significant sums of money.⁴⁴

However, two *khul* service users who completed their satisfaction survey via telephone noted reasons why they were dissatisfied with the service they had received from the IWO. Maryam is a women aged between 40 and 55 of ‘mixed’ ethnicity. She ‘agreed’ that the *khul* service had helped her well-being but overall felt ‘mixed’ about the service she had received as she too had experienced communication problems with the IWO. Tahira is a woman also aged between 40 and 55 and is of ‘Middle Eastern’ ethnicity. She selected ‘neither agree nor disagree’ in relation to whether the service had helped her well-being and overall was ‘mostly

⁴⁴ For example, the Islamic *Sharia* Council website (<http://www.islamic-sharia.org/>) notes a charge of £200 for a *talaq* and of £400 for a *khul*. In addition, Birmingham Central Mosque charges £250 for a *khul* (http://centralmosque.org.uk/downloads/652_Divorce-Procedure.pdf) [Both accessed 05/12/12]

dissatisfied' with the service that she had received. Tahira explained that her dissatisfaction was due to feeling that she had been given inaccurate information from the IWO about whether she needed to obtain a civil divorce as well as an Islamic divorce. A while after obtaining her *khul* from the IWO, Tahira discovered that she did in fact need a civil divorce after all, but by that point was unable to contact her estranged husband. Tahira's comments show it is important not only to bear in mind whether service users feel they have been given correct religious or spiritual advice from a faith-based organisation, but other types of important information, including legal advice, too. This scope for potential confusion is highlighted by Douglas *et al.*'s (2012, p.152) study of divorce procedures at three religious tribunals, including a *Shariah* Council, where the authors highlight how such a council 'may be purporting to lay down binding judgments for which they have no civil legal authority.' Whilst it not being suggested here that the IWO did make any claim to service users regarding having civil legal authority, the potential for confusion can nonetheless be noted.

Conclusion

The chapter identifies several sub-groups within the category of 'Muslim service user' who found the Tranquility Project services in some way beneficial and also pinpoints a range of overlapping themes which appear to cut across different services, ethnicities and genders. Muslim women (accessing counselling and *khul* services) and young Muslims asylum seekers constituted two particular populations which the qualitative and quantitative data identified as finding the services of particular utility, for a range of religious and cultural, as well as practical and financial, reasons.

Medical research, including a study by Gater *et al.* (2010, p.227) found that 'South Asian women living in the UK, particularly of Pakistani family origin, have a higher prevalence of depression, suicide and self-harm than White women.' Similarly, Chew-Graham *et al.*'s (2002) study identified social factors including *izzat*, racism, domestic violence and poverty which may contribute to higher rates of depression amongst South Asian women. It is potentially for some of these reasons that Muslim women may seek a service such as counselling offered by an organisation like the IWO. It is interesting to note that none of the female interviewees directly mentioned the issue of *izzat*, despite the subject of confidentiality being raised, although this may be due to the small sample size of participants taking part in the interviews. However, Bolognani and Mellor (2012) suggest that the construction of an Islam/culture binary may be linked to the desire of young Pakistani

Muslim women to counteract the pressures of *izzat* and it is possible that this was of salience to some interviewees despite it not being explicitly mentioned.

Cross-cutting themes regarding authenticity, being non-judgemental, as well as the importance of effective communication, emerged from individual accounts across the spectrum of services. The role and interplay of these multiple factors result in it being hard to pinpoint a specific ‘faith factor’ which service users found beneficial (Von Furstenberg, 2006, p. 39). It is important to note the variations between the accounts of individual service users. For example, Safia’s perceptions of the counselling service, which reported a negative experience of talking about *namaz* and *dhikr*, contrast those of Hamida and Aisha who seemed satisfied with the religious advice and guidance given. Despite these differences, and given the heterogeneity of the IWO service users indicated by the database analysis, it is argued that it is still meaningful to talk about Muslim service users as a distinct category. Hussain (2008, p.183) in particular advocates that ‘religious affiliation is an important measure for deprivation and disadvantage for Muslims’ despite high levels of intra-community ethnic, cultural and theological diversity.

The feedback from service users identified the importance of person-centred, non-proselytizing, confidential services, in line with the approach described by IWO staff members in Chapter 5. However, it is interesting to note how little the service users spoke about the importance of spirituality in contrast to the staff members. Again, it is possible that this is simply a result of the sampling, but it can also be argued that these Muslim service users did not distinguish between religion and spirituality in the same way as advocated within mainstream social work discourse (Scourfield *et al.*, 2013). It was proposed in Chapter 5 that the focus placed upon spirituality when talking about the IWO’s Islamic approach by some staff members (aside from the Director) may be partly a result of their absorption of mainstream social work discourse regarding appropriate ways to engage with religiosity in contemporary practice. In addition, it may be that staff members gave extra weight to the concept due to the influence of the Director’s Sufi beliefs, which were most likely not shared by the majority of their service users. Future research could focus upon exploring the salience of the concept of spirituality for Muslim service users in order to confirm or deny these tentative suggestions.

The limitations of the data presented here must be acknowledged, particularly the small number of interview participants and the relatively poor response rate of the service user satisfaction survey. However, the data are still valuable in raising important questions and in giving some insight into the perspectives of the IWO's diverse array of service users. Particular questions raised relate to the difficulty for an Islamic counsellor in sensitively applying a person-centred approach (given Safia's critique) and how an Islamic organisation may meet the needs both of Muslim service users and also work with statutory bodies (as in Suleiman's case). In addition, the professional challenge for small-scale organisations in offering effective communication to potentially vulnerable service users has also been identified. The University evaluation is on-going and the service user assessment tool has the potential to add further depth to the findings presented here.

To conclude, it is interesting to note Ahmad and Sheriff's (2001) argument, resulting from their study of women accessing the Muslim Women's Helpline. Ahmad and Sheriff (2001, p.8) propose that 'the fact that women themselves choose to seek support from an Islamically defined organisation instead of one that is ethnically focused suggested that a need for this form of service exists.' However, there are clearly multiple theoretical, practical and financial challenges for organisations such as the IWO to negotiate in continuing to do so.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This research was conducted due to a lack of empirical investigation exploring contemporary grassroots forms of social work emerging amongst Muslim communities in Britain. While earlier studies commented on the welfare needs and internal community support mechanisms of seafaring populations (Halliday, 2010, Lawless, 1995) and post-war migrants (Shaw, 1994, 2000, Werbner, 1990), such exploration was primarily through the lens of the racial and ethnic identities of these individuals, rather than religion. As third and fourth British-born generations are emerging, shifting affiliations indicate the centrality of religious identity in the lives of many young Muslims (Archer, 2001, Jacobson, 1998), and there is a need to consider the impact of this in the services being provided to these communities. This is particularly important given the critiques of Gray (2008) and Wong and Vinsky (2009) in relation to dominant definitions of spirituality within current social work literature, and their implications in relation to minority faith communities. It is argued that internal forms of community support are changing, given the emergence of professional Muslim youth work and Muslim chaplaincy in recent decades (Belton and Hamid, 2011, Gilliat-Ray, 2010a), and that the IWO also represents an example of this. Through a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, this thesis provides a contribution to addressing the current paucity of research on grassroots initiatives, by exploring the experiences of one Islamic welfare organisation, critically analysing their Islamic social work discourse, and exploring the potential impact for service users. It is the first in-depth multi-method study of a British Muslim welfare organisation. The thesis is therefore an original contribution in providing a sociological analysis of the Islamic approach to social work developed by one organisation within the emerging ‘Muslim voluntary sector’ in Britain (An-Nisa Society and Radical Middle Way, 2012, p.14). This conclusion will discuss three key areas in particular where the data contributes to contemporary academic discussions in the sociology of religion, social work and social policy.

Firstly, the thesis contributes to the sociological study of religion, particularly to the field of British Muslim studies. Documenting the emergence and development of the IWO adds to contemporary research analysing the professionalization of internal forms of community support by British Muslims, including work on Muslim chaplaincy (Gilliat-Ray 2010a, 2010b). This study is innovative in exploring the work of Islamic counsellors, community

chaplains and advocates, examining the everyday practices of these professionals, and documenting their significance for service users. Such an analysis builds on scholarly works exploring community infrastructure, development and levels of agency amongst British Muslims (Ansari, 2004, Gilliat-Ray, 2010a). The study highlights the professionalization of female care-giving roles, and provides empirical evidence for a transition from internal networks which were significant to new migrants, such as the *biradari* (Werbner, 1990, Shaw, 2000), to the emergence of professional welfare initiatives which prioritise religious, rather than ethnic, identities. The findings in Chapter 8 develop the insights of qualitative studies which evidence the salience of faith identities for young British Muslims (Basit, 1997, Dwyer 1999a, Dwyer, 1999b, Jacobson, 1998), by indicating how these identities may impact upon service provision, particularly within a counselling context. The data also indicate how new Muslim welfare professionals are negotiating contemporary issues of Islamic authenticity and authority, as identified by Bunt (2009), Peter (2006) and Mandaville (2001), in their everyday practices when providing welfare services to diverse groups of Muslim service users.

Exploring the construction, manifestation, contestation and significance of the IWO's Islamic social work discourse also contributes to contemporary sociological discussion regarding the role of religion in British society. Woodhead's (2012b) analysis of religion in the spheres of welfare and healthcare argues that 'reformation-style religion still appears to be the dominant mode of religion in welfare activities whereas life-path religion has taken over in relation to health and healing.' For Woodhead (2012b), this notion of 'reformation-style' or 'old style' religion describes religious activity often centred around medium-sized local organisations (which are located within a national structure), with a distinction drawn between priesthood and laity, and with a focus on creeds, canons, catechisms and liturgy. Alongside this, Woodhead (2012b) suggests a 'new style' of religion, or 'life-path' religion, has emerged which has become even more significant since the 1980s. This 'new style' is characterised as being much more focused upon the choices of the individual, gives great emphasis to spirituality, and is linked to a 'deregulation of religious goods' in which new forms of media have played a central role. It is argued the two styles do not exist in isolation but that 'the old style is often now transmuting into a new style', especially in the lives of young people (Woodhead, 2012b). The IWO's Islamic social work discourse appears to draw on 'old style' elements in its theoretical construction, utilising Islamic texts and scriptures in the psycho-spiritual model, and deriving authority from Dr Rahman's charisma and spiritual capital.

However, the centrality of the person-centred approach, focusing on the needs and choices of the individual service user, indicates the ability of the IWO staff to also engage with ‘new style’ religious identities in practice. The feedback in Chapter 8 highlights the significance several young Muslim service users gave to having the freedom to accept or reject religious guidance offered by the IWO counsellors. While the ‘old style mode of religion’ may be dominant in the sphere of welfare, this study of the IWO highlights how an ability to engage with ‘new style’ religious identities by faith-based providers may help ensure their services are relevant and significant.

The data analysed within this study also contribute to debates regarding secularization, which have been dominant within the sociology of religion for much of the twentieth century (Davie, 2007). It is argued that the development of an organisation such as the IWO is indicative of the re-emergence of religion as a significant category within the public sphere, or ‘de-differentiation’, particularly in relation to the provision of welfare services, with the increasing recognition that ‘modernity does not necessarily entail the disappearance of religion’ (Davie, 2007, p.224, Pettersson, 2011, p.15). The appearance of an organisation such as the IWO, with professional Islamic counsellors, highlights a new way in which religion is becoming significant within contemporary British society in the twenty-first century. The establishment of the IWO can be located as part of a broader trend, with the An-Nisa Society and Radical Middle Way (2012, p.14) commenting that ‘the emergence of Muslim voluntary sector organisations addressing health and social welfare has been a very new development.’

In line with Dinham (2012, p.9), however, it can be recognised that ‘post-secular religious faith emerges in a very different context’ in which there are challenges for faith-based groups to negotiate in securing their public legitimacy. A shift of emphasis at the Bridston Third Sector Conferences, from focusing on the unique and novel psycho-spiritual elements of the Islamic model in 2010 to highlighting the multicultural elements of the model in 2011, is indicative of their efforts to negotiate such challenges. Furthermore, the changing name of the organisation, from the Islamic Social Work Organisation, to the Islamic Welfare Organisation and finally to the *Inayat* Welfare Organisation, is also symbolic of this contested role. Bäckström and Davie (2011, p.154-155) highlight the challenges experienced by European churches where there is an increased demand for them to provide welfare services yet ‘the churches are themselves contracting’ in terms of resources, and ‘contractual arrangements

with local authorities' often lead to 'a reduced religious profile.' However, Pettersson (2011, p.31, 23) argues that whilst the churches are 'becoming increasingly like any other organisation within the voluntary sector', the majority churches are nonetheless a 'less controversial institution than those which represent a minority of the population' when providing services, as the majority churches are 'seen to belong to everyone, irrespective of religious involvement.' Following Pettersson's (2011) comments, it is argued that welfare provision emanating from some minority faith service providers may be subject to even greater challenges in attempting to accomplish recognition of their services as being acceptable and professional, even when they are not publicly funded.

It can be questioned whether there have been different experiences amongst minority faith groups in Britain. The literature review noted Harris's (1997, p.7) comments that the Jewish voluntary sector may struggle in 'maintaining a 'Jewish' character'; although she suggests the shrinking Jewish population in Britain as being a primary factor in this. Whether the Muslim voluntary sector experiences unique challenges in comparison to other faith groups in securing public recognition, acceptance and funding for the provision of welfare services is a key question within future research. Although the emergence of the IWO is suggested to contribute to counter arguments against the secularization process, the potential impact of institutional isomorphism cautions against making presumptions about such organisations' long term significance. As Cormode (1998, p.116) comments, 'the fact that churches and secular voluntary associations became more alike over time can either support or refute the secularization paradigm, depending on the point of view of the observer.' Evaluating the long term significance of these organisations and processes is an important area for future research.

Secondly, the findings within this thesis are of relevance to contemporary debates within the social work discipline regarding spirituality, particularly in informing critiques relating to dominant discourses of spirituality within current literature. The data showed a focus on theistic definitions of spirituality for many of the Tranquility Project staff, with the Director defining spirituality as '*the connection with the divine and the effect on everyday life.*' Furthermore, the influence of Sufi notions of self-purification and of the *ruh* was shown as being central to the spiritual component of the IWO's psycho-spiritual model. The Tranquility Project staff did not appear to distinguish between religion and spirituality in the dichotomous style of some contemporary social work texts. Where Helping Hands project

staff did make a distinction between the Islamic aspect of the services, and the religious and pastoral elements, the potential influence of mainstream attitudes within social work regarding spirituality and religion was considered as being a factor underpinning this. The theistic definitions of spirituality advocated by several IWO staff members, including the Director, suggest that the 'spirituality- religion binary' described by Henery (2003, p.1109) within current literature may be particularly problematic in relation to social work with Muslim communities.

In line with this, it is interesting to note that none of the Muslim service users who participated in the research spoke about the significance of spirituality in relation to their satisfaction with the IWO's services, except in relation specifically to *ruqyah* as '*spiritual guidance*', but instead several of them focused on the importance of authentic Islamic knowledge and guidance. This may also indicate that, as Scourfield *et al.* (2013) argue, Muslim service users do not distinguish between religion and spirituality in the same way that some social work texts do. There is clearly a need for a reassessment of the dominant concepts of religion and spirituality prevalent within mainstream social work, particularly in addressing social work with minority faith communities. These challenges relating to spirituality are also the source of larger theoretical and practical issues for social workers in dealing with beliefs surrounding spiritual illnesses and *ruqyah* healing. The thesis highlighted that such beliefs and practices present a theoretical challenge in testing the extent to which the profession of social work may engage with religion and spirituality, as well as a challenge in how to respond to these issues in practice. Whether offering *ruqyah* treatment remains a sustainable practice for professional Muslim voluntary sector organisations is an insightful topic for future research, particularly given the potential impact of institutional isomorphism within the sector.

Thirdly, the suggestion that the IWO is a comparatively unique organisation in comparison to other institutions in Bridston, particularly due to the Director's spiritual capital and charisma, has implications for whether the organisation and its services are potentially replicable within other towns and cities to offer welfare support for wider Muslim communities. The data analysed within the thesis highlighted that the practice of Islamic counselling differs in relation to the varying skills, training and competencies of different practitioners (Dharamsi and Maynard, 2012). Furthermore, the database analysis indicated the heterogeneity of the Tranquility Project service users, for whom a service offering multiple theological opinions is

arguably particularly relevant. It is possible that in other UK towns and cities with Muslim populations composed of different ethnic groups, or of individuals adhering to other theological affiliations (for example Shia Islam or *Salafism*), that the models of service provision developed by the IWO may be of lesser relevance in offering appropriate support. The IWO's approaches to *hizanat* and *khul* were also highlighted as celebrated by some, yet critiqued by others, which may impact upon broader levels of acceptance and engagement with their model.

In light of these findings, it is questioned whether one model of Islamic social work alone will be able to accommodate for the diversity of, and different perspectives within, British Muslim communities, in providing a relevant response to service provision. Whether other British Muslim communities have the agency, resources and capital to develop such organisations is also a key issue. Pettersson (2011, p.50) suggests that faith-based provision often 'depends to a huge extent on particular individuals' and there is evidence to support this in this data relating to the Bridston Muslim community. Following this, there are clear implications for policy perspectives on faith communities as service providers. Dinham (2010, p.526) argues that faith communities should not be viewed uncritically as 'repositories of resources' but that there is a need to recognise levels of diversity and heterogeneity amongst different groups. This study provides further evidences for this and highlights some of the challenges which policy makers must overcome in order to effectively engage with organisations within the Muslim voluntary sector.

In relation to potentially exporting the IWO model to other countries with Muslim minority populations, there are several factors to consider. Muslim populations in France and Germany can be highlighted as experiencing varying welfare issues, composed of different ethnic groups, with diverse migration histories and levels of community development and agency (Fetzer and Soper, 2005). Furthermore, Islamic religious professionals within France and Germany may subscribe to different theological affiliations and will likely have undergone a variety of types of scholarly training, in contrast to the prominence of *Deobandi* educational institutes in Britain (Geaves, 2012, Gilliat-Ray, 2006). In addition, these countries vary in their attitudes towards the public visibility of religion, for example the policy of *laïcité* in France, with differing relationships between Church and State, which may impact upon the public role and acceptability of religion in society (Kastoryano, 2006). Borrell and Gerdner's (2011, p.968) study of 'hidden voluntary social work' amongst Muslim congregations in

Sweden noted that much of this work was carried out by migrants with low levels of educational attainment, rather than salaried professionals, suggesting that these communities may not have the capacity or capital to develop organisational infrastructure similar to that of the IWO based in Britain. Outside Europe, the United States can also be highlighted as having a Muslim population with a different socio-economic and ethnic profile (Haniff, 2003), which may impact upon the relevance and significance of the IWO's model. However, Harris *et al.* (2003, p.97) suggest that 'the scope for transferring welfare responsibilities to faith-based organisations' is 'far greater in the United States than in the UK', particularly as a result of the Charitable Choice initiative which emerged in 2001 under the presidency of George Bush (Boddie and Cnaan, 2006, Davis, 2011). It would be fruitful for future research to explore the experiences of faith-based organisations developed by Muslim communities in both Britain and the United States to analyse this claim.

Finally, there are several key areas related to the questions analysed within this thesis which would benefit from future empirical enquiry. This study has provided an in-depth exploration of one Islamic welfare organisation and it would be pertinent to explore the experiences of other similar organisations in order to evaluate the generalizability of the thesis findings. To date, there is limited statistical data relating to the number of organisations such as the IWO and there is a clear need to 'map what Muslim voluntary organisations exist and what they are already doing' (An-Nisa Society and Radical Middle Way, 2012, p.22). Future longitudinal research could also explore the opportunities and challenges faced by Muslim voluntary sector organisations in the face of changing political circumstances. Jawad (2012, p.121) notes the impact of the Blair government upon social policy regarding religious groups in British society, and suggests that the present Coalition government 'is offering opportunities for religious organisations to access government funding' in England through its Big Society initiative. What the overall impact of this initiative is for Muslim voluntary sector organisations, in terms of their expansion and professionalization, would constitute an insightful study. In addition, the role of such organisations in promoting or inhibiting integration could also be analysed, to build on Borrell and Gerdner's (2011, p.978) finding that Muslim congregations in Sweden providing voluntary social work services 'are those that are most interested in co-operation with the majority society.' The impact of the Muslim voluntary sector for British Muslim communities themselves, particularly for Muslim service users, would also be valuable to analyse. Overall, there is a clear need for further enquiry to

explore the changing landscape of service provision for Muslim communities in contemporary Britain.

Glossary⁴⁵

Adab

Proper conduct and etiquette

Adhan

Ritual call to prayer

Alhamdu Lillah

Praise be to God. Used in everyday speech as expression of thanks and praise for something good that has happened

Ansar

Companions or supporters. The term applied to people of Medina who supported Muhammad after the *hijrah*

Aql

Intelligence. In Islamic theology, natural human knowledge. In philosophy, the intellect. In jurisprudence, reason as source for *Shariah*

Ayat

Usually translated as “verse” or “sign.” Refers to divisions within *surahs* (chapters) of the Quran

Biradari

Family, clan-like, connections

Bismillah

In the name of God. First word in opening chapter of the Quran. Generally also the first phrase taught in Quran recitation and in Quranic schools. Use is shorthand for the full opening chapter of the Quran

Dar al-Ulum

House of knowledge and learning; religious seminary; school

Darar

Legal term meaning harm, prejudice, or cruelty. In marriage, *darar* may be grounds for divorce

Dawah

Call. God's way of bringing believers to faith and the means by which prophets call individuals and communities back to God

⁴⁵ All entries here are extracted from Esposito's (2003) *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* accessed via Oxford Islamic Studies Online, except for entries on *Biradari* and *Dar al-Ulum* from Ansari (2004, p.xi); entry on *Hizanat* from Ebrahimi (2005, p. 463); entry on *Inayat* from Milton Cowan (1979, p. 762) and Baalbaki and Baalbaki (2009, p.187); entry on *Istinja* from Sheikh and Gatrad (2000, p.28); entry on *Jasad* from Bashir (2011, p.34); entries on *Muhajirun*, *Nikah* and *Talaq* from Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine (2007, p. 42, 104, 116); entry on *Niqab* from Shirazi and Mishra (2010, p.44); entry on *Ruqyah* from Philips (2007, p.128-131) and Eneborg (2012, p.1).

Deobandis

Indo-Pakistani reformist *ulama* movement centered in the *Dar al-Ulum* of Deoband. The school was founded (1867) by scholars associated with the thought of Sayyid Ahmad Reza Khan Bareilwi to preserve the teachings of the faith during non-Muslim rule. The school emphasized *Hadith* and the *Hanafi* legal tradition, and encouraged spiritual transformation through “sober” Sufis

Dhikr

Remembering or reminding. In Islamic devotional practice, it represents the ways of reminding oneself of God, based on Quranic injunctions such as “O you who believe, remember Allah with frequent *dhikr*” (33:41). In Sufi devotions, the term is used both for the regular activity of remembrance and for the litanies and prayers involved in the acts of remembering

Din

Way of life for which humans will be held accountable and recompensed accordingly on the Day of Judgment. The word is the root of the Arabic term for “habit,” “way,” “account,” “obedience,” “judgment,” and “reward” and is very often translated as “religion.” *Din* encompasses beliefs, thought, character, behavior and deeds

Dua

An appeal or invocation; usually refers to supplicatory prayers in Islam

Fiqh

Conceptually, the human attempt to understand divine law (*Shariah*). Whereas *Shariah* is immutable and infallible, *fiqh* is fallible and changeable

Fitra

According to the Quran, the original state in which humans are created by God. The concept of *fitra* was commonly invoked by Sufis, who often viewed their own quest as the means for restoring the original harmony of creation

Hadith

Report of the words and deeds of Muhammad and other early Muslims; considered an authoritative source of revelation, second only to the Quran (sometimes referred to as sayings of the Prophet). Hadith were collected, transmitted, and taught orally for two centuries after Muhammad's death and then began to be collected in written form and codified. The six most authoritative collections are those of Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Daud Al-Sijistani, Al-Nasai, and Al-Qazwini

Hajj

The annual pilgrimage to Mecca during the month of *Dhu al-Hijjah*

Hakim

(1) A generic term indicating a ruler, sovereign, or governor. (2) One with profound understanding of the divine guidance for human life and perspicacity born from knowledge and experience and characterized by the undertaking of good deeds; one whose pronouncements are consistent with the truth. Also a traditional physician, theosophist, or philosopher

Halal

Quranic term used to indicate what is lawful or permitted

Halaqa

Circle. In general, refers to a group of students studying under a particular professor. In Sufism, refers to the circle formed around a spiritual leader, and to the circle of students or devotees adhering to a specific course of study or set of rituals

Hanafi (School of Law)

Islamic school of legal thought (*madhhab*) whose origins are attributed to Abu Hanifah in Kufa, Iraq, in the eighth century

Hanbali (School of Law)

Islamic school of legal thought (*madhhab*) whose origins are attributed to Ahmad ibn Hanbal in ninth-century Baghdad

Haram

Legal term for what is forbidden or inviolable under Islamic law

Hijab

Traditional Muslim women's head, face, or body covering, of numerous varieties across time and space, often referred to as the "veil"

Hijrah

Migration or withdrawal. Typically refers to the migration of Muhammad and his Companions from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E., the first year in the Islamic calendar

Hizanat

Custodianship. Means to maintain, supervise and take custody and care of someone. In its legal context, *hizanat* requires parents and other legal custodians to take care of the material and spiritual needs of the child. The concept of *hizanat* is similar to the concept of custody in Western law. In Western law, however, custody includes not only the control and protection of the physical and psychological affairs of a child, but also control and protection of a child's assets and administration of the child's financial affairs

Honour

Arabic *sharaf*, *ird*, *ihiram*, *izzat*, or *namus*. Culturally understood as a sign of God's pleasure and part of one's Muslim identity. May be displayed through ownership of land and resources, family solidarity, the chastity of women, and the personal characteristics of courage, generosity, hospitality, independence, wisdom, honesty, self-control, actions guided by reason, disinclination to conflict, avoidance of degradation of others, mastery of culture, and verbal skill, particularly in poetry recitation

Iblis [See *Shaytan*]

Ijtihad

Islamic legal term meaning "independent reasoning," as opposed to *taqlid* (imitation). One of four sources of Sunni law. Utilized where the Quran and *Sunnah* (the first two

sources) are silent. It requires a thorough knowledge of theology, revealed texts, and legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*); a sophisticated capacity for legal reasoning; and a thorough knowledge of Arabic

Imam

One who stands in front; a role model for the Muslim community in all its spiritual and secular undertakings. The title is used interchangeably with the word *khalifah* for the political head of the Sunni Muslim state. In legal writings the term is applied to the leader of the congregational prayers in the mosque. Historically, Muslim rulers used to appoint the imam for the official function of leading the Friday services in the main mosque of capital cities. Sunni Muslims use the title for their prominent jurists, who are also regarded as the founders of their legal schools, such as Abu Hanifah and Shafii. In Shii Islam the imam is the divinely appointed successor of Muhammad and is regarded as infallible, with the ability to make binding decisions in all areas of human activity. In Twelver Shiism, following the disappearance of the twelfth and last imam, the jurists (*fuqaha*) have assumed the title imam

Iman

Faith or belief. Assumes belief in the oneness of God, angels, prophets, revealed books, and the hereafter. Faith is a matter of free choice in Islam but is also considered a gift from God; no one is to be compelled to believe. The Quran establishes the close connection between faith and action, so that true faith manifests itself in right conduct

Inayat

Care, Concern. From the verb to take care of, to feel concern.

Insh Allah

If God wills. Used in statements of what one hopes will happen in the future. Common phrase in everyday speech

Istinja

Use of running water to wash the genitals and anus after urination or evacuation.

Izzat [See Honour]

Jasad

Body

Jinn

Creatures known in popular belief in pre-Islamic Arabia and mentioned numerous times in the Quran, parallel to human beings but made out of fire rather than clay. Believed to be both less virtuous and less physical than humans, but like humans, endowed with the ability to choose between good and evil. In folk religion, *jinn* are spirits invoked for magical purposes and are often held responsible for miraculous or unusual events and for a wide range of illnesses, which are popularly believed to be caused by an imbalance between internal and external *jinn*. Healers often speak directly to *jinn* prior to driving them out of patients

Khanaqah

Persian. Place where the meal cloth is spread. Term for Sufi meetinghouse

Khul

Removal. Usually refers to a divorce procedure under Islamic law whereby a woman may obtain a divorce without showing cause by returning her dowry or conceding other financial obligations to her husband. This divorce procedure is initiated by the wife and is usually not revocable within the waiting period (*iddah*) prescribed for women before remarriage is allowed. Muslim legal sources disagree as to whether the consent of the husband is necessary for this procedure to take effect

Khutbah

Sermon or speech given by an imam during the Friday midday service at the mosque and on the occasion of the two major festivals (*Id al-Adha* and *Id al-Fitr*)

Kitab

In early Arabic, something written; soon thereafter, book

Madhab

School of legal thought

Madrasa

Establishment of learning where the Islamic sciences are taught

Maliki (School of Law)

School of law attributed to Malik ibn Anas Al-Asbahi in the eighth century in the Arabian Peninsula

Muhajir [See *Muhajirun*]**Muhajirun**

Emigrants. Companions of Muhammad who followed him when he left Mecca to go to Yathrib/Medina and who became, with the *Ansar* ("helpers"), members of a new community. They included members of Muhammad's family, members of the *Quraysh* tribe and ordinary people

Mujtahid

One who exercises independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) in the interpretation of Islamic law

Murid

One who desires. Disciple or aspirant in Sufi order who submits to the direction, authority, and guidance of the *murshid* (Sufi master). Initiation into the order requires the *murid* to surrender his or her will to that of the *murshid*

Murshid

One who guides (Persian *pir*, "old man" or "respected elder"). Sufi master responsible for guiding and directing novices and disciples toward mystical knowledge of God through specified "way" or "path." Often bases decisions on interpretation of dreams and visions. Bestows practices, liturgy, formulas, and symbols of order on novices in the same manner in which he received them, preserving continuity of the order in the name of the original master. The *murshid's* name is listed in the *silsilah* (roster) of the order to verify that the transmittance is genuine and to trace the order back to the founder

Nafs

Self or soul. Used in the Quran as a general designation for the self or true self; interpreted as the spiritual reality of all living creatures. In philosophy, the specifically human *nafs* is often described as the potential to actualize the fullness of self-awareness, often equated with the intellect (*aql*). In Sufism, often described as the “lower self,” associated with physical rather than spiritual impulses, by contrast to *ruh*, understood as the “soul” or “higher self.” Often understood primarily in a negative sense

Namaz [See *Salat*]

Nikah

Marriage. Based on a contract drawn up before two witnesses... The ceremony has no special religious ceremony but it is “recommended” that verses from the Qur’an be recited that day

Niqab

Face veil. Politicians and religious authorities in various countries have held widely different positions on the *niqab*. Islamic religious authorities, depending on the specific school of thought they follow, have major differences on this particular issue.

Purdah [See *Seclusion*]

Qalb

Heart. Central concept of Sufi epistemology and psychology, based on frequent Quranic references to it as an intuitive faculty by which the inner reality of things is perceived. Sufis consider *qalb* superior to logical reasoning in grasping the divine mysteries

Qiblah

Direction Muslims face during prayer (toward the *Kaaba* in Mecca)

Quran

The book of Islamic revelation; scripture. The term means “recitation.” The Quran is believed to be the word of God transmitted through the Prophet Muhammad

Rasul

Messenger (of God). One of two Quranic terms to refer to Muhammad and other prophets. The other is *nabi*, usually translated as “prophet.”

Ruh

Spirit, breath (of life). Used in the Quran twenty-one times, referring to the divine spirit in the sense of communication of life force. Often interpreted as an immaterial, immortal element of a living being, as well as the true self, or soul, apart from the body. Also a designation for Jesus and the angel Gabriel. Often used interchangeably with *nafs* (self), although Sufis distinguish between *ruh* as the higher principle of soul and *nafs* as the “lower” or “animal” self

Ruqyah

Recited formulas used during exorcism are collectively referred to in Arabic as *ruqa* (s. *ruqyah*) which is derived from the verb *raqa/yarqi* meaning ‘to charm someone by

involving Allah.’ *Ruqyah* is ‘a charm or spell, either uttered or written, by which a person having an evil affliction, such as fever and epilepsy etc., is charmed. Argued by some Islamic scholars to be legitimate according to Islamic law only when using Allah’s words [i.e., the Quran], names or attributes, in [comprehensible] Arabic or intelligible words in another language. Also that those taking part must believe the incantation cannot have independent effect, but it is Allah who causes it to have effect. The term *ruqyah shariah* can also be used to refer to ‘lawful incantation.’

Sadaqah

Charity, alms, freely made offering

Salaam(u) Alaykum(u), al-

Peace be upon you. Used by Muslims as a greeting. Response is “*wa-alaykum al-salaam*” (peace be upon you also). Hadith portray use of the greeting as a good work

Salafi

Name (derived from *salaf*, “pious ancestors”) given to a reform movement led by Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh at the turn of the twentieth century. Emphasized restoration of Islamic doctrines to pure form, adherence to the Quran and *Sunnah*, rejection of the authority of later interpretations, and maintenance of the unity of *ummah*. Prime objectives were to rid the Muslim *ummah* of the centuries-long mentality of *taqlid* (unquestioning imitation of precedent) and stagnation and to reform the moral, cultural, and political conditions of Muslims.

Salat

Prayer, worship (Persian *namaz*). The second pillar of Islam is the prayers required of Muslims five times daily: daybreak (*salat al-fajr*), noon (*salat al-duhr*), midafternoon (*salat al-asr*), sunset (*salat al-maghreb*), and evening (*salat al-isha*).

Seclusion

Term referring to various practices designed to protect women from men in traditional Muslim societies, including confining women to the company of other women and close male relatives in their home or in separate female living quarters, veiling, self-effacing mannerisms, and the separation of men and women in public places. These practices reflect both social and religious custom

Shafii (School of Law)

School of Islamic law founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ibn Al-Abbas ibn Uthman ibn Shafii in the eighth century.

Shariah

God's eternal and immutable will for humanity, as expressed in the *Quran* and Muhammad's example (*Sunnah*), considered binding for all believers; ideal Islamic law. The Quran contains only about ninety verses directly and specifically addressing questions of law. Islamic legal discourse refers to these verses as God's law and incorporates them into legal codes. The remainder of Islamic law is the result of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), human efforts to codify Islamic norms in practical terms and legislate for cases not specifically dealt with in the Quran and *Sunnah*. Although human-generated legislation is considered fallible and open to revision, the term *Shariah* is sometimes applied to all Islamic legislation

Shaykh

A pre-Islamic honorific title. Meaning embraces concepts such as “leader,” “patriarch,” “notable,” “elder,” “chief,” and “counselor.” The term “*shaykh al-din*” has been applied to men who possess scriptural learning

Shaytan

Devil. The Arabic term *shaytan* means “adversary.” Used in the Quran in both the singular and the plural, often interchangeably with *Iblis* (considered to be a particular satan), the disobedient angel ejected from heaven for disobeying God

Silsilah

Formal chain of spiritual descent in Islamic mysticism (Sufism); the process of transmission of ritual from original teacher to students. The origin is usually traced from Muhammad through the founder of the order to the present student

Subhan Allah

Praise be to God. An expression similar to *hallelujah*

Sufism

Islamic mysticism, often referred to as the internalization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice. Sufis strive to constantly be aware of God's presence, stressing contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism, and cultivation of the soul over social interaction. In contrast to the academic exercises of theology and jurisprudence, which depend on reason, Sufism depends on emotion and imagination in the divine-human relationship

Sunnah

Established custom, normative precedent, conduct, and cumulative tradition, typically based on Muhammad's example. The actions and sayings of Muhammad are believed to complement the divinely revealed message of the Quran, constituting a source for establishing norms for Muslim conduct and making it a primary source of Islamic law. In the legal field, *Sunnah* complements and stands alongside the Quran, giving precision to its precepts

Surah

Usually translated as “chapter.” The Quran is divided into 114 *surahs*, arranged by descending length rather than chronological order. These were divided by early commentators into the Meccan and Medinan periods of Muhammad's ministry

Talaq

One form of Islamic divorce involving unilateral repudiation of the wife by the husband

Tariqah

Path or way; Sufi order or spiritual regimen of specific teacher or master, including devotional practices, recitations, and literature of piety. Also refers to the Sufi order as a social organization that can extend across several regions

Tasawwuf [See Sufism]

Tibb al-Nabawi, al-

Religious traditional medicine focusing on Muhammad 's practices. Early collections discuss a wide range of subjects, ranging from the curative power of honey to the medical properties of wolf's gall, whether or not one should flee from plague or use passages from the *Quran* as charms, and whether ritually unclean or forbidden substances are allowed if they could restore health. Incorporates natural/herbal and faith/magical remedies, and ethical and moral. In modern times, the medicine of the Prophet has enjoyed great popularity and engendered discussions of medicine from an Islamic perspective

Ulama [Sunni]

Men of knowledge (sing., *alim*). Refers to those who have been trained in religious sciences (*Quran*, *Hadith*, *fiqh*, etc.).

Ummah

Muslim community. A fundamental concept in Islam, expressing the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings. In the *Quran*, designates people to whom God has sent a prophet or people who are objects of a divine plan of salvation.

Wahhabi

Eighteenth-century reformist/revivalist movement for sociomoral reconstruction of society. Founded by Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, a Hanbali scholar, in Arabia. Proclaimed *tawhid* (uniqueness and unity of God) as its primary doctrine. Began in response to the perceived moral decline and political weakness of the Muslim community in Arabia. Proposed a return to an idealized Islamic past through reassertion of monotheism and reliance on *Quran* and *Hadith*, rejecting medieval interpretations of Islam and jurisprudence.

Wudu

Obligatory cleansing rituals performed in order to render the believer ritually pure. Required prior to prayer for both men and women. Consists of washing the hands, mouth, face, arms up to the elbows, and feet. Water is usually poured over the top of the head as well.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule of 35 Interviewees

Appendix Table 1.1: Schedule of 35 Interviewees

Category	Name	Type
IWO Staff Member	Dr Rahman	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Soraya	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Marwa	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Zahra	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Leila	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Hamza	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Robina	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Dr Malik	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Zainab	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Yusuf	Face-to-face
IWO Staff Member	Dr Quraishi	Telephone
IWO Staff Member	Nadim	Face-to-face
IWO Advisor	Dr Rahman's Shaykh	Face-to-face
IWO Referrer/BME Voluntary Sector Worker	Nadia	Face-to-face
IWO Referrer/Statutory Services Worker	Irene	Telephone
IWO Referrer/Statutory Services Worker	Jenny	Telephone
IWO Referrer/BME Voluntary Sector Worker	Shabnam	Telephone
IWO Referrer/Voluntary Sector Worker	Darren	Telephone
IWO Referrer/BME Voluntary Sector Worker	Batool	Telephone
IWO Referrer/Voluntary Sector Worker	Bushra	Telephone
IWO Referrer/Statutory Services Worker	Daniel	Telephone

IWO Referrer/Statutory Services Worker	Sally	Telephone
IWO Service User	Suleiman	Telephone
IWO Service User	Hamida	Telephone
IWO Service User	Aisha	Face-to-face
IWO Service User	Jamal	Telephone
IWO Service User	Ahmed	Telephone
IWO Service User	Susie	Telephone
IWO Service User	Khalida/Samia	Telephone
IWO Service User	Hassan	Telephone
IWO Volunteer	Syed	Face-to-face
IWO Volunteer	Yafiah	Face-to-face
IWO Volunteer	Yasser	Face-to-face
IWO Volunteer	Hafsa	Face-to-face
IWO Volunteer	Asma	Face-to-face

Appendix 2: Letter sent to the Director in June 2010

Dear Dr Rahman,

I hope you are well. Following our meeting on March 9th I have been developing a literature review and discussing potential research questions with my PhD supervisors. So far, there are two core working themes which I would like to suggest:

1. What type of Islamic social work is offered by the IWO?

- What Islamic model is the organisation based upon?
- What are the Islamic models of each service? (E.g. Islamic Counselling model)
- How do the services vary in their Islamic identity?
- How does the IWO respond to problems relating to jinn and black magic?

2. How is Islamic social work perceived to be significant for Muslim clients?

- Which sections of the Muslim community predominantly access the IWO's services?
- Which services are accessed most frequently and why?
- What influences lead people to choosing the IWO's services? (E.g. mental health difficulties, problems with jinn, seeking Islamic Counselling)
- Why is a distinctively Islamic service felt to be important for clients?

To answer the first question, a combination of interview and observation methods could be utilised. This could involve observing the day-to-day running of the organisation, conducting interviews and participating in volunteer training sessions. To answer the second question, a quantitative survey could be developed in collaboration with IWO staff and distributed to clients, potentially with follow-up client interviews. This would occur after initial qualitative fieldwork had begun.

I hope these ideas would produce research which would benefit the IWO and I would be very grateful to hear any suggestions for improvement you may have by e-mail, phone or at your office. If my ideas are suitable, I would very much like to attend a staff meeting to discuss the research with the rest of the IWO team and to hopefully begin moving forward to the next stage of research. I would welcome any advice you have about how to introduce the proposed research to staff and volunteers to ensure that any concerns about the project may be addressed. I will be in contact shortly, please do not hesitate to contact me in the meantime if you would like to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely,

Roz Warden

E-mail: WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk Phone: 0*****

Appendix 3: Interview Questions for IWO Staff Members

Pre-interview

- Reminder of the nature of the research project/evaluation
- Ensure information sheet has been read.
- Explain procedure: Will last up to one hour, with permission will be recorded, interviewee may withdraw at any time and ask if the interviewee has any questions.
- Explain that the recording will be typed up (transcript) and names will be changed to keep it private. Interviewee has the right to view the transcript afterwards if they wish.
- Would you like to choose a pseudonym?
- Sign consent form, ensure mobile phones off and establish willingness to continue.

Staff Background and Biography

1. How did you first become involved with the IWO?
2. What interested you in working at the IWO?
3. Why were you interested in working at the IWO rather than other organisations?
4. What do you think lead you towards your career path?
5. What qualifications and training have you achieved?
6. Which skills gained from these qualifications/training are most important in your everyday work at the IWO?

Working at the IWO

7. What are the main tasks and responsibilities in your job?
8. What does a typical day working at the IWO involve for you?
9. Has this changed as the IWO has expanded? (How?)
10. Do you feel part of a team? (If not, why do you feel this is?)
11. How does Islam influence or shape your everyday activities in your job? Specifically?
--- Probe for examples
12. Are there key Islamic activities, rituals or practices which you incorporate into your work?
13. What changes over Eid/Ramadan? Celebrations?
--- Probe for memories/highlights

The Islamic Ethos/Model

14. What do you think are the main characteristics of the Islamic ethos underpinning the IWO?
15. Which Islamic aspects are particularly important? (I.e. in social work)
--- Probe for stories/examples
16. How did you learn about the Islamic ethos/model of the IWO? (Staff training?)
17. Who do you think influences the Islamic element of the IWO?
18. Does the (Director's) Islamic model behind the IWO influences on your work?
19. More generally, how does the Islamic model behind the IWO influence the running of the organisation?
20. Why do think it is important for service users that you acknowledge their faith background?
--- Probe for examples
21. Are there ever challenges and opportunities in using this Islamic approach?
--- Probe for stories

22. To what extent have you ever experienced tension between the Islamic approach and statutory requirements/policy?
23. Do you think the name change has changed else anything about the IWO? (E.g. services, self-understanding)

Responses to the IWO

24. How is the IWO different from other welfare organisations which serve the Muslim community?
25. How is your work different from that of other figures and organisations in the Muslim community? (E.g. Imams, mosques).
26. How do other agencies in the community respond to the IWO? (Both statutory/voluntary/non-Muslim).
27. Are there any agencies you work particularly closely with or would like to work more closely with?
28. Are there any agencies which you've struggled to make links with?

Reflections/The Future

29. The IWO seems to have developed significantly since it began. What do you think has helped the IWO expand so significantly?
30. What have been the defining events in the life of the organisation so far?
--- Probe for examples
31. What further plans does the IWO have to expand?
32. What are the main priorities for the IWO now and in the future?

Appendix 4: Interview Questions for IWO Referring Agencies

Pre-interview:

- Brief introduction to research project/evaluation.
- Ensure information sheet has been read.
- Explain procedure: Will last around up to one hour, with permission will be recorded, interviewee may withdraw at any time and ask if the interviewee has any questions.
- Explain that the recording will be typed up (transcript) and names will be changed to keep it private. Interviewee has the right to view the transcript afterwards if they wish.
- Sign consent form, ensure mobile phones off and establish willingness to continue.

Initial Questions

1. Could you briefly describe your organisation and the services it provides?
(Probe: How long has the organisation existed? Number of staff/service users?)
2. How did you first hear about the IWO?
3. Have you been to the office and met the staff or have the referrals been simply by phone/e-mail?
4. Which of the staff at IWO have you had contact with?
5. Is there a particular staff member you contact most often (and why)?

Service User Referrals

6. Roughly how many service users have you referred to the IWO?
7. Age/gender/ethnicity of those service users referred?
8. Which particular services do you often refer service users to the IWO for and why?
9. Can you give me an example of a service user you decided to refer to the IWO? What problem did they have and what service did you refer them for?
10. Are there particularly common problems or issues that service users are dealing with which make you decide to refer them to the IWO?
(Probe: Can you give some examples/stories relating to these?)
11. Why do you think that the IWO is able to meet the needs of those individuals?
(Probe: For particular cultural or religious reasons?)

Experiences with the IWO

12. How would you describe your experiences of working with the IWO?
(Probe: Largely positive or negative?)
13. Do you think they have any particular strengths or weaknesses?
14. Why do you think that the IWO is particularly equipped to deal with the needs of the Muslim community?
15. How do you think the IWO fits in to the local voluntary BME sector?
16. Has your organisation learnt anything in particular from the IWO which has influenced how you work with Muslim service users?
17. How well known is the IWO amongst your team or organisation?
18. Did you attend the Bridston Third Sector conference?
(Probe: If so, how did you find it?)
19. Any final comments or feedback?

Appendix 5: Interview Questions for IWO Volunteers

Pre-interview:

- Brief introduction to research project/evaluation
- Ensure information sheet has been read.
- Explain procedure: Will last up to one hour, with permission will be recorded, interviewee may withdraw at any time and ask if the interviewee has any questions.
- Explain that the recording will be typed up (transcript) and names will be changed to keep it private. Interviewee has the right to view the transcript afterwards if they wish.
- Sign consent form, ensure mobile phones off and establish willingness to continue.

Background information

1. How did you first hear about the IWO?
2. Had you volunteered before you started volunteering at the IWO?
(Probe: If so, which organisation? What sort of volunteering?)
3. Why were you interested in volunteering with the IWO?
(Probe: Religious/cultural reason?)
4. Is there a reason you were interested in volunteering for the IWO and not other organisations?
(Probe: religious/cultural reason?)
5. Which service do you volunteer with?
(Probe: chaplaincy, befriending, mentoring, advocacy?)
6. Why did you choose to volunteer in that area?
(Probe: Was there a particular reason that attracted you to it?)
7. Do you work with the same service user regularly?
(Probe: If so, why do you think you were you matched with that client?)

Experiences of volunteering

8. What does a typical volunteering session involve for you?
(Probe: What activities do you do with/for the service users?)
(Probe: Can you tell me what happens during a normal meeting with a service user?)
9. What do you enjoy most about the volunteering?
(Probe: What do you find particularly rewarding?)
10. What kind of personal skills and qualities do you think you bring to your volunteering?
(Probe: Cultural awareness? Religious knowledge/sensitivity? Shared perspectives?)
11. Are there any particular challenges you come across as a volunteer?
(Probe: Have service users ever asked you difficult questions?)
(Probe: Has there ever been an awkward situation?
Probe: If so, how did you deal with this?)
12. Do you know many of the other volunteers working for the IWO?
13. How do you think your experiences compare to other IWO volunteers?
(Probe: Similar/dissimilar/better/worse?)
14. How did you find the volunteer training?
(Probe: Do you think it prepared you quite well for your volunteering?)
15. How could the volunteer training have been improved?
(Probe: More sessions? More information? Different time/date?)

The IWO more generally

16. What are your experiences of being managed by the IWO whilst volunteering?
(Probe: How often do you meet your manager? What sort of things do you talk about?)
17. Are there any staff members at the IWO you find particularly helpful?
(Probe: Why?)
18. Why do you think it's important for Muslims to be involved in organisations like the IWO?
19. How do you think it benefits the Muslim community to have an organisation like the IWO?
20. What sort of attributes or services do you think it's most important for a Muslim support service to have?
(Probe: Muslim staff members? Services in community languages? Confidentiality?)
21. How do you think your volunteering will develop in the future?
(Probe: How could the IWO develop its volunteering?)
22. Any final comments or feedback?

Appendix 6: Interview Questions for IWO Service Users

Pre-interview:

- Brief introduction to research project/evaluation: Aiming to discover what Islamic social work is and its significance for service users.
- Ensure information sheet has been read.
- Explain procedure: Will last up to one hour, with permission will be recorded, interviewee may withdraw at any time and ask if the interviewee has any questions.
- Explain that the recording will be typed up (transcript) and names will be changed to keep it private. Interviewee has the right to view the transcript afterwards if they wish.
- Sign consent form, ensure mobile phones off and establish willingness to continue.

Initial Questions

1. How did you first come to be involved with the IWO?
(Probe: Was it through family/friends /GP/other organisation?)
(If self-referred: What attracted you to the IWO?)
2. Which services at the IWO did you use?
(Probe: was it counselling, befriending, advocacy, mediation, *khul*, *ruqyah*, or a support group?)
3. What did that service involve for you?
(If counselling, was it Islamic counselling? Bereavement counselling?)
(If advocacy, what issue was it that you needed help with?)
(If mediation, what issue was it that you needed help with?)
4. Roughly how long did you use that service for?
5. Had you tried to get help from other organisations or services before coming to IWO?
(Probe: If so, which?)

Response to Service

6. How do you feel about the service you received?
(Probe: Would you say it was a positive or a negative experience?)
7. Do you feel that the service made a big difference to your life?
(Probe: Can you give me an example?)
8. Have your family and friends noticed that it has made a difference to you?
9. Were there particular staff members who helped you?
(Probe: Why were they helpful in particular?)

For those who found service positive

10. What was it about the approach of the IWO that you found particularly helpful?
(Probe: Use variables from survey q. 4: Could talk in own language, understood culture, received religious guidance, spirituality, service was confidential.)
(Probe: Which of the above variables was most helpful?)
11. How was the service sensitive?
12. Do you feel the service met your religious or spiritual needs?
(Probe: Can you give me an example of this?)
13. Do you feel the service met your cultural needs?
(Probe: How? In what way?)

For those who found service negative

14. Why do you feel you had a negative experience?
(Probe: Can you give me an example why?)
15. Was there a particular reason that it wasn't satisfactory?
16. Have other services met your needs better?
(Probe: Who? How?)

Reflections

17. What difference do you think the IWO makes to the local Muslim community?
(Probe: How is it different to mosque-based support or other Muslim organisations?)
18. What more could the IWO do to help the local Muslim community?
(Probe: What other services could they provide?)
19. What attributes do you think it is important for a Muslim welfare service to have?
(Probe: Mention variables from survey q. 3: Muslim staff members, services in own language, religious guidance/counselling, *ruqyah*, prayers with service users?)
(Probe: Which of those above is particularly important?)
20. What could other organisations learn from the IWO to make them more sensitive to the needs of Muslims?
21. Would you recommend the IWO to others?
(Probe: Why in particular? To whom would you recommend it?)
22. Overall, how would you sum up your experiences with the IWO?

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet for Participant Observation of IWO Staff and Volunteers

Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project exploring social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to a PhD study of Islamic social work and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield's Evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project.

Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully.

Please note that if you do not complete the opt-out form you will automatically be included in the study.

Why am I doing this research?

The 2001 census highlighted that many Muslim communities in Britain suffer from socio-economic deprivation and have high levels of welfare need. However, the perspectives of Muslim communities themselves and emerging community organisations have been little researched and there is a need to raise awareness.

This research project seeks to explore how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to community needs and how services which recognise Muslim identity are seen to be significant in addressing providing welfare solutions. It is hoped that the project could make a difference to British Muslim communities and the Muslim community in Bridston.

Why am I attending the training sessions?

I am attending the training sessions to try to learn about how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to the welfare needs of local Muslims. I am interested in how services which recognise Muslim identity are involved in helping solve welfare problems.

What would I do with the information?

I am hoping to make anonymous 'fieldnotes' about the volunteer training sessions where I will write about what I observed. No details which identify participants will be recorded. All data will be kept securely in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act. An analysis of the information will form part of the final thesis and evaluation report. Anonymous quotations may be used within the thesis, evaluation report and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers. They will not be used for any other purpose.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study after the training session has occurred, this is possible by contacting the researcher. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher. If you decide to withdraw from the study you can still attend the training sessions and no information about you will be recorded.

You can withdraw by filling out one of the **‘Opt-Out Forms’** at any time. If you do not have a copy, please contact the researcher by e-mail or phone who can supply you with one.

Who is conducting and funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University studying at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK.

The supervisors for the project are Dr. Sophie Gilliat- Ray (Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr. Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) who are both at Cardiff University.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University’s School of Social Sciences.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk or telephone (07*****). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 8: Opt-out Form for Participant Observation of IWO Staff and Volunteers

Opt-Out Form

If you do not wish to participate in the research project please complete this form and return it to the researcher Roz Warden.

YOU ONLY NEED TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

Please note that if you do not complete this form you will automatically be included in the study.

I understand that I will no longer contribute to any data collected by the researcher.

I understand that my choice not to participate will remain anonymous to everyone except the researcher Roz Warden.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact anytime by e-mail (wardenre@cardiff.ac.uk) or phone (07*****).

If you would like to submit this form to the researcher by post a mailing address may be supplied upon request.

Additionally, if you would like a copy of the completed opt-out form, please contact the researcher by e-mail or phone.

Appendix 9: Participant Information Sheet for Participant Observation of IWO Service Users at Support Groups

Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project exploring social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to a PhD study of Islamic social work and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield's evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project.

Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully.

Please note that if you do not complete the opt-out form you will automatically be included in the study.

Why am I doing this research?

The evaluation of the IWO aims to see how successful the services at the IWO have been so far and how they may continue to improve for clients in future. Part of this research involves talking to clients about their experiences of the IWO. It also involves attending events such as the client support group. Similarly, the PhD study aims to explore welfare services being developed by the Muslim community in Bridston and the impact these services have.

Why am I attending the support group?

I am attending the support group to try to learn about how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to the needs of local Muslims. I am interested in how services which recognise Muslim identity are involved in helping solve welfare problems.

What would I do with the information?

I am hoping to make anonymous 'fieldnotes' about the support group where I will write about what I observed. No details which identify members of the support group will be written down. All information will be kept securely in line with the Data Protection Act. Anonymous quotes may be used within the PhD thesis, evaluation report and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers. They will not be used for any other purpose.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study after the support group has occurred, this is possible by contacting the researcher. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher. **If you decide to withdraw from the study you can still attend the support groups and no information about you will be recorded.**

You can withdraw by filling out one of the ‘**Opt-Out Forms**’ at any time. If you do not have a copy, please contact the researcher by e-mail or phone who can supply you with one.

Who is the researcher and who is funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University studying at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK.

The supervisors for the project are Dr. Sophie Gilliat- Ray (Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr. Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) who are both at Cardiff University.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University’s School of Social Sciences.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk or telephone (07*****). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 10: Opt-out Form for Participant Observation of IWO Service Users attending Support Groups

Opt-Out Form

If you do not wish to participate in the research project please complete this form and return it to the researcher Roz Warden.

YOU ONLY NEED TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH.

Please note that if you do not complete this form you will automatically be included in the study.

I understand that I will no longer contribute to any information collected by the researcher during my attendance at the support group.

I understand that my choice not to participate will remain anonymous to everyone except the researcher Roz Warden.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact anytime by e-mail (wardenre@cardiff.ac.uk) or phone (07*****).

If you would like to send this form to the researcher by post a mailing address can be given on request.

Additionally, if you would like a copy of the completed opt-out form, please contact the researcher by e-mail or phone.

Appendix 11: Information Sheet for IWO Staff Member Interviews

Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project exploring social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to a PhD study of Islamic social work and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield's Evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project. Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully

Why am I doing this research?

The 2001 census highlighted that many Muslim communities in Britain suffer from socio-economic deprivation and have high levels of welfare need. However, the perspectives of Muslim communities themselves and emerging community organisations have been little researched and there is a need to raise awareness.

This research project seeks to explore how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to community needs and how services which recognise Muslim identity are seen to be significant in addressing providing welfare solutions. It is hoped that the project could make a difference to British Muslim communities and to the Muslim community in Bridston.

What would be involved?

If you choose to participate I would like to talk to you about the following topics:

1. What Islamic social work involves
2. Your experiences of working within this field

All interviews would be audiotaped so I have a record of what was said.

What would I do with the information?

The interview recording would be typed up into a written version (transcript) which would be accessible only to the researcher as a password protected file. All data will be kept securely in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act and would not be used for any other purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of the final thesis and evaluation report. Anonymous quotations may be used within the thesis, evaluation report and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers.

Will my taking part be confidential?

All information that is collected during the research will be strictly anonymous and all names changed within the report of the study. You can give as much or as little information as you wish.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study after the interview has occurred, this is possible by contacting the researcher. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher

Who is the researcher and who is funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University studying at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK.

The supervisors for the project are Dr. Sophie Gilliat- Ray (Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr. Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) who are both at Cardiff University.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk or telephone (07*****). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 12: Consent Form for IWO Staff Member Interviews

Participant Consent Form

The questions within the interview will help to research the topic of social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to a PhD study of Islamic social work and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield's Evaluation of the Tranquility Project.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in the project information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I am able to take part in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and that only the researcher will be aware of this.

I have no objections to being recorded or for any information to be used anonymously in the thesis and evaluation report resulting from this interview. I am fully aware that the thesis may be placed in the university library for public reading. I also consent to anonymous data being used in conference papers or publications resulting from this research

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Person Taking Consent:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact anytime by e-mail (wardenre@cardiff.ac.uk) or phone (07*****).

Appendix 13: Information Sheet for IWO Referring Agency Interviews

Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to participate in my research exploring social services provision for Muslims in Bridston by taking part in an interview. This interview would contribute to two research projects. Primarily, it would contribute to Dr. Jonathan Scourfield's evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project. Secondly, if relevant, it may also contribute to a PhD study of Islamic social work. Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully.

Why am I doing this research?

The 2001 census highlighted that many Muslim communities in Britain suffer from socio-economic deprivation and have high levels of welfare need. However, the perspectives of Muslim communities themselves and emerging community organisations have been little researched and there is a need to raise awareness.

This research project seeks to explore how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to community needs and how services which recognise Muslim identity are seen to be significant in addressing providing welfare solutions. It is hoped that the project could make a difference to British Muslim communities and to the Muslim community in Bridston.

What would be involved?

If you choose to participate I would like to talk to you about the following topics:

1. The nature of the referrals you have made to the IWO (e.g. why you felt it necessary to refer service users, what types of problems service users were experiencing, how you felt the IWO could help)
2. Your general experience and feedback from working with the IWO

The interview could take place either via the telephone (at a pre-arranged time) or face-to-face at the location of your choice. All interviews would be audiotaped so I have a record of what was said.

What would I do with the information?

The interview recording would be typed up into a written version (transcript) which would be accessible only to the researcher as a password protected file. All data will be kept securely in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act and would not be used for any other purpose. Anonymous quotations may be used within the evaluation report, PhD thesis and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers. A copy of your transcript would be available on request.

Will my taking part be confidential?

All information that is collected during the research will be strictly anonymous and all names changed within the report of the study. You can give as much or as little information as you wish.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study after the interview has occurred, this is possible by contacting the researcher. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher

Who is the researcher and who is funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University. I am also participating in data collection for the IWO evaluation.

The supervisors for the PhD project are Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) who are both at Cardiff University. Dr Jonathan Scourfield is also a lead researcher of the IWO evaluation team.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk or telephone (07*****). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 14: Consent Form for IWO Referring Agency Interviews

Participant Consent Form

The questions within the interview will help to research the topic of social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to a PhD study of Islamic social work and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield's Evaluation of the Tranquility project.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in the project information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I am able to take part in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and that only the researcher will be aware of this.

I have no objections to being recorded or for any information to be used anonymously in the thesis and evaluation report resulting from this interview. I am fully aware that the thesis may be placed in the university library for public reading. I also consent to anonymous data being used in conference papers or publications resulting from this research

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Person Taking Consent:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact anytime by e-mail (wardenre@cardiff.ac.uk) or phone (07*****).

Appendix 15: Information Sheet for IWO Volunteer Interviews

Interview Information Sheet for Volunteers

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project exploring social services provision for Muslims in Bridston. This research is contributing to Dr. Jonathan Scourfield's Evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project and to a PhD study of Islamic social work. Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully.

Why am I doing this research?

The 2001 census highlighted that many Muslim communities in Britain suffer from socio-economic deprivation and have high levels of welfare need. However, the perspectives of Muslim communities themselves and emerging community organisations have been little researched and there is a need to raise awareness.

This research project seeks to explore how the Muslim community in Bridston is responding to community needs and how services which recognise Muslim identity are seen to be significant in addressing providing welfare solutions. It is hoped that the project could make a difference to British Muslim communities and to the Muslim community in Bridston.

What would be involved?

If you choose to participate I would like to talk to you about the following topics:

1. Your experiences of volunteering at the IWO
2. The nature of Islamic social work

All interviews would be audiotaped so I have a record of what was said.

What would I do with the information?

The interview recording would be typed up into a written version (transcript) which would be accessible only to the researcher as a password protected file. All data will be kept securely in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act and would not be used for any other purpose. An analysis of the information will form part of the final thesis and evaluation report. Anonymous quotations may be used within the thesis, evaluation report and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers.

Will my taking part be confidential?

All information that is collected during the research will be strictly anonymous and all names changed within the report of the study. You can give as much or as little information as you wish.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the study after the interview has occurred, this is possible by contacting the researcher. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher

Who is the researcher and who is funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University studying at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK.

The supervisors for the project are Dr. Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Gilliat-RayS@cardiff.ac.uk) and Dr. Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) who are both at Cardiff University.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk or telephone (07*****). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 16: Consent Form for IWO Volunteer Interviews

Participant Consent Form

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in the project information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I am able to take part in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and that only the researcher will be aware of this.

I have no objections to being recorded or for any information to be used anonymously in the evaluation report and thesis. I am fully aware that the thesis may be placed in the university library for public reading. I also consent to anonymous data being used in conference papers or publications resulting from this research

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Person Taking Consent:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact anytime by e-mail (wardenre@cardiff.ac.uk) or phone (07*****).

Appendix 17: Information Sheet for IWO Service User Interviews

Participant Information Sheet for Interviewees

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview about welfare services provided to Muslims in Bridston. This interview would contribute to two research projects. Firstly, it would contribute to Dr. Jonathan Scourfield's evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project. Secondly, it may also contribute to a PhD study of Islamic social work.

Before you choose to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully.

Why am I doing this research?

The evaluation of the IWO aims to see how successful the services at the IWO have been so far and how they may continue to improve for clients in future. Part of this research involves talking to staff, volunteers and clients about their experiences of working with the IWO. Similarly, the PhD study aims to explore welfare services being developed by the Muslim community in Bridston and the impact these services have.

What would be involved in the interview?

If you choose to take part I would like to talk to you about the following topics:

1. Your experiences with the IWO
2. How you think welfare services for Muslims could be improved

The interview can take place at a location of your choice. This could be either at the IWO office, at your home or a local café, with any other family members or friends present if you wish. Interviews will take place in English and you may bring a friend or family member to help translate if needed. If you'd prefer not to do the interview in person then it would be possible to do a telephone interview at a pre-arranged time. Before doing the interview, a consent form would need to be filled in to make sure you fully agree to take part.

You can give as much or as little information as you wish during the interview and do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable with

All interviews would be audio recorded so I have a record of what was said. The interview would then be typed up into a written document (transcript). All names would be changed in the transcript.

What would I do with the information?

The transcript would only be available to the researcher (Roz Warden) and to Dr Jonathan Scourfield at Cardiff University who is leading the IWO evaluation. It would be a password protected file stored on the Cardiff University computer system. This would be in line with the Data Protection Act. Anonymous quotes from the interview may be included in the

evaluation report, PhD thesis and any published work such as journal articles or conference papers.

Will my taking part be confidential?

As some of the clients at the IWO suffer from serious mental health problems, the names of those people willing to be interviewed would be checked with the Tranquility Project manager before the interview takes place. This is to ensure that any vulnerable clients who may be very distressed by taking part in an interview do not do so. However, all names will be changed in the written-up transcript and any publications which include quotes from the interview.

Also, should you tell the researcher anything which suggests that you or any other individual may be at a very great risk then it may be necessary for the researcher to pass this information on to a member of the IWO staff. This is so that, if necessary, the appropriate support can be provided.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time you wish without giving a reason. If you change your mind after you have done the interview you can contact the researcher and any information you have given will not be included in the study. No-one will be told that you have decided to withdraw apart from the researcher. **If you choose not to participate this will not affect the services you receive from the IWO.**

Who is the researcher and who is funding the research?

My name is Roz Warden and I am PhD student at Cardiff University studying at the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK.

Dr Jonathan Scourfield (Scourfield@cardiff.ac.uk) from Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences is one of the lead researchers on the IWO evaluation team and also one of the PhD supervisors.

The research is being reviewed by the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences.

The research is being funded by a Cardiff University Jameel Scholarship.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix 18: Consent Form for IWO Service User Interviews

Participant Consent Form

The information from this interview will contribute to Dr. Jonathan Scourfield's evaluation of the IWO's Tranquility Project and to a PhD study of Islamic social work.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in the participant information sheet. I have also had the chance to answer any questions I may have about taking part.

I am able to take part in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose to stop taking part at any point, even after the interview, without giving any reason.

I understand that if I tell the researcher anything which suggests that I or any other individual may be at a very great risk then it may be necessary for the researcher to pass this information on to the IWO.

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded.

I agree that anonymous quotes from the interview may be used in the evaluation report and PhD thesis. I am fully aware that the PhD thesis may be placed in the university library for public reading. I also agree to anonymous quotes being used in any conference papers or publications.

Name of Participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Person Taking Consent:

Signature:

Date:

The research is being carried out by Roz Warden who you can contact by e-mail (WardenRE@Cardiff.ac.uk)

Appendix 19: Covering Letter sent with Service User Satisfaction Survey

99 Clearview Road

Bridston

BR99 8LQ

01*** **

Assalaamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-Allaahi wa barakaatuhu

The Tranquility Project at the IWO has been providing services to the Muslim community in Bridston since the millennium. We hope these services are culturally and religiously sensitive to the needs of local Muslims. To measure the impact of the project, an evaluation is being carried out by Cardiff University which will inform our funding body.

Part of this evaluation involves a client satisfaction survey. Please find enclosed a copy of the survey. There are eleven questions about your experiences of the IWO. We would be very grateful if you could take the time to fill in the survey and post it back to us. This will help us improve the IWO's services for future clients and inform our funders of our progress. You may answer as few or as many questions as you wish. There is no need to include your name. All completed surveys will be viewed only by members of the evaluation team from Cardiff University.

Alongside the survey, a researcher from Cardiff University will be conducting short follow-up interviews with clients about their experiences at the IWO. This can be by telephone or face-to-face. If you would be willing to be interviewed, please leave your details at the end of the survey and a researcher from Cardiff University will be in contact with you.

If you require a copy of the survey in Arabic, Urdu or Bengali or if you have any other questions please contact the IWO office on 01*** **.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, *Jazak Allah Khair*.

Dr Fadil Rahman, Director of the Islamic Welfare Organisation (IWO)

Appendix 20: Service User Satisfaction Survey

IWO Client Satisfaction Survey June 2011

1. Which service(s) at the IWO do/did you access? (Tick all that apply)

- Counselling Chaplaincy Befriending
 Family Mediation Islamic Divorce (*Khul*) Advocacy
 Treatment with *Ruqyah* (*spiritual healing with Quran and Sunnah*)
 Other (please state): _____

2. Which other organisations/ services have you had help from? (Tick all that apply)

- Social Services GP Community Mental Health Team
 Other (please state): _____

3. Which of the following do you think it is important for an Islamic welfare service to provide? (Circle one box in each row)

Muslim staff members:

Very important	Quite important	Unsure	Not very important	Not at all important
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Services in own language (e.g. Arabic, Urdu)

Very important	Quite important	Unsure	Not very important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------------	--------	--------------------	----------------------

Religious Knowledge/ Guidance:

Very important	Quite important	Unsure	Not very important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------------	--------	--------------------	----------------------

Islamic Counselling:

Very important	Quite important	Unsure	Not very important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------------	--------	--------------------	----------------------

Treatment with *Ruqyah* (*spiritual healing with Quran and Sunnah*):

Very important	Quite important	Unsure	Not very important	Not at all important
----------------	-----------------	--------	--------------------	----------------------

Other (please state): _____

4. What, if anything, did you find helpful about the IWO? (Tick all that apply)

- I could talk in my mother tongue They understood my culture
 I could talk about my religion The service was confidential
 I received religious guidance The service was not helpful
 Other (please state): _____

PLEASE TURN OVER

5. Do you feel that the help from the IWO has improved your well-being? (Tick one box)

- Agree Strongly Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Disagree Disagree Strongly

6. Overall how do you feel about the help you have received from the IWO? (Tick one box)

- Delighted Pleased Mostly Satisfied Mixed
 Mostly Dissatisfied Displeased Terrible

7. What gender are you? Male Female

8. What age are you? Under 18 18-24 25-39 40-55 56-64 65+

9. Are you still currently receiving services from the IWO? Yes No

10. What is your ethnicity?

- Pakistani Bangladeshi Indian Black Caribbean Black African
 Chinese Mixed Middle Eastern White British Other White background
 Other (please state): _____

11. How did you hear about the IWO? (Tick all that apply)

- Friends/Family Leaflet/Poster Internet GP Social Worker
 From any other organisation Other (please state): _____

Further Comments:

If you would be willing to be contacted for a short follow up interview to discuss your satisfaction with the IWO's services (either by phone or face-to-face) please leave contact details below. You will be contacted by a researcher from Cardiff University who is conducting the evaluation.

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

E-mail address (if you have one): _____

THANK YOU

Appendix 21: Extra Letter sent to 30 Tranquility Project Service Users Inviting them to be Interviewed

Islamic Welfare Organisation (IWO) Assalaamu 'alaykum wa rahmat-Allaahi wa barakaatuhu

IWO Interviews

The IWO are currently participating in an evaluation with Cardiff University to see how their services have made a difference to the Bridston Muslim community. As part of this evaluation we are inviting clients to take part in a short interview with a researcher from Cardiff University.

If you are interested in talking about your experiences of using the IWO's services, please contact Roz Warden, a researcher from Cardiff University.

Phone number: 07***** If Roz does not answer the phone, please **leave a voice-mail message or text** and she will get back to you as soon as possible.

E-mail address: WardenRE@cardiff.ac.uk

Roz would like to hear from you as soon as possible. This research will end on **1st June 2012**, so please get in touch with her as soon as you can.

There is more information about what the interview would involve in the information sheet enclosed. If you have any questions then please ask Roz and she will be happy to answer them.

We look forward to hearing from you. We hope you can provide us with your feedback and help us in shaping our services for the community.

Thank you for helping, *Jazak Allah Khair.*

Dr Fadil Rahman, Director of the Islamic Welfare Organisation (IWO)

The above letter was sent in April 2012 to 30 'live' service users in the Tranquility Project database referred between June 2010 and June 2011. They were sent to service users accessing counselling, spiritual guidance, advocacy, mediation, divorce/*khul* and befriending (five individuals per service). Service users were selected via purposive sampling. Unfortunately no service users responded to the letter.

Appendix 22: Information on Sampling, Response Rates and Findings from Service User Satisfaction Survey

Sampling and Response Rate

Questionnaires were sent to 152 service users during June 2011. 113 questionnaires were sent to 'live' service users (referred between 01/06/10-01/06/11) and to 39 'archive' service users (cases closed between 01/06/10-01/06/11). Both live and archive service users were included in the sampling frame as it was felt that archive service users may be able to report long-term changes to their well-being. A one-year time frame was implemented as it was suggested that service users who had not been in contact with the IWO outside of this time frame could potentially have changed contact details. A total of 36 questionnaires were completed. 24 were returned by post and 12 were completed via telephone (a response rate of 23.6%). 15 of the questionnaires returned via post included contact details of service users for potential follow-up interviews. All 15 individuals were contacted by telephone and e-mail and eight agreed to be interviewed. Those who chose not to participate in an interview gave reasons including current family commitments and a focus on fasting during Ramadan.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents:

Appendix Table 22.1: Gender of Survey Respondents

Gender	No. Respondents (%)
Male	18 ⁴⁶ (50%)
Female	18 (50%)

Of the 36 respondents, there were an equal number of male and female respondents.

⁴⁶ One individual left the gender question blank but left interview contact details with a male name

Appendix Table 22.2: Age of Survey Respondents

Age	No. of respondents (%)
Under 18	1 (2.7%)
18-24	4 (11.1%)
25-39	19 (52.7%)
40-55	8 (22.2%)
56-64	4 (11.1%)
65+	0 (0%)

Over half of the respondents, the majority, were aged 25-39.

Appendix Table 22.3: Service Accessed by Survey Respondents

Service Accessed	No. people ⁴⁷ (%)
Counselling	17 (45.9%)
Chaplaincy	0 (0%)
Befriending	1 (2.7%)
Mediation	1 (2.7%)
Islamic Divorce (<i>Khul</i>)	5 (13.5%)
Advocacy	2 (5.4%)
<i>Ruqyah</i>	2 (5.4%)
Other ⁴⁸	5 (13.5%)
Question left blank	4 (10.8%)

⁴⁷ Total number of services accessed totals 37 as one service user indicated that they had received two services

⁴⁸ 'Other' services included accessing "information on prayer times", "landlord mediation" and "consultation meeting with Director"

Appendix Table 22.4: Ethnicity of Survey Respondents

Almost half of the respondents, 45.9%, had accessed the counselling service.

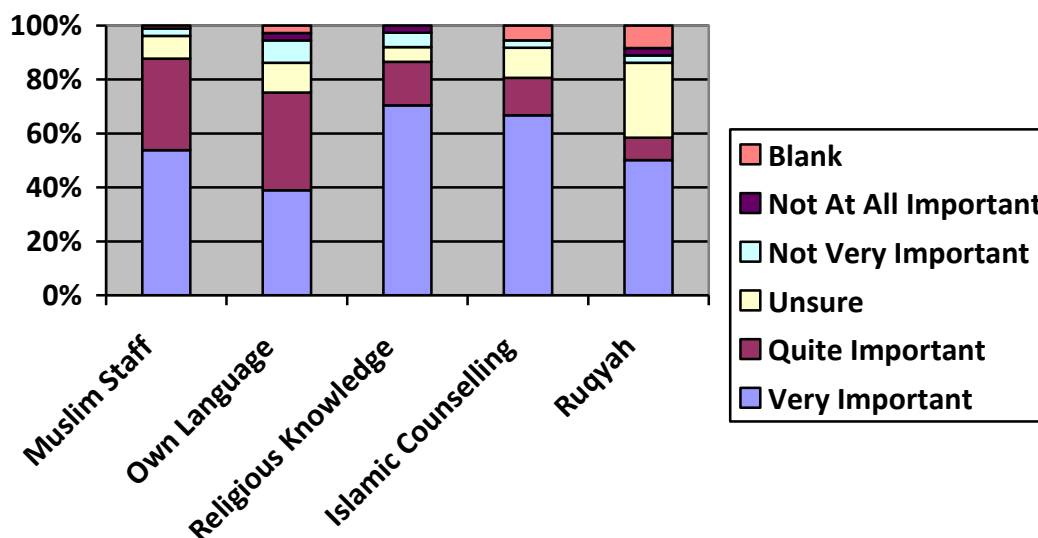
Ethnicity	No. of Respondents (%)
Pakistani	14 (38.8%)
Bangladeshi	6 (16.6%)
Indian	2 (5.5%)
Black Caribbean	0 (0%)
Black African	1 (2.7%)
Chinese	0 (0%)
Mixed	1 (2.7%)
Middle Eastern	3 (8.3%)
White British	1 (2.7%)
White Other	0 (0%)
Other ⁴⁹	7 (19.4%)
Question left blank	1 (2.7%)

The majority of participants, 60.9%, were of South Asian ethnicity, being Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian.

⁴⁹ Those who selected 'other' included those who self-identified as "Kurdish" and those who wrote "N/A."

Findings of Satisfaction Survey

Survey Question 3: Which of the following do you think it is important for an Islamic welfare service to provide?



Appendix Fig 22.1: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 3

Appendix Table 22.5: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 3

Attribute	No. respondents who considered it 'Very Important' (%)	No. respondents who considered it 'Quite Important' (%)
Muslim Staff Members	19 (52.7%)	12 (33.3%)
Services in Own Language	14 (38.8%)	13 (36.1%)
Religious Knowledge/Guidance	26 (72.2%)	6 (16.6%)
Islamic Counselling	24 (66.6%)	5 (13.8%)
<i>Ruqyah</i>	18 (50%)	3 (8.3%)

72.2%, or almost three-quarters, of respondents considered it 'very important' that the organisation provided religious knowledge/guidance and this attribute received the greatest amount of respondents selecting it as 'very important' out of the five attributes.

Survey Question 4: What, if anything, did you find helpful about the IWO?

Appendix Table 22.6: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 4

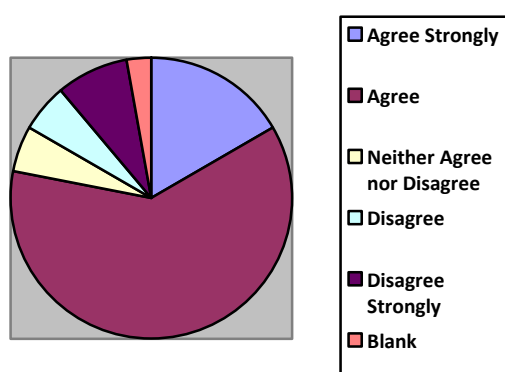
Category	No. of respondents (%)
“I could talk in my mother tongue”	6 (16.6%)
“I could talk about my religion”	19 (52.7%)
“I received religious guidance”	17 (47.2%)
“They understood my culture”	19 (52.7%)
“The service was confidential”	20 (56.5%)
“The service was not helpful”	2 (5.5%)
“Other”	9 (25%)
Question left blank	2 (5.5%)

56.5% of respondents selected confidentiality as being a helpful aspect of the IWO’s service and this was the most popular category.

Reasons for selecting ‘other’ included: “helped with prayer”, “helped with tenancy”, “an Islamic scholar”, “counselling”, “very open”, and as the “receptionist [is] really nice.”

One service user who selected that ‘the service was not helpful’ completed the questionnaire via telephone and so enquiries were made about this response. The service user commented that the service was not helpful as they had been unable to arrange the required appointment yet with the appropriate staff member.

Survey Question 5: Do you feel that the help from the IWO has improved your well-being?



Appendix Fig 22.2: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 5

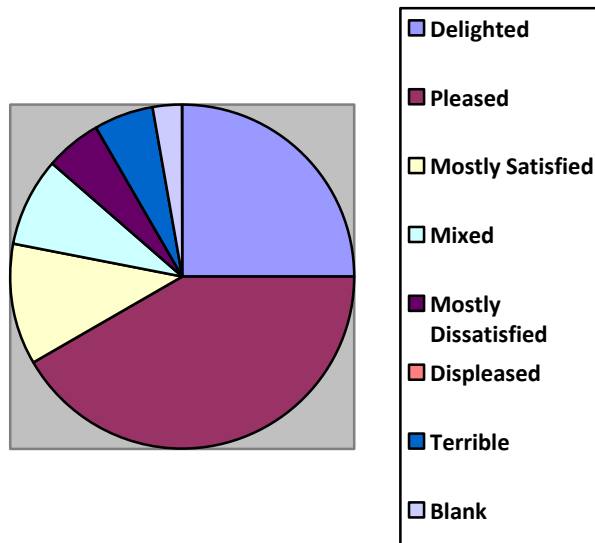
Appendix Table 22.7: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 5

Category	No. of respondents (%)
Agree Strongly	6 (16.6%)
Agree	22 (61.6%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2 (5.5%)
Disagree	2 (5.5%)
Disagree Strongly	3 (8.3%)
Question left blank	1 (2.7%)

78.2%, over three-quarters, of respondents ‘agreed strongly’ or ‘agreed’ that the help from the IWO had improved their well-being.

All three service users who selected ‘disagree strongly’ completed their questionnaire via telephone. Two of these service users ‘disagree strongly’ as they reported that they had not had much contact with the organisation so were unable to report significant changes to their well-being.

Survey Question 6: Overall how do you feel about the help you have received from the IWO?



Appendix Fig 22.3: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 6

Appendix Table 22.8: Responses to Satisfaction Survey Question 6

Category	No. of respondents (%)
Delighted	9 (25%)
Pleased	15 (41.6%)
Mostly Satisfied	4 (11.1%)
Mixed	3 (8.3%)
Mostly Dissatisfied	2 (5.5%)
Dissatisfied	0 (0%)
Terrible	2 (5.5%)
Question left blank	1 (2.7%)

77.7%, over three-quarters of respondents, indicated that they were either ‘delighted’, ‘pleased’ or ‘mostly satisfied’ about the service they had received.

The two service users who selected ‘terrible’ both completed their questionnaires via telephone. One respondent selected ‘terrible’ as they had not been able to get an immediate appointment with the staff member of their choice and disliked that it was up to the service

user to arrange appointments. The other respondent who selected 'terrible' suggested that the staff member they saw was not wholly interested as they are not of Muslim faith. Despite this service user's interpretation, another service user who participated in an interview, who had indicated on their questionnaire that they were 'pleased', felt comfortable with the service and commented that *"it was made quite clear to us that being a practising Muslim wasn't part of the criteria. You didn't have to be practising to use the service."*

Appendix 23: Process of Editing the Tranquility Project Database

The Original Dataset

The original dataset received from the IWO was in the form of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data contained the details of 495 ‘live’, ‘archive’ and ‘awaiting’ service users with names, addresses and client codes removed. The only identifiable data related to birth date and ethnicity. No pre-coding had been implemented by the IWO for any of the variables. Therefore there were a significant amount of varying ‘reasons for referral’ given and 39 different ethnicities were listed. The data from Excel was imported into SPSS. During importation, the data regarding birth date did not import successfully. Therefore the age group for each individual was altered manually by matching up the individual’s other attributes (e.g. ethnicity, reason for referral, service used) with those in the Excel database. After the age group variable had been re-coded, the other six variables were re-coded. Each time one variable was fully re-coded a copy of the data set was saved to help facilitate any re-editing if necessary.

The Process of Editing

Age

In the original Excel data set, the data for the age variable contained each service user’s date of birth. In order to help promote anonymity, each date of birth was manually altered into an age category. The age categories used in the IWO Satisfaction Survey were applied. These categories were used to correspond with those which had been agreed by the evaluation team to use in the Satisfaction Survey. The aim in doing this was to help see how representative a sample the responses from the Service User Satisfaction Survey were in comparison to the overall IWO service user database. The age categories applied were:

1. ‘Under 18’
2. ‘18-24’
3. ‘25-39’
4. ‘40-55’
5. ‘56-64’
6. ‘Over 65’

Before running the statistical chi-square tests, however, the age categories were further modified. This was to help ensure the validity of any statistically significant links found between variables (see below under ‘Further Modifications’).

Ethnicity

In the imported data set from Excel, 39 different ethnicities were listed. These 39 ethnicities included ‘Bargo’, ‘Lebanese’, ‘Qaraei’ and ‘Slovakian’. Many of the different ethnic

categories only applied to one or two service users. Where there were a significant number of clients within one ethnic category, e.g. 19 ‘Somalis’ and 18 ‘Sudanese’, then that particular ethnic category was kept. Where there were less than ten service users linked to a particular ethnicity, that ethnic category was subsumed within a broader group [excluding ‘Mixed Race’]. Specific ethnicities which were kept were: ‘Pakistani’, ‘Bangladeshi’, ‘Sudanese’, ‘Arab’, ‘Somali’, ‘Unknown’ and ‘Mixed Race’

Ethnicities which were amalgamated included:

1. British (To include ‘British’, ‘English’, ‘Welsh’, ‘Scottish’)
2. Other Asian (To include ‘Asian’, ‘Indian’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Qaraei’, ‘Gujurati’ and ‘Malaysian’)
3. Other White (To include ‘White’, ‘American’, ‘Italian’, ‘Spanish’, ‘German’, ‘Romanian’, ‘Polish’, ‘Slovakian’)
4. Other African (To include ‘African’, ‘Bargo’, ‘Kenyan’, ‘Moroccan’ and ‘Tanzanian’)
5. Other Middle East (To include ‘Afghani’, ‘Egyptian’, ‘Iranian’, ‘Iraqi’, ‘Kurdish’, ‘Kuwaiti’, ‘Lebanese’, ‘Qatari’, ‘Palestinian’, ‘Yemeni’)

It was important to distinguish ‘Pakistani’ and ‘Bangladeshi’ service users in particular from other South Asian ethnicities as a significant number of respondents to the Service User Satisfaction Survey were from these particular ethnic backgrounds.

Religion

In the original imported version of the database, seven different categories were listed under the variable of religion, including ‘Not applicable’, ‘Not provided’ and ‘Unknown.’ Re-coding amalgamated these responses into one category of ‘Unknown’ and preserved the three other categories used. The religions were therefore listed as:

1. ‘Islam’
2. ‘Hindu’
3. ‘Jewish’
4. ‘Unknown’

No service users were listed as Christian, Sikh or Buddhist.

Reason for Referral

In the original Excel database, over 50 different reasons for referral were stated with no pre-coding used by the IWO. Five broad categories regarding reason for referral were initially identified. These were: ‘Marriage/Divorce’, ‘Family/Parenting’, ‘Mental Health’,

‘Advocacy/Legal’ and ‘Islamic Guidance’. An additional two categories covering ‘Other’ and ‘Unknown’ were also identified.

However, upon further analysis of the database, the category ‘Mental Health’ was split into ‘General Mental Health’ or ‘Serious Mental Health.’ Where a diagnosed mental health condition was listed, that individual was designated as ‘Serious Mental Health.’ When an individual was simply described as being ‘isolated’ or ‘lonely’ then the category ‘General Mental Health’ was applied.

Similarly, the category ‘Advocacy/Legal’ was re-coded into three new categories. These were ‘Immigration/Asylum’, ‘Housing/Tenancy’ and ‘Other Advocacy.’ Individuals who fitted the ‘Other Advocacy’ criteria included those getting help with benefits, form-filling and court cases.

A significant number of individuals were initially listed by the IWO as having several reasons for referral. In re-coding the reasons for referral into one single category, consideration was given to the service that that particular individual accessed. For example, one service user was listed as ‘suffered from domestic abuse, feels unstable & depressed.’ As this service user had accessed the counselling service and had been diagnosed with depression this were re-coded as ‘Serious Mental Health.’ Additionally, one individual’s reason for referral was listed as ‘marriage breakdown/bipolar.’ As this individual went on to access the counselling service, rather than mediation or divorce services, it was re-coded as ‘Serious Mental Health.’ Similarly, one individual’s reason for referral was listed as ‘son’s illness and isolation.’ As this individual access befriending services, rather than mediation or advocacy, the reason for referral was re-coded as ‘General Mental Health’ rather than ‘Family/Parenting.’

The nine categories covering reasons for referral were re-coded as:

1. Marriage/Divorce: included ‘*Nikah*’, ‘*Khul*’, ‘Divorce’ and ‘Marriage Problems’, and ‘forced/pressurised marriage.’
2. Family/Parenting: included ‘parent and child issues’, ‘parental support’, asking about ‘crèche facilities’, ‘domestic abuse’, ‘behavioural problems’, ‘support for family member who is on drugs’, ‘pregnant before marriage’, ‘relationship problems’, ‘interested in fostering/child minding’, ‘separation problems’, ‘can’t cope with being a carer’, ‘support for ill family member.’
3. General Mental Health: included ‘isolation’, ‘trauma’, ‘stress’, ‘struggle to accept death of family member’, ‘anger issues’, ‘low-self esteem’ and ‘distress.’
4. Serious Mental Health: included ‘depression’, ‘anorexia’, ‘schizophrenia’, ‘PTSD’, ‘bulimia’, ‘bipolar’, ‘marriage breakdown and bipolar’, ‘homeless and mental health’
5. Housing/Tenancy: included ‘housing’, ‘housing issues’, ‘issues re: housing association.’

6. Immigration/Asylum: included ‘immigration’ ‘naturalisation’, ‘British citizenship’ and ‘family member passed away, wants to stay in UK.’
7. Other Advocacy: included ‘benefits’, ‘financial dispute’, ‘representation’, ‘help with form filling’, ‘fraud’, ‘British citizenship’, ‘counter signature for documentation’ and ‘advice regarding employment’.
8. Islamic Guidance: *anything aside from nikah/khul which overtly relates to religion.* Included: ‘spiritual intervention’, ‘would like a prayer timetable’, ‘advice regarding Islam’, ‘*halaga* classes’, ‘Islamic view on contraception’, ‘religious history’, ‘struggling to fast during Ramadan due to ill-health’, ‘Islamic will’, ‘prayers for safety in relation to health’, ‘understanding of Islamic faith’, ‘faith concerns’, ‘issues around faith’, ‘issues regarding mosque’, ‘interest money’, ‘banned from mosque’ and requires certificate of declaration of Islam.’
9. Other: Included ‘ill health’, ‘managing finances’, ‘substance misuse’, ‘self support’, ‘support with GP appointments’, ‘training courses’, ‘help with appointments’, ‘general support due to ill health’, ‘physical disability’, ‘struggle with self-management’, ‘re: homeless man’, ‘regarding self-development’, ‘assault’, ‘bereavement’, ‘insomnia’, ‘general advice on relationships and friendship’, ‘to discuss personal life issues and community sin’, ‘visits for translations’, ‘children’s education’, ‘support after leaving prison’, ‘ill health’, ‘regarding health appointments’, ‘learning disability.’

Referral Source

Over 20 different referral sources were listed in the original dataset including ‘heard from a friend’, ‘self-referral’, ‘IWO staff member’, ‘agency referral’, ‘CMHT’, ‘Salvation Army Hostel’ and ‘mosque.’

These were re-coded into nine new categories:

1. Staff/volunteer
2. Self-referral
3. Family/friend
4. Statutory: Included local GP’s, CMHT’s, hospitals, Social Services, Council, Police, ‘health visitor’, ‘YOS’, ‘probation’, ‘midwifery unit’, ‘education welfare officer’ and ‘Dr. ----.’
5. Mosque
6. BME voluntary
7. Non-BME voluntary
8. Unknown

9. Other: Included 'agency referral', 'education welfare officer', website, advertisement, directory, solicitors, council, Muslim Times and 'independent mental health volunteer.'

Language

In the original Excel database, 31 different languages were listed (including 'unknown' and 'deaf') with a significant amount of service users listed as speaking two or more languages.

The 31 languages included: Dari, Farsi, Urdu, English, Pashto/Pushto/Pushtoon, Unknown, Arabic, French, Somali, Punjabi, Swahili, German, Dutch, Bengali, Hindi, Basic English/ESOL, Tamil, Persian, Kurdish, Sarani, Malay, Hinko, Mirpuri, Spanish, Slovakian, Yemini, Gujarati, Deaf, Bargo, BSL and Polish.

No set pre-coding had been applied by the IWO. As such, languages appeared in the initial database in different combinations for different individuals, subsumed under one variable. For example, one service user was listed as speaking 'Farsi, Urdu and English.' One Bangladeshi service user was listed as speaking 'English, Urdu, Bengali' and another as 'Bengali, Urdu, English.' There was no indicator that the languages had been listed in different orders for any particular reason (e.g. mother tongue, second language).

In the process of re-coding, the lone variable for 'language' was removed and five new variables were produced. The first four variables were for specific languages to which the client could be listed as either speaking or non-speaking ('yes', 'no', 'basic', unknown.) The fifth variable implemented was 'Other' where any additional languages spoken by the client could be stated.

The five variables used were:

1. English (either 'yes', 'no', 'basic' or 'unknown')
2. Bengali (either 'yes', 'no', 'basic' or 'unknown')
3. Urdu (either 'yes', 'no', 'basic' or 'unknown')
4. Arabic (either 'yes', 'no', 'basic' or 'unknown')
5. Other (to be stated e.g. 'Persian', 'Tammil' etc.)

Service

In the initial Excel database, the single variable 'service' contained a significant number of varying different responses which were not pre-coded. These included one client listed as receiving 'Advice and Counselling', another listed as receiving 'Advice, Counselling', and another receiving 'Advice, Advocacy, Counselling and Spiritual Guidance.'

It was decided to split this single 'service' variable into 9 different variables:

1. Advice/Information (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')

2. Divorce/*Khul* (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
3. Advocacy (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
4. Befriending (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
5. Mediation (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
6. Counselling (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
7. Support Group (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
8. Spiritual Guidance (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
9. Chaplaincy (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')
10. Marriage/*Nikah* (either 'yes', 'no' or 'unknown')

By dividing the services into ten different variables, this allowed for bivariate analysis of each individual service in relation to variables of age group, ethnicity and languages spoken.

Further Modifications

After the initial cleaning of data described above, frequencies were performed. In order to conduct cross-tabulations and chi-square tests, however, certain categories within variables were further merged to ensure that no more than 20% of cells had expected frequencies of less than five, in line with Pallant (2010). Categories merged were:

1. Age '0-18' and '18-24' became '0-24'
2. Age '56-64' and '65+' became '56+'
3. 'Arab' ethnicity and 'Other Middle Eastern' ethnicity both became 'Arab'
4. 'Somali' ethnicity, 'Sudanese' ethnicity and 'Other African' ethnicity all became 'African'
5. 'Other Asian', 'Other White', 'Mixed Race', 'British' and 'White' ethnicities all became 'Other'
6. 'Housing/Tenancy', 'Immigration/Asylum' and 'Other Advocacy' as reasons for referral all became 'Advocacy'

Modifying the age categories helped ensure they each covered a more equal age range of 14-15 years. The 0-24 and 56+ categories also essentially covered this 15 year range too as no service users under the age of 10 and very few service users over the age of 70 were included in the database. Modifying the age categories before running the chi-square tests helped ensure greater statistical validity of any associations found relating to the age variable.

Appendix 24: Frequencies, Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests on Tranquility Project Database Analysis

Frequencies

The tables below show frequencies generated by analysing the Tranquility Project database. The frequency tables illustrate the demographic profile of the service users.

Appendix Table 24.1 Age of Service Users

Age category	Frequency	Per cent
18-24	42	8.5
25-39	185	37.4
40-55	77	15.6
56-64	20	4.0
Over 65	10	2.0
Under 18	15	3.0
Unknown	146	29.5
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.2 Ethnicity of Service Users

Ethnic category	Frequency	Per cent
Arab	26	5.3
Bangladeshi	66	13.3
British	13	2.6
Mixed Race	6	1.2
Other African	20	4.0
Other Asian	18	3.6
Other M East	37	7.5
Other White	8	1.6
Pakistani	153	30.9
Somali	19	3.8
Sudanese	18	3.6
Unknown	80	16.2
White	31	6.3
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.3 Religion of Service Users

Religion	Frequency	Per cent
Hindu	2	0.4
Islam	407	82.2
Jewish	1	0.2
Unknown	85	17.2
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.4 Reasons for Referral

Reason for referral	Frequency	Per cent
Family/Parenting	56	11.3
General Mental Health	49	9.9
Housing/Tenancy	18	3.6
Immigration/Asylum	13	2.6
Islamic Guidance	47	9.5
Marriage/Divorce	144	29.1
Other	48	9.7
Other Advocacy	38	7.7
Serious Mental Health	50	10.1
Unknown	32	6.5
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.5 Sources of Referral

Referral source	Frequency	Per cent
BME voluntary organisation	47	9.5
Family/friend	120	24.2
Mosque	12	2.4
Non-BME voluntary organisation	24	4.8
Self-Referral	125	25.3
Staff/volunteer	36	7.3
Statutory service	47	9.5
Other	21	4.2
Unknown	63	12.7
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.6 English Language Fluency of Service Users

Language fluency	Frequency	Per cent
Basic	13	2.6
Fluent	354	71.5
None	81	16.4
Unknown	47	9.5
Total	495	100.0

Appendix Table 24.7 Community Language Fluency of Service Users

Language	Spoken	Not spoken	Unknown	Total
Bengali	9.3% (n=46)	81.2% (n=402)	9.5% (n=47)	100% (n=495)
Urdu	21.6% (n=107)	68.7% (n=340)	9.7% (n=48)	100% (n=495)
Arabic	16.4% (n=81)	74.1% (n=367)	9.5% (n=45)	100% (n=495)

Appendix Table 24.8 Services Received

Type of service	Received	Not received	Unknown	Total
Advice/Info	38% (n=188)	59% (n=292)	3% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Counselling	27.7% (n=137)	69.3% (n=343)	2.8% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Advocacy	18.6% (n=92)	78.6% (n=389)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Divorce/ <i>Khul</i>	17.2% (n=85)	79.8% (n=395)	3.0% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Spiritual Guidance	14.1% (n=70)	83.0% (n=411)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Mediation	10.3% (n=51)	86.9% (n=430)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)
Marriage/ <i>Nikah</i>	4.2% (n=21)	92.7% (n=459)	3.0% (n=15)	100% (n=495)
Chaplaincy	3.6% (n=18)	93.5% (n=463)	2.8% (n=14)	100% (n=495)

Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests

Producing cross-tabulations explores the relationships between variables as a form of bivariate analysis. For example, if one particular ethnic group accesses one particular service more than others, this trend can be identified. As noted in appendix 24, after performing the frequencies the database was further modified to ensure that no more than 20% of cells had expected frequencies of less than five. Furthermore, the database was edited so that 'unknown' cells under the variables for all services were excluded from tests run. Chi-square tests were performed simultaneously with the cross-tabulations to see if links identified were statistically significant.

41 cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were produced to explore relationships between variables including: ethnicity & source of referral, ethnicity & reason for referral, age & source of referral, age & reason for referral, source of referral & reason for referral, ethnicity & counselling, age & counselling, languages spoken (English, Arabic, Urdu, Bengali) & counselling etc. Services included in the tests were counselling, advocacy, advice/information, mediation and *khul*/divorce. Other services (e.g. marriage/*nikah*) did not have high enough frequencies to run the tests.

Of the 41 tests run, 9 had a chi-square value lower than 0.05 and so were statistically significant. These 9 tests were:

1. Ethnicity & Source of Referral ($X^2 79.34$, df^{10} , $p < 0.001$)
2. Age & Reason for Referral ($X^2 68.01$, df^{24} , $p < 0.001$)
3. Age & Source of Referral ($X^2 65.26$, df^8 , $p < 0.001$)
4. Reason for Referral & Source of Referral ($X^2 72.25$, df^{10} , $p < 0.001$)
5. Ethnicity & Counselling ($X^2 11.37$, df^5 , $p < 0.05$)
6. Age & Counselling ($X^2 9.65$, df^4 , $p < 0.05$)
7. Bengali Language & Counselling ($X^2 11.42$, df^2 , $p < 0.03$)
8. Age & Advocacy ($X^2 22.34$, df^4 , $p < 0.01$)
9. English Language & Advocacy ($X^2 55.71$, df^3 , $p < 0.001$)

The tables below show these cross-tabulations and chi-square tests including the standard residuals.

Appendix Table 24.9 Cross-Tabulation of Ethnicity & Source of Referral

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected numbers of Arabs (+2.1) and Bangladeshis (+2.7) being referred by statutory services.

		Ethnicity						Total	
		African	Arab	Bangladeshi	Other	Pakistani	Unknown		
Source of referral	Non-statutory	Count	45	49	45	56	132	37	364
		Expected Count	41.9	46.3	48.5	55.9	112.5	58.8	364.0
		% within Ethnicity	78.9%	77.8%	68.2%	73.7%	86.3%	46.2%	73.5%
		Std. Residual	.5	.4	-.5	.0	1.8	-2.8	
	Statutory	Count	4	11	13	4	8	7	47
		Expected Count	5.4	6.0	6.3	7.2	14.5	7.6	47.0
		% within Ethnicity	7.0%	17.5%	19.7%	5.3%	5.2%	8.8%	9.5%
		Std. Residual	-.6	2.1	2.7	-1.2	-1.7	-.2	
	Unknown	Count	8	3	8	16	13	36	84
		Expected Count	9.7	10.7	11.2	12.9	26.0	13.6	84.0
		% within Ethnicity	14.0%	4.8%	12.1%	21.1%	8.5%	45.0%	17.0%
		Std. Residual	-.5	-2.4	-1.0	.9	-2.5	6.1	
Total	Count	57	63	66	76	153	80	495	
	Expected Count	57.0	63.0	66.0	76.0	153.0	80.0	495.0	
	% within Ethnicity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Appendix Table 24.10 Chi-Square Test for Ethnicity & Source of Referral

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	79.336 ^a	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	70.806	10	.000
N of Valid Cases	495		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.41.

Appendix Table 24.11 Cross-Tabulation of Age & Reason for Referral

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected number of referrals for service users aged 0-24 for reasons of ‘Serious Mental Health’ (+2.0) and of referrals of service users aged 25-39 for reasons of ‘Marriage/Divorce’ (+2.8). They also show a lower than expected number of referrals for individuals aged 25-39 for reasons of ‘Advocacy’ (-2.2) and of those aged 56+ for reasons of ‘Marriage/Divorce’ (-2.6).

		date of birth					Total	
		0-24	25-39	40-55	56+	Unknown		
Reason for referral	Advocacy	Count	7	15	15	11	21	69
	Expected Count	8.5	26.5	11.2	4.2	18.6	69.0	
	% within date of birth	12.3%	8.4%	20.0%	39.3%	16.8%	14.9%	
	Std. Residual	-5	-2.2	1.1	3.3	.5		
	Family/Parenting	Count	10	15	11	2	18	56
	Expected Count	6.9	21.5	9.1	3.4	15.1	56.0	
	% within date of birth	17.5%	8.4%	14.7%	7.1%	14.4%	12.1%	
	Std. Residual	1.2	-1.4	.6	-.8	.7		
	General Mental Health	Count	7	16	5	4	17	49
	Expected Count	6.0	18.8	7.9	3.0	13.2	49.0	
	% within date of birth	12.3%	9.0%	6.7%	14.3%	13.6%	10.6%	
	Std. Residual	.4	-.7	-1.0	.6	1.0		
	Islamic Guidance	Count	5	16	6	1	19	47
	Expected Count	5.8	18.1	7.6	2.8	12.7	47.0	
	% within date of birth	8.8%	9.0%	8.0%	3.6%	15.2%	10.2%	
	Std. Residual	-.3	-.5	-.6	-1.1	1.8		
	Marriage/Divorce	Count	10	76	20	1	37	144

	Expected Count	17.7	55.4	23.3	8.7	38.9	144.0
	% within date of birth	17.5%	42.7%	26.7%	3.6%	29.6%	31.1%
	Std. Residual	-1.8	2.8	-.7	-2.6	-.3	
	Count	7	23	6	3	9	48
Other	Expected Count	5.9	18.5	7.8	2.9	13.0	48.0
	% within date of birth	12.3%	12.9%	8.0%	10.7%	7.2%	10.4%
	Std. Residual	.4	1.1	-.6	.1	-1.1	
	Count	11	17	12	6	4	50
Serious Mental Health	Expected Count	6.2	19.2	8.1	3.0	13.5	50.0
	% within date of birth	19.3%	9.6%	16.0%	21.4%	3.2%	10.8%
	Std. Residual	2.0	-.5	1.4	1.7	-2.6	
	Count	57	178	75	28	125	463
Total	Expected Count	57.0	178.0	75.0	28.0	125.0	463.0
	% within date of birth	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Table 24.12 Chi-Square Test for Age & Reason for Referral

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	68.037 ^a	24	.000
Likelihood Ratio	70.705	24	.000
N of Valid Cases	463		

a. 6 cells (17.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.84.

Appendix Table 24.13 Cross Tabulation for Age & Source of Referral

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected number of statutory referrals for service users aged 0-24 (+3.3) and 56+ (+2.5)

			date of birth					Total
			0-24	25-39	40-55	56+	Unknown	
Source of referral	Non-statutory	Count	41	147	66	20	90	364
		Expected Count	41.9	136.0	56.6	22.1	107.4	364.0
		% within date of birth	71.9%	79.5%	85.7%	66.7%	61.6%	73.5%
		Std. Residual	-.1	.9	1.2	-.4	-1.7	
	Statutory	Count	13	16	5	7	6	47
		Expected Count	5.4	17.6	7.3	2.8	13.9	47.0
		% within date of birth	22.8%	8.6%	6.5%	23.3%	4.1%	9.5%
		Std. Residual	3.3	-.4	-.9	2.5	-2.1	
	Unknown	Count	3	22	6	3	50	84
		Expected Count	9.7	31.4	13.1	5.1	24.8	84.0
		% within date of birth	5.3%	11.9%	7.8%	10.0%	34.2%	17.0%
		Std. Residual	-2.1	-1.7	-2.0	-.9	5.1	
Total	Count	57	185	77	30	146	495	
	Expected Count	57.0	185.0	77.0	30.0	146.0	495.0	
	% within date of birth	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Appendix Table 24.14 Chi-Square Test for Age & Source of Referral

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	65.250 ^a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	59.094	8	.000
N of Valid Cases	495		

a. 1 cells (6.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.85.

Appendix Table 24.15 Cross-Tabulation of Reason for Referral & Source of Referral

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected number of statutory referrals for reasons of ‘Serious Mental Health’ (+4.9) and a lower than expected number of statutory referrals for reasons of ‘Islamic Guidance’ (-2.2) and ‘Marriage/Divorce’ (-3.3).

		Source of referral			Total	
		Non-statutory	Statutory	Unknown		
Reason for referral	Advocacy	Count	50	4	15	69
		Expected Count	52.5	6.9	9.7	69.0
		% within Source of referral	14.2%	8.7%	23.1%	14.9%
		Std. Residual	-.3	-1.1	1.7	
	Family/Parenting	Count	47	7	2	56
		Expected Count	42.6	5.6	7.9	56.0
		% within Source of referral	13.4%	15.2%	3.1%	12.1%
		Std. Residual	.7	.6	-2.1	
	General Mental Health	Count	27	8	14	49
		Expected Count	37.3	4.9	6.9	49.0
		% within Source of referral	7.7%	17.4%	21.5%	10.6%
		Std. Residual	-1.7	1.4	2.7	
	Islamic Guidance	Count	39	0	8	47
		Expected Count	35.7	4.7	6.6	47.0
		% within Source of referral	11.1%	0.0%	12.3%	10.2%
Std. Residual		.5	-2.2	.5		
Marriage/Divorce	Count	123	2	19	144	
	Expected Count	109.5	14.3	20.2	144.0	

	% within Source of referral	34.9%	4.3%	29.2%	31.1%
	Std. Residual	1.3	-3.3	-.3	
	Count	35	9	4	48
	Expected Count	36.5	4.8	6.7	48.0
Other	% within Source of referral	9.9%	19.6%	6.2%	10.4%
	Std. Residual	-.2	1.9	-1.1	
	Count	31	16	3	50
	Expected Count	38.0	5.0	7.0	50.0
Serious Mental Health	% within Source of referral	8.8%	34.8%	4.6%	10.8%
	Std. Residual	-1.1	4.9	-1.5	
	Count	352	46	65	463
	Expected Count	352.0	46.0	65.0	463.0
Total	% within Source of referral	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Table 24.16 Chi-Square Test for Reason for Referral & Source of Referral

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.249 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	73.859	12	.000
N of Valid Cases	463		

a. 4 cells (19.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.67.

Appendix Table 24.17 Cross-Tabulation of Ethnicity & Counselling

The standardised residuals show a lower than expected number of Bangladeshi service users accessing the counselling service (-2.0).

		Ethnicity						Total	
		African	Arab	Bangladeshi	Other	Pakistani	Unknown		
Counselling	No	Count	41	43	56	43	107	53	343
		Expected Count	40.7	45.0	47.2	51.5	107.9	50.7	343.0
		% within Ethnicity	71.9%	68.3%	84.8%	59.7%	70.9%	74.6%	71.5%
		Std. Residual	.0	-.3	1.3	-1.2	-.1	.3	
	Yes	Count	16	20	10	29	44	18	137
		Expected Count	16.3	18.0	18.8	20.6	43.1	20.3	137.0
		% within Ethnicity	28.1%	31.7%	15.2%	40.3%	29.1%	25.4%	28.5%
		Std. Residual	-.1	.5	-2.0	1.9	.1	-.5	
Total		Count	57	63	66	72	151	71	480
		Expected Count	57.0	63.0	66.0	72.0	151.0	71.0	480.0
		% within Ethnicity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Table 24.18 Chi-Square Test for Ethnicity & Counselling

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.368 ^a	5	.045
Likelihood Ratio	11.825	5	.037
N of Valid Cases	480		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.27.

Appendix Table 24.19 Cross-Tabulation of Age & Counselling

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected number of service users aged 0-24 accessing counselling services (+1.9).

		date of birth					Total	
		0-24	25-39	40-55	56+	Unknown		
Counselling	No	Count	33	129	54	24	103	343
	Expected Count	40.7	131.5	54.3	20.0	96.5	343.0	
	% within date of birth	57.9%	70.1%	71.1%	85.7%	76.3%	71.5%	
	Std. Residual	-1.2	-.2	.0	.9	.7		
	Yes	Count	24	55	22	4	32	137
	Expected Count	16.3	52.5	21.7	8.0	38.5	137.0	
	% within date of birth	42.1%	29.9%	28.9%	14.3%	23.7%	28.5%	
	Std. Residual	1.9	.3	.1	-1.4	-1.1		
	Total	Count	57	184	76	28	135	480
	Expected Count	57.0	184.0	76.0	28.0	135.0	480.0	
% within date of birth	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Appendix Table 24.20 Chi-Square Test for Age & Counselling

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.651 ^a	4	.047
Likelihood Ratio	9.742	4	.045
N of Valid Cases	480		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.99.

Appendix Table 24.21 Cross-Tabulation of Bengali Language & Counselling

The standardised residuals show a lower than expected frequency of Bengali-speaking service users accessing the counselling service (-2.5).

		Bengali language			Total	
		No	Unknown	Yes		
Counselling	No	Count	278	23	42	343
		Expected Count	283.0	27.2	32.9	343.0
		% within Bengali language	70.2%	60.5%	91.3%	71.5%
		Std. Residual	-.3	-.8	1.6	
	Yes	Count	118	15	4	137
		Expected Count	113.0	10.8	13.1	137.0
		% within Bengali language	29.8%	39.5%	8.7%	28.5%
Total		Std. Residual	.5	1.3	-2.5	
		Count	396	38	46	480
		Expected Count	396.0	38.0	46.0	480.0
	% within Bengali language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Appendix Table 24.22 Chi-Square Test for Bengali Language & Counselling

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.416 ^a	2	.003
Likelihood Ratio	13.473	2	.001
N of Valid Cases	480		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.85.

Appendix Table 24.23 Cross-Tabulation of Age & Advocacy

The standardised residuals show a higher than expected number of advocacy service users aged 56+ (+2.9).

		date of birth					Total	
		0-24	25-39	40-55	56+	Unknown		
Advocacy	No	Count	48	158	52	16	115	389
		Expected Count	46.1	148.8	61.5	22.6	110.0	389.0
		% within date of birth	84.2%	85.9%	68.4%	57.1%	84.6%	80.9%
		Std. Residual	.3	.8	-1.2	-1.4	.5	
	Yes	Count	9	26	24	12	21	92
		Expected Count	10.9	35.2	14.5	5.4	26.0	92.0
		% within date of birth	15.8%	14.1%	31.6%	42.9%	15.4%	19.1%
Total		Std. Residual	-.6	-1.5	2.5	2.9	-1.0	
		Count	57	184	76	28	136	481
		Expected Count	57.0	184.0	76.0	28.0	136.0	481.0
	% within date of birth	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Appendix Table 24.24 Chi-Square Test for Age & Advocacy

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.386 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	19.816	4	.001
N of Valid Cases	481		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.36.

Appendix Table 24.25 Cross-Tabulation of English Language & Advocacy

The standardised residuals show a lower than expected number of English speaking service users accessing the advocacy service (-2.9).

		English language				Total
		Basic	No	Unknown	Yes	
Advocacy	No					
	Count	9	42	33	305	389
	Expected Count	10.5	65.5	30.7	282.2	389.0
	% within English language	69.2%	51.9%	86.8%	87.4%	80.9%
	Std. Residual	-5	-2.9	.4	1.4	
	Yes					
	Count	4	39	5	44	92
	Expected Count	2.5	15.5	7.3	66.8	92.0
% within English language	30.8%	48.1%	13.2%	12.6%	19.1%	
Std. Residual	1.0	6.0	-8	-2.8		
Total	Count	13	81	38	349	481
	Expected Count	13.0	81.0	38.0	349.0	481.0
	% within English language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix Table 24.26 Chi-Square Test for English Language & Advocacy

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.707 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	47.249	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	481		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.49.

Appendix 25: NVivo Thematic Coding Nodes

Appendix Table 25.1: NVivo Thematic Coding Nodes

NVivo Node	Explanation of Node
Authenticity	References to the IWO providing ‘authentic’ or ‘true’ Islamic advice and guidance
Authority Contested	Critiques made in relation to the authority of the IWO e.g. due to being progressive, because of not responding to communications, and in relation to <i>khul</i> and <i>hizanat</i>
Charisma	Instances of the Director being described as ‘ <i>shaykh</i> ’ and ‘spiritual guide’ and to his authority within the IWO
Community Chaplaincy Model	References to the Helping Hands Project model
Complementary	References to the IWO being complementary to other service providers
Compromising Faith	References to do with potentially compromising faith e.g. references to working with men and not chastising service users alcohol/drug use
Confidentiality	References made to the importance of confidentiality
Culture opposite Religion	References to culture as being distinct from religion
Flexibility	References to the IWO’s approach as flexible
Freedom Choice	References to freedom of choice for service users
Funding	References to the IWO’s funding
Gender	References made to the IWO respecting gender norms/meeting needs of women
Inclusivity	References to the IWO’s services being for Muslims of all backgrounds and non-Muslims too
Inclusivity Contested	References indicating that the IWO’s service may not be inclusive e.g. prioritising <i>Shariah</i> law over

	British law
Islamic Ethos	References made to the IWO's Islamic ethos
Islamic Perspectives	References made to Islamic perspectives, e.g. those underpinning services such as befriending, mentoring and advocacy
Islamic Space	References to the IWO's spaces as Islamic
Jinn Black Magic Evil Eye	References made to <i>jinn</i> , black magic and the evil eye, including contestations made by various social actors
Mosque	Description of the IWO's work in comparison to services available at mosques
Multicultural Model	References to the IWO's multicultural model
Muslim Culture	References to the IWO recognising Muslim culture
Non-judgemental	References made to the IWO's approach as being non-judgemental
Organisation's Name	References made to the organisation's name, contestating surrounding this and subsequent name changes
Practical Model	Examples of the IWO's Islamic model in practice e.g. <i>Hadith</i> and Quranic references used during counselling sessions, example of <i>dhikr</i> used during a counselling session, discussions of service user assessment process
Professionalism	References made to the professionalism of the IWO
Psycho-Spiritual Model	References made to the psycho-spiritual model
Spirituality	References made to spirituality during discussion of the IWO's model/services/identity/work.
Unique	References made as to why the IWO is unique
Vocation	References by staff members and volunteers regarding reasons to work/volunteer at IWO