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# **The Impacts of Cyberhate**

Harriet Fearn

PhD Psychology

University of Sussex

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### **Declaration**

The thesis conforms to an ‘article format’ in which the middle Chapters consist of discrete articles written in a style that is appropriate for publication in peer-reviewed journals in the field. The first and final Chapters (1 and 5) present synthetic overviews and discussions of the field and the research undertaken. These Chapters were written by the first author, with feedback provided by Professor Rupert Brown and Dr Mark Walters.

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Chapters 2 and 3 were submitted to the European Journal of Social Psychology. All the initial research design, the data collection, analysis and write up of the manuscripts was completed by the first author. Professor Rupert Brown (first supervisor) provided support with the quantitative analysis in Chapter 3 and Dr Mark Walters (second supervisor) provided support with the qualitative analysis in Chapter 3. Additionally, both supervisors provided feedback on the research designs and the manuscripts themselves.

Chapter 4 has been written in article format with an experimental design for submission to a psychology journal. The author contributions follow the same format as the two papers previously with myself, Harriet Fearn, as the first author completing the design, data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation. Professor Rupert Brown and Dr Mark Walters contributed with feedback on the research design, analysis and manuscript preparation.

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signed.....

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## **Summary**

### **The Impacts of Cyberhate**

Harriet Fearn

University of Sussex

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

## **SUMMARY**

The thesis explores the impacts of being exposed to hate material online, so called cyberhate, using social psychological theories of group identity as a framework to explore victimisation experiences when targeted directly or witnessing others from the same identity group being targeted, known as indirect victimisation. Three papers examine these impacts with two commonly stigmatised groups; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGB&T) and Muslims. Paper 1 reports the results from two online surveys about the nature of cyberhate experienced by these two groups. Results indicate it is a common and frequent problem occurring over a range of internet platforms and mediums and there are a number of negative emotional reactions and behavioural intentions similar to those reported by Intergroup Emotions Theory after group identity challenges. Paper 2 uses qualitative interviews with victims of cyberhate to gain a detailed understanding of the impacts of being victimised. Participants indicated that there is a level of resilience to being targeted as bad behaviour is expected online, but being exposed to hateful material causes many to take avoidance action, avoiding certain parts of the internet. Paper 3 presents the results of an innovative experimental study exposing members of the stigmatised groups and a control to hate material. Those viewing group specific hate material felt angrier than when just viewing generally unpleasant material. The current research finds that being targeted online has similar negative impacts to offline hate crime, both to those who are targeted directly but also those who are indirectly victimised.

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**Abbreviations**

ANCOVA – Analysis of Covariance

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

GSH – Group Specific Hate

IET – Intergroup Emotions Theory

ITT – Integrated Threat Theory

LGB&T – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people

MANCOVA – Multiple Analysis of Covariance

MANOVA – Multiple Analysis of Variance

NSH – Non-Specific Hate

PAF - Principal Axis Factor

SD – Standard Deviation

SIT – Social Identity Theory

## **Chapter 1: Theoretical Overview**

### **Cyberhate: Using Social Psychological Theories of Group Attacks to Understand the Impacts on Victims**

Hate crime, the act of targeting someone offensively in word or deed because of their membership of a particular group, has been shown to be a pervasive and particularly damaging form of crime for its victims (Hall, 2013; Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999; Iganski, & Lagou, 2014; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia, & Gu, 2001). There is now a substantial body of research on the causes and consequences of hate crime; however, one particular area where there is a paucity of research is hate crime that occurs on the internet - known from this point on as ‘cyberhate’<sup>1</sup>. The aim of this thesis is to explore the emotional and behavioural impacts of being a victim of cyberhate for two commonly victimised groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T)<sup>2</sup> people and Muslims. To help understand these impacts, the research will use a theoretical framework that draws from the following social psychological theories: Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET, Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993), Integrated Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and Stigma Theory (Crocker & Major 1989; Goffman, 1963; Major & O’Brien, 2005). Examining the victimisation impacts of cyberhate will add a new dimension to an, as yet, largely unexplored area of hate crime victimisation research.

### **1.1.What is Hate Crime?**

There is currently no universally agreed definition of hate crime within the extant literature (Hall, 2013). Despite this, most scholars (and practitioners) working in this area agree that hate crime need not be about hate at all. Indeed, Jacobs and Potter state that “[h]ate crime is not really about hate, it is about prejudice and bias” (1998: 27). In reality this means that most hate crimes are incidents that are at least partly motivated by some form of prejudice, which has been demonstrated towards the victim’s (perceived) identity characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of cyberhate is given later in this chapter

<sup>2</sup> The LGB&T group represent two protected groups (sexual orientation AND transgender identity), however following discussions with LGB&T organisations it was deemed appropriate to work with them as one group at this early stage of the research.

In order to provide clarity for the current research, a definition of hate crime needed to be decided on. The definition chosen is an amalgamation of the definitions of hate crimes and (non-criminal) hate incidents currently used by the UK police force, with some adaptations so that it is pertinent to the protected identity groups included in this research.

“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or..... against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender or..... against a person’s religion or perceived religion.” (College of Policing, 2014).

There are a number of critical advantages of using this victim-centred definition that incorporates both criminal offences and non-criminal incidents. The first advantage, from a legal perspective, is that if a victim perceives the offence/ incident to be motivated by hate (i.e. prejudice or hostility) then the police have to investigate it as such. This reduces police discretion in investigating these offences. Such an approach helps to remove any institutional prejudice that may be directed towards certain protected groups (College of Policing, 2014) which has been shown to be problematic in the United Kingdom in the past (Macpherson, 1999) as well as in other jurisdictions (Bell, 1997). The second advantage, in terms of this research, is that the broader definition allows the current investigation to capture the full range of victimisation experiences (both criminal and targeted anti-social behaviour). Inclusive definitions have been argued to provide a much more comprehensive picture of the extent of hate crime victimisation than relying on official statistics alone (Van Kesteren, 2016) and helps to overcome the problem of underreporting ubiquitous to hate crimes/incidents (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014; Home Office, 2014).

The chosen definition does have a limitation. Hate crime definitions have been designed to explain hate crime that occurs offline. There is no known “official” definition that explicitly adds cyberhate as a dimension of hate crime. The lack of any formal definition of cyberhate is largely due to the fact that diverging approaches are taken to criminalising (online) speech in different parts of the world (Bakalis, 2016). What may be deemed as a cyberhate offence in one country may be protected as free speech in another. More broadly, cyberhate incidents (whether criminal or not) have been defined as “the use of electronic communications to express hateful comments, insults or discriminatory remarks about a person or group of persons based on, for example, their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity” (Bakalis, 2016: 263) In practice incidents are likely to involve one or more of the following forms of communication:

- verbal or written abuse (e.g. in chatrooms, on social media and when gaming)
- trolling<sup>3</sup>
- spam<sup>4</sup>
- indecent or offensive images sent to an individual or their friends and family (e.g. via social media or email)
- stalking or harassment through all forms of internet activity, and
- threats of physical violence.

The inclusive hate crime definition along with the inclusion of a broad range of internet activities allows not only for the analysis of cyberhate that occurs on social media, which has generally been the subject of most of the research (Awan, 2014; Awan & Zempi, 2016; Burnap & Williams, 2015; Burnap & Williams, 2016), but all forms of online media. This includes blogs, comments pages on news websites, forums, and emails too. This will

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<sup>3</sup> ‘trolling’ is going on a website with the specific intention to cause trouble and post offensive and controversial comments

<sup>4</sup> ‘spam’ is junk email that is unwanted and unsolicited

help to establish a fuller picture of the extent of cyberhate in all its forms, which can then be used to explore the impacts of victimisation.

In the UK, cyberhate offences are proscribed under a number of different pieces of legislation (see Figure 1.1). In order that the legislative framework recognises the “wave of harm” and the social inequality of hate crimes (Iganski, 2001; Perry, 2002; Tyner, 2016) the legislation offers enhanced sentencing (longer and more punitive punishments) for crimes that are considered to be aggravated offences and that have been motivated by a hostility (or which demonstrate hostility) towards one of the five protected characteristics: race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and disability (section 28 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 & sections 145 & 146 Criminal Justice Act 2003).

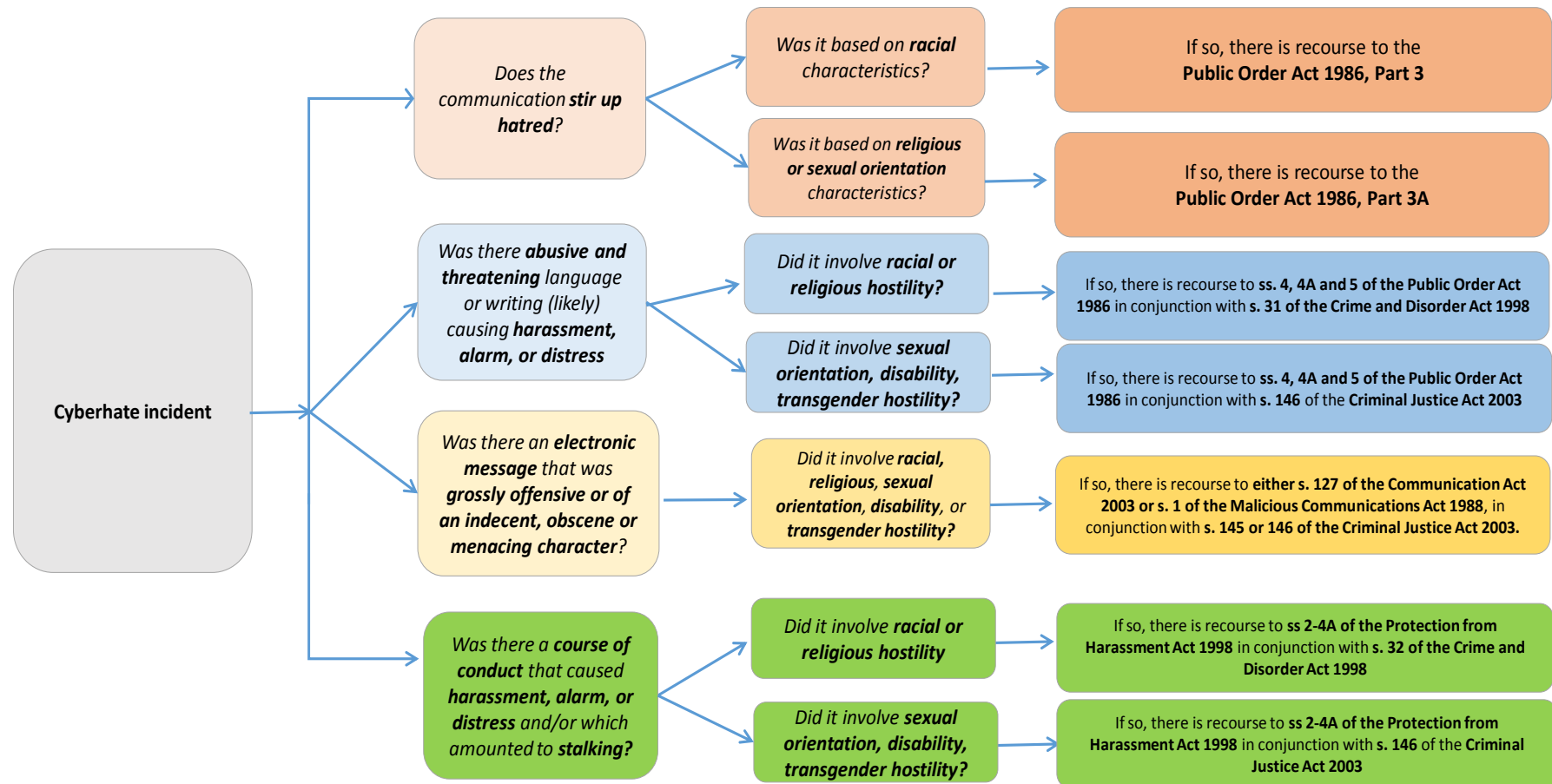
Prosecutions using the aggravated versions of offences have been problematic. It can be difficult to prove perpetrator motivations (Law Commission, 2014) and the burden of proof for conviction is much higher than the definition used for reporting (College of Policing, 2014). Thus, it is likely that there will be a discrepancy between the rate of reporting and the rate of conviction. Additionally, as hate crime has been shown to include a large number of ‘low-level’ offences which may occur regularly (Bowling, 1998; Iganski, 2008b), or be part of a protracted dispute in which both parties are in breach of the law (Walters & Hoyle, 2012) and often be committed by someone known to the victim (Roberts, Innes, Williams, Tregida & Gadd, 2013) it can be difficult for the appropriate charges to be filed.

Along with the problems associated with prosecuting ‘hate crime’ offline currently under the UK legal framework is that there are no specific “cyberhate” offences. The majority of hate crime legislation (such as sections 28-32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) has been designed with contact and face to face crime in mind. This has meant that cyberhate offences have been dealt with under other pieces of legislation not originally

intended for preventing prejudice-based online activities. For example, section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 states that it is an offence to ‘send (or to cause to be sent) an electronic message that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character’. Where the message also contains hate content the offence can become aggravated under section 145 & 146 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003). This means that cyberhate offences must first fall within the ambit of section 127 and then also within another statute in order for it to become a hate crime. In reality this legislation has been rarely used to prosecute those guilty of perpetrating cyberhate due to a lack of clarity and clear guidance in prosecuting these offences (Edwards, 2012).

The fragmented legislative framework that is currently used to regulate cyberhate has created a situation whereby this facet of hate crime victimisation is poorly understood and, in turn, rarely prosecuted. The predominant focus on offline hate crime, both by state agencies and academics, has meant that experiences of cyberhate have been largely overlooked. Although efforts are being made to rectify this, (online hate crime now forms part of the new hate crime strategy, including plans to implement better monitoring systems and closer joint working with online platform providers to manage cyberhate (Home Office, 2016)), there is still much to be learnt about the causes, effects and responses required to prevent cyberhate.

Figure 1.1: Legal remedies for cyberhate (designed by Walters & Fearn, 2016)



## 1.2. Prevalence of Hate Crime

Hate crime is a common occurrence for many marginalised groups within society (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015). In the year 2014- 2015 52,528 hate crimes were reported to the police in England and Wales of which 11% were crimes targeting sexual orientation, 6% were targeting religious identity and 1% targeted those who are transgender (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015). Overall this represents an 18% increase in the number of hate crimes recorded than the previous year. However, the situation may be a lot worse than this. The UK's decision to leave the European Union in June 2016 precipitated a spike in the recorded number of hate crimes, a rise of around 42% (National Police Chiefs Council, 2016).

Data taken from the Crime Survey for England and Wales attempts to estimate the “dark figure” of hate crime. The most recent analysis of this data found that there are an estimated 222,000 hate crimes committed each year (data taken from 2012-2015) (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015). Out of this total there were an estimated 29,000 hate crimes based on sexual orientation and 38,000 hate crimes based on religion. A number of other organisations have also tried to capture the true prevalence of both anti-LGB&T and anti-Muslim hate crime. For example, the UK charity Stonewall has examined hate crime figures against people who are LGB&T across two different research projects, using self report surveys, one in 2008 and one in 2013 (Dick, 2008; Guasp, Gammon & Ellison, 2013). These indicated that in 2008 twenty percent of 1,721 LGB&T people had experienced hate crime in the last three years (Dick, 2008), and in 2013 one in six of over 2500 respondents indicated the same (Guasp et al., 2013).

TellMAMA, a charity supporting Muslim people who are victims of hate crime, offer a third party reporting system. In the year of February 2014 to March 2015 they reported 729 incidents of anti-Muslim hate crime, of which 548 were verified externally (Feldman &

Littler, 2015). Given that hate crimes against all religious groups stood at just over 3000 (Corcoran et al., 2015), with a little over 1000 being anti-Semitic in nature (Community Security Trust, 2015), this suggests that anti-Muslim abuse is more common than the current reporting channels indicate, particularly as victims need to be aware of third party reporting mechanisms in order for a hate crime/incident to be logged there. Similar reports have been collated by a range of charities for people who are disabled (Quarmby, 2008) and for Jewish people (Community Security Trust, 2015).

There are two key reasons why accurate figures of hate crime are hard to capture. The first is the application of different definitions applied across different reporting mechanisms, as discussed in the previous section (Hall, 2013). Applying different definitions to measurement can severely impact the numbers that are reported. Definitions that include non-criminal incidents and/ or the victim's perceptions of why they were targeted produce much higher and, it has been argued, much more realistic prevalence rates (Van Kesteren, 2016).

The second reason is that victims do not tend to report hate crime. It has been indicated that the more common types of hate offences are less likely to be reported (Home Office, 2014). Estimates suggest that between half and two thirds of people who are victims of hate crime do not report to the police (Corcoran et al., 2015; Guasp, et al., 2013).

The reasons people choose not to report hate crime have been widely explored. The Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) asked for the reasons why people did not report hate crimes and the reasons were (as stated in Home Office, 2014):

- that they felt the matter was trivial,
- that the police would/ could not do anything,
- that the victims had dealt with the incident themselves,
- that they reported to another organisation,

- that it was a common occurrence,
- that they feared reprisals, and
- dislike/ or bad previous experiences with the police.

The Leicester Hate Crime project (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014) indicated the most common reasons why people chose not to report to the police were: that they did not think the police would take it seriously, that they were able to deal with the incident themselves with help, the police could not have done anything, fear of retaliation, embarrassment, that it was a private matter, and that they did not like the police or they had a bad experience with them previously. A number of the most common reasons appear to stem from a disbelief in the police to be able or willing to deal with the situation effectively. However, 20% of the sample did not state a reason for not reporting suggesting that there are still a number of complex reasons why people choose not to report hate crime that have not yet been captured in the literature.

There is another issue associated with the nature of hate crime incidents that can impact levels of reporting. The nature of hate crime victimisation is that it is not always a one-off event perpetrated by a stranger (Roberts et al., 2013) and hate crime can take a variety of different forms, such as graffiti, harassment and intimidation, as well as violence (Perry, 2001). Walters & Hoyle (2012) indicated that hate crime /incidents could often be part of a long and protracted dispute between acquaintances where both parties can end up engaging in behaviours that are in breach of the law. Iganski (2008b) indicated that the majority of hate crime tends to be ‘low-level’ crime, such as graffiti and abrasive encounters rather than ‘mission orientated’ attacks (although these still happen at the extreme end; Levin & McDevitt (1993) define mission orientated hate crime as ‘Hate offences committed as an act of “war” against any and all members of a particular group of people’). This low level

targeting means that hate crime is often overlooked by authorities (Garland, 2010), making these hate crime incidences harder to capture in the current reporting mechanisms.

Currently there is almost no systematic provision for measuring cyberhate. Some key organisations are starting to collate figures on the extent of cyberhate but these are in the very early stages. The UK charity Stonewall commissioned a piece of research examining the extent to which people who are LGB&T experienced hate crime and asked about online experiences as part of this survey (Guasp et al., 2013). This report indicated that 5% of 2500 people had experienced homophobic abuse directly online and 28% had witnessed hate crime online targeting someone else who is LGB&T, so called 'indirect victimisation' (Paterson, Brown, Walters & Carrasco, 2016). Stonewall's research also reported that this was more common for those aged 18-24 years (Guasp et al., 2013). While this gives an indication of the prevalence of online hate crime there was no specific information on the nature or the content of hate crime online or the frequency in which it was experienced.

TellMAMA collects information on Muslim people who have been targeted by hate crime both on and offline. The most recent statistics collated by this group indicated that 402 incidents of the 548 reported to the organisation in 2014 and 2015 happened online; suggesting that over two thirds of hate crime reported in this system occurred on the internet (Feldman & Littler, 2015). However, this number is based purely on those people who know about the organisation and chose to report using this medium.

As yet, there are no formal official surveys or measures to capture the extent to which people are targeted by cyberhate. This is compounded by the lack of clarity in how cyberhate is defined. However limited the current research is, it does suggest that certain groups (in this case LGB&T and Muslims) are being targeted online for hate crime as well as offline. With no official channels or clear information on the incidences of cyberhate, it is highly likely that the prevalence of cyberhate will be grossly underestimated and under-reported, and therefore

the impacts for victims are not yet being fully understood or recorded. Currently we do not know what forms of cyberhate are most frequently experienced or how these impact upon those who read, see or hear hate-based messages online. This thesis will start to address some of the key gaps in cyberhate research regarding its prevalence, frequency, nature and most importantly impact.

### **1.3. Impacts of Hate Crime Victimisation**

The harms of hate crime on its victims have been relatively well documented. Hate crimes have been shown to have a number of impacts on the victims that are likely to be worse than those reported by victims of similar crimes that do not have a bias or hate motivation (Hall 2013; Iganski & Lagou, 2014; McDevitt et al., 2001). These impacts can last for a longer period of time, with one study finding that emotional impacts were still felt five years after the initial victimisation, compared with a period of two years for non-hate victims (Hall, 2013; Herek, 2008).

The negative impacts that have been reported include higher levels of depression, anger, anxiety, and more post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (Herek, Gillis, Cogan, Glunt, 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt, et al., 2001). Victims are also more likely to feel more vulnerable about being targeted by crimes in the future (Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001) and start to feel the world is generally not a safe place to be (Herek et al., 1999). These negative emotional reactions to hate crime can also precipitate behavioural changes within victims. The feelings of vulnerability meant that people in the same identity group are likely to take behavioural action which makes them feel safer. These behavioural responses include choosing not to disclose sexual orientations and changing how individuals express themselves publically (Bell & Perry, 2015), or

avoiding certain locales (Perry & Alvi, 2012). In some cases victims have withdrawn from public engagement altogether (Awan & Zempi, 2015).

However, hate crimes do not just impact those who are directly targeted; they are uniquely damaging because they can have an impact to those people who share the same identity group. It has been argued that hate crimes are a community based crime as they are a way of communicating societal power and ensuring that marginalised groups remain in subordinate positions. Perry describes this as follows:

“It involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator’s group and the ‘appropriate’ subordinate identity of the victim’s group” (Perry, 2001: 10).

Indeed, Iganski (2001) describes how hate crimes can give rise to a ‘wave of harm’ which impacts victims, marginalised communities, as well as societal norms and values.

These wider impacts of hate crime have been termed ‘indirect’ hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). The impacts of hate crime on these indirect victims have been shown to have striking similarity to those who are directly targeted (or direct victims) (Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012). Several studies have suggested that people who are aware of an attack against an individual who shares the same identity group characteristics may experience vicarious trauma (Noelle, 2002), such as a loss of self-esteem and self-worth (Bell & Perry 2015), a loss of trust in the perpetrator group, and a feeling that they would not be protected should the same thing happen to them (Perry & Alvi, 2012).

More recent research has found correlations between indirect hate crime victimisation and specific negative emotional reactions, such as anger and fear, and then subsequent

behavioural responses, such as avoidance strategies or being more aggressive and proactive (Paterson et al., 2016). These behavioural responses are similar to those self-protection behaviours adopted by the direct victims (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Bell & Perry, 2015; Perry & Alvi, 2012). The links between these emotional reactions and behavioural responses will be discussed further in the social psychology theories section below.

#### **1.4. The Impacts of Hate Crime Online (Cyberhate)**

The growing body of evidence on the harms of hate crime has predominantly been examined for the experiences of hate crime that occurs offline. Most studies have neglected to examine whether cyberhate has similar or diverging impacts on victims. For example, Katz-Wise and Hyde (2012) completed a meta-analysis of LGB&T people's hate crime victimisation experiences. However, there was so little data on victimisation that occurred online that this element of the analysis had to be removed in a number of cases.

The paucity of empirical research on the impacts of cyberhate is palpable considering that the internet plays a central role in many people's everyday life. Currently in the United Kingdom (UK), the average adult spends 20 hours per week online (Ofcom, 2015) and 39.3 million adults access the internet daily or almost daily (ONS, 2015). The increased use of the internet in our everyday lives has meant that there has been a commensurate rise in the amount of hate-based content proliferated (Home Office, 2014; Williams & Wall, 2013).

Apart from the basic information provided on prevalence discussed in section 1.2 there is limited research on when cyberhate occurs. Williams and Burnap (2015) explored the prevalence of anti-Muslim attacks on Twitter following a precipitating event, in this case the

murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby<sup>5</sup>. The findings showed that there was a spike in anti-Muslim comments immediately following the event which then trailed off within a couple of days.

Much of the online hate reflected a clear rhetoric between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Burnap & Williams, 2016; Williams & Burnap, 2015), comments and expressions were shown to be influenced by content within the media, with more negative reports of Muslim behaviour encouraging more anti-Muslim hate material online (Burnap & Williams, 2015). The media has also been demonstrated to influence attitudes and behaviour towards a stigmatised identity group in social psychological research (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, Gerhardstein, 2002).

A small number of other studies have begun to explore the harms that are being caused by cyberhate. Awan and Zempi (2016) compared the impacts of offline and online anti-Muslim victimisation and found that experiencing cyberhate can have negative effects such as worrying that threats online may happen offline, while some victims indicated that they had withdrawn from society after observing hate-based content. Awan and Zempi’s (2015) previous study noted that victims felt fear when targeted online because the anonymity afforded to the perpetrators by the internet meant that the threat could be from anyone. Other negative emotional reactions observed by the researchers included anger and vulnerability, mirroring both the direct and indirect victimisation experiences of offline hate crime (Bell & Perry, 2015; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012).

Respondents in Awan and Zempi’s (2015) study reported that they did not report cyberhate because they were unsure if an offence had been committed. This finding highlighted one of the issues associated (explored above) with the lack of information on what constitutes cyberhate in the current definitions and UK legal context.

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<sup>5</sup> Lee Rigby was murdered on a street in Woolwich on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, targeted for being a soldier by two offenders claiming to commit the crime in the name of Islam.

Due to the current lack of research on the impacts of cyberhate victimisation, other evidence can be used to try and shed some light on this topic. The closest body of literature to cyberhate which indicates that abuse online can lead to psychological harm is research into cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has been shown to cause psychosocial problems, problems in other relationships for victims, and unsafe protection behaviours such as carrying weapons (for a review see Tokunaga, 2010).

While the impacts of cyberbullying have been shown to be profound (Kowalski Giumetti, Schroeder & Lattanner, 2014; Price & Dalgleish, 2010), there are some important distinctions to be made between cyberbullying and cyberhate. Most cyberbullying research has focused on young people (those under eighteen years old) and people being targeted as *individuals* rather than *group members* (Addington, 2013; Hempill & Heerde, 2014; Sakellariou, Carroll, Houghton, 2012). Being targeted as a group member is important because of Tajfel's (1978) continuum of social interaction moving from 'interpersonal' to 'intergroup' behaviour, with the two processes being at opposite ends of the continuum. The implication of this is that intergroup responses are likely to be very different from interpersonal ones (see Brown & Turner, 1981). As hate crime is, by nature, a social and community based crime (Perry, 2001; Walters & Brown, 2016), it is important to consider the role that group processes play in victimisation experiences. The definitions of cyberbullying also employ a much broader range of abusive internet behaviours that are not necessarily in breach of the law, such as spreading rumours and withdrawing friendship. While this type of online aggression is undoubtedly serious for its victims, it is seldom the case that they are targeted because of their specific group identity which is the key and defining element of hate crime (Hall, 2013; Herek, et al., 1999; Zempi & Chakraborti, 2014).

Hate crime research so far has been conducted from a range of different disciplines including criminology, sociology and socio-legal studies using a range of different definitions

of cyber victimisation. These include broader ranges of internet-based crime such as identity theft and phishing scams<sup>6</sup> (McGuire & Dowling, 2013) and cyberbullying (Kowalski Giumetti, Schroeder & Lattanner, 2014; Price & Dalgleish, 2010) or in conjunction with other forms of hate crime (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Awan & Zempi, 2016). The research is starting to demonstrate the link between cyberhate and its subsequent negative impacts but this evidence base is still fairly small.

It is clear that the research on cyberhate remains sparse and that a number of key gaps remain. This thesis will aim to fill some of these gaps by providing a series of papers based on quantitative and qualitative studies that examine the direct and indirect impacts of two distinct forms of cyberhate (anti-LGB&T and anti-Muslim).

Before presenting the results of these studies, the next section sets out the key social psychological theories in which this thesis is situated, with reference to the importance of group identity in the formation of prejudice and how this can impact those who are the victims of prejudice.

### **1.5. Social Psychological Theories and Hate Crime**

A number of social psychological theories have highlighted the importance, not only of the role that group membership has on constructing a positive identity, but of helping to explain the wider group impacts when that group identity is challenged. These explanations mirror the wider community damage known to be inflicted by hate crime, when members of the same identity group feel the impacts of the offences. The aim of this thesis is to apply these social psychological theories to cyberhate, a real world example of an attack on a member of a group because of their group identity, and use them to explore the impacts on victims.

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<sup>6</sup> Phishing is a way to commit fraud by convincing people to provide important financial information under the guise of improving personal identity security

### **Intergroup bias and prejudice.**

Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is a theory that suggests that people's membership in certain social groups can be an important part of their social identity. A key element of the theory is that through creating social groups to which we belong there are inevitably groups in which we are not members. This process of forming so-called ingroups and outgroups is the basis of prejudice according to Tajfel (1978, 1982). The development of the theory followed a number of early experiments such as Robbers Cave (Sherif, 1958; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1954, 1961) and the minimal group paradigm studies (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971; Tajfel & Billig, 1974), which indicated that mere group membership could be important in the formation of prejudice. These social groups could form quickly and be based on arbitrary and random criteria but still could lead to discriminatory behaviour. There are two crucial elements to the role of identifying with your chosen group: ingroup favouritism and outgroup bias. Ingroup favouritism describes the phenomena in which people demonstrate a preference for members of their own group and outgroup bias is when individuals may display negative attitudes and behaviour towards members of other groups. These biases are formed by the need of people to create positive distinctiveness for their group to make it more socially valued (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Brown, 2000). It is outgroup bias that is theorised to lead to prejudice and discrimination.

SIT is one of the most influential theories in social psychology and there is a wide range of empirical support for the formation of social groups and how these group identities can lead to prejudice (Tajfel & Turner 1979; see Brown, 2000 for a review). However, one of the key critiques of the theory is the lack of clarity in the available information on identity motives or the choice of strategies to protect identities for those groups who have low societal status; in other words, the impacts on groups, targeted with discrimination or that are

marginalised by society (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Brown, 2000; Hogg, Abrams, Otten, Hinke, 2004; Hornsey, 2008). Given that it has been demonstrated that high status groups display more intergroup bias than low status groups this is an important aspect of the theory which requires further development (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002). SIT is based on the premise that social groups need to have positive distinctiveness for the self-esteem and wellbeing of the group members. So, what are the impacts on someone's identity when they belong to a marginalised group? Scheepers and Ellemers (2005) found members of stigmatised groups had lower self-esteem and would strive to achieve a change in their position. To protect their identity, low status group members may adopt a number of strategies when faced with an identity challenge, known as 'identity management strategies' (Van Knippenberg, 1989). These include: trying to move to a higher status group, comparing groups on factors not relating to group status, splitting their group further into sub groups in which they can be in the higher status group, contesting or challenging the current group hierarchy, or using changes within the ingroup to form a more positive view. All of these strategies have been shown to be utilised by low status groups in some circumstances (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, Klink, 1998; Brown, 2000; Doojse, Spears, Koomen, 1995; Ellemers, 1993). While it may be argued that any or all of these strategies could be used to improve the positive distinctiveness in the group identity of members of low status groups, there is a lack of clarity within the current research literature about when each strategy may be employed and under which social circumstances (Brown 2000). Additionally, these responses proposed under the SIT framework neglect to explore what the *impacts* are for victims of discrimination in low status groups, particularly if one or more of these 'identity protection' responses are not available to them.

SIT's explanation of group identity aligns well with the research on hate crime as it helps to explain why prejudice occurs and why people may want to target someone based on

a perceived group-based characteristic and, potentially, why other members of the same identity group may feel vulnerable when they perceive that their group is targeted. However, the lack of information on what the impacts are of being a member of a low status group means that it is not able to help inform the research of the potential impacts of hate crime victimisation, and so attention needs to be turned to other theories to do this.

### **Understanding victimisation impacts.**

Currently there are fewer explanations on the impacts of prejudice and discrimination against marginalised groups than the causes of prejudice, although there are some theories that offer some useful insight.

The first is Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET, Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993) whose key tenet is that when people belong to social groups they experience group-based emotions as a result of the intergroup situations they find themselves in (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Mackie & Smith, 1998). This then means that the wellbeing of the group becomes directly related to an individual's wellbeing. IET has extended the existing literature by moving the focus away from explaining *why* prejudice in groups occurs to the role group-based emotions play in intergroup situations. IET seeks to identify which emotions are associated with the experience of prejudice, and how these emotions can lead to specific behavioural intentions (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004). This includes exploring emotional reactions when someone is *a victim* of prejudice.

Group-based emotions are stimulated following appraisals of situations and contexts that may have emotional relevance to the group (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007). It is the nature of that appraisal that then prompts specific emotional reactions (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). For the purposes of this research we are interested in examining

when group-based situations are attributed to a threat or challenge towards the group and their identity (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), of which hate crime is an example.

Smith, Seger and Mackie (2007) indicated there were four criteria that define group level emotions, these were; firstly, people feel emotions for their identified group, or members of that group even if they are not directly involved in the incident (Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus & Gordijn, 2003), akin to indirect victimisation in hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). Secondly these emotions are shared within the group. The third criteria is that high levels of group identification affects these group level emotions, namely the stronger the level of identification the stronger the emotional convergence to the group emotion. Finally, that these emotions both contribute towards and help to regulate attitudes and behaviour.

Specific group-based emotions are stimulated based on different situational appraisals. When there is a perceived threat to the group the most common emotions reported are anger and fear. Gijordijn, Wigboldus and Yzerbyt (2001) indicated that when participants were placed into a group with perceived disadvantage then they were more likely to feel angry with some intermediate levels of anxiety. Others have reported similar findings when examining perceived unfairness (Van Zomeren, Spears & Leach, 2008). Anger has also been shown to be far more common in the low status groups when there has been existing conflict or tension (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003) or when threat acts as an obstacle to the group's goals (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005).

Anxiety and fear are often experienced when the outgroup is perceived to be strong (Devos et al., 2003), there is a level of uncertainty about the threat (Mackie & Smith, 2001), or there is an immediate perceived danger (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) such as terrorist attacks (Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007). This was demonstrated in studies by Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus and Gordijn, (2003) following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America.

Other emotions such as envy and disgust have also been examined following certain situational appraisals (see Mackie & Smith, 2015 for a review). However, it is anger and fear that are the most important emotions experienced when a low status group faces a group-based identity threat. These emotional responses mirror those reported by hate crime victims (Bell & Perry, 2015; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016) and therefore are the most relevant emotions in the context of this research.

It is not just the group-based emotional reactions which are important in IET. Certain emotional reactions have been shown to cause specific behavioural or action tendencies (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004). These behavioural responses are a functional way of responding to the group-based emotions experienced (Maitner, Mackie & Smith, 2006). Most importantly for the current research context, anger reactions are more likely to provoke aggressive or proactive responses and fear is more likely to provoke avoidance behaviours. However, the specific emotional reactions and behavioural tendencies are dependent on the relations to and perceived threat posed by the outgroup (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) and have been demonstrated to be nuanced and complex, allowing also for positive emotions as well as prejudice (Smith & Mackie, 2015). The link between anger and proactive responses has been found when examining people's reactions to thinking about a hostile outgroup (Mackie et al., 2000), or when mediated through other factors such as social support and perceived unfairness (Van Zomeren et al., 2004), where there is existing conflict or tension (Devos et al., 2003) and can increase when identification with the ingroup is stronger (Kessler & Hollbach, 2005) among other ways (see Iyer & Leach, 2009). The links between fear and avoidance behavioural intentions are less clearly established than anger but have been noted when there is a clear threat to the group identity (Yzerbet et al., 2003) or if there is the potential for a physical altercation (Devos et al., 2003).

These behavioural intentions once again mirror those responses reported by hate crime victims (Bell & Perry, 2015; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012). This provides further evidence that social psychological theories of group identity provide a useful conceptual framework with which to study hate crime, an example of group identity attack.

Another group-based emotion experienced, following situational appraisals involving prejudice, is shame. Research into shame has solely focused on those in high status groups demonstrating prejudicial attitudes towards low status groups (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna & Teroni, 2014; Gausel, Leach, Vignoles & Brown, 2012; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier & Ames, 2005). Although there is little research indicating that victimised groups may experience shame, there is some evidence in the criminological and social psychological literature which indicates victims of certain crimes or identity challenges may well experience shame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Kanyangara, Rime, Philippot, & Yzerbyt, 2007) or attribute their victimisation to their own identity (Tracy & Robins, 2006). These feelings of shame can be increased if there is an element of victim blaming (Bell & Perry, 2015) and has been shown to be an emotion specific to victims of hate crime (Gerstenfeld, 2013; Paterson et al., 2016). So it will be important to include this emotion within the current exploration of cyberhate victimisation.

IET is a relevant theory for this thesis as it adds four crucial elements to the study of hate crime. Firstly, it explores the impacts of being a victim of prejudice rather than focusing on the reasons why powerful groups perpetrate prejudice-motivated conduct. Secondly, it examines the specific emotional reactions and subsequent behavioural intentions as a result of being targeted by prejudice and discrimination, of which hate crime is a perfect example, demonstrated by the similarity of emotions and behaviours reported in IET and hate crime literature. Thirdly, and particularly important for the study of hate crime, is that the impacts

of being targeted because of a group identity can cause group-based emotions which means the impacts associated with being victimised extends not only to those directly targeted but to other people who share the same identity group (see Brown 2010: 176-178), so called indirect victims noted in the hate crime research (Bell & Perry, 2015; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012; Noelle, 2002). Finally, it suggests that level of group identification can change the impacts experienced following group identity challenges.

There is mixed evidence in the IET literature about the role of group identification, possibly linked to the lack of clarity in exactly what constitutes a group-based emotion (Iyer & Leach, 2009; Iyer, Schmader & Lickel, 2007). Level of group identification has been demonstrated to moderate a number of the impacts of forming social groups (Ellemers, Spears & Doojse, 2002). In some cases it has shown to be an important factor in the group emotions experienced, with those being highly identified experiencing stronger levels of emotions (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Seger, Smith, Klinias & Mackie, 2009; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Yzerbyt et al., 2003). However, other evidence has suggested that level of group identification does not impact all group-based emotions such as guilt (Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus & Dumont, 2006; Iyer & Leach, 2009). So it appears that the link between level of group identification and group-based emotions is not as straightforward as IET proposes. The contradictory evidence regarding group identification is discussed further when exploring stigma theory.

Although there are some elements of IET that may need some further explanation or clarification, it is currently the most credible, evidenced and useful theoretical framework in which to explore victim impacts of hate crime, both on and offline.

The other major branch of work that has explored the impacts of being *victimised* by prejudice is the work on Stigma. This topic is worth exploration as it adds to the knowledge about the impacts of victimisation, and starts to discuss, in more detail, the importance of

how much a person identifies with a group and what effects this has on the impacts of identity challenges.

Stigma theory was initially developed by the sociologist Irvin Goffman (1963) who suggested that experiencing social stigma can cause a 'spoiled identity'. Social psychologists have developed this further and defined stigma as "some attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context" (Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998). This devaluation can also apply in group contexts. A stigmatised group has been defined as one that is "devalued or holds a subordinate place within an existing social hierarchy" (Crocker & Major, 1989). Stigma is socially constructed dependent on the dominant groups in society (Major & O'Brien, 2005).

Major and O'Brien (2005) highlight four ways in which stigma is experienced by low status groups. The four experiences of stigma are: Negative treatment and discrimination, stereotype activation behaviour, expectancy confirmation processes, and identity threat. For a review of these see Major and O'Brien (2005).

For the purposes of this research it is the impacts on the low status groups that experience stigma that is the critical focus. Being a member of a stigmatised group has been shown to have a number of negative impacts that are not experienced by high status social groups (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). These can include lower self-esteem (Major, Barr, Zubek & Babey, 1999; McCoy & Major, 2003; Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2002), poorer educational outcomes and investment (Schmader, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995), being at greater risk of physical and mental health problems (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo & Icovics, 2000; Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams 1999; Link & Phelan, 2001) and higher rates of psychological distress (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009). Links between stigma and its impacts have also been ascribed to hate crime victimisation. Herek (2007) attributed

hate crime against those who are LGB&T to a group stigma of other sexual orientations by those who are heterosexual.

That stigma has a negative effect on those that experience it is supported by empirical evidence. (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo & Icovics, 2000; Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams 1999; Major, Barr, Zubek & Babey, 1999; McCoy & Major, 2003; Nosek, Banaji, Greenwald, 2002; Schmader, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995). However, the literature on the impacts of stigma is inconsistent, particularly in regards to the impacts of self-esteem. Not all individuals who belong to stigmatised or marginalised groups report lower levels of self-esteem. For example, African Americans have reported higher self-esteem than White Americans (Twenge & Crocker, 2002) and reported collective self-esteem of minority ethnicities have also been found to be higher than the dominant ethnic group (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994). This is not just true of ethnicities; women have been found to achieve similar scores of implicit measures of personal self-esteem to men (Aidman & Carroll, 2002).

Crocker and Major (1989) initially tried to explain the differences in the impacts of experiencing prejudice by stating that there are three ways in which people may protect their self-esteem. The first is that negative events or evaluations are attributed to prejudice towards their group rather than towards themselves as an individual, therefore protecting their identity, known as the 'discounting hypothesis' (Crocker & Major 1989; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa & Major, 1991; Major, Quinton & Schmader, 2003). This was subsequently altered to 'self-blame discounting hypothesis' (Major et al., 2003). The second is that individuals may compare their own outcomes to those of members of the same stigmatised group. This selective comparison process makes one's own outcomes seem more favourable and therefore help to protect self-esteem. Finally, individuals may devalue elements of themselves or their identity that are associated with the group and are the ones that are

discriminated against. This makes these elements of self less important to wellbeing and therefore less damaging to self-esteem (McCoy & Major, 2003). These are similar to the identity protection strategies outlined in SIT (Van Knippenberg, 1989).

These explanations were developed further by Major et al., (2003) who suggested a 'Transactional Model' of prejudice and self-esteem. This model is based on similar models of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This model suggests that reactions to prejudice are based on situational cues and the cognitive appraisals of those cues, as well as the application of individual coping strategies. As part of this model, there were a number of suggestions of the potential moderators which alter the impacts of stigma and prejudice. These moderators include threats to personal identity (Major et al., 2003), clarity of the prejudice and situational cues (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major, Quinton & Schmader, 2003; Major, McCoy, Kaiser, Quinton, 2003), group status (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002), personal characteristics such as optimism (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa & Major, 1991; Kaiser, Major & McCoy, 2004) and, most importantly to this framework, level of group identification (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey, 1999; Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt & Spears, 2001; McCoy & Major, 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001). The transactional model argues that the more highly identified you are to your group the more personal salience a threat or attack against the group has (Major et al., 2003; McCoy & Major 2003). Major and her colleagues therefore argue that those who have higher levels of group identification will report higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem. Research supporting this model has demonstrated the negative impacts of prejudice when people were highly identified to the group (Major et al., 2003; Major & Eccleson, 2004; McCoy & Major, 2003). This model is seen as quite comprehensive as it allows for the inclusion of a number of situational and personal factors to be considered when examining the impacts of prejudice (Major & O'Brien, 2005).

Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey (1999) offer a different perspective on how level of group identification can change the effects of prejudice. They developed the Rejection – Identification model which stated that because stigmatised groups are rejected by the dominant groups they seek solace in identifying with their stigmatised group where they are likely to be accepted. This process of moving towards the stigmatised group improves self-esteem. This hypothesis has been demonstrated in a number of different stigmatised groups including women (Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002), African Americans (Branscombe et al., 1999), older people (Garstka, Schmitt, Branscombe, & Hummert, 2004), and ethnic identity (Opererio & Fiske, 2001) amongst others. Branscombe and her colleagues argued that the models suggested by Crocker and Major (1989) focused on a single event of prejudice but argued that the Rejection-Identification Model is a better explanation for higher levels of self-esteem in groups who face persistent and ongoing prejudice and discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999). Research has found that those with higher levels of group identification report higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression (Bat-Chava, 1994; Munford, 1994) and tests of the Rejection-Identification Model have supported its assumptions (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002; Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz & Owen, 2002; Schmitt, Spears & Branscombe, 2002).

Both of the models offering an explanation about the role of group identification have some evidence supporting and refuting them. Which theory best explains the role of group identification when facing prejudice is still subject to some debate. These contradictions are also very similar to the findings exploring the role of group identification in IET-based research (Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus & Dumont, 2006; Iyer & Leach, 2009; Mackie & Smith, 2015; Seger, Smith, Klinias & Mackie, 2009; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Yzerbyt et al., 2003). Neither explanation nor theory offers irrefutable evidence of the role of group identification. Suggestions for clarification of these findings have been that group

identification needs to be properly defined, as researchers are working with different definitions, in different contexts, and across different situations (McCoy & Major, 2003). Equally, the vast majority of the research has been correlational meaning the causal links between levels of group identification and impacts of prejudice cannot be clearly established.

The key theoretical consideration to take forward in the current research is that IET and Stigma theory indicate that the impacts of being a member of a stigmatised group, one that experiences prejudice and discrimination on a regular basis, produces a range of negative impacts. These negative emotional reactions; anger, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem bear a number of similarities to the impacts recorded by offline hate crime victims, suggesting that hate crime is an example of a group-based threat (Mackie, Smith, & Ray, 2008). It is therefore plausible that cyberhate victims will experience the same emotional and behavioural responses to an online group-based threat.

A second consideration is whether level of group identification mediates or moderates the impacts of hate crime online. Two predominant and well supported models offer contradictory explanations. One theory states that the more highly identified you are with a group the more damaging prejudice can be (Crocker & Major, 1989; Mackie & Smith, 2015; Major et al., 2003; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Seger, Smith, Klinias & Mackie, 2009; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Yzerbyt et al., 2003). Another theory states that highly identified group members can be protected by their group identities (Branscombe et al., 1999; Gordijn, et al., 2006; Iyer & Leach, 2009). Despite the differing predictions of exactly what role high group identification plays in the impacts of prejudice, it is clear that it does play some role in victim experiences so including a measure of group identification is important when looking at the impacts of cyberhate.

### **Perceived threat and victimisation experiences.**

When exploring victimisation experiences it is also important to consider the role of threat. Feelings of threat have been highlighted in IET (Mackie & Smith, 2001) and Stigma research (Major & O'Brien, 2005; McCoy & Major, 2003). Integrated Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Stephan, 2000) takes the idea of group threat further and proposes that there are four types of threats to group identity. These are realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Ybarra & Stephan, 1994). Realistic and symbolic threats are the important features in the context of this research.

Realistic threat is a threat posed, or perceived to be posed, to the very existence of the ingroup (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). These can include threats to the political power of the ingroup or the health and wellbeing of individual members of that group. This type of threat can predict prejudice against the outgroup even if the threat is not real. A number of studies have found supporting evidence for the existence of realistic threat (McLaren, 2003; Quillan, 1995; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Sears & Henry, 2003). The perception of these threats (real or imagined) can lead to the outgroup being blamed for wider social issues which, in turn, leads to hostile attitudes towards that outgroup (Croucher, 2008; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006).

Symbolic threat focuses on threat based on the differences in values between cultures. Prejudice is believed to stem from the belief that some outgroups threaten the values that are important to the ingroup, and therefore threaten the ingroup's way of life. This effect has been shown in a number of studies focusing on the relationship between Black and White people in the US (Biernat, Vescio & Theno, 1996; Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Dunbar, Saiz, Stela & Saez, 2000; Sears, 1988; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin 2005;

Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998), but Integrated Threat Theory extended this concept to other group contexts.

Feeling threatened is considered to be an important part of challenges to group identity but there is almost no research examining the role of threat from the point of view of the low status group. Threat has largely been explored from high status group's perspective about the threat that low status groups pose to them. Threat for stigmatised groups is worth examining in relation to hate crime because research on victim impacts have indicated that those targeted by hate crime feel more threatened and more at risk of crime in the future (Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001) and extend to those who experience indirect victimisation (Noelle, 2012; Perry & Alvi, 2012). It is therefore plausible that higher levels of perceived threat may mediate the relationship between cyberhate crime victimisation and its impacts. This link has already been noted with experiences of offline hate crime. Paterson et al., (2016) reported that those equating hate crime with increased threat experienced higher levels of anger and anxiety.

Both symbolic and realistic threats are plausible experiences to have online. It is envisaged that realistic threat will involve threatening and abusive behaviour directed towards a member of the stigmatised group. Symbolic threat will be comments, pictures and videos showing attacks on important buildings and icons for the group, for example, pictures online of anti-Islamic graffiti on a Mosque. Both types of threat will need to be measured to see if one is more prevalent or important within cyberhate experiences than the other.

## **1.6. Additional Theoretical Considerations**

The primary theoretical concern of this thesis is the impacts of being a victim of cyberhate because of your membership of an identity group. However, given that cyberhate is such a new area of research, it is worth considering what behaviours may put people at more

risk of being victimised. If people engage in risky or provocative behaviour online and have expectations for being targeted, this may moderate or mediate the victimisation impacts. As a result, it is worth examining some theoretical concepts on what increases the likelihood of victimisation and whether accepting risk of crime does mediate these subsequent impacts.

The two key theories relating to likelihood of crime victimisation are Lifestyle Theory and Routine Activities Theory. Both theories are similar as they highlight the link between behaviour and the chance of crime victimisation and, as a result, will be discussed in tandem in this section.

The Lifestyle Theory (Hindelang, Gottfriedson & Garofalo, 1979) and the Routine Activities Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) of crime victimisation state that certain lifestyle habits, behaviours, and choices make people more at risk of being victims of crime. In this vein, Miethe, Stafford and Long (1987) argued that social structure and demographics affected daily routines and lifestyle activities which changed the likelihood of being a victim of crime. These lifestyle habits included a number of different elements such as the place someone lives, the hobbies that they engage in, where they work, and the people that they choose to spend time with. For example, if someone works long hours on a regular basis and spends a lot of time outside of their house then they are, according to the theory, at greater risk of being burgled. Or if someone chooses to go drinking in a part of their local town that has higher crime rates then they are more likely to be victims of violent crime.

These two theories have been applied to a greater or lesser extent to the groups under investigation in this project. Mason and Palmer (1996) found that a great number of homophobic attacks took place outside an LGB&T bar, supporting similar findings by Herek et al., (1999). Cramer, McNiel, Holley, Shumway and Boccelleri (2011) found that LGB&T groups experienced different crime victimisation than heterosexual victims based on certain

lifestyle choices. Muslim women reported experiencing high levels of abuse when choosing to wear a symbol of Islam, the Hijab (Perry, 2014). The idea that victims can be targeted through daily activities and lifestyle choices supports research indicating that hate crime is often committed by acquaintances (Roberts et al., 2013) and can be a series of low level crimes based on where the victims may live and the current relations between different social groups (Bowling, 1998; Iganski, 2008a). That those targeted by hate crime can be done so because of certain lifestyle or behaviour patterns may have an impact on their victimisation experience. If certain behaviours offline may make people more prone to victimisation then it is possible that certain behaviours online may have the same effect.

There are some limitations to these theories. They tend to be somewhat individualistic which makes it quite difficult to compare to the impacts of hate crime as these are considered to be socially based crimes (Perry, 2001; Walters & Brown, 2016), and thus at odds with the group specific impacts of prejudice outlined by social psychological theories. As such, they will be treated with caution when measuring and interpreting the data.

These theories only offer an explanation into the likelihood of being a victim of crime rather than focusing on the impacts of being a victim of crime. Additionally, they have been criticised for victim-blaming (Akers, 2004). However, they are worth including within the research framework because they offer a perspective that suggests there are certain people who may be more likely to be targeted online due to their internet behaviour and how they choose to present their identity. For example, if someone writes an open blog about being homosexual then there is a likelihood, according to these theories, that they would be more at risk of being targeted. Early research has started to support this assertion which has indicated certain online behaviours make people more at risk of cyber stalking (Reyns, Henson & Fisher, 2011).

The current research will consider the role of behaviour online and how that affects the likelihood of victimisation, the type of victimisation and, whether this mediates or moderates any of the impacts of being victimised. As there is no research addressing this with regards to cyberhate no prediction can be made as to any differences it may make, but it should be an important consideration for the research.

### **1.7. Overall Rationale and Research Questions**

The current research literature indicates that hate crimes are a prevalent and pervasive problem in the UK (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015) and the impacts on both the direct victims and the wider identity communities (indirect victims) are damaging and wide ranging (Bell & Perry, 2015; Hall 2013; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016). However there is much less work on hate crime which occurs on the internet and very little research on the impact of being a victim of cyberhate (Awan, 2014; Awan & Zempi, 2015; Burnap & Williams, 2015). Accordingly, this current research will address this lacuna by examining the impacts of being a victim of cyberhate on two commonly victimised groups in the UK; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGB&T) and Muslims. Although, it is worth noting that for the LGB& T group transgender people are only represented in the studies reported in Chapters 2 and 3. This means that the results, and therefore conclusions, are largely based on responses of those who class themselves as LGB.

These groups have been chosen because they represent groups (sexual orientation, transgender identity, and religion) which are commonly targeted by hate crime. The additional benefit of choosing these groups is that they are each distinct in terms of cultural norms, values and identity characteristics, thereby helping the research to uncover the full

range of victimisation experiences for cyberhate, as well as identifying what are the common or disparate experiences across groups.

The decision to put people who are transgender with a sexual orientation group was subject to some debate amongst a number of charities in the formation stage of this project<sup>7</sup>. It was decided that it would be better, at this early phase of research to be inclusive, but to bear in mind differences between the two groups within the analysis and examine the issues for both groups.

Social psychological theories examining the impacts of threats and attacks to group identity provides an excellent theoretical framework in which to explore the harms of cyberhate. Firstly, it helps to explain the wider community impacts that occur when other group members are targeted for abuse, as has been found for offline hate crime victims, so called indirect victimisation (Bell & Perry, 2015; Mackie & Smith, 2015; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Secondly, the impacts noted by hate crime research and studies testing the social psychological theories of group identity indicate the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions are the same, suggesting that hate crime victims are experiencing the group identity challenges outlined by these theories (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Finally, it helps to introduce a different perspective and discipline into the study of hate crime which has largely been dominated by sociologists and criminologists (Chakraborti, et al., 2014; Iganski, 2008a; Perry, 2002). This ensures that there is research that is specifically focused on the impacts for victims which can help to gain a real understanding of the potential harms associated with hate crime online.

Due to the lack of current research specifically addressing the issues of cyberhate there are no formal hypotheses for the current project but it hopes to make a unique

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<sup>7</sup> These were organisations that support LGB&T victims of hate crime including Stonewall and Galop

contribution by being the first series of studies to demonstrate the harms uniquely related to cyberhate. There are three key aims of this thesis:

1. To establish an understanding of the types of cyberhate victimisation commonly experienced by LGB&T people and Muslims.

The current research will aim to examine what the experience of cyberhate involves for victims in the two groups under investigation. This is done by establishing the nature of the cyberhate, how people believe they are targeted, the platforms in which one is likely to be targeted, and how common an occurrence that it is. The research will explore online hate crime experiences both for those directly and indirectly targeted.

2. To examine whether the emotional and behavioural impacts of cyberhate victimisation fit with other noted impacts of offline hate victimisation and IET

As discussed earlier, the relationship between the emotional impacts of being a victim of offline hate crime and those noted by attacks to group identity in Intergroup Emotions Theory (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith 1993) and Stigma theory (Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998) are similar to each other, implying that hate crime is a prime example of the group identity challenges which these theories examine. Research indicates that the emotional reactions of anger and fear are the most predominant emotional reactions to being a victim of offline hate crime (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016). These emotional reactions are said to prompt certain behavioural intentions (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Devos et al., 2003; Kessler & Hollbach, 2005; Mackie et al., 2000; Van Zomeren et al., 2004). The links between the emotional and behavioural intentions outlined by IET have already been noted for offline hate crime experience (Paterson et al., 2016). The research will test whether the emotional and behavioural links can be established for direct

and indirect victims of cyberhate, initially through correlational research and then testing them experimentally.

3. To determine if the impacts of cyberhate victimisation are mediated or moderated by group identification, level of perceived threat and specific internet behaviours.

Research has indicated that there are a number of potential moderators and mediators which influence people's responses and reactions to experiencing prejudice (Major & O'Brien, 2005; Major et al., 2003). This research will examine a number of potential mediators/moderators, these are; level of group identification, level of perceived threat and internet behaviour.

Level of group identification has been shown to be a factor in responses to prejudice (Branscombe et al., 1999; Crocker & Major, 1998; Major & O'Brien, 2005) although there is contradictory evidence in what the impact of high levels of group identification can be. Some researchers suggest that high identifiers will experience more negative impacts (Crocker & Major, 1998) while others argue that higher levels will protect self-esteem and lessen the impacts of prejudice (Branscombe et al., 1999). The research will make no prediction on the direction of the impacts of group identification but will examine its effect on cyberhate victims.

Feeling threatened has been demonstrated to be a factor for victims of hate crime. Those targeted for hate feel more fearful of being a victim of crime in the future (Awan & Zempi 2015; Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001). Using ITT's (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) distinction between realistic and symbolic threat, this thesis will examine whether higher levels of perceived threat will mediate the negative emotional responses and subsequent behavioural intentions, as have been indicated for offline hate crime victimisation (Paterson et al., 2016).

Drawing on the criminological theories suggesting that certain behaviours can increase risk of victimisation (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, et al., 1979), the research will examine which behaviours people engage in online. As certain behaviours have been shown to make people more at risk of being targeted by hate crime offline (Cramer et al., 2011; Herek et al., 1999; Mason & Palmer, 1996) the same may well be true of cyberhate. Time spent online and the behaviours that people engage in are used as potential mediators and moderators of cyberhate victimisation.

### **1.8. Overview of Papers**

Paper 1 presents the findings of two online quantitative surveys examining the cyberhate experiences for the two groups under investigation. The questionnaires measured previous experiences of hate crime; both online and offline, the frequency and methods in which people were targeted for online abuse, emotional reactions and behavioural responses (based on the framework outlined by Intergroup Emotions Theory (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith 1993)), levels of group identification, internet behaviour and, potential criminal justice system responses to cyberhate. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding about the frequency and nature of cyberhate targeting these two groups and to test whether the emotional and behavioural reactions experienced as a result matched the reactions experienced when groups were targeted by offline hate crime. It was theorised that previous experiences of victimisation and levels of group identity would moderate the relationship between victimisation experiences and the emotional reactions and behavioural responses. No prediction was made on the direction of this moderation effect, as there is currently contradictory evidence.

The results indicated that experiences of both direct and indirect cyberhate were a frequent and common occurrence for both groups. The types of internet behaviour in which

people engaged could increase their risk of being targeted, activities online which are completely open access made people more prone to abuse.

Clear correlations were established between experiences of both direct and indirect cyberhate and fear and anger, but not shame. There were also some links between these emotional reactions and the behavioural intentions, although not offering complete support for the framework proposed by IET (Devos et al., 2003; Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith 1993). In some cases, anger led to avoidance behaviours. Help seeking was a behavioural intention noted that has hitherto not been explored in the literature. Level of group identification did not mediate or moderate the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. These findings suggests that the internet provides a different social sphere in which people interact, so changes in the emotional and behavioural responses also differ.

Paper 2 reports a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with people from both victimised groups (LGB&T people and Muslims) who have been victims of cyberhate. The paper presents a detailed account of the impacts of cyberhate victimisation for those victims to provide a more nuanced account of the emotional reactions and behavioural responses to cyberhate in a way that quantitative methods are unable to capture.

Analysis of the interviews revealed a number of important additions to the theoretical framework. As well as the most common emotions of anger and fear, a range of ‘lower level’ emotions were reported such as, disappointment, frustration and sadness. The minimising of perpetrator motivations was also considered important, potentially as a way of protecting group members from the harmful impacts of cyberhate. Resilience was a clear theme, and a consideration for all work on victimisation experiences. The agency of the victim needs to be considered in research as these responses may change the victimisation impacts.

Paper 3 presents the findings of two experimental studies. While a link between negative impacts (both psychological and behavioural) and being a victim of cyberhate has been established, all this evidence is correlational or qualitative. The final two studies aim to show a causal link between being exposed to cyberhate and the subsequent reactions. Participants were shown preselected material across three experimental conditions; group specific hate, non specific group hate, and positive group material, and then asked to rate their emotional reactions, behavioural intentions and level of perceived threat after being exposed to the material. The experimental groups included both victimised groups under investigation and two control groups.

Comparisons across groups and conditions suggested that group specific hate material made respondents in both stigmatised groups angrier than just witnessing non specific hate material. This finding was also noted for both of the control groups. These results indicate that indirect impacts of hate crime may extend more widely than originally proposed, that the harms could extend beyond the targeted groups into wider society. This is an impact so far just found with cyberhate, so more work will need to be done to examine if this is the same with offline hate crime too.

## **Chapter 2:**

# **The Impacts of Cyber Hate: Applying Intergroup Emotions Theory to Online Hate Crime**

## **2.1. Abstract**

This paper explores the direct and indirect victimisation experiences of cyberhate crime with two victimised groups. Two studies with Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T; N = 116) and Muslim (N = 129) participants indicated cyberhate crime was a common and frequent experience for both groups. The relationship between participants' emotional reactions to experiencing hate crime (anger, fear and shame) and their behavioural intentions (avoidance, help seeking and pro-action) was explored. The results offered support to Intergroup Emotions Theory's predictions that specific emotions will lead to certain behavioural intentions in an online environment; fear was linked to avoidance behaviour and anger was linked to proactive behaviours. The emotional motivations behind help seeking behaviour were different for the two groups: Muslim respondents were motivated by anger and LGB&T participants were motivated by fear. This paper shows that cyberhate does have a negative effect on its victims.

## 2.2. Introduction

Hate crime – people being targeted by violence and abuse because of their group membership - is now recognised as a significant social problem which causes emotional, physical, and behavioural impacts on those who are directly targeted (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999) as well as to wider communities (Paterson, Brown, Walters & Carrasco, 2016). There is an increasing number of reported hate crimes in the UK (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015). Incidents of hate crime can cover a range of criminal offences but typically involve verbal abuse and harassment, violent assault, stalking/ harassment, and threats of physical violence on the internet (Corcoran, et al., 2015). Hate crimes are uniquely destructive in that they can have deleterious effects on other community members who share the same (or similar) identity as the direct victim. Such individuals frequently become what Paterson et al., (2016) refer to as the “indirect victims of hate crime” (see also, Bell & Perry, 2015; Noelle, 2002; Perry & Alvi, 2012).

However, there is paucity of research which explores the harms caused by online hate crime (so called cyberhate). This is a noteworthy omission considering the vast expansion of online activities and the hate-based conduct that has proliferated in tandem with this (Home Office, 2014). The internet has become, for most people, an essential resource. In the United Kingdom (UK), the average adult spends 20 hours per week online (Ofcom, 2015). The aim of the current research is to examine, from a social psychological perspective, the experiences of victims of online hate crimes, including a number of emotional reactions and behavioural intentions associated with being a victim. The study involved participants from two commonly victimised groups: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGB&T) and Muslims. In so doing, the research reported here will not only document the nature and extent of direct and indirect online victimisation, but it will also provide a novel test of some

hypotheses drawn from one contemporary theoretical perspective, Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET; Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993).

### **Current hate crime research.**

Much of the research on the impacts of hate crime has focused on sexual orientation based incidents (Dunbar, 2006; Herek et al., 1999) or racist crimes (Craig, 1999; Fitzgerald & Hale, 1996). There has been one exploration of the experiences of different racial groups (Perry, 2001). Recently, research has explored victimisation experiences for a number of identity groups, including disability and alternative sub cultures (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014) and others from a specifically Muslim perspective (Awan & Zempi, 2015); but these have been from a criminological standpoint. The other key focus of research is the number of reported incidents or overall prevalence (Herek, Gillis, Cogan & Glunt, 1997; Herek, 2009), and helping clinicians manage the impacts of being a victim (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). This paper will expand the current literature in two ways: it will examine two commonly victimised groups in the UK (Muslim and LGB&T people) allowing for direct comparisons to be made between identity groups; and it focuses solely on the impacts of online hate crime victimisation.

### **What is hate crime?**

There is currently no universally agreed definition of hate crime within the extant literature (Hall, 2013). Despite this most scholars (and practitioners) working in this area agree that hate crime need not be about hate at all. Jacobs and Potter state that “[h]ate crime is not really about hate, it is about prejudice and bias” (1998: 27). In reality this means that most hate crimes are incidents that are at least partly motivated by some form of prejudice, which has been demonstrated towards the victim’s (perceived) identity characteristics. In England and

Wales the police have developed a working definition of hate crime that is used to record and investigate hate crime (and non-criminal) incidents:

“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender OR against a person’s religion or perceived religion.” (College of Policing, 2014).

This broad definition of hate crime/incident has been used in this study for two reasons. The first is that this is now the most commonly used definition within the criminal justice system in England and Wales. The second reason is that the definition is victim-centred and therefore allows the victim to determine whether she or he has been a victim of an incident that she or he perceived to be motivated by prejudice and/or hostility.

Although this definition becomes problematic if it was to be applied in court<sup>8</sup> (which is not the case), it does allow for a more inclusive approach to researching the impacts of online hate abuse. In particular it helps ensure that all individuals who had experienced abusive and hurtful conduct (whether amounting to a crime or not) were included within each of the studies. This reduced the potential for those who had experienced online hate abuse but who were unclear as to whether their experience amounted to a crime from being excluded from the study.

That said, how the definition applied to online hate crime requires some further operational clarification. The surveys in this research situated the definition within the context of hate speech that targeted different groups. This included: verbal or written abuse

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<sup>8</sup> There must of course be objective proof that a defendant’s conduct is motivated by prejudice or hostility.

and harassment and stalking, most prominently occurring as trolling via social media platforms; the sending of inappropriate, offensive or intimate images to individuals or their friends and family; and verbal and written threats of physical violence.

### **Research on hate crime on the internet.**

There has been very little research about online hate crime. The most comprehensive studies so far were conducted by the UK LGB&T charity Stonewall (Dick 2008; Guasp, Gammon & Ellison, 2013). These looked at LGB&T experiences of online hate crime finding that 45% of 18-25 year olds had witnessed anti-LGB&T abuse online and one in twenty had been a direct victim (Guasp et al., 2013).

Other research on internet crime has explored its emotional and psychological impacts, such as anger and anger expressions, levels of depression, and the importance of social support but without focusing on specific identity groups (Ak, Ozdemir & Kuzucu, 2015; Tennant, Demaray, Coyle & Malecki, 2015). Some studies have been conducted from a policy rather than a psychological perspective; such as arguing that online hate crime should be given the same attention as offline hate crime (Awan, 2014; Burnap & Williams, 2015), or have examined hate crime perpetration following a significant event (Williams & Burnap, 2015). Nonetheless, there remains a paucity of research that specifically investigates the emotional impacts of online hate crime. This research aims to fill this lacuna.

### **Intergroup emotions theory.**

Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET, Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993) is particularly appropriate for the study of hate crime because it provides an explanation for the emotional impacts on the wider identity group when the group's identity is challenged. IET proposes that when the situational context is salient to social identity, this will trigger group-based

emotions. The theory posits that powerful outgroups tend to provoke fear reactions, and that conflicts between groups tend to provoke anger in the discriminated group (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003). These specific emotional reactions can, in turn, promote specific action tendencies. For instance, research has shown that anger is likely to provoke more proactive behavioural responses (e.g. confronting homophobia) whereas feelings of fear are more likely to provoke more avoidant behaviours (e.g., not disclosing sexual orientation) (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Kessler & Hollbach, 2005). These specific correlations between the emotional and behavioural reactions have received a wide range of support (Devos et al., 2003; Mackie et al., 2000; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004). Note, however, that IET is yet to be applied to hate crime.

Since the inception of IET there has also been some evidence that more self-critical emotions such as guilt and shame are present in some intergroup situations (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Čehajić, 2008; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead 1998). So far, the role of such self-conscious emotions has almost exclusively been explored from the perpetrator group's viewpoint. This raises the interesting question as to whether they, and especially shame, may also be experienced by members of victimised groups. In some conceptions, shame has been linked to a negative and global judgement of the whole self (Giner-Sorolla, 2012; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Negative events against the self can sometimes be attributed to stable and uncontrollable factors about the self, such as group identity (Tracy & Robins, 2006). This suggests it is possible that being targeted for abuse because of a group identity over which an individual has little control (e.g., sexual orientation, transgender identity, or Faith) may damage a person's sense of self-worth and lead to their making negative judgements about themselves. There is evidence that being victimised in other violent crimes such as rape and genocide can produce feelings of shame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Kanyangara, Rime, Philippot & Yzerbyt, 2007). Other research has

also indicated that being a victim of hate crime can lead to feelings of shame (Gerstenfeld, 2013; Paterson et al., 2016), particularly when other people attribute blame to the victim (Bell & Perry, 2015). In view of these considerations, we will also examine the incidence and correlates of shame as a result of online hate victimisation.

There has been some debate over the action tendencies most likely to occur with a shame reaction. It has been argued that shame can promote avoidance and proactive behaviours in different circumstances (Brown et al., 2008; Giner-Sorolla, 2012; Iyer Schmader & Lickel, 2007; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher & Gramzow, 1992). However, once again, these links are based on when members of the ingroup have been *perpetrators* of discrimination. Since the theoretical work on feelings of shame associated with being a *victim* of identity attack and the subsequent emotional reactions have not been researched it is possible that either action tendency may occur.

While the links between some of the emotions and action tendencies have been clearly theorised in the literature (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003; Smith, 1993), other links are less clear. For example, another action tendency that may be important to victims of hate crime is seeking help after the attack. Which emotion is most likely to precipitate this? A similar question can be asked in relation to ‘victim shame’; with which action tendency is this most likely to be associated? This research aims to investigate these neglected issues.

### **Research aims and hypotheses.**

The first aim of the research was to examine and document the experiences of online hate crime victimisation for the two identity groups. It was also crucial to capture data on the wider impacts of hate crime, i.e. effects not just on those who have been directly targeted by online hate crime (*direct* victimisation) but the impacts on those who may have witnessed or

heard of other LGB&T people or Muslims being targeted for abuse online because of their identity (*indirect* victimisation).

A second goal was to test a central tenet of IET- namely, that threats to the ingroup (generated by hate crime) should elicit certain emotions which, in turn, are linked to their own specific action tendencies or behavioural intentions. In the case of hate crime, the two most likely emotions to be generated are predicted to be anger and fear. These are thought to be mainly related to *pro-action* to address threat (in the case of anger) or *avoidance* (in the case of fear). This may be stated formally as a hypothesis that hate crime victimisation will be associated with the behavioural intentions of pro-activity and avoidance, associations that are mediated by anger and fear respectively.

There are other emotions and action tendencies that have received rather less theoretical attention in IET. Among these, the emotions of shame (felt as a member of a victim group) and help seeking as an action tendency are the most obviously neglected issues. Associations with these variables were examined in a more exploratory fashion.

## 2.3. Study 1

### 2.3.1. Method

#### **Participants.**

There were 116 LGB&T participants (male = 50.9%, female = 28.4%, transgender = 17.2%, other = 3.4%;  $M_{age} = 36.9$ ,  $SD = 12.43$ , range 18-68).

To assess sexual orientation participants were asked to self-disclose, using an open-ended question. Responses were then coded into relevant categories: 48.3% identified as

‘gay’, 14.7% identified as ‘lesbian’, 13.8% identified as ‘bisexual’. The remaining participants identified as ‘other’ types of sexual orientation<sup>9</sup>.

Unfortunately, for the emotions and behavioural items there was some missing data. For the emotion items 106 participants reported emotional reactions for an experience of direct hate crime and 90 participants reported emotional reactions for an indirect experience. For the behavioural intentions data 102 participants reported for direct hate crime and 99 reported for indirect hate crime. Thus, in the analyses reported below degrees of freedom vary somewhat.

### **Measures.**

The study was an online survey that comprised the following measures (see Appendix I for the questionnaire):

#### ***Internet usage.***

Internet usage had two elements: the time respondents spent online, and the online activities they participated in. They were asked to estimate the time they spent online per week on all internet activities (using a frequency Likert scale). The response options were 0-5 hours, 6-15 hours, 16-25 hours, 26-35 hours, and 35+ hours.

The online activities questions were asked to see if certain internet activities made respondents more at risk of online hate crime. Respondents rated how frequently they did certain things on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from ‘never’ to ‘very frequently’. These activities were ‘using social media’, ‘working’, ‘reading the news’, ‘blogging’, ‘contributing to forums’ and ‘using LGB&T specific sites’, among others.

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<sup>9</sup> ‘other’ sexual orientation included pansexual, omnisexual, queer and undecided

To reduce these numerous activities to meaningful groups for analysis a Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) factor analysis was conducted using oblique rotation. The results of the factor analysis indicated that there were four categories of internet activity (KMO = .54, Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2_{(91)} = 174.49, p < .001$ ), these were: Dating activities ('dating websites' and 'pornography',  $r = .33^{**10}$ ), Active Participation activities ('forums', 'LGB&T specific sites' and 'other',  $\alpha = .59$ ), Social Activities ('communicating with friends and family', 'Social networks', 'surfing', 'blogging', and 'shopping',  $\alpha = .52$ ) and Professional Activities ('working', 'studying', and 'reading the news',  $\alpha = .55$ ).

### ***Hate crime experience.***

For all the questions measuring hate crime experience, which included hate crimes and incidents (direct online and indirect online), respondents were asked to rate how many times they had experienced forms of abuse (0 = no experience, 1 = 1-3 occasions, 2 = 4-7 occasions, 3 = 8-10 occasions, 4 = 11-15 occasions, 5 = 16-20 occasions, 6 = 21-50 occasions and 7 = 50+ occasions) because they were LGB&T.

These items were used to measure both direct and indirect online hate crimes with small changes in the wording for sense purposes<sup>11</sup>

### ***Emotional reactions and behavioural intention measures.***

Participants were asked to describe two experiences of online hate crime that they had found particularly upsetting (one direct experience and one indirect experience). Participants then rated how strongly they felt, after that experience, on 12 emotion items (see Table 2.1; 1 = did not feel at all to 7 = felt extremely strongly).

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<sup>10</sup>  $P < 0.01$

<sup>11</sup> Level of group identification was measured but this was shown to have no mediating effect reported in this paper so will not be discussed further.

The emotional reactions were then organised into categories using a PAF factor analysis (with oblique rotation). The results revealed three main emotional clusters for both direct and indirect experiences of hate crime. These were Fear ('scared', 'anxious', 'depressed', 'isolated', 'alarmed'; direct  $\alpha = .89$ , indirect  $\alpha = .88$ ), Anger ('outrage', 'anger', 'revolted'; direct  $\alpha = .86$ , indirect  $\alpha = .89$ ) and Shame ('ashamed', 'guilty', 'embarrassed'; direct  $\alpha = .87$ , indirect  $\alpha = .83$ ).

To measure behavioural intentions participants were given 13 actions (and an additional option of 'other', see Table 2.1) and asked to indicate (yes/no response) whether they had taken that behaviour as a result of the incident they had reported.

*Table 2.1: Emotional reaction and behavioural intention items*

Emotional Reactions	Scared
	Anxious
	Depressed
	Isolated
	Alarmed
	Outraged
	Anger
	Revolted
	Ashamed
	Embarrassed
	Guilty
	Other (state)
Behavioural intentions	Ignore it [Avoid]
	Retaliate (insult the perpetrators back) [Proactive]
	Report abuse to website/internet provider [Help seeking]
	Report the abuse to the police [Help seeking]
	Discuss the abuse with friends/family [Help seeking]
	Changed your online profile or habits [Avoid]
	Been more vocal or active about your LGB&T/Muslim identity [Proactive]
	Been more aggressive to other groups/people online [Proactive]
	Made sure that no one could tell your sexual orientation/ transgender identity from your online behaviour [Avoid]
	Started using substances to help you cope [Avoid]
	Reported the abuse to another group or person (e.g. support groups, online communities) [Help seeking]
	Sought professional help (counsellor etc) [Help seeking]
	Changed your behaviour offline (state) [Avoid]
	Other (state)

Most respondents did not include any other ‘other’ behavioural response. Those that did tended to provide specific examples of the options already listed.

A score for each behaviour intention was computed by their mean of each of the three behavioural intention categories: avoidance, help seeking, or proactive (range 0-1).

### ***Demographics.***

Age, residence, gender, religion, and ethnicity were recorded. Participants were asked about their sexual orientation and this variable was an open variable that was later back-coded into meaningful categories.

### **Procedure.**

Responses were collected using an online survey, presented as a questionnaire exploring experiences of online hate crime and advertised via Twitter and Facebook and other sites/ organisations that work closely with the LGB&T community. The survey ran from February to September 2014. Ethics approval was granted for the study. The survey included an information page that outlined the participant’s right to withdraw and ensuring them of confidentiality. A debrief sheet at the end outlined support organisations for people who may have been victims of hate crime.

### **2.3.2. Results**

For ease of presentation, the results are organised into two sections. The first presents the frequencies of different kinds of online hate crime experiences and their correlates. The second explores the relationships between victims’ emotions and behavioural intentions.

### **Experiences of online hate crime.**

Most respondents (83%) reported that they had been a victim of *direct* online hate crime at least once and 86.4% indicated that they had been *indirectly* victimised at least once. Multiple victimisation was common: respondents had experienced some types of abuse on average between 4 and 10 occasions for direct hate crime and between 8 and 15 times for indirect hate crime. Stalking and harassment were experienced rarely (see Table 2.2).

Potential determinants of online victimisation were examined to see if there are ‘risk’ factors associated cyberhate victimisation. To achieve this a ‘victimisation’ variable was created by taking the mean of the ten online victimisation items (Table 2.2). This was done separately for direct and indirect experiences of online hate crime; direct ( $M = 1.17$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ,  $\alpha = .87$ ) and indirect ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ).

A hierarchical regression was performed with IVs (in the following order): gender, sexual orientation, time online, and online activities. DVs were direct and indirect victimisation. Contrast codes were created for sexual orientation and gender: gay and lesbian respondents versus bisexual and ‘other’ (+1, +1, -1, -1), and males and females versus transgender respondents (+1, +1, -2).

Sexual orientation was associated with experiences of cyberhate. Those who identified as bisexual or ‘other’ sexual orientations were more likely to be victims of both direct ( $\beta = -.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and indirect ( $\beta = -.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ) online hate crime. Respondents spent a considerable amount of time online, averaging over 25 hours a week online. However time spent online was only significantly associated with LGB&T people’s *indirect* experience of online hate crime ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

*Table 2.2: Frequencies for types of online hate crime (Study 1)*

	Direct		Indirect	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Responses to comments to a post written	2.07	2.54	3.48	2.64
Direct Abuse	1.47	2.20	3.03	2.73
Written or verbal abuse from chat rooms, forum etc	1.68	2.47	2.45	2.70
Trolling	1.47	2.33	2.93	2.76
Spam	1.73	2.56	1.88	2.54
Indecent Images sent to self	.88	1.64	1.50	2.08
Indecent images sent to others	.17	.59	.68	1.55
Stalking and harassment (unwanted attention on at least two occasions)	.89	1.56	1.25	1.87
Threats of physical violence	.63	1.37	1.59	2.28
Other	.77	1.66	1.08	2.14

Note: All frequencies were measured on a 0-7 scale (see measures)

The types of internet activity that people engaged in were also significantly associated with the respondents' victimisation. 'Active participation' activities were significantly related to direct and indirect cyber hate experiences (direct  $\beta = .41, p < .001$ , indirect  $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ). Dating activities were negatively related to both types of online hate crime (direct  $\beta = -.37, p < .001$ , indirect  $\beta = -.27, p < .01$ ).

### **Emotions and behaviours associated with online hate crime victimisation.**

The second set of analyses was to explore the links between cyberhate and the emotional and behavioural reactions to this. Anger was the most strongly experienced emotion for both types of hate crime, followed by fear. Shame was the least strongly experienced emotion. 'Help seeking' was the most common behavioural response to both direct and indirect hate crime. 'Avoidance behaviours' were more likely to be employed when people were directly victimised (see Table 2.3 for means of and inter-correlations between all variables).

First, a series of hierarchical regressions were conducted to see if online hate crime correlated with the three emotions. For direct victimisation, the DVs were the emotions (one for each of the three emotions for direct experiences), the IVs were (in the following order) online activities, direct victimisation, indirect victimisation. Both direct and indirect

victimisation were included in the models to ensure the other type of victimisation was controlled for. The results indicated there were significant links between direct experiences and fear ( $\beta = .39, p < .01$ ) and anger ( $\beta = .34, p < .01$ ), and Shame (if indirect victimisation is not controlled) (see Table 2.4).

The same regressions were performed for *indirect* experiences with the only change being that the DVs were the emotional reactions specifically for indirect experiences. There were significant links for fear ( $\beta = .39, p < .01$ ), shame ( $\beta = .48, p < .01$ ), and Anger (without indirect).

Table 2.3: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for emotional reactions and behavioural intentions (Study 1)

		Correlations														
		N	M	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Direct	1. Fear	106	3.51	2.22	.90											
	2. Shame	106	2.03	1.84	.86	.64**										
	3. Anger	106	4.68	2.21	.87	.67**	.39**									
	4. Avoid (0-3)	102	1.48	1.23	.72	.38**	.34**	.37**								
	5. Help (0-5)	102	1.88	1.35	.74	.42**	.08	.38**	.03							
	6. Proactive (0-3)	102	1.01	0.88	.62	.16	.13	.35**	-.32	.36**						
Indirect	1. Fear	90	3.09	2.04	.88	.66**	.43**	.53**	.37**	.27*	.15					
	2. Shame	90	1.51	1.48	.89	.44**	.63**	.31**	.61**	.08	.19	.61**				
	3. Anger	90	5.02	2.33	.83	.41**	.28**	.58**	.57**	.37**	.33**	.57**	.37**			
	4. Avoid (0-3)	99	1.14	1.22	.78	.29**	.26*	.26*	.58**	.05	-.05	.25*	.09	.12		
	5. Help (0-5)	99	1.74	1.33	.78	.32**	.12	.33**	-.01	.17	.17	.19	.09	.14	.26**	
	6. Proactive (0-3)	99	1.10	1.02	.64	.28**	.24	.33**	.04	.66**	.66**	.16	.14	.34**	.17	.32**

\*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

Table 2.4: Direct and indirect experiences and emotional reactions (Study 1).

			Fear		Shame			Anger			
			β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	
Direct Experience	Online Activities	Social	.02	-.02	-.02	.14	.12	.11	-.02	-.06	-.07
		Active	.09	-.08	-.13	-.14	-.25*	-.26*	.24*	.05	.03
		Professional	-.09	-.03	-.03	-.04	-.00	-.00	-.12	-.06	-.06
		Dating	-.01	.17	.18	.22*	.33**	.34**	-.16	.03	.04
	Direct Experience			.49***	.39**		.29**	.20		.48***	.34**
	Indirect Experience				.14			.12			.19
	R <sup>2</sup>		.02	.19	.20	.06	.13	.14	.06	.25	.26
F Change			.38	22.38***	.95	1.68	8.08**	.68	1.59	25.56***	2.14
Indirect Experience	Online Activities	Social	.15	.11	.09	.22*	.16	.18	.17	.13	.12
		Active	.18	.04	.03	.01	-.12	-.11	.18	.08	.07
		Professional	-.17	-.13	-.13	-.14	-.09	-.10	-.14	-.11	-.13
		Dating	.04	.19	.20	.19	.34**	.33**	-.13	-.01	-.00
	Direct Experience			.44***	.39**		.41***	.48**		.39**	.26
	Indirect Experience				.07			-.11			.07
	R <sup>2</sup>		.09	.26	.26	.11	.25	.25	.06	.15	.15
F Change			2.22	18.97***	.22	2.58*	15.79**	.50	1.49	8.59**	.24

\*\*\* p&lt;.001, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

The next step was to see if there was a link between these emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. The regressions used the behavioural intentions for direct experiences as the dependent variables (in three separate regressions). The IVs were (in this order) online activities, direct experiences, indirect experiences and the three emotions. This indicated that, for direct experiences, fear ( $\beta = .47, p < .01$ ) and shame ( $\beta = -.27, p < .05$ ) were linked to help seeking behaviours, and anger ( $\beta = .28, p < .05$ ) was linked to proactive behaviours (Table 2.5).

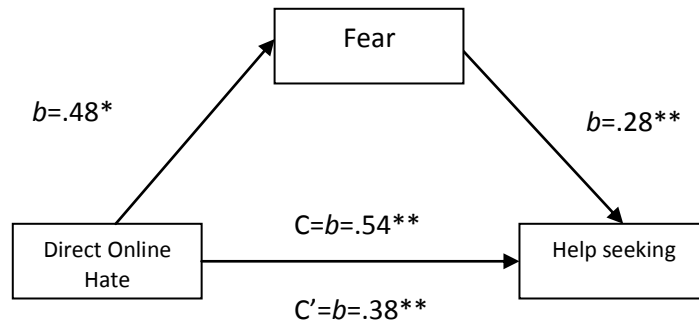
The same regressions were performed for indirect experiences. These showed that fear was linked to avoidance behaviours ( $\beta = .41, p < .05$ ) and anger was again linked to proactive behaviours ( $\beta = .30, p < .05$ ).

### **Mediation analyses.**

As behavioural intentions were linked with experiences of online hate crime and with certain emotions, further mediation analyses were performed to see if the same emotional reactions would mediate the link between victimisation and behavioural intentions (using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS method in SPSS). 'Direct experiences' was the IV (indirect victimisation controlled), the behavioural items as the DV (in three separate mediation analyses) and all three emotions as mediators (Table 2.6).

As can be seen, fear mediated the relationship between direct online hate crime and help seeking (see Figure 2.1), and anger was also a significant mediator between direct experiences of online hate crime and proactive behaviour (Figure 2.2). The same mediation analysis was conducted using indirect experiences as the predictor and direct experiences as a control. None of these analyses yielded any evidence of mediation.

*Figure 2.1: Fear as a mediator for help seeking behaviour and direct online hate crime (Study1)*



Indirect effect ( $b=.13$ , 95% BCa CI [.00/ .31]).

## 2.4. Study 2

Study 2 used the same methods as Study 1 but with a sample of Muslim respondents.

### 2.4.1. Method

The survey was completed by 129 participants (female = 51.9%;  $M_{age} = 30.39$ ,  $SD = 11.26$ , range 18-67). The ethnic breakdown was 25.6% 'Asian Pakistani', 14.7% 'Arab', 12.4% 'Bangladeshi', 7% 'Indian', 14% 'White', 7% 'Black African'. The remaining ethnic identities were 'Mixed', 'Chinese', or 'preferred not to say'.

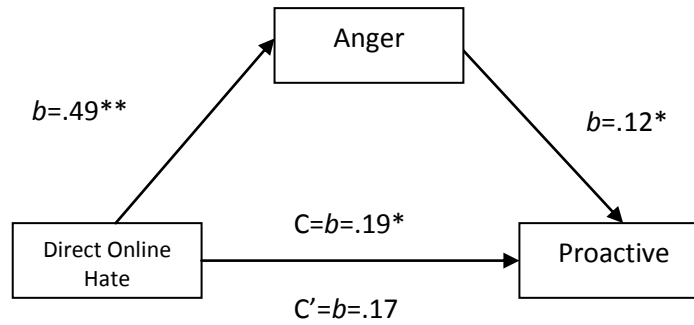
Again there were some missing data on some variables. Emotional reactions had 106 respondents for experiences of indirect hate crime. For behavioural intentions, 103 participants completed for direct experiences and 101 completed for indirect experiences.

Table 2.5: Direct and indirect experiences and the links between emotional reactions and behavioural intentions (Study 1)

			Avoidance				Help Seeking				Proactive			
			B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Direct Experience	Online Activities	Social	-.16	-.18	-.18	-.17	.06	.05	.06	.15	.02	.00	-.00	.00
		Active	-.04	-.17	-.17	-.12	.14	.01	.04	.02	.26	.26*	.12	.12
		Professional	.12	.14	.14	.17	.09	.12	.12	.14	-.17	-.09	-.09	-.06
		Dating	.25*	.38**	.39*	.29*	-.23*	-.09	-.11	-.13	.06	.04	.09	.08
	Direct Experience			.35**	.39*	.19		.36**	.57***	.38**		.38****	.34*	.31*
	Indirect Experience				.03	-.05			-.29	-.36*			.07	.03
	Emotions	Fear				.06				.47**				-.26
		Shame				.17				-.27*				.13
		Anger				.24				.18				.28*
		R <sup>2</sup>	.07	.18	.18	.28	.06	.17	.20	.37	.06	.19	.19	.24
	F Change		1.86	10.99**	.04	4.19*	1.46	11.29**	3.82	7.61***	1.55	13.80***	.19	1.85
Indirect Experience	Online Activities	Social	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.04	.11	.08	.07	.07	.16	.12	.09	.08
		Active	-.11	-.13	-.15	-.19	-.08	-.17	-.18	-.20	.14	.03	-.01	-.03
		Professional	.06	.07	.08	.13	-.08	-.06	-.06	-.03	-.08	-.05	-.04	-.03
		Dating	.19	.21	.22	.15	-.22	-.12	-.11	-.15	-.08	.04	.06	.08
	Direct Experience			.05	-.09	-.20		.29*	.24	.19		.38**	.15	.13
	Indirect Experience				.21	.16			.06	.04			.29	.29
	Emotions	Fear				.41*				.24				-.15
		Shame				-.13				-.09				-.01
		Anger				.02				.02				.30*
		R <sup>2</sup>	.04	.04	.05	.15	.07	.14	.14	.18	.04	.15	.19	.25
	F Change		.72	.21	1.48	2.90*	1.49	6.71*	.17	.98	.88	10.22**	3.41	.11

\*\*\* p&lt;.000, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

Figure 2.2: Anger as a mediator for proactive behaviour and direct online hate crime for the LGBT group



Indirect effect ( $b=.06$ , 95% BCa CI [.01/ .17]).

Table 2.6: Emotions as mediators between direct experiences and different behavioural intentions (Study 1).

DV	Mediators	Direct online hate crime				Indirect online hate Crime			
		<i>b</i>	SE	95% CI Bias Corrected		<i>b</i>	SE	95% CI Bias Corrected	
Avoidance	Total Effect	.19	.13	-.07	.46	.11	.11	-.11	.33
	Direct Effect	.08	.13	-.19	.35	.07	.11	-.15	.31
	Indirect effect via								
	Fear	.02	.05	-.05	.15	.02	.04	-.03	.15
	Shame	.02	.04	-.03	.11	.00	.01	-.01	.05
Help seeking	Anger	.07	.05	.00	.19	.00	.01	-.02	.02
	Total Effect	.54	.14	.26	.82	.02	.11	-.20	.24
	Direct Effect	.38	.13	.10	.65	.00	.12	-.24	.24
	Indirect effect via								
	Fear*	.13	.07	.00	.31	.01	.02	-.01	.12
Proactive	Shame	-.02	.04	-.13	.05	.00	.02	-.01	.09
	Anger	.04	.04	-.03	.14	.00	.01	-.02	.04
	Total Effect	.19	.09	.00	.39	.16	.09	-.02	.36
	Direct Effect	.17	.10	-.02	.38	.16	.09	-.03	.35
	Indirect Effect via								
	Fear	-.05	.04	-.17	.00	.00	.01	-.07	.01
	Shame	.00	.02	-.02	.06	.00	.01	-.04	.01
	Anger*	.06	.04	.01	.17	.01	.02	-.03	.06

\*significant mediation analysis

### **Measures.**

The same measures were used as in Study 1, with some minor changes in language to reflect the change in respondent group.

#### ***Internet usage.***

As before, a PAF factor analysis with oblique rotation was performed to make the categories of internet behaviour clearer for analysis. The model for this was similar to that found in Study one (KMO = .67, Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2 = (91)380.99, p < .001$ ). Four factors were found (Dating  $r = .62^{***}$ ; Active participation  $\alpha = .38$ , Professional  $\alpha = .67$ , Social activities  $\alpha = .65$ ).

#### ***Hate crime experience.***

The same 10 items used in Study 1 were employed with some changes in wording.

#### ***Emotional reactions and behavioural intention measures.***

The format of these two measurement scales were the same as in Study 1 (Table 2.1).

There was a small wording change with the one behavioural measure from Study 1; respondents were asked if they had been 'more vocal or active about their Muslim identity'.

Emotions were again grouped based on a PAF factor analysis with oblique rotation (Direct: KMO = .89, Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2 = (78)790.92, p < .001$ ; Indirect KMO = .87, Bartlett's test of sphericity  $X^2 = (78)978.49, p < .001$ ). This indicated a three factor model: Fear (direct  $\alpha = .89$ , indirect  $\alpha = .94$ ), Shame (direct  $\alpha = .81$ , indirect  $\alpha = .81$ ) and Anger (direct  $\alpha = .82$ , indirect  $\alpha = .90$ ). 'Other' was removed from the analysis due to the low number of responses.

Behavioural reactions were again grouped into ‘avoidance behaviours’, ‘help seeking behaviours’ and ‘proactive behaviours’.

### ***Demographics.***

The demographics that were collected included; age, location, gender, religion, and ethnicity. Following discussions with a range of Muslim organisations, it was decided that Muslim participants would not be asked about their sexual orientation.

### **Procedure.**

This was the same as Study 1 except Muslim organisations were targeted. The survey ran from March 2014 and April 2015. The same ethics procedure was followed as in the previous study.

### **2.4.2. Results**

The analysis followed the same procedures as in Study 1.

### **Experiences of online hate crime.**

High rates of online victimisation was found for both direct and indirect experiences of online hate crime (direct = 80%, indirect = 88%). Multiple victimisation across both types of online victimisation was common (see Table 2.7) with experiences of verbal and written abuse the most typically experienced forms of online abuse; the average experiences was between 4-10 occasions for direct experiences, and between 8-15 occasions for indirect experiences.

As before, the first step was to examine the potential risk factors for online hate crime. To do this, the victimisation experience variables for direct and indirect hate crime were calculated in the same way as Study 1 (direct:  $M = 1.51$ ,  $SD = 1.65$   $\alpha = .90$ , indirect  $M = 2.0$ ,  $SD = 1.95$   $\alpha = .93$ ) (Table 2.7).

Hierarchical regression was performed. The IVs were (in the following order): gender, time online, and online activities, the DV was online experiences of abuse (direct and indirect victimisation conducted separately). Gender was coded (M +1, F -1).

Gender was a significant predictor of experiences of both direct and indirect victimisation with men being more likely to be targeted than women (direct  $\beta = .21, p < .05$ ; indirect  $\beta = .20, p < .05$ ).

*Table 2.7: Frequencies of online experiences of hate crime (Study 2)*

	Direct		Indirect	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Responses to comments to a post written	2.23	2.50	3.26	2.71
Direct Abuse	2.20	2.61	3.17	2.76
Written or verbal abuse from chat rooms, forum etc	2.00	2.74	2.41	2.81
Trolling	2.80	2.90	3.10	2.82
Spam	1.87	2.60	1.38	2.36
Indecent Images sent to self	.88	1.86	1.45	2.43
Indecent images sent to others	.75	1.70	1.13	2.23
Stalking and harassment (unwanted attention on two or more occasions)	.69	1.59	1.22	2.15
Threats of physical violence	.84	1.77	1.41	2.06
Other	.84	1.94	1.46	2.45

Note: all frequencies were measured on a 0-7 scale (see measures)

Average time online was not a predictor of experiencing online hate crime either directly or indirectly. However, as with LGB&T respondents, the types of internet activity that people engage in were significantly associated with victimisation experiences. ‘Active participation’ activities were significantly related to direct and indirect online hate crime (direct  $\beta = .27, p < .01$ ; indirect  $\beta = .33, p < .001$ ).

As with Study 1, ‘internet activities’ was used as a control variable in subsequent regressions.

### Emotions and behaviours associated with online victimisation.

Means of and inter-correlations among all variables are shown in Table 2.8. These results mirrored those found in Study 1 and indicated that anger and fear were the most strongly felt emotions reported (Table 2.8). Once again, help-seeking and avoidance were the most common behavioural intentions.

The link between emotions and experiences of hate crime was explored through a series of regressions. The IVs were entered into the regression as follows: online activities, direct experiences and indirect experiences. The DV was the emotional reactions (fear, shame and anger) tested in different regressions (Table 2.9). This showed that fear was linked to direct experiences ( $\beta = .32, p < .01$ ), as were shame and anger (without controlling for indirect).

The second set of regressions used the same parameters but with *indirect* hate crime as the IV and direct experiences as the control (but still entered in the same order). This indicated that fear ( $\beta = .38, p < .01$ ), shame ( $\beta = .35, p < .01$ ) and anger ( $\beta = .44, p < .01$ ) were all linked to indirect experiences of online hate crime<sup>12</sup>.

We then analysed the links between online victimisation, emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. These regressions indicated that there were only links between *direct* experiences, emotional reactions and behavioural intentions: fear was associated with avoidance ( $\beta = .34, p < .05$ ); help seeking was linked to both shame ( $\beta = -.31, p < .05$ ) and anger ( $\beta = .46, p < .001$ ); fear was associated with proaction ( $\beta = -.28, p < .05$ , Table 2.10).

### Mediation analyses.

Mediation analyses were again conducted using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS method in SPSS.

There were no significant mediation analyses (see Appendix II).

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<sup>12</sup> Level of group identity significantly moderated the relationship between indirect experience and shame. Those with lower levels of identity felt more shame (Appendix III).

Table 2.8: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for emotional reactions and behavioural intentions (Study 2)

		Correlations														
		N	M	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Direct	1.Fear	129	3.04	2.12	.89											
	2.Shame	129	1.86	1.83	.82	.59**										
	3.Anger	129	4.34	2.28	.81	.65**	.53**									
	4. Avoid (0-3)	103	1.27	1.04	.81	.41**	.17	.29**								
	5. Help (0-5)	103	1.46	1.47	.80	.12	-.04	.33**	.03							
	6. Proactive (0-3)	103	0.78	0.83	.71	-.11	.04	.11	-.05	.30**						
Indirect	7.Fear	106	2.60	2.24	.94	.78**	.48**	.55**	.32**	.06	-.10					
	8.Shame	106	1.61	1.75	.90	.41**	.69**	.37**	.12	.03	.00	.63**				
	9. Anger	106	3.78	2.60	.81	.58**	.47**	.81**	.25*	.33**	.10	.70**	.54*			
	10. Avoid (0-3)	101	1.09	0.94	.83	.34**	.10	.15	.73**	-.04	.01	.22*	.03	.11		
	11. Help (0-5)	101	1.18	1.15	.84	.06	.04	.13	-.05	.66**	.41**	.01	-.03	.16	.06	
	12. Proactive (0-3)	101	0.79	0.89	.78	-.06	.02	.09	-.05	.32**	.85**	-.06	-.05	.09	.05	.48**

\*\*p&lt;.01,\*p&lt;.05

Table 2.9: Direct and indirect experiences and emotional reactions (Study 2)

			Fear			Shame			Anger		
			β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Direct Experience	Online Activities	Social	.00	.00	.00	.03	.03	.03	.14	.14	.14
		Active	.19	.09	.07	.03	-.04	-.06	.14	.06	.03
		Professional	.00	.00	-.00	.10	.10	.08	.12	.12	.09
		Dating	-.09	-.08	-.08	.20	.21*	.21*	-.00	.00	.01
	Direct Experience			.38***	.32**		.26**	.18		.31***	.18
	Indirect Experience				.11			.14			.21
	R <sup>2</sup>		.03	.14	.14	.05	.12	.13	.08	.17	.19
F Change			.96	20.43***	.90	1.59	8.84**	1.41	2.58*	12.99***	3.33
Indirect Experience	Online Activities	Social	-.13	-.14	-.12	-.06	-.07	-.06	-.04	-.05	-.03
		Active	.14	.05	.00	.00	-.09	-.15	.14	.03	-.04
		Professional	.26*	.27**	.23*	.19	.21*	.17	.24*	.25*	.20*
		Dating	-.04	.00	-.04	.22	.26*	.22*	-.00	.04	-.00
	Direct Experience			.32**	.07		.33**	.10		.36***	.07
	Indirect Experience				.38***			.35**			.44**
	R <sup>2</sup>		.09	.19	.26	.06	.17	.22	.09	.21	.29
F Change			2.75*	11.33**	8.96**	1.78	11.70**	7.32**	2.43	14.53***	12.88**

\*\*\*p&lt;.001, \*\*p&lt;.01, \* p&lt;.05

Table 2.10 Direct and indirect experience and the links between emotional reactions and behavioural intentions (Study 2)

			Avoidance				Help Seeking				Proactive			
			B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Direct Experience	Online Activities	Social	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.08	.08	.08	.08	.04	.06	.06	.06	.02
		Active	.11	.05	-.02	-.06	.30*	.29*	.24	.22	.15	.13	.12	.14
		Professional	.30**	.31**	.28**	.26*	-.13	-.12	-.15	-.18	-.01	-.00	-.01	-.02
		Dating	-.18	-.16	-.23	-.12	.02	.02	-.01	.04	.27*	.28*	.27*	.22
	Direct Experience			.19*	.01	-.03		.02	-.14	-.11		.09	.07	.11
	Indirect Experience				.31*	.24			.27	.18			.03	.05
	Emotions	Fear				.34*				-.01				-.28*
		Shame				-.11				-.31*				.00
		Anger				.02				.46***				.17
		R <sup>2</sup>	.14	.17	.22	.29	.10	.10	.14	.27	.14	.15	.15	.19
	F Change		3.92**	4.05*	5.41*	2.95*	2.67*	.06	3.91	5.65**	3.75**	.91	.06	1.57
Indirect Experience	Online Activities	Social	-.16	-.17	-.17	-.15	.14	.15	.15	.14	-.04	-.05	-.05	-.08
		Active	-.01	-.11	-.11	-.16	.33**	.37**	.35**	.34**	.21	.17	.14	.14
		Professional	.31**	.34**	.31**	.31*	-.13	-.14	-.15	-.15	-.06	-.05	-.01	-.01
		Dating	-.08	-.06	-.04	-.04	.15	.14	.13	.15	.22*	.23*	.26*	.26*
	Direct Experience			.19	.08	.08		-.13	-.17	-.16		.12	.09	.12
	Indirect Experience				.19	.22			.06	.02			.11	.11
	Emotions	Fear				.26				-.08				-.19
		Shame				-.19				-.15				-.18
		Anger				.12				.26				.16
		R <sup>2</sup>	.11	.14	.16	.19	.19	.20	.21	.24	.19	.20	.21	.24
	F Change		2.63*	3.23	1.80	1.12	5.13**	1.70	.21	1.43	5.14**	1.70	.21	1.44

\*\*\* p&lt;.000, \*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

## 2.5. Discussion

The aim of this research was to assess the extent of people's victimisation experiences of online hate crime in two groups, LGB&T people and Muslims, and then to explore the emotional and behavioural correlates of those experiences as a test of IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993).

Online hate crime was found to be a frequent occurrence for both target groups. Over 80% of respondents reported experiencing both direct and indirect online hate crime, suggesting it is extremely common, both to be targeted themselves and also to see other members of their groups become victims. In line with other research on hate crime (Home Office, 2014; ONS, 2015), the current studies found that multiple victimisation experiences were also common. The most frequent forms of online hate abuse experienced for both groups were written or verbal abuse. Other forms of online hate crime, such as stalking and harassment, threats of physical violence, and sending inappropriate or offensive material were less frequently experienced.

People self-identifying with less common forms of sexual orientation (bisexuality) and transgender identity appeared to be slightly more at risk of abuse. Muslim men were slightly more at risk of being targeted than Muslim women. This finding is a contrast to other recent reports on both offline and online Islamophobic hate crime, which suggested that Muslim women are more commonly targeted (Awan 2014; Awan & Zempi 2015).

Certain internet behaviours were revealed as potential predictors of online hate crime. Currently it is reported that social media is one of the most common online platforms in which people experience abuse (Home Office, 2014). However this research indicates that it is not social media per se that is correlated with abuse, but how open access the platform is. Those websites that have completely open access provides a means through which people are

more likely to experience online hate crime. So other online sources should not be overlooked in this regard, including blogs, forums, and comment pages on news websites.

The link between emotions and direct online hate crime was established for LGB&T people, with anger and fear being the predominant emotions (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003). The link between emotions and *indirect* experiences was not so evident for this group but the high mean scores for both anger and fear suggests that they may still be important.

For the Muslim group, indirect online hate crime experiences showed a correlational link with all the emotional reactions (anger, fear and shame). This suggests that experiencing online hate crime, even indirectly, can provoke strong negative emotional reactions, as predicted by IET.

Moreover, associations observed between the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions were also consistent with IET (Smith, 1993). For the LGB&T sample, fear and shame were linked with help seeking behaviour and anger was linked with proactive behaviours for direct experiences. For indirect experiences fear was associated with avoidance behaviours and anger was again linked to proactive behaviours (although through regression analysis only). These patterns are consistent with IET, although help-seeking as a behavioural intention represents a new direction for future research in this tradition to explore.

For the Muslim group, relationships between emotional reactions and behavioural intentions were only found for *direct* experiences of online hate crime. There was, again, partial support for IET since fear was linked to avoidance intentions.

Shame was negatively linked with seeking help. This finding is an interesting contrast to the typical correlates for perpetrator shame (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna &

Teroni, 2014; Brown et al., 2008; Gausel, Leach, Vignoles & Brown, 2012). It suggests that if you are a victim of online hate abuse and you experience shame as a result, and you are less likely to draw attention to your experience.

Conversely, anger was linked to help seeking behaviour for Muslims while fear was linked to help seeking behaviour for the LGB&T group. This implies that there may be different motivations for the two groups when seeking help. Anger would suggest wanting a response that was more punitive, whereas fear would suggest a motivation of self-protection. More research is needed to untangle this.

Overall both groups offered support to IET's framework. However, the fact that neither group completely supported the model could suggest that the internet acts as a different social space in which there are different rules and risks associated with different behaviours. For example, avoidance behaviour offline may involve removing people from your social circle or changing daily habits in order to minimise risk. This may come at substantial personal cost. However, to avoid people *online* may only take a small, not too disruptive action, such as 'blocking' someone. Conversely, to take proactive action online may also not pose the same level of risk to personal safety as it would offline. Inappropriate and/or hateful language and behaviour could be challenged from the safety of one's own home. Help seeking behaviour may also be as simple as clicking a report button, thereby alerting an organisation who can do something about it without fully engaging with the criminal justice system, or necessarily revealing one's identity. This choice and ease of options online may mean that multiple behavioural responses are taken and therefore the clear link between specific emotions and behaviours is not as clear as it is offline, or as IET would predict.

While the current research establishes some new and interesting findings regarding hate crime victimisation on the internet there are some limitations. Apart from the obvious issues with our correlational design, one of the key issues is that the survey is potentially a complex measure of sensitivity to online abuse. Participants were recruited by explaining that it was a survey on the experiences of online hate crime and hate incidents. It is likely that those who identified their experiences as upsetting and serious were more likely to have completed the survey. This has the potential to inflate both the amount and frequency of online hate crime and the severity of the emotional reactions reported by the respondents.

Despite the infancy of the research in this area there are a number of implications worth considering. The first is that hate crime/ hate speech is a common problem online for the two identity groups under investigation. The strong negative emotional responses to being a victim of both direct and indirect online hate crime suggests that it is psychologically damaging and should be taken seriously in terms of trying to reduce it, or to offer support for those who are victims.

There are also some policy implications of the research. More needs to be done to improve internet safety for all people online. This will need, one suspects, close joint working between the criminal justice system, policy makers, and the internet providers and website owners to try and minimise online hate crime, punish persistent perpetrators, and offer effective support and recourse for the victims (see Bakalis 2016). One way to start to accomplish this would be to ensure that the operational definitions of hate crime factor in the role of the internet in order that online hate crimes and incidents are more readily identifiable.

Differences in the types of emotional reactions and the motivations of behavioural intentions between groups have some implications for the future management of online hate crime. It cannot be assumed that the reactions to online hate crime are the same; the

perception of threat and the motivation of the action tendencies appear to be different across identity groups. Therefore specific measures and support plans will need to be devised for each legally protected identity group to try and minimise the damage of being a victim of, or a witness to, online hate crime.

### **Chapter 3:**

## **The Social Psychological Impacts of Cyberhate: A Qualitative Analysis**

### **3.1. Abstract**

This paper reports the findings of interviews with cyberhate victims from two commonly victimised groups, Muslim (n = 8) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T, n = 8). Both victim groups indicated that the most common emotion experienced as a result of being victimised was anger, particularly when they were targeted by direct abuse. Fear was reported for experiences of indirect cyberhate only. Disappointment, sadness, and frustration were also common emotional reactions. Despite the negative impacts of cyberhate, participants indicated a level of resilience to experiencing abuse online, partly due to the perceived motivation of perpetrators and low expectations of behaviour online. Participants would generally avoid or challenge hate-based behaviour. Muslim participants felt a responsibility to portray their faith in a positive way, LGB&T victims did not. When cyberhate was reported to websites or the police the perceived effectiveness of the responses and the satisfaction of the victims were mixed.

### **3.2. Introduction**

Hate crime continues to be a pervasive social problem in the United Kingdom (UK) (see e.g. Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015). Research suggests that being a victim of ‘hate’ crime can result in victims experiencing higher levels of depression, increased anxiety, greater perceived vulnerability and a fear of being targeted for crimes in the future (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999; Iganski, & Lagou, 2014; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu, 2001). Hate crime is uniquely destructive because, not only does it impact those targeted directly, but it also affects other members of the same identity group (indirect victimisation) (Bell & Perry, 2015; Noelle, 2002; Paterson, Brown, Walters & Carrasco, 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012). Despite the growing body of research on ‘hate harms’ there remains a dearth of evidence exploring the impacts that cyberhate (online hate crime) has on victims (Awan & Zempi, 2016). This paper will use qualitative interviews and a thematic analysis to explore cyberhate victimisation experiences from a social psychological perspective, using two commonly victimised groups: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) people and Muslims.

#### **What is hate crime?**

This research utilises and adapts the current UK police working definition of hate crime which records criminal (and non-criminal) incidents:

Any criminal offence [or non-crime incident] which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation... or against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender... or against a person’s religion or perceived religion.  
(College of Policing, 2014: 3).

This victim-centred definition allows the victim (or anyone else) to determine whether she or he has been a victim of an incident that she or he perceived to be motivated by prejudice and/or hostility; it is also the most commonly used definition currently within the UK criminal justice system.

As the definition is predominantly used to describe offline hate crime, some further clarification is needed as to how this would apply to online hate crime. There are a number of UK laws which proscribe online hate crimes (for a review, see Law Commission 2014). In the main, online hate crimes involve (but are not necessarily limited to) verbal or written abuse, harassment and stalking, trolling, sending inappropriate or offensive material/ images to victims or their friends and family, and threats of physical violence (see, for example section. 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or section 127(1) of the Communications Act 2003). These offences are often very difficult to prove (Law Commission 2014) and incidents remain vastly under-reported (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014: 67).

### **Cyberhate crime: A social psychological analysis.**

At present, there is limited research on cyberhate. This is an important omission considering the growing influence of the internet in our lives, with the average UK adult now spending 20 hours per week online (Ofcom, 2015) and over 3 billion internet users worldwide<sup>13</sup>. With the increased use of the internet there has also been an increase in the amount of reported internet hate crime (Home Office, 2014). However, it is only very recently that researchers have turned their attentions to exploring the nature and extent of cyberhate (Awan & Zempi 2015; Awan & Zempi, 2016; Burnap & Williams, 2016; Williams & Burnap 2015).

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.statista.com/statistics/273018/number-of-internet-users-worldwide/>

Two of the most comprehensive studies were conducted by the UK LGB&T charity Stonewall (Dick, 2008; Guasp, Gammon & Ellison 2013). These studies looked at LGB&T experiences of both offline and online hate crime, finding in relation to the latter that 45% of 18-25 year olds had witnessed anti-LGB&T abuse online and one in twenty had been a direct victim (Guasp et al., 2013). Yet neither study focused on the *impacts* of cyberhate. The limited research that has focused on the impacts, specifically from a group identity perspective, was an earlier study conducted by the current authors that indicated that cyberhate was a common and frequent problem for Muslims and LGB&T people and that indirect victimisation occurred on the internet as well as offline (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016). Awan and Zempi (2016) indicated that the impacts experienced online could ‘bleed into’ life offline with victims fearing that online abuse could then turn into attacks offline.

Inferences can also be drawn from other research that has started to explore some of the impacts of being a victim of cyberbullying more generally (Chakraborti et al., 2014). While these studies have not focused solely on specific identity groups, they have shown that cyber abuse can have serious emotional and psychological impacts, including experiencing anger and ‘anger expressions’, higher levels of depression, (although these are somewhat buffered by stronger levels of social support) (Ak, Ozdemir & Kuzucu, 2015; Tennant, Demaray, Coyle & Malecki, 2015).

Fearn, Brown and Walters (2016) found that the emotional and behavioural reactions associated with cyberhate are consistent with those proposed by Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET). IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993) is a theory that has particular relevance for the study of hate crime because it provides an explanation of the emotional impacts when a person’s group identity is attacked. IET posits that a person can experience emotional reactions vicariously via his or her connection with other individuals who share a ‘group identity’ (see Brown 2010: 176-178). In relation to hate crime, emotional reactions, and in

turn behavioural responses, can be experienced vicariously amongst ingroup members who become aware of other members being attacked (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016). This is because the targeting of an individual because of his or her identity amounts to an attack on the group's identity as a whole.

The predominant emotions experienced when group identity is challenged are anger and fear (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003). Outgroups that are perceived by ingroup members to be more (socially) powerful tend to provoke fear reactions, due to the ingroup's perception of relative socio-cultural and/or socio-economic weakness. Where conflicts between these groups occur, the emotion of anger tends to be provoked amongst members of the discriminated group (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Paterson et al., 2016). These specific emotional reactions can, in turn, promote specific action tendencies. Anger is likely to provoke more proactive behavioural responses (e.g., confronting homophobia) whereas feelings of fear are more likely to provoke more avoidant behaviours (e.g., not disclosing sexual orientation) (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Kessler & Hollbach, 2005; Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Mackie, Maitner & Smith 2009). These specific correlations between the emotional and behavioural reactions have received a wide range of support within the literature (Devos et al., 2003; Mackie et al., 2000, Mackie & Smith, 2015; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004).

In a previous study conducted by the authors (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016), anger and fear were the predominant emotions when experiencing online hate crime (both direct and indirect) (see also, Awan & Zempi 2016; Paterson et al., 2016). While this has increased our understanding of the impacts of cyberhate, there has yet to be a detailed *qualitative* analysis that focuses *solely* on online hate crime. Survey data collected in previous studies provides only broad indications of the most common emotional reactions to experiences of internet hate crime, and their correlates, or compares online and offline experiences (Awan &

Zempi, 2016). Qualitative analysis of individuals' experiences allows for a more nuanced examination of the different and specific emotional reactions to cyberhate victimisation and their relationship with action tendencies in a way that questionnaire data is often unable to capture. Additionally, the impacts of offline hate crime have been shown to be complex and individual, thus meriting the kind of in-depth investigation afforded by qualitative approaches in other hate crime research (Noelle, 2002; Perry & Alvi, 2012).

Another advantage of a qualitative approach is the flexibility that it offers (Braun & Clark, 2006). As the topic is a relatively new and under-researched area, the approach allows for an exploration of the main issues experienced by the victims without imposing the constraints of a predesigned quantitative methodology. Generating this level of understanding of the impacts of cyberhate victimisation can help to inform further quantitative research by identifying the topics and issues that are relevant to victims. Despite its lack of generalisability, a qualitative approach acts as a complementary facet to existing quantitative findings.

### **Research aims.**

The aim of the current research is to complete a detailed exploration of the impacts of being a victim of cyberhate. This includes exploring the impacts of both direct and indirect victimisation experiences of members of two commonly victimised groups (LGB&T people and Muslims). This will be done by utilising thematic analysis (explained below) as this provides the required level of flexibility in terms of both how the interviews are conducted and the themes that are derived in the analysis. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, there are no specific hypotheses, but it is envisaged that the research will be able to provide an in-depth analysis of the range of impacts experienced when these groups are targeted by cyberhate. As IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993) has been shown to be an important

theoretical concept in hate crime victimisation, the analysis will be conducted with this framework in mind. By including two victimised groups, it will increase the range of experiences of cyberhate that will be explored, although the data does not lend itself to precise comparisons between the groups, some similarities and differences in victimisation experiences and the subsequent impacts will be noted.

### **3.3. Method**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 participants (8 LGB&T, aged between 20 and 65 years; 4M, 3F), 8 Muslim (aged between 18 and 63 years; 6M, 2F). Interviews were conducted via telephone or Skype by the first author, who has extensive interviewing experience and was not a member of either victimised group. Interviews lasted between 30 and 70 minutes. The discussion topics for the interview were designed to capture the range of both direct and indirect experiences of cyberhate and included questions which covered their victimisation experiences online (both direct and indirect), their emotional and behavioural reactions to that abuse, their group identity, and any other impacts that they had experienced (see Appendix IV). The interview topics were left as open-ended as possible to allow for the interviewees to expand on areas that were important to them or to introduce new topics not considered by the researchers. Probes were included to try and encourage participants to think about specific examples and the emotions they experienced as well as any resulting action they had taken.

Participants were chosen via advertising online for people who would want to take part in an interview about their experiences of online hate crime. Two of the LGB&T interviews were conducted with people as couples (RL and KM were interviewed separately, SO and SW were interviewed together). Not all participants were willing to disclose their

exact age. All the participants were currently living in the UK. Interviews were conducted between October 2014 and January 2015.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (3 participants refused to be recorded; in this case, detailed notes were taken). The transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis. Codes were initially established based on comments individuals made about emotional and behavioural reactions to cyberhate, their group identity and, due to the exploratory nature of the research, anything else that was felt to be pertinent to their victimisation experience. The exact procedure was similar to that proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). To ensure that the codes identified were grounded in the data, the transcripts were returned to a number of times in order to provide evidence for the coding claims. Once these codes were established they were then categorised into larger themes. An inductive approach was used since the codes were generated directly from the data. However, the emotional reaction and behavioural intentions noted in IET were used as a guide when exploring the participants' reactions to the victimisation experiences. Inter-rater reliability was performed with three researchers independently coding the same two transcripts to ensure consistency across the codes. Where there was disagreement a discussion and a review of the data resolved the few coding disagreements.

### **3.4. Analysis**

There were a number of common themes identified across the two identity groups about the impacts of being a victim of cyberhate. These were:

1. attitudes to the internet,
2. emotional reactions to cyberhate, and
3. behavioural responses to cyberhate.

Although the larger themes were common across the two groups, there were some small differences noted. The themes and the similarities and differences across the groups are discussed in the following section.

**Attitudes to cyberhate.**

***Expectations of the internet.***

The majority of participants, from both groups, talked about the importance of free speech on the internet. Most did not want the internet to be censored so therefore they felt people should be free to express themselves, even if those opinions were aggressive and hateful. A number of interviewees emphasised this point:

So essentially people are free to say anything they like about Islam and they are entitled to criticise Muslims as a generality to any extent that they want.

(Muslim, MA)

Anybody can post anything that they like, that is the purpose of the social media and the internet.... That is the point, the freedom.

(Muslim, CA)

There is always going to be ignorant people online and there is always going to be trolls.

(LGB&T, SO)

Some interviewees acknowledged that what was offensive for some people was not necessarily offensive for others. This made it difficult for some individuals to make a clear distinction between what was hate crime and what was an acceptable way to state opinions. For instance, one interviewee noted:

I will give the prevalent example of when Stephen Gately<sup>14</sup> passed away. That was such a high profile example and there were some vicious, vicious comments. But obviously that is from my perspective that they were vicious and I found them offensive, but obviously from the site administrators' perspective as people having the right to express an opinion.

(LGB&T, PP)

There was a general acceptance amongst interviewees that the internet is a place in which people are going to be badly behaved; that it is a place where people are free to express negative or hateful views that they would not otherwise do so in the "real" world. A number of participants spoke of how they had now come to expect such abuse.

I mean that is just a daily occurrence. That is just something that I have come to expect. If in fact I don't see it I will be surprised. If there is some sort of topic related to that [Islam] and I don't see that type of abuse then I will be perfectly surprised.

(Muslim, NS)

In fact because Twitter is so fast and furious and people are so aggressive we tend to normalise that sort of behaviour

(Muslim, YR)

There were very low expectations amongst participants as to what is acceptable behaviour online, with bad behaviour being tied to the idea that the internet should be a place in which people can be free to say whatever they like. Indeed, for many participants cyberhate was seen as part and parcel of going online.

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Gately was a member of an Irish pop band 'Boyzone' who came out as gay in 1999 and then died in 2009.

*The difficulty of managing hate crime.*

Interviewees acknowledged that there are a number of difficulties in terms of managing cyberhate for the authorities (the police, the internet service providers, and the websites). This was acknowledged for both those who had reported the abuse and those who had not.

Then a few months later I got a letter saying that they had decided on this occasion not to press charges because the accused said somebody must have hijacked his twitter account. And I just thought ‘well he will probably think twice before he ever sends an abusive tweet again’. But at the same time, what a lot of effort! You know a policeman... has to spend an hour interviewing somebody, then he has to do a report then he has to pass it on to possibly his supervisor who then has to pass it on.... I just think how many burglaries could have been solved and how many grannies could have been stopped from being mugged in the time that it has taken to investigate a tweet!

(Muslim, YR)

This was also reflected by another Muslim participant who was not sure that anything could really be done to manage it because it is “just a post”.

The general sense of official regulation simply not being worth it was further compounded by the fact that most individuals were unsure as to what is and is not criminal conduct online. Most interviewees noted that it was difficult to be able to tell when abusive language, controversial views, or ‘near the knuckle’ humour turned into an online hate crime, with one individual (AB) noting that it was an extremely “fine line”.

However, despite a general appreciation that the internet is a really difficult medium to manage, there was correspondingly a level of frustration that there were inconsistencies in

how websites managed the problem of cyberhate. Many interviewees felt that, were there to be more consistency in the way that websites managed the issue, then behaviour online would improve. Two LGB&T interviewees noted that:

So I think different companies, whether it is social media, independent forums or news sites they all need to look at their processes for allowing comments, or filtering comments, or reactively dealing with comments and what their guidelines are and what they should and shouldn't allow. There doesn't seem to be any consistency across the board.

(LGB&T, PP).

There doesn't ever seem to be any type of censorship (on abusive comments), nobody ever seems to be removing those comments.

(LGB&T, FM)

Many felt that the lack of consistent (private) regulation was due to the volume of traffic on websites, with most host sites only removing certain words that they have flagged as 'offensive'. Some interviewees noted that, even when such language is used, websites did not always take offensive comments down where they had been stated within certain contexts (LGB&T, PH). This meant that some offensive and abusive language was still being allowed online. In some ways, interviewees' views about internet regulation were in tension with their views of free speech on the internet. While most believed that the internet must remain an arena for the expression of speech and ideas, there was also an expectation that *particularly* hateful and offensive material should be moderated. It was not clear amongst interviewees, however, where this line should be drawn, with many themselves admitting that they did not know when the line had been crossed. These contradictions provide a strong indication that it

is going to be difficult to establish the right balance between the right for freedom of speech and the protection of groups from cyberhate.

Interviewees were asked about how they felt cyberhate should be regulated. Several spoke about the potential of having a central reporting hub in which frequent offenders could be identified and where the frequency of hate crimes online could be accurately measured<sup>15</sup>. Participant PH indicated that he felt that “teamwork was really important” in order to regulate online hate crime. Other interviewees concurred, with one stating:

[T]he police centralising anti-internet crime would make sense. Because it is crazy that you have individual police forces responsible for this when the internet is a globally borderless medium.....So they would be much more sensible to have a single, sort of, internet crime unit rather than each authority trying to do its own stuff.

(Muslim, MA)

It was also noted by one interviewee that more information should be collected from people who make profiles on sites so that they can be followed up and that there are then consequences for illegal behaviour online.

One of the things that would be helpful about the internet generally is for service providers to do more to identify the identities of people.

(Muslim, MA)

However, it was not just websites that were expected to regulate cyberhate. Several interviews noted that the general public also have a role to play in challenging online hate. For instance, interviewee SW indicated that she felt that it was the responsibility of “every

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<sup>15</sup> The Mayor’s office for London has recently announced this change and it will be discussed further in the discussion.

decent person to report it...there is power in people”. This suggests that there is also a role for self-policing of the internet, i.e. that everyone has responsibility to challenge and report hate-based behaviour.

### **Emotional reactions to cyberhate victimisation.**

#### ***The harms of online hate crime.***

There were a number of negative emotions reported as a result of experiencing cyberhate. One of the key emotional reactions was that of anger, one of the predominant emotions noted by IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993). One participant (who had experienced sustained cyberhate) indicated that describing the emotion he felt as ‘anger’ was not going far enough:

Angry, there needs to be new definition for anger: I control it I really do. [My partner] can let his anger out. Whereas... I need to contain it because I am afraid that if I do give into this anger and frustration inside me then I will have a nervous breakdown.

(LGB&T, KM)

You know there has been anger and there has been disappointment even. People I have known on the internet for years they do not think twice before vilifying someone online.

(Muslim, NS)

Almost all participants reported extremely high levels of anger after experiencing hate abuse online. Interviewee AB described this as “pure anger”. The impact of this anger on the behavioural responses of the participants will be discussed below.

There were fewer reports of feeling fear as a result of experiencing cyberhate amongst interviewees; however, fear was still a common feature of people's experiences. For many, this was vocalised as feeling 'worried' about online abuse. For most, this fear was discussed in relation to indirect experiences of online hate crime. Fear in this sense was felt for *other* members of their identity group. For example, one Muslim interviewee JK felt particularly fearful for Muslim women who were often subjected to rape threats. He was concerned that those people who said such things online could be capable of following through with their threats offline (see also Awan & Zempi, 2016). Other interviewees similarly noted the dangerous way in which others in their groups were spoken to:

Spreading bias views is just a dangerous thing, we have seen the effects of it, you know, on the news you see hate crimes against Muslims.

(Muslim, CA)

They are pretty threatening and the stuff that they say are obscene.

(LGB&T, SW)

Emotions other than anger and fear were reported. Many interviewees also talked about feeling a level of frustration and disappointment at the views expressed by people online against their identity group. Interviewee PP, for instance, stated that he found it "sad" that people still feel this way about the LGB&T community. Others noted their feeling of sadness and frustration in the following terms:

There is nothing I can do about it, and that frustrates me.

(Muslim, CA)

Sometimes I feel angry, sometimes I feel sad, sometimes I feel frustrated.

(Muslim, KA)

For some other participants, cyberhate was met with a feeling of disgust:

They like to make out gay people are paedophiles..... And to pinpoint it on one group of people when it is actually a lie it is quite disgusting.

(LGB&T, LD)

These results indicate that there are a range of negative emotional responses to experiencing cyberhate, beyond the main group emotions indicated by IET; including frustration, disappointment and sadness. These emotions were particularly strong when someone had been directly targeted for abuse through direct messages, cloning accounts, or spreading defamatory information. Interviewees SO, SW, RL and KM all reported that they had been the victims of “an online hate campaign”. The negative impacts on them had been substantial. This was summed up by one LGB&T participant who stated:

Totally destroyed my life, my reputation, my career, my health and my wealth...  
Because they have destroyed my reputation online

(LGB&T, KM)

These findings suggest the range of emotional reactions to experiencing cyberhate include those indicated by IET; namely anger and fear, as supported by previous research in this area (Awan & Zempi, 2016; Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016) and research exploring offline hate crime too (Chakraborti et al., 2014, Paterson et al., 2016), and there are a number of other emotional reactions reported, such as frustration, disappointment and sadness, when people are victimised online. These slightly lower level emotions experienced perhaps suggest cyberhate promotes slightly different emotions to offline hate crime.

***Impact on identity.***

There was some emerging, if not comprehensive, evidence from the interviews that the impact on group identity could be damaging for both direct and indirect victimisation experiences. Where participants were the indirect victims of hate crime (i.e., where they had seen or read other ingroup members being victimised) they consistently expressed concern about the well being and security of other members of the same identity group.

As a person I didn't personally feel victimised. I think when I take issue online with these people coming out with this nonsense I am always thinking of the younger me or the younger LGB&T people that are struggling with who they are.

(LGB&T participant, LD)

Such remarks indicated that sustained direct abuse against a member of an identity group has the potential to have significant, and potentially very negative, impacts on other group members.

The frequency with which targeted abuse was observed online served to further alienate some individuals from dominant or mainstream identity in society. The stigmatisation and alienation of minority groups can have pernicious consequences. Previous experiences of discrimination and the subsequent feelings of being isolated and rejected by society, and the ability to meet like-minded people easily on the internet have been suggested to be linked to radicalisation (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Precht, 2007). This idea was reinforced in the case of one Muslim interviewee who indicated that online abuse put younger Muslims at risk of being enticed by extremist views:

You know it hurts to see something like that. I would say when I was a lot younger, when my political views hadn't formed yet. I would have said I would be vulnerable to extremism at that point. Because the amount of abuse that you see.

(Muslim, NS)

Such statements suggested that the internet could have significant impacts on certain individual's attachment to, and experience of, group identity; particularly by those who faced substantial amounts of abusive content. This was a discourse common for Muslim participants who felt the media were particularly responsible for attacking Islam which, in turn, encouraged the anti-Islamic speech that they had experienced online. Our observation here reflects that of other research studies that have also linked the media's coverage of Muslims with wider Islamophobic sentiments and in turn to increases in incidences of cyberhate (Williams & Burnap, 2015). Specific trigger events involving Muslim people and the media attention they garner have been correlated with spikes in targeted abuse against Muslim people (Feldman & Littler, 2014; Williams & Burnap 2015).

Trigger events can also give rise to some group members feeling that they must recant the actions of terrorists with whom they have no connection with other than a (perceived) shared identity as a Muslim. One interviewee indicated that he was fed up of having to apologise for the behaviour of a few Muslims when the same was not expected of other identity groups.

If he was to be a British Muslim man the media would say "a Muslim man" they would definitely attach that name. If it was a British Christian man then this does not happen.

(Muslim, KA)

Something that was also apparent for both groups is that the hate directed at the group was not always from outside the group. A number of participants commented that some of the perpetrators of the hate crime they had witnessed online were from within their own identity group. This was noted by both the LGB&T and Muslim participants.

So there is also infighting as well within the gay community itself online, it can be quite unpleasant

(LGB&T, PP)

My experience is that it tends to be other Muslims that are more hostile. For example where I tend to be much more nuanced then they want me to be have actually been more, sort of personally hostile or more vociferous in their objections then non-Muslims. What I encounter from non-Muslims are large amounts of bile directed towards Islam and Muslims in generality rather than things that are expressly directed at me.

(Muslim, MA)

Being targeted by both members of outgroups and ingroups suggests that the role of identity in cyberhate victimisation is more complex than first thought. Our interviews revealed the potential for cyberhate to form part of a process of internalised prejudice that is re-birthed by members of groups that are being targeted by other group members. We see here a duplication of hatred, which is experienced both as a form of external subjugation imposed by outgroup members and again internally by ingroup members who seek resistance against members of marginalised groups who fail to tow the line of dominant identity. The findings highlight that need for further research on the extent to which cyberhate (and by analogy other forms of hate crime) is committed by individuals within certain ingroups.

***Resilience.***

As reported in the section above, there was a wide range of negative emotions experienced as a result of cyberhate. However, there was a strong discourse of resilience within the majority of the interviews. These experiences of resilience were strongly related to the low expectations of people's behaviour on the internet. Examples of resilience included trying to understand why people held prejudicial and hateful attitudes towards their group.

Of course the thing I am always conscious of which stops me getting too, sort of, het up about it is the reason why all these non-Muslim idiots say all these things about Islam is because they have had so many Muslims idiots who have given them good cause

(Muslim, MA)

Others talked about developing a level of resilience as they got more 'used' to the abuse that they encountered online. They had started to develop a much 'thicker skin' to the abuse that they witnessed and experienced.

I used to take it personally, now I don't. I usually give them two or three tweets and then just go straight for the blocker. And then announce I have just blocked so and so because I can't talk to ignorant people.

(Muslim, YR)

Participants also talked about learning to expect it and not letting how other people react to what they have to say alter how they behave online, or what they choose to post about themselves.

I realise this whole drama could've been avoided if I just didn't post the status in the first place, but at the end of the day, it's my news feed, I should feel comfortable posting whatever I want to express.

(Muslim, AB)

This minimal level of resilience observed amongst participants acted as a coping mechanism for those who frequently experience online hate. Resilience has been noted by research on victims of other crimes (Walklate, 2011). While the harms caused by ongoing online abuse must not be underestimated, there was some evidence, at least, that resilience could be built up over time where an individual had experienced the abuse frequently, where individuals already held low expectations of the internet and, for some, where they had attempted to try and understand the perpetrators' motives (see minimising motivations section below).

***Minimising motivations: Hate is not hate online.***

A common theme that emerged was minimising the motivations of perpetrators. Participants spontaneously reported that they felt that the reasons people were targeting their identity group online were not related to hatred of their group at all. Previous research by Awan (2014) on Islamophobic online hate on Twitter found that most cyberhate tweeters were “reactive” to news events, while others acted as “disseminators” and “accessories” in retweeting negative images of Muslim people. Smaller numbers of perpetrators of cyberhate were labelled as “professionals” or “trawlers”, i.e. those who spend significant time on social media purposively disseminating hate speech about Muslims. Amongst the interviewees in the current study a number of reasons were given by participants as to why people were happy to abuse them online. One was that it was a small minority of people who made it their business to cause trouble online. The participants in this study seem to attribute the abuse to

the offender type of ‘professional’, someone who launches sustained cyberhate attacks at individuals or ‘Impersonator’; a person who hides their identity online.

If Muslims were not the target they would find another group to target; they are just out to cause trouble.

(Muslim, JK)

Often I genuinely think that internet trolls are not as prolific as people think they are. I think it’s quite often just a small group of people.

(Muslim, YR)

Many also felt that those who perpetrated hate on the internet were a group of cowards who would not perform this behaviour offline. “I do believe like all these gangs on the internet they are in themselves cowards.” This cowardice was inferred due to high level of people who are hiding their identity online.

You know I was always brought up to, if you have got something to say you stand up and you say it and you put your name to it or you sit there and shut up. And false names, hoax IDs were all the cloaks of cowards

(Muslim, YR)

The idea of hiding identity or hiding behind a screen was another way in which people felt that those perpetrators did not have to take responsibility for what they said.

I think because, in a way, it is more impersonal online, you know, you have got almost like an invisible wall around you, and you kind of feel protected for, you know you can say whatever you want, there won’t be any repercussions.

(LGB&T, LD)

This minimising of motivations seemed to serve a number of purposes for the participants. For many it is likely to have served to protect them from some of the more negative impacts of cyberhate. This included feeling less at risk when people threatened them online. Minimising motivation also offered some protection for the overall security of individuals' group identity. By ascribing motivations to a few trouble making cowards rather than a hatred of their identity, there was the perception that the group was not under attack by numerous members of society. One participant vocalised why receiving abuse online was different to being abused offline.

I think out in the real world it is more alarming. Because you can put a face to the name, to the voice, to the threat.

(Muslim, YR)

The anonymity of the internet therefore appeared to reduce many individuals' sense of vulnerability. The fact that perpetrators were unknown meant that recipients of abuse could more easily neutralise the hate element of the abuse. This was done either by pathologising perpetrators as being part of very small subgroups of "trolls", or more generally seeing cyberhaters as un-dangerous "cowards" who hid behind the computer screens.

Perpetrator motivations were not explored so it not is possible to assert whether hate online is motivated by ideologies of hate or whether incidents simply make up everyday expressions of "low-level" prejudice (Iganski, 2008b). Research has indicated that the nature of cyberhate changes with the motivations of the perpetrator, but that many of the motivations of those who act online may well be very similar to those who express prejudice in the "real world" (Awan 2014).

### **Behavioural responses to cyberhate.**

As predicted by IET, there were a range of action tendencies as a result of being targeted for abuse. IET suggests that these behaviours are often based on avoidance and proactive behaviours (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Kessler & Hollbach, 2005; Mackie et al., 2000; Mackie et al., 2009). A similar pattern was reported by the participants in the interviews. There was also a theme of seeking justice and resolution which supports findings from Fearn, Brown and Walters, (2016) that help seeking is an important behavioural intention following cyberhate.

#### ***Avoidance.***

The most common form of behavioural response to experiencing cyberhate was to try and avoid experiencing the abuse.

I went onto a chat room my friend invited me to online .....The comments received there were absolutely disgusting even though they meant it as trolling not full blown hate..... was beyond aggravating. I was shocked to think that there were actually people out there who do talk and joke like this but I kept my cool and after realising that any sensible reply I gave was fuelling humour and being dismissed, the best thing to do was just leave.

(Muslim, AB)

I pick and choose the sites that I visit or the parts of the sites that I visit. So, not so I avoid certain things just so I am not exposed to things that upset me.

(LGB&T, PP)

We are just trying to ignore this particular group of people....and they do try to keep having a go we are just carrying on doing what we are doing.

(LGB&T, SW)

It was clear that participants employed a number of avoidance techniques to minimise the amount of exposure to cyberhate. Interviewees' comments about avoidance were slightly at odds with the attitudes around resilience and the low expectations of the internet. However avoidance came at little cost to the user, with most stating that cyberhate was easy to avoid when on the open access web. Thus though many internet users developed a resilience to cyberhate, this did not mean that they wished to endure it where it was easily avoided. Moreover, there were examples of more targeted abuse (through direct or personal messaging, cloning accounts, and spreading malicious and defamatory information) where this was impossible to avoid and could be particularly upsetting. In one case this had meant someone had withdrawn from the internet completely:

I don't go into any chat rooms what so ever, at all. I never will. [My partner] doesn't use the internet now he has just had enough of it.

(LGB&T, RL)

Still, for many other users, the ease of negotiating cyberspace allowed them to escape exposure to potentially hurtful content. Interviewee SO reflected that it "is easier to ignore people online than it is face-to-face". This again highlighted the different dynamics of cyberhate in contrast to offline hate crime victims can (but not always) feel slightly more removed from the threat, making it somewhat easier in this context to avoid abuse, this is somewhat at odds with research that indicates cyberhate can lead to fear of real world attacks (Awan & Zempi, 2016). An important factor within IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith,

1993) is the action tendencies from people following a challenge to their identity. By far the most common and frequently used action tendency reported here was to avoid the abuse; this involved avoiding certain websites, genres, or the internet entirely.

***Seeking justice or resolution.***

One important behavioural response that was common across the two groups was that participants would often try and seek a solution or some type of resolution to their experiences of cyberhate. There were a number of techniques participants reportedly employed to do this. Two participants indicated that it was important for them to tell the truth about their experience.

It was important for one participant in particular (who had been the victim of sustained and defamatory cyberhate) to tell others about his experience. He did this through a series of blogs highlighting his experience.

Basically just to put blogs about the truth, to set the story straight. Because I have never been helped by any authority I feel that I need to just put my messages out there and they are out there in blogs, various blogs and what have you, and if people are interested in reading them they are, they may not be, I don't know.

(LGB&T, RL)

The motivations for these blogs were numerous. First and foremost it had enabled the victim to inform others as to the truth of his experience. This counter narrative was also a cathartic process relinquishing some of the negative feelings that had followed his perceived lack of support from a variety of authorities. Finally, the blogs enabled the victim to provide support for other people who had been through a similar situation. Hence, for this individual the internet provided both the problem and, in turn, the resolution to his victimisation. It is

here that we see in stark contrast both the disempowering and re-empowering capacity of the internet.

Although this proactive blogger was able to find some resolution to his own abuse, for the vast majority of others the most common form of seeking resolution was to ‘block’ or report the perpetrators to website. This was predominantly done through social media (Twitter and Facebook). In most cases, this was usually a simple process of clicking a button or sending a message to the website. Most felt that this was a sensible and easy form of seeking resolution without causing too much trouble. However, there was a mixed response from websites when reporting was done (see attitudes to the internet section). Interviewees SO and SW reported that the response from Twitter had been very positive. Others had not been so lucky:

But all homophobic abuse that you hear about you just hear about something that has gone online, you don’t hear about the rest and you don’t hear about the account suspended. So as a result of high profile cases for other minority groups and other types of discrimination comparatively I don’t really have faith that homophobic abuse will be dealt with in the same way that other discrimination is online.

(LGB&T, PP)

Only three out of the sixteen participants reported the abuse to the police, supporting research indicating there are low levels of reporting of cyberhate incidents (Chakraborti et al., 2014). The effectiveness of the responses from the police was mixed. Participant YR noted that the police had completed a thorough investigation. However, partners RL and KM had found the police response to be lacking. They both spoke of not feeling protected by the police from what had become a sustained campaign of hate. The damage to their lives as a

result of this had been substantial; including the loss of jobs and then subsequently the loss of their home ownership and deterioration in both of their health.

A notable point was that one or two participants indicated that hate crime targeting their particular group was not taken as seriously as hate crimes targeting other identity groups and was not managed as well by the relevant authorities. This concurs with other recent research suggesting there is a ‘hierarchy’ of hate crime which has emanated from the piecemeal way in which victim groups have been protected under the law (Law Commission 2014). It also suggests that some hate crime victims feel particularly targeted and unsupported by state agencies.

I don’t think hate crimes in terms of sexual orientation are dealt with with the seriousness that hate crimes in terms of race are dealt with. ....The sort of things you see in the news and on the telly that certain words in terms of race would be an immediate offence.

(LGB&T, PP)

### ***Proactive behaviour responses.***

Proactive behaviour was the second most common response to cyberhate amongst participants. Proactive behaviour mainly consisted of directly challenging people who had said hateful things. There was a noticeable difference between the two groups as to how individuals tried to challenge prejudiced comments. LGB&T participants often reported direct retaliation, telling perpetrators that they were ‘being stupid’, or engaging in an aggressive exchange of words. With these exchanges there was little evidence amongst the eight LGB&T interviewees that they attempted to alter other’s perceptions of the LGB&T people. One LGB&T interviewee said:

I speak back you know, why should those people be able to say those things and not have someone tell them that they are being stupid.

(LGB&T, LD)

A slightly different approach was taken by Muslim participants many of whom indicated that they would try and engage in a positive debate with people who were attacking Muslims and Islam. They indicated that they found it important to try and present a positive and reasonable view of the faith and other group members. For example, AB indicated she made comments that she hoped would “defend, inform and educate” and she was not the only one:

We are ambassadors for our faith because we are identified as Muslim women and however we act could then have an impact, so, you know, try and be polite and respectful although, you know, you could be sorely tested.

(Muslim, YR)

Muslim participant MY indicated that when people had misperceptions about Islam or current stories involving Muslim people he would research the story thoroughly so he could then refute their opinions with facts. This tactic was employed to try and promote a positive view of Islam as a way of counteracting all the negative messages that participants felt that most people were getting and to help change the perception of that group identity.

This was one of the key differences noted between the two groups. It is possible that with the strong rhetoric in the UK and beyond linking Islam with extremism and terrorism that Muslims feel they have to show moderate and respectful behaviour as a counterbalance to the current narrative. There was no particular evidence that these proactive behaviours online translated to behaviours offline above and beyond what people were doing anyway.

Although a number of participants were already very active in both the LGB&T and Muslim communities.

Common amongst both groups of interviewees was that most felt it was only really worth engaging with people who would be willing, or able, to engage in constructive debate. No one was keen to engage with someone who would not listen as this felt like a waste of time.

So coming back to Twitter, on Twitter there are a range of people who, some of whom, have very anti-Muslim ideas. People who are sensible I will engage with and others who, frankly, just rant and I don't even bother replying to.

(Muslim, MA)

So, even within the discussions on proactive behaviours there was still a certain level of avoidance demonstrated by participants, an avoidance of engaging with people felt to be 'completely ignorant', potentially as another way to protect themselves from some of the more persistent and pervasive perpetrators of cyberhate.

### **3.5. Discussion**

The results from this qualitative study are aimed at increasing the knowledge base on people's experiences of cyberhate amongst two commonly targeted groups (LGB&T people and Muslims). There are a number of key findings within the current study that offer some important theoretical developments and suggest some interesting practical implications.

One implication of our findings is that the emotional reactions and behavioural responses to being a victim of online hate crime are complex. While survey data has indicated that anger and fear are important emotions, as predicted by IET and other research exploring the emotional impacts of hate crime, both on and offline (Chakraborti et al., 2014; Fearn,

Brown & Walters, 2016; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016), this study indicates that fear is more associated with indirect experiences of hate crime and is particularly associated with concern about other group members' identity, and was often voiced as the less severe emotion; 'worry'. This worry was partially based on the idea that online hate could lead to incidences in the real world (Awan & Zempi, 2016). The similarity between the emotions experienced between online and offline hate crime indicate that the line between the two it is not particularly clear and it is likely that the impacts of online hate crime may impact lifestyle and behaviour offline (Awan & Zempi, 2016).

A number of other, less extreme, emotions such as frustration, disappointment and sadness were reported. These may be useful additions to the current emotional framework as it implies that hate crime that may be perceived as 'lower level' or more distant from the victims may produce more 'lower level' emotions, and the potentially 'lower level' behavioural reactions. This echoes research on offline hate crime indicating that hate crime is likely to be a series of low level incidences that make it difficult to track (Chakraborti et al., 2014: 15-20; Iganski, 2008b).

The role of resilience is also an important addition to the current theoretical framework. Previously research that has focused on being targeted with prejudice and discrimination has positioned this purely in terms of being victimised (Herek et al., 1999; Iganski, & Lagou, 2014; McDevitt et al., 2001). Resilience has been shown to be an important factor in victimisation experiences with other crimes (Walklate, 2011). This study has shown that victims of cyberhate showed a level of resilience in terms of how they chose to react to the abuse that they experienced. Further research is needed to examine whether this resilience is demonstrated when experiencing offline hate crime too and what impact, if any, this may have on the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions after being targeted.

The current study additionally found that cyberhate can be perpetrated, not just by members of different identity groups, but by individuals from within the same identity group. Such a finding has important implications for the way in which we understand the nature and extent of cyberhate, including how some demonstrations of prejudice may be internalised by certain group members before being rebirthed as expressions of hate against their own ingroup. This gives rise to the assertion that cyberhate may be playing a growing and powerful role in the policing of group identity (Perry 2001). If this is true, the power of the internet is not just one of disseminating hate, but in shaping and recreating acceptable identity characteristics.

Additionally this finding suggests the way in which group identity is measured needs some further thought. Perhaps by conflating group identities into large categories, which potentially miss smaller within-group identities, for the purposes of hate crime research means that some forms of within group hate are overlooked. Therefore, some of the complex impacts on group identity are being missed, particularly if targeted by members of your own identity group. More work needs to be done on the breakdown of identity groupings within the larger categories of ‘Muslim’ and ‘LGB&T’ and if there are differences in the emotional reactions and behavioural responses when being targeted by abuse by your own identity group.

Despite the burgeoning nature of the research there are some important parallels in the findings in this study and other research exploring online hate crime. Victims’ perceptions of the types of perpetrators indicate that they think the majority of cyberhate is committed by individuals identified as ‘Professionals’ who make it their business to attack others online (Awan, 2014). This identification of perpetrators as specialised or unusual people appeared to help to protect the participant’s sense of security. Other interviewees perceived perpetrators as ‘cowards’ who would not behave as they had done online in the physical world. There did

not appear to be a sense that cyberhaters were ‘normal’ or ‘everyday’ people that some other offline hate crime studies have suggested (Iganski 2008a).

Another important similarity with the existing research on cyberhate is the role of the media in fuelling intolerance and prejudice. This was reported by the Muslim respondents supporting research that media portrayals can increase incidences of cyberhate (Williams & Burnap, 2015). Media stories and the comments people are allowed to post online following news stories were also indicated to be a source of cyberhate not otherwise considered previously (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016).

There are a number of practical implications to consider from the current research findings. It is clear that much work is still to be done in terms of defining, managing, and regulating hate crime online (see, Bakalis, 2016). While it is acknowledged that the internet is inordinately difficult to monitor, much more needs to be done to ensure both effective and consistent regulation of cyberhate as well as support of those who are targeted. This study is intended to help with these endeavours by uncovering the nature and impacts of cyberhate amongst different targeted groups. Our findings suggest that a separate and clearer definition of online cyberhate would help to create broader understanding about what is and is not an online “hate crime” - thereby helping the public to understand when to report incidents to the police.

Moreover, there is a clear need to create a systematic and comprehensive way of collating data about cyberhate. In this regard, recent recommendations by the London Mayor’s office that cyberhate should be incorporated into a wider strategy to tackling cyber-crime is to be welcomed (MOPAC, 2014). Such an initiative *may* enhance the monitoring of online hate crime, and in turn lead to improvements in agency responses to the phenomenon. Based on the limited number of interviews conducting for this study, such an initiative looks

to be a welcomed step forward in the regulation of cyberhate. However, for this to work on a national level police services across the country must identify new ways of combating online hate crime. Only then can state agencies begin to understand the true extent of the problem and to develop interventions and regulatory measures aimed at reducing the free flow of targeted hate abuse online.

Another potential area for policy development is a strong educational programme about what is acceptable behaviour online. The internet seems to be a place in which hateful behaviour has been normalised and this needs to be counteracted. Highlighting some of the damage of cyberhate on its victims and punishments which may limit the use of the internet could be potential ‘stick’ approaches to enforce, at the very least, legal behaviour online. As highlighted by a number of interviewees, encouraging a culture in which individual people challenge hate behaviour that they witness may help with policing the internet. This coincides with the “Don’t Stand By” campaign that was recently launched by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust in 2016. The initiative outlines a number of ways that the general public can more proactively challenge different types of prejudice (see further, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, 2016). Implementing codes of practice that are enforced by members of a website would be an easy and cheap way to start challenging hateful behaviour online.

The current research highlights that cyberhate, unchecked, can have potentially negative impacts on its victims. The internet is a social medium in which people are still learning how to behave and negotiating new social boundaries. As a result the ‘fight’ against ‘hate’ online is only just beginning.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **The Impacts of Cyberhate: How Far do the Harms Extend?**

#### **4.1. Abstract**

This paper reports two experimental studies (Ns = 115, 134) which expose two targeted groups, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual, people (LGB) and Muslims along with non-stigmatised control participants to internet material that depicted hostile expressions relating to group hate (GSH), hostile expressions that were non-specific to groups (NSH), and expressions of group support, in order to investigate the impacts of indirect cyberhate victimisation. Emotional reactions and behavioural intentions resulting from viewing such material were examined. Comparisons between GSH and NSH indicated that the GSH condition made people angrier and more likely to engage in proactive behavioural responses. Shame was higher for the control group in the GSH conditions in both studies. Serial mediation analyses indicated indirect effects between being exposed to GSH and higher levels of anger which led to more proactive behaviour (Study 1) and avoidance offline (Studies 1 and 2). An indirect effect was also found for higher levels of anxiety and avoidance behaviour, both online and offline (Study 2). The similarity of responses between the control and stigmatised groups implies that the harms of hate crime may extend more widely than initially proposed.

## 4.2. Introduction

There is growing literature documenting the damaging impacts of being a victim of hate crime; these include higher incidences of depression, anxiety, and a fear of being targeted for crime in the future (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999; Iganski, & Lagou, 2014; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu, 2001; Paterson, Brown, Walters, & Carrasco, 2016). It is widely acknowledged that crimes with a bias motivation cause more harm than those without it (Hall, 2013; Iganski, 2001). An additional harm, possibly unique to hate crime, is the impact it can have on the wider community, defined by Paterson et al., (2016) as ‘indirect victimisation’. The harms of indirect victimisation have been shown to be similar to those of direct victimisation (Bell & Perry, 2015; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012). While the harms of offline hate crime have been established, there is less research examining the impacts of hate crime and incidents online (henceforth ‘cyberhate’). Qualitative research suggests that cyberhate may have similar emotional effects to offline hate crimes (Awan & Zempi, 2015) and there is correlational evidence of the nature and effects of indirect hate victimisation online (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016). The aim of the current investigation is to use an experimental design to empirically test the links between being exposed to indirect cyberhate and emotional reactions and subsequent behavioural intentions.

The impacts of cyberhate (both directly and indirectly) include negative emotions such as anger and fear (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016). Victims also indicate that experiencing this abuse can affect their life offline by making them fear for their safety and withdrawing from wider society (Awan & Zempi, 2016). Cyberhate is often precipitated by inflammatory community events or acts of terror such as 9/11 and the murder of Lee Rigby<sup>16</sup> (Williams & Burnap, 2015). Cyberhate may have the potential to cause a range of harms to

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<sup>16</sup> Lee Rigby was murdered in Woolwich, London in 2013 by perpetrators claiming to be “soldiers of Allah”

its victims. However, so far, studies have used correlational designs or qualitative analysis (Awan & Zempi, 2016; Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016; Fearn, Walters & Brown, 2016) or analysis of online material in which the impacts on victims were not assessed (Burnap & Williams, 2016; Williams & Burnap, 2015), from which causal inferences remain equivocal. An experimental analysis using controlled material and an immediate assessment of the indirect impacts of cyberhate victimisation is still lacking. The current research fills this gap by using a novel experimental paradigm with two commonly victimised groups: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) people and Muslims. We exposed participants from both stigmatised and non-stigmatised groups to material typically found online<sup>17</sup>. Some of this material contained group-targeted hate content, some included similarly offensive but non group-targeted comments, and some included group-targeted comments that were supportive and positive in content (as ‘control’ material). By using such a design we were able to examine the indirect effects of cyberhate material, on both specifically targeted groups and the wider community.

### **Defining cyberhate.**

This research adapts the current working definition of hate crime and hate incidents used by the UK police:

“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person’s religion or perceived religion.” (College of Policing, 2014).

At present, this definition does not explicitly refer to cyberhate. However, cyberhate can amount to both a hate crime or to a hate incident (commonly referred to as ‘hate speech’),

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<sup>17</sup> The ethical implications and considerations of this are discussed in the methods section

depending on the content and context of information expressed (Law Commission, 2014).

Cyberhate is understood to involve one or more of the following: written abuse and harassment, most prominently occurring as ‘trolling’ via social media platforms, the sending of inappropriate, offensive or intimate images to individuals or their friends and family, and written threats of physical violence.

### **Social psychology and hate crime victimisation.**

To analyse the indirect psychological impacts of hate crime, we draw upon Intergroup Emotions Theory which provides a framework for understanding the emotional reactions that individuals experience when they identify with a particular social group (ingroups) (IET, Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993). The impacts of group threat noted in IET are similar to those recorded by victims of hate crime. Research on IET has demonstrated that anger and fear are the predominant emotions associated with intergroup threats, depending on the nature of the intergroup relationship; powerful outgroups tend to provoke fear reactions, and conflicts that exist between groups tend to provoke anger in the discriminated group (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003). These emotional reactions are thought to have specific behavioural intentions associated with them: anger is thought to lead to more proactive behavioural responses (such as counter speech to homophobic attacks) and fear to avoidance responses, such as not disclosing one’s sexuality (Cottrell and Neuberg, 2005; Kessler & Hollbach, 2005). These emotional and behavioural links have recently been confirmed for hate crime offline (Paterson et al., 2016) and in a correlational study of cyberhate (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016).

Another theory, Integrated Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Stephan, 2000), provides additional insights for understanding the impacts of hate crime. ITT distinguishes between ‘realistic threats’, for example to material resources or physical safety (Riek, Mania &

Gaertner, 2006), and ‘symbolic threats’, for example to cultural norms and belief systems (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001). Walters and Brown (2016) have argued that it is these perceived threats which are central to understanding the causation of hate crime: People who experience hate crime (both directly and indirectly) may feel more threatened and fear future assaults (Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1999; Perry & Alvi, 2012). Currently within ITT research the role of threat has almost exclusively been applied to groups *perpetrating* discrimination rather than those who are *victimised* by it, although research by Paterson et al., (2016) has suggested that perceived threats can act as a mediator between offline victimisation, emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. Following this lead, here we will examine whether threat mediates between exposure to online hate material, emotional reaction and behavioural intentions.

Shame has also been implicated as an emotion in intergroup situations. Mostly, this has focussed on its effects from the *perpetrators’* viewpoint (e.g., Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna & Teroni, 2014; Gausel, Leach, Vignoles & Brown, 2012; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier & Ames, 2005), but little attention has been paid to the possibility that members of victimised groups may also experience shame. However, there is some evidence to suggest that shame can also be a feature of hate crime victimisation (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016; Paterson et al., 2016), particularly when other people blame the victim for their experiences (Bell & Perry, 2015). As a result, further exploration of shame as a consequence of cyberhate will be incorporated into the current research although no specific hypotheses are formulated, given the scarcity of prior theory and research.

### **Research aims and hypotheses.**

As noted earlier, the primary aim of this research is to test the indirect impacts of cyberhate with an experimental design. This will be achieved by comparing people’s

reactions to group-specific online hate material and to similarly unpleasant but non-group specific online material. If the group specific hate material elicits more negative emotional and behavioural reactions, then this is evidence that cyberhate has more pronounced indirect impacts on victimised communities and perhaps on others too. The inclusion of a condition in which the material is more favourable towards the targeted group serves as a baseline condition in order to reflect the range of different opinions experienced online.

The inclusion of a control group of non-stigmatised participants allows comparisons between targeted groups and non-discriminated groups. Most current research has focused solely on those groups that have been targeted by hate crime (Awan & Zempi, 2016; Herek et al., 1999; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016). However, it may be that the indirect effects of hate crime extend beyond the specifically targeted groups into the wider society, just as community or domestic violence can have an impact on witnesses (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003).

We test the IET hypothesis that threat (whether realistic or symbolic) to the ingroup provokes particular emotional reactions that lead to specific behavioural intentions: anger should be more likely to lead to proactive responses and fear more likely lead to avoidance behaviours:

H1: That group specific abusive or threatening hate-based material will cause more negative emotional reactions and associated behavioural intentions than similarly worded abusive or threatening non-group specific based material; these effects will be especially visible in stigmatised groups (LGB, Muslims).

H2: Anger will lead to proactive behavioural responses, fear will lead to avoidance behavioural responses and these reactions to the group-related offensive material will be mediated by levels of perceived threat.

### 4.3. Study 1

#### 4.3.1. Methods

##### **Participants.**

To conduct a power analysis, Paterson et al.'s (2016) findings on the effects of offline hate were used. Their results indicated 'moderate' effect sizes could be expected and an analysis using Gpower (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) indicated that 128 participants would provide sufficient power to detect effects at the .05 level with power set at .80. One hundred and forty-seven participants took part: 74 were LGB&T, and 73 were in the non-stigmatised control group. In the LGB&T group, 5 participants were removed due to excessive missing data and one further participant was removed because they identified as Muslim<sup>18</sup>. Because they were unevenly distributed between the three experimental conditions, a further 13 participants who all identified as transgender were also removed from the sample. Thus, this study focuses just on LGB participants ( $n = 55$ ). In the control group, 11 participants were removed due to excessive missing data and further two participants were removed, one for being LGB and one for being Muslim, leaving 60 participants. The total sample was thus 115 participants ( $M = 34$ ,  $F = 81$ ;  $M_{age} = 31.49$   $SD = 15.34$ ; LGB,  $M = 32.22$ ,  $SD = 12.67$ , Control,  $M = 30.82$ ,  $SD = 17.52$ ). All those in the control group identified as 'straight' or heterosexual; in the LGB group, 34 participants identified as Gay or Lesbian, 10 identified as Bisexual and 11 identified as 'other' sexual orientations.

The majority of the participants were White (88 overall). Other ethnic groups were Asian (3), Black (2), Mixed or 'other' ethnicities (20) or preferred not to say (2).

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<sup>18</sup> The Muslim participant was removed to avoid any overlap between this study and study 2

### **Design.**

The study comprised a 3x2 Between Participants design: Condition (Group Specific Hate (GSH) vs Non Specific Hate (NSH) vs Group Support) x Group (LGB vs Control).

Participants within each Group were randomly assigned to the three conditions.

### **Materials.**

The stimulus materials were created by adapting existing internet pages using edited screen shots. Each condition comprised three internet pages, two Facebook pages and a Twitter page. Each page was presented on the screen individually, the Facebook material first followed by the Twitter material. Facebook and Twitter are extremely commonly used social media, with 1.71 billion and 313 million active monthly users respectively (Statista.com, 2016). Previous studies examining cyberhate indicated Twitter and Facebook were two of the most common places for hate material to be distributed (Awan, 2014; Burnap & Williams, 2016; Fearn, Walters & Brown, 2016). The two Facebook pages had a ‘status’<sup>19</sup> cited (first page GSH condition “OK, to be Gay, OK”, second page GSH condition “Be proud to be LGBT”) underneath this status were ‘comments’ which were manipulated according to condition. The Twitter page had a range of comments on the ‘stream’<sup>20</sup> that were different for each condition (see Table 4.1). In the GSH condition, all stimuli words that were directly targeting LGB&T people were removed and presented as ‘missing words’. This was done for legal and ethical reasons (see below).

Data for the main study was collected using the Qualtrics online survey programme. Once the material was viewed, participants then answered the following questions.

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<sup>19</sup> Facebook allows people to post a ‘status’ indicating a mood, an opinion or an event. People can then comment on this status

<sup>20</sup> Twitter has a ‘stream’ on which people’s posts are shown on an individual’s ‘newsfeed’ this is based on their membership of groups and interests

Emotional reactions to the material were assessed by providing a list of 17 emotions (including an 'other' option), of which 12 were negative emotions and, 4 were positive. Respondents answered on a 7 point scale (1 'did not feel at all', 7 'felt extremely strongly'). A Principal Component Factor Analysis with oblique rotation was conducted to reduce these 16 emotions to a smaller number of clusters. Four emotion groups emerged: 'Anger' (anger, outrage, revolted, disgust;  $\alpha = .95$ ,  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 2.25$ ); 'Anxiety' (scared, anxious, alarmed, isolated, depressed;  $\alpha = .88$ ,  $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ ); 'Positive' (secure, accepted, proud and unconcerned,  $\alpha = .64$ ,  $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ); and 'Shame' (embarrassed, ashamed and guilty,  $\alpha = .72$ ,  $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ). Very few participants reported any additional emotions in the 'other' category' so these were excluded.

Behavioural intentions were assessed by 7 items that tested whether or not people would take avoidance behaviour *offline* (4 items: 'go out less often', 'see friends/acquaintances less often', 'avoid going to certain places', avoid going out alone',  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M = 1.49$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ), take avoidance action *online* (2 items: 'avoid certain websites', 'be careful about the information I put online about myself'  $r = .57^{***}$ ,  $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = 2.19$ ) and proactive behaviour intentions (1 item, 'be more vocal online about LGBT rights). Responses were recorded on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale.

*Table 4.1: Examples of the internet material across the three experimental conditions*

	Facebook Material 1	Facebook Material 2	Twitter Material
GSH Status	“OK to be Gay, OK”	“Be proud to be LGBT”	
GSH Comments	“Hey (missing word) people...See you in Hell”	“I’d like to bash your head in”	“@Mike T is a dirty (missing word)”
	“Fuck the (missing word) and Andrew [NAME] who supports them”	“Fucking (missing word) ruin everything”	“These (missing word) are disgusting. They make me sick.”
	“Fuck all of you (missing word)”	“(missing word) makes me sick”	“You guys are (missing word) and I hope you die in a house fire”
NHS Status	“OK to be yourself, OK”	“Be proud of who you are”	
NHS Comments	“Hey people...See you in Hell”	“I’d like to bash your head in”	“@Mike T is a dirty bastard”
	“Fuck you and Andrew [NAME] who supports you”	“Fucking idiots ruin everything”	“@Tahi you are disgusting, you make me sick”
	“Fuck all of you”	“You make me sick”	“You guys are fucking morons and I hope you die in a house fire”
Group support Status	“OK to be Gay, OK”	“Be proud to be LGBT”	
Group Support Comments	“Hey Gay people do what makes you happy”	“Exactly”	“Great to see @Asifa discussing #LGB issues”
	“Ignore the haters and listen to those that support you”	“This is true”	“Hold onto whatever keeps you happy”
	“You guys are love”	“Sounds good to me”	“I’m seeing lots of good in the #LGB community-thank you”

Perceived threat was measured by 9 items (7 tested realistic threat: ‘I worry about the safety of LGBT people’, ‘I think LGBT people are more vulnerable to abuse online’, ‘I think that LGBT people need to take more precautions online to protect themselves from abuse’, ‘I worry that LGBT people targeted online are more likely to be victims in the real world’, ‘LGBT people who are visiting organisations that support them are particularly at risk of persecution’, ‘I think people’s behaviour online poses a threat to the personal rights of LGBT people’, ‘I think people’s behaviour online poses a threat to LGBT people’s way of life’ ( $\alpha = .87$ ,  $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ) and 2 tested symbolic threat; (‘Images on the internet attacking LGBT symbols are hard for me to see’, ‘I think people’s behaviour online poses a threat to beliefs and values of LGBT people’, ( $r = .28^{**}$ ,  $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ )) using the same 1-7 agreement scale. Respondents were asked to rate how offensive they found the three pieces of material on a scale of 1-7 (7 indicated extreme offence).

An additional 28 questions asked the respondents to estimate how many times they had directly and indirectly experienced hate crime both online and offline using examples such as ‘verbal abuse’ and ‘threats of violence’. They were then asked to rate how many hours a week they spent online on average and rate on 14 online activities, such as using social networks, using ‘dating’ websites and writing a blog (including an ‘other’ option), how frequently they undertook that activity. A Principal Component factor analysis with oblique rotation reduced these to four clusters of activities (‘Dating’: looking at pornography, using dating sites, ( $r = .36^{***}$ ,  $M = 1.57$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ), ‘Social’: gaming, surfing, social networks, communicating with friends and family, and shopping ( $\alpha = .64$ ,  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ), ‘Pro’: Working, studying, reading the news ( $\alpha = .45$ ,  $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ), ‘Active participation’: forums, blogging, using LGBT/Muslim specific sites, ( $\alpha = .54$ ,  $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ )). The purpose of these questions was to be able to control for prior experience, if necessary.

LGB participants were asked 5 additional questions on their LGB identity where they rated agreement for items for a 1-7 likert scale (Paterson et al., (2016);  $\alpha = .84$ ,  $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ). Control participants were asked how much they agreed (1-7 likert scale) with statements that reflected how tolerant they felt towards people who are LGB (I support people's rights to believe what they want even if I do not agree with those beliefs, People can behave in whatever way they want as long as it doesn't hurt other people, I think LGBT people are unfairly targeted for abuse, I try very hard not to stereotype people who have a different way of life from me, I think certain beliefs and practices promote a culture of hate (r), I view myself as a tolerant and accepting person:  $\alpha = .72$ ,  $M = 5.48$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

Demographic items were age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religion.

### **Procedure.**

People were recruited by making contact with local community organisations, both those supporting LGB people and organisations with no focus on transgender identity or sexual orientation, such as hobby groups.

Participants met with the researcher (either face to face or on Skype) and were given information about the project, including a warning that they would see material that they might find offensive. Once they had agreed to take part, they were given access to a computer with the survey program loaded (or privately emailed a link to the study). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions by the survey program. They viewed the material (for as long as they wanted to) and then answered the questions that followed. The researcher was available to answer any questions.

Once they had completed the study they were debriefed by the researcher.

### **Ethics.**

There were a number of legal and ethical considerations in this study. Despite the survey only being shown to those who had agreed to take part, there was a potential legal constraint against publishing anti-LGB hate material that might have put the researchers in breach of current UK legislation. As a result, words that were specifically directed towards LGB&T people were removed (in the GSH condition only) and replaced with brackets indicating that there was a missing word. In this condition participants were then asked to imagine the word was targeting LGB&T people and then enter what they felt the missing word was. This had the added advantage of testing to see if participants recognised that the group being targeted was LGB&T people.

On completion of the study participants were fully debriefed and provided information on organisations that offer support for victims of cyberhate (or other forms of hate crime). Participants were given an opportunity to talk about any concerns they had following the study with the researcher. A week after the study the researcher contacted the participants to see if there were any ongoing problems following the study. No participants reported any negative consequences following participation.

### **4.3.2. Results**

#### **Preliminary analyses.**

Initial checks were conducted to assess the equivalence of the six cells of the design. An ANOVA on age of participant revealed no significant effects due either to Condition ( $F(2,114) = .39, p = .68, \eta^2 = .01$ ), Group ( $F(2,114) = .17, p = .68, \eta^2 = .00$ ) or their interaction ( $F(2,114) = .75, p = .48, \eta^2 = .01$ ). A 2 (gender) \* 2 (group) \* 3 (condition) chi-square indicated some imbalances in gender distribution (with relatively more females in the

control group) ( $\chi^2(2) = 3.76, p = .05$ ). As a result, gender is used as a covariate in all subsequent analyses.

A 3 (condition) \* 3 (Sexual orientation: Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual, Other) chi-square analysis revealed no differences for sexual orientation between conditions for the LGB group ( $\chi^2(4) = 6.47, p = .37$ ).

A MANCOVA was conducted with the internet activities as the DVs, Group and Condition as the fixed factors and gender as a covariate. There were no significant differences across the conditions in which activities people engaged in and how long they spent online. However, those who were LGB reported taking part in significantly more ‘dating’ and ‘active’ activities than those in Control (Dating  $F(2,114) = 32.01, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$ , Active  $F(2,114) = 21.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$ ). Thus, the internet activities ‘dating’ and ‘active participation’ were also used as covariates in the analyses reported below.

As a check on the manipulation of the stimulus material, a 2\*3, Group \* Condition, MANCOVA was conducted using gender and two internet activities as covariates and offensiveness of the material (Facebook, Twitter and overall) as DVs. This revealed a significant effect for Condition (Pillai’s Trace = .56,  $F(2,114) = 13.56, p < .001, \eta^2 = .28$ ) but not Group (Pillai’s Trace = .03,  $F(2,114) = .99, p = .40, \eta^2 = .03$ ) or interaction effects (Pillai’s Trace = .04,  $F(2,114) = .62, p = .71, \eta^2 = .02$ ). Post hoc tests indicated the difference between the GSH and NSH across all three sets of material was significant (GSH vs NSH  $M_{\text{difference}} = .84, p < .05$ ; GSH  $M = 5.30, SD = 1.30$ , NSH  $M = 4.43, SD = 1.52$ ) but there was no significant difference for the two Facebook materials across GSH and NSH ( $M_{\text{difference}} = .71, p = .09$ ). Both Facebook and Twitter materials, however, were significantly different from the support condition ( $M = 1.71, SD = 1.34, p < .001$ ). Thus, as intended, most of the GSH and NSH were seen as more or less equivalently offensive, but both were regarded as much more offensive than the support condition.

### Principal analyses.

In order to test the first hypothesis, a MANCOVA was conducted with the four emotional indices as DVs, Group and Condition as the fixed factors, and gender and the two internet activities as covariates. Significant effects for Condition and Group were found across all emotions (Condition, Pillai's Trace = .67,  $F(2,114) = 12.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .33$ ; Group, Pillai's Trace = .12,  $F(2,114) = 3.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .12$ ), with no interaction (Pillai's Trace = .11,  $F(2,114) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .18$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ).

Follow up univariate 2(Group: LGB and control)\*3 (Condition: GSH, NSH, group support) ANCOVAs were conducted on each emotion index. Then, to decompose any main effects of Condition, two orthogonal *a priori* comparisons were made amongst the means, for both Groups combined and within each Group. These comparisons were: to test the difference between the two hate conditions only (C1 [GSH (+1), NSH (-1), Support (0)]), and comparing the two hate conditions to the Support Condition (C2 (GSH (+1), NSH (+1), Support (-2)]). C1 is of particular interest to H1 since it tests whether the inclusion of a 'hate' element to any offensive material evokes additional response over and above the non-group specific offensive material.

For anger, there was a significant main effect of Condition ( $F(2,114) = 63.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .54$ ) but not Group ( $F(2,114) = .15$ ,  $p = .70$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ), and there was no interaction ( $F(2,114) = .48$ ,  $p = .62$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ) (see Table 4.2 for all means, ANCOVA and planned comparison results). Regarding the crucial GSH vs NSH difference, there was a significant effect of the one-tailed C1 comparison, with GSH respondents across both groups being angrier than the NSH respondents ( $t(114) = 2.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = .46$ ) with slightly more anger reported by the control ( $t(114) = 3.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .70$ ) than the LGB group ( $t(114) = 2.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .50$ ).

Table 4.2: Study 1 means, standard deviations and marginal means for each condition and ANCOVAS all controlling for two internet activities and gender

	GSH <i>M (SD)</i>			NSH <i>M (SD)</i>			Group Support <i>M (SD)</i>			Main effect of Group <i>F</i> (2,115), [ $\eta_p^2$ ]	Main effect of Condition <i>F</i> (2,115), [ $\eta_p^2$ ]	Interaction <i>F</i> (2,115) [ $\eta_p^2$ ]
	LGB (n=23)	Cont (n=20)	Marginal	LGB (n=17)	Cont (n=20)	Marginal	LGB (n=15)	Cont (n=20)	Marginal			
Anger	5.04 <sub>(1.71)</sub>	4.79 <sub>(1.64)</sub>	4.89 <sub>ax</sub>	3.97 <sub>(1.86)</sub>	4.26 <sub>(1.49)</sub>	4.15 <sub>cx</sub>	1.45 <sub>(.70)</sub>	1.10 <sub>(.34)</sub>	1.28 <sub>z</sub>	.15[.01]	63.28***[.54]	.48[.01]
Anxiety	2.63 <sub>(1.19)</sub>	2.67 <sub>(1.38)</sub>	2.65 <sub>ax</sub>	2.05 <sub>(1.15)</sub>	2.52 <sub>(1.20)</sub>	2.30 <sub>ax</sub>	1.32 <sub>(.68)</sub>	1.04 <sub>(.10)</sub>	1.14 <sub>z</sub>	1.98[.02]	20.69***[.28]	.90[.02]
Positive	2.49 <sub>(.84)</sub>	2.45 <sub>(.96)</sub>	2.46 <sub>ax</sub>	2.79 <sub>(1.04)</sub>	2.16 <sub>(.84)</sub>	2.48 <sub>ax</sub>	4.63 <sub>(.94)</sub>	3.80 <sub>(1.65)</sub>	4.24 <sub>z</sub>	5.45*[.05]	30.80***[.39]	1.56[.03]
Shame	2.01 <sub>(.98)</sub>	2.78 <sub>(1.39)</sub>	2.40 <sub>ax</sub>	1.76 <sub>(1.22)</sub>	2.53 <sub>(1.31)</sub>	2.14 <sub>ax</sub>	1.44 <sub>(.71)</sub>	1.03 <sub>(.10)</sub>	1.23 <sub>z</sub>	6.90*[.06]	12.65***[.19]	3.36*[.06]
Proactive	4.13 <sub>(2.49)</sub>	4.65 <sub>(1.76)</sub>	4.36 <sub>ax</sub>	3.71 <sub>(1.93)</sub>	3.40 <sub>(1.50)</sub>	3.58 <sub>cx</sub>	2.20 <sub>(1.47)</sub>	2.75 <sub>(1.71)</sub>	2.48 <sub>z</sub>	.62[.01]	9.28***[.15]	.74[.01]
Avoidance Offline	1.79 <sub>(.92)</sub>	1.56 <sub>(.96)</sub>	1.68 <sub>ax</sub>	1.71 <sub>(.92)</sub>	1.49 <sub>(.83)</sub>	1.61 <sub>ax</sub>	1.08 <sub>(.18)</sub>	1.10 <sub>(.35)</sub>	1.06 <sub>z</sub>	.19[.00]	6.81**[.11]	.51[.01]
Avoidance Online	3.52 <sub>(1.87)</sub>	3.95 <sub>(1.69)</sub>	3.70 <sub>ax</sub>	3.03 <sub>(1.83)</sub>	4.23 <sub>(1.74)</sub>	3.68 <sub>ax</sub>	1.50 <sub>(.87)</sub>	1.65 <sub>(1.35)</sub>	1.59 <sub>z</sub>	1.36[.01]	19.42***[.29]	.99[.02]
Realistic	4.96 <sub>(1.02)</sub>	5.09 <sub>(.69)</sub>	5.00 <sub>ax</sub>	4.75 <sub>(1.52)</sub>	4.92 <sub>(1.06)</sub>	4.87 <sub>ax</sub>	3.71 <sub>(1.49)</sub>	4.14 <sub>(1.30)</sub>	3.91 <sub>z</sub>	1.89[.02]	9.09***[.15]	.18[.00]
Symbolic	4.67 <sub>(1.59)</sub>	4.93 <sub>(1.18)</sub>	4.81 <sub>ax</sub>	4.24 <sub>(1.61)</sub>	4.95 <sub>(.89)</sub>	4.58 <sub>ax</sub>	3.77 <sub>(1.80)</sub>	4.38 <sub>(1.35)</sub>	4.05 <sub>z</sub>	4.75*[.04]	2.72[.05]	.36[.01]
Offensiveness	5.17 <sub>(1.47)</sub>	5.45 <sub>(1.10)</sub>	5.30 <sub>ax</sub>	4.41 <sub>(1.62)</sub>	4.45 <sub>(1.47)</sub>	4.46 <sub>cx</sub>	2.00 <sub>(1.25)</sub>	1.50 <sub>(1.40)</sub>	1.73 <sub>z</sub>	.02[.00]	63.50***[.55]	.69[.01]

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Among marginal means, subscripts indicate results of two planned comparisons (C1= hate vs NS hate, a and c; C2= 2 hate conditions vs support, x and z).

Means not sharing a subscript are significantly different,  $p < .05$ .

For anxiety, there was a significant main effect of Condition but not Group or an interaction (Condition ( $F(2,114) = 20.69, p < .001, \eta^2 = .28$ ), Group ( $F(2,114) = 1.99, p = .16, \eta^2 = .02$ ) interaction ( $F(2,114) = .90, p = .41, \eta^2 = .02$ )). While overall the difference between the GSH and NSH conditions on a one tailed test approached significance ( $t(114) = 1.48, p = .07, d = .28$ ), the LGB group did report significantly higher levels of anxiety in GSH than in NSH ( $t(114) = 1.87, p < .05, d = .35$ ) and more so than the control ( $t(114) = .45, p = .37, d = .07$ ).

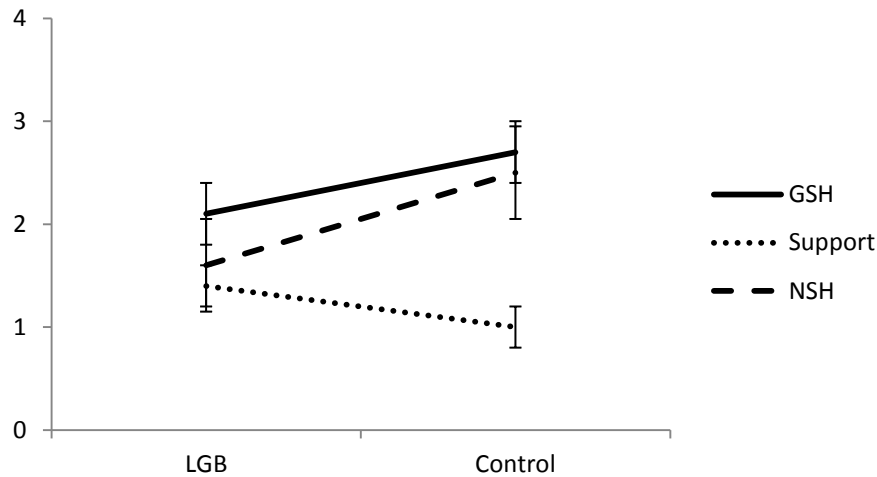
Positive emotions showed a significant effect for both Group and Condition (Condition ( $F(2,114) = 30.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .39$ ), Group ( $F(2,114) = 5.45, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$ ) but no interaction ( $F(2,114) = 1.56, p = .22, \eta^2 = .03$ ). However, the one-tailed C1 comparisons indicated there was no significant difference between NSH and GSH, either overall,  $t(114) = .08, p = .47, d = .01$ , or within the LGB group,  $t(114) = .07, p = .47, d = .01$ . The Group main effect reflected the fact that control participants experienced less positive emotions overall than the LGB participants (LGB  $M = 3.16, SD = 1.29$ , Control  $M = 2.80, SD = 1.39$ ).

Shame produced significant effects for both Condition and Group (Condition ( $F(2,114) = 12.65, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$ ), Group ( $F(2,114) = 6.90, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$ ). There was also a significant interaction ( $F(2,114) = 3.36, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$ , see Figure 4.1). Analysis of simple effects indicated that the control group reported more shame than the LGB group in both GSH and NSH conditions (see Table 4.2) but not in the Support condition. Examining the C1 comparison within each Group revealed that the difference between GSH and NSH was not significant for either group (LGB,  $t(114) = .81, p = .21, d = .04$ , Control  $t(114) = .76, p = .22, d = .14$ ).

For all four emotions, the C2 comparisons amongst the marginal means for Condition were significant with the hate groups reporting higher levels of negative emotions and the

Support Condition reporting higher levels of positive emotions (anger  $t(114) = 14.24, p < .001, d = 2.67$ , anxiety  $t(114) = 7.97, p < .001, d = 1.49$ , positive  $t(114) = -3.38, p < .001, d = -.63$ , shame  $t(114) = 6.45, p < .001, d = 1.21$ ).

*Figure 4.1: Interaction between group and condition for shame (Study 1)*



As with emotions, a MANCOVA was conducted with the three behavioural intentions as DVs, Group and Condition as the fixed factors and indirect offline hate crime and gender as covariates. There was a significant effect for Condition (Condition Pillai's Trace = .33,  $F(2,114) = 6.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ ), but not Group (Group Pillai's Trace = .01,  $F(2,114) = .57, p < .63, \eta^2 = .02$ ), or the interaction (Pillai's Trace = .07,  $F(2,114) = 1.25, p = .28, \eta^2 = .03$ ).

The same follow up 2\*3 ANCOVAs were performed with the behavioural intentions as the DVs. As with emotions, main effects were found for all three behavioural intentions for Condition but not for Group or any significant interactions (see Table 4.2). Again, C1 comparisons indicated that there were significant differences between NSH and GSH with higher levels of proactive behaviour intentions reported for the GSH Condition ( $t(114) = 1.98, p < .05, d = .37$ ). This was more pronounced for the control than the LGB group (Control  $t(114) = 2.12, p < .05, d = .40$ , LGB  $t(114) = .74, p = .23, d = .14$ ). However, this

was not found for avoidance behaviours offline ( $t(114) = .64, p = .26, d = .12$ ) or online ( $t(114) = .11, p = .46, d = .02$ ), with no differences across the two groups on the C1 comparisons. However, the C2 comparisons were significant for all three behaviours with the hate conditions reporting higher levels of all three behaviours than the Support Condition (proactive  $t(114) = 4.89, p < .001, d = .92$ , avoidance offline  $t(114) = 4.58, p < .001, d = .86$ , avoidance online  $t(114) = 8.12, p < .001, d = 1.52$ ).

MANCOVAs were also performed with threat (realistic and symbolic) as the DVs which showed a main effect for Condition (Pillai's Trace = .16,  $F(2,114) = 4.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ ), but not for Group (Pillai's Trace = .04,  $F(2,114) = 2.37, p = .09, \eta^2 = .04$ ) and there was no interaction (Pillai's Trace = .01,  $F(2,114) = .41, p = .80, \eta^2 = .01$ ).

Follow up ANCOVAs indicated that there was only a main effect for Condition on realistic threat. However, the C1 comparisons were not reliable, either overall or within each group. This Condition effect was not present for symbolic threat where, instead, there was a significant effect for Group with, somewhat surprisingly, the LGB group experiencing lower symbolic threat overall than control participants ( $M_{\text{difference}} = .72, p < .05$ , LGB  $M = 4.29, SD = 1.67$ , Control  $M = 4.75, SD = 1.17$ ). The C2 comparisons once again revealed significantly higher levels of perceived threat in the two hate conditions than the Support Condition (realistic  $t(114) = 4.78, p < .001, d = .89$ , symbolic  $t(114) = 2.64, p < .01, d = .49$ ).

In summary, respondents in both groups had stronger emotional reactions, more associated behavioural intentions and higher levels of perceived realistic threat in the two hate conditions. While the difference between the two hate conditions (C1 comparison) was not always significant, the means for the GSH were generally higher than those for NSH across most of the DVs.

### **Additional analyses.**

A 2 (Group)\*3(Condition) ANOVA on previous indirect experience found there were no significant differences between either Group ( $F(2,114) = .1.19, p = .28, \eta p^2 = .01$ ) or Condition ( $F(2,114) = .14, p = .87, \eta p^2 = .00$ ) for witnessing hate crime online. However there was a significant difference noted between both Group ( $F(2,114) = 9.58, p < .01, \eta p^2 = .08$ ) and Condition ( $F(2,114) = 4.63, p < .05, \eta p^2 = .08$ ) for witnessing hate crime offline. Those who were LGB reported that they had experienced significantly more offline hate crime than the control participants.

Checks on levels of tolerance indicated high levels in the control group ( $M = 5.52, SD = .87$ ) and there were no differences noted across condition in a one-way ANOVA<sup>21</sup> with condition and tolerance ( $F(1,59) = .07, p = .93, \eta p^2 = .93$ ). When examining levels of LGB group identification using the same format ANOVA, the LGB group levels of identity were relatively high ( $M = 4.66, SD = 1.56$ ) and there were no differences across condition ( $F(1,54) = .87, p = .46, \eta p^2 = .03$ ).

These additional variables did not make any difference to the results of ANCOVAs when added as covariates in alternative analyses and therefore were not analysed further.

### **Mediation analysis.**

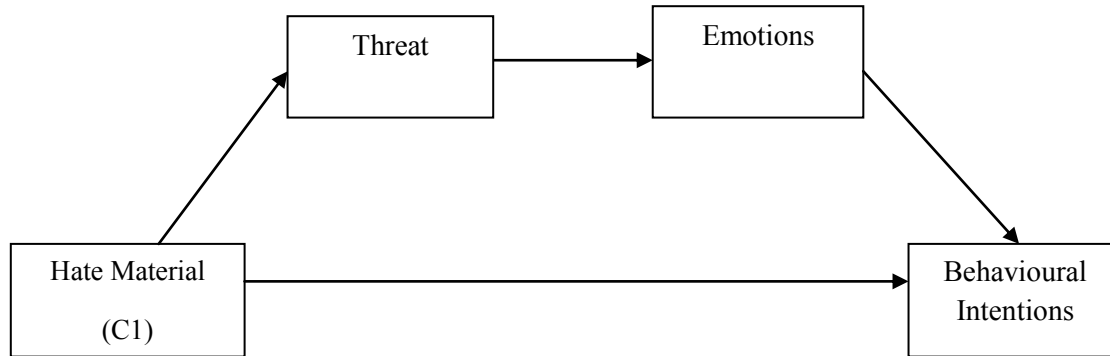
To test the hypothesised links between the emotional reactions and the behavioural responses predicted by IET (H2), mediation models were examined. The same *a priori* contrast described above (C1) was used in a series of serial mediation analyses using PROCESS model 6 (Hayes (2012) in SPSS), with the three behavioural responses (avoidance offline, avoidance online and proactive) as the DVs, C1 as the IV and perceived realistic threat and

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<sup>21</sup> One way ANOVAs were performed as Groups were asked different questions. LGB participants were asked about group identification. Control participants were asked about levels of tolerance

emotional responses (anger, anxiety and shame) as the mediators. Group was also added to the model, as well as the two internet activities and gender as controls. The proposed serial mediation model is depicted in Figure 4.2.

*Figure 4.2: Proposed serial mediation model*



There were no significant serial mediation models for any of the three behavioural intention DVs. However, there were two significant indirect effects between the hate conditions and the DVs (without the whole mediation model being significant). There was an indirect effect indicating that viewing GSH material made people angrier and this encouraged more proactive behaviour ( $b = .10$ ,  $SE = .08$ , BCaCIs .00/.32) and more avoidance behaviour offline ( $b = .06$ ,  $SE = .04$ , BCaCIs .00/.17). There were no other significant mediation models or indirect effects (see Table 4.3).

### 4.3.3. Discussion

These findings offer partial support for the first hypothesis that GSH material made respondents angrier, more likely to be proactive, and more anxious (LGB only) than the NSH condition. It is also interesting that there were only three main effects for Group and only one reliable interaction, suggesting that the experimentally manipulated online material was reacted to similarly by LGB and non-stigmatised people alike. We return to this issue in the General Discussion.

Table 4.3: Serial mediation results for LGB study

DV	Mediators	Indirect paths	C1 Comparison			
			<i>b</i>	SE	95% CI Bias Corrected	UL
Proactive	Anger	Total Effect	.14	.09	-.01	.38
		Direct Effect	.26	.21	-.15	.68
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.02	.04	-.04	.15
		Threat and Anger	.01	.02	-.01	.32
	Anxiety	Anger*	.10	.08	.00	.32
		Total Effect	.07	.08	-.05	.27
		Direct Effect	.34	.21	-.08	.75
		Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.03	.05	-.05	.16
		Threat and Anxiety	.00	.01	-.00	.04
	Shame^	Anxiety	.03	.05	-.02	.20
		Total Effect	-.00	.08	-.17	.15
		Direct Effect	.24	.20	-.16	.65
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	-.01	.05	-.12	.09
Avoidance Offline	Anger	Threat and Shame	-.00	.01	-.03	.01
		Shame	.01	.06	-.09	.14
	Anxiety	Total Effect*	.07	.04	.00	.18
		Direct Effect	-.03	.09	-.20	.14
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.00	.01	-.01	.04
	Shame^	Threat and Anger	.01	.01	-.01	.03
		Anger*	.06	.04	.00	.17
		Total Effect	.06	.05	-.03	.19
		Direct Effect	-.02	.08	-.18	.14
		Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.00	.01	-.01	.04
	Anxiety	Threat and Anxiety	.01	.01	-.01	.04
		Anxiety	.05	.05	-.03	.17
		Total Effect	.00	.04	-.07	.10
		Direct Effect	-.01	.08	-.17	.16
		Indirect effect via				
Avoidance Online	Anger	Threat	-.00	.04	-.07	.10
		Threat and Shame	-.00	.00	-.02	.00
		Shame	.00	.04	-.06	.10
	Anxiety	Total Effect	.14	.09	-.01	.37
		Direct Effect	-.14	.18	-.49	.22
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.02	.03	-.03	.12
	Shame^	Threat and Anger	.01	.02	-.01	.06
		Anger	.11	.08	-.00	.32
		Total Effect	.12	.09	-.06	.35
		Direct Effect	-.12	.17	-.46	.22
		Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.02	.03	-.03	.11
	Anxiety	Threat and Anxiety	.01	.02	-.01	.06
		Anxiety	.09	.08	-.06	.27
		Total Effect	-.00	.08	-.16	.16
		Direct Effect	-.15	.18	-.50	.19
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	-.01	.05	-.11	.07
	Shame^	Threat and Shame	-.00	.01	-.02	.01
		Shame	.01	.06	-.10	.14

^ Interaction between group and condition was used in the model

\*Significant effect

#### 4.4. Study 2: Muslims

As noted earlier, a second commonly targeted group in the UK are Muslims. Therefore, we replicated Study 1 with some minor variations, using Muslim people (and some non-Muslim controls) as participants. Although we tested the same hypotheses in this experiment, it is worth noting that Muslims occupy a different socio-political position within British society than does the LGB community and so some variations in findings would not be unexpected.

##### 4.4.1. Method

Study 2 mirrors Study 1: the design, the IVs and dependent measures were all the same. For brevity, only differences from Study 1 are noted below.

##### **Participants.**

Initially, 153 participants took part in this study, 86 Muslims and 67 controls. Only 70 Muslims and 65 controls fully completed the study and one additional control participant was removed for identifying as LGB, leaving a total sample of 134 participants (70 Muslims, 64 controls; (M 61, F 73;  $M_{age} = 31.73$ ,  $SD = 12.33$  range 18-79, Muslim  $M_{age} = 33.06$ ,  $SD = 11.20$ , Control  $M_{age} = 30.28$ ,  $SD = 13.41$ ).

Ethnicity was predominantly Asian or White (56 participants reported as Asian, 51 reported as White). Fifty of the Asian participants were in the experimental group and the White participants were all in the Control. Other ethnicities reported were Mixed (20), Black (4) or preferred not to say (3).

Following advice from partner Muslim organisations, participants were not asked about their sexual orientation, those in the control all identified as 'straight/ heterosexual'.

### **Materials.**

The NSH group used the same material as Study 1. For the GSH condition and the group support condition the main materials stayed the same with some small changes in the wording which now targeted people who are Muslim. Where the words ‘Gay’ or ‘LGBT’ were used these were changed to ‘Muslim’ (see Table 4.1).

### **Procedure.**

The procedure was the same as in Study 1 but recruitment of Muslim participants was mainly via community ‘gate keepers’ such as local Imams who invited the researcher to events. These predominantly took place within Mosques and community centres.

## **4.4.2. Results**

### **Preliminary analysis.**

Initial comparisons of the two groups were carried out to investigate if there were any differences in the composition of participants across Groups or Conditions. A 2 (Group: Muslim and Control)\*3 (Condition: GSH, NSH, group support) ANOVA indicated no significant differences in age by Condition ( $F(2,133) = .77, p = .47, \eta^2 = .01$ ) or Group ( $F(2,133) = 1.79, p = .18, \eta^2 = .01$ ), and no interaction ( $F(2,133) = .53, p = .59, \eta^2 = .01$ ). A 2 (Gender)\*3 (Condition)\*2 (Group) Chi square test revealed no differences for gender by Condition or Group ( $\chi^2(2) = .99, p = .32$ ).

ANOVAs were conducted to see if there were differences across Group and Condition in the time people spent online and the activities that they completed. There were no significant differences in how much time people spent online across the experimental conditions. However, Muslim participants engaged in more ‘active participation’ activities

than the control group ( $F(2,133) = 38.66, p < .001, \eta^2 = .23$ ). As a result, ‘active participation’ on the internet was included in the following analyses as a covariate.

To check how well the online material had been manipulated, a 2\*3 MANCOVA was conducted with active participation as the covariate and the three offensiveness items as the DVs. This revealed that there was a significant effect of Condition (Pillai’s Trace = .35,  $F(2,133) = 8.95, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$ ). Post hoc tests indicated that there was no significant difference in offensiveness between the GSH and NSH conditions (GSH vs NSH  $M_{\text{difference}} = .40, p = .77$ , GSH  $M = 5.02, SD = 1.84$ , NSH,  $M = 4.65, SD = 1.61$ ). Both GSH and NSH were reliably perceived as more offensive than the Support Condition ( $p < .001$ ).

### **Principal analyses.**

A 2\*3 MANCOVA was conducted with emotions as the DVs, Group and Condition as the fixed factors with active participation, as a covariate. This yielded a significant effect for both Group (Pillai’s Trace = .12,  $F(2,133) = 4.10, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12$ ) and Condition (Pillai’s Trace = .58,  $F(2,133) = 12.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$ ) but there was no interaction (Pillai’s Trace = .11,  $F(2,133) = 1.76, p = .09, \eta^2 = .05$ ).

Follow-up univariate 2\*3 ANCOVAs were conducted on each emotion as the DV using the same fixed factors and covariate as above. Once again, to determine if there was a difference between the two important GSH and NSH groups, planned comparisons comparing the two hate conditions only (C1 [GSH(+1), NSH (-1), Support (0)], and comparing the two hate conditions to the Support Condition (C2 (GSH (+1), NSH (+1), Support (-2)])) were conducted.

ANCOVA results on anger indicated that there was a main effect for Condition, but not for Group or an interaction (see Table 4.4). The one-tailed C1 comparison for anger indicated that there was a significant difference between GSH and NSH conditions for both

groups overall with the GSH group reporting slightly higher levels of anger  $t(133) = 2.14, p < .05, d = .37$ , although the control group were considerably angrier in the GSH than the NSH (Muslim  $t(133) = 1.65, p = .05, d = .29$ , Control  $t(133) = 4.43, p < .001, d = .77$ ).

Anxiety yielded a significant effect for Condition but not for Group or an Interaction. C1 comparisons indicated that there was an overall difference between GSH and NSH ( $t(133) = 2.14, p < .05, d = .37$ ), but this difference was predominantly driven by differences in the two hate conditions by the Control (Muslim  $t(133) = .17, p = .43, d = .03$ , Control  $t(133) = 2.83, p < .001, d = .49$ ) with those control participants in the GSH Condition reporting higher levels of anxiety.

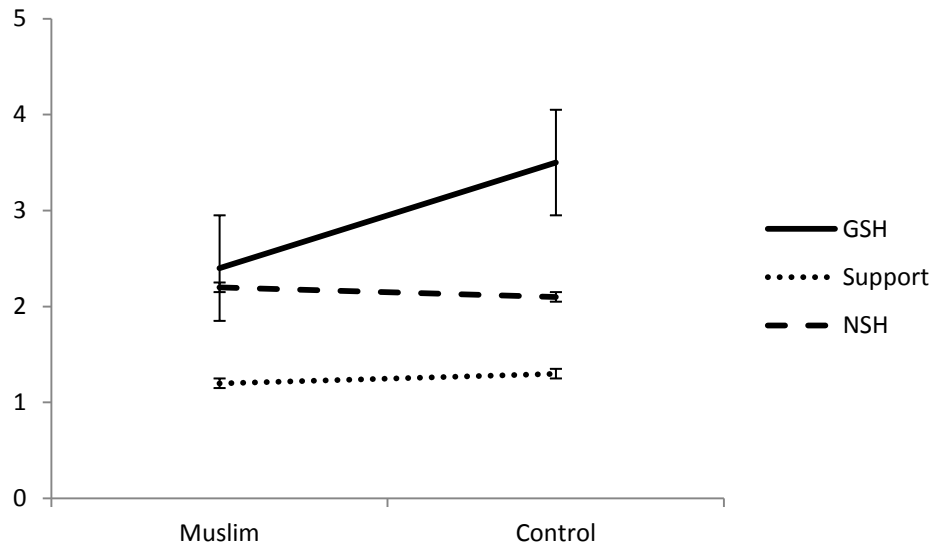
Positive emotions indicated a main effect for Condition only. The C1 comparison for positive emotions indicated there was no significant difference between NSH and GSH, either overall,  $t(133) = .25, p = .40, d = .04$ , or in each group separately (Muslim  $t(133) = .40, p = .34, d = .07$ , Control  $t(133) = .05, p = .48, d = .01$ ).

Shame followed a similar pattern to Study 1. There was a main effect for Condition, but additionally a significant main effect for Group and a significant interaction (see Figure 4.3). Those in the Control felt more shame after viewing the GSH material than the NSH and the support condition (see Table 4.4). C1 comparisons indicated that there was a difference between GSH and NSH overall, with GSH showing higher levels of shame ( $t(133) = 3.73, p < .001, d = .65$ ) but this difference was mainly due to larger differences in shame reported by the Control (Control  $t(133) = 4.33, p < .001, d = .75$ , Muslim  $t(133) = .90, p = .18, d = .16$ ).

One-tailed C2 comparisons across all the emotions were significant with hate conditions reporting higher levels of the negative emotions and the Support Condition reporting higher levels of positive emotions. (Anger  $t(133) = 12.35, p < .001, d = 2.14$ ,

Anxiety  $t(133) = 7.74, p < .001, d = 1.34$ , Positive  $t(133) = 7.73, p < .001, d = 1.34$ , Shame  $t(133) = 7.75, p < .001, d = 1.34$ .

Figure 4.3: Interaction between group and condition and shame (Study 2)



The same MANCOVA was conducted as above with the behavioural intentions as DVs. Again there were significant main effects (Group Pillai's Trace = .09,  $F(2,133) = 4.51, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$ , Condition Pillai's Trace = .15,  $F(2,133) = 3.31, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ ) but no interaction (Pillai's Trace = .05,  $F(2,133) = 1.13, p = .34, \eta^2 = .03$ ).

Follow up 2\*3 ANCOVAs on each behavioural intention revealed significant main effects for avoidance behaviours for both Group and Condition but there were no interactions. One-tailed C1 comparisons for avoidance behaviour indicated that there were no differences between the GSH and NSH condition for either group either online or offline (offline Muslim  $t(133) = .86, p = .20, d = .15$ , Control  $t(133) = .41, p = .34, d = .07$ ; Online Muslim  $t(133) = .47, p = .32, d = .08$ , Control  $t(133) = .84, p = .20, d = .15$ ).

For proactive behavioural intentions there were no main effects for Group nor Condition or an interaction. Comparisons between GSH and NSH condition revealed significant differences for proactive behavioural intentions ( $t(133) = 1.67, p < .05, d = .29$ ).

with those viewing GSH material more likely to express proactive behavioural intentions.

This was largely due to the differences reported by Muslim participants in the GSH and NSH conditions (Muslim  $t(133) = 1.65, p = .05, d = .29$ , Control  $t(133) = .63, p = .26, d = .11$ ).

C2 comparisons on the behavioural intentions indicated a significantly higher level in the two hate conditions than the support condition for both avoidance behaviours (avoidance offline  $t(133) = 4.11, p < .001, d = .71$ ; avoidance online  $t(133) = 2.85, p < .01, d = .49$ ). The difference between the two hate conditions and the support condition for proactive behaviours was not significant ( $t(133) = .85, p = .20, d = .15$ ).

A MANCOVA with realistic and symbolic threat as the DVs indicated a main effect for Condition (Pillai's Trace = .04,  $F(2,133) = 5.15, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ ) but not Group (Pillai's Trace = .15,  $F(2,133) = 2.67, p = .07, \eta^2 = .04$ ) or an interaction (Pillai's Trace = .05,  $F(2,133) = 1.50, p = .20, \eta^2 = .02$ ). Follow up 2\*3ANCOVAs found that there was a significant main effect for Condition and Group for perceptions of realistic threat only. No C1 comparisons were significant because of the generally high levels of threat across all Groups and Conditions (realistic  $t(133) = .36, p = .36, d = .06$ , symbolic  $t(133) = .30, p = .38, d = .05$ ). C2 comparisons were only significant for realistic threat, with the hate conditions reporting higher levels than the Support Condition, ( $t(133) = 4.83, p < .001, d = .84$ ) but not symbolic threat ( $t(133) = 1.20, p = .12, d = .21$ ).

To recapitulate, these results show that anger, anxiety and shame were stronger in the GSH condition than the NSH condition. In general, Control participants reported stronger emotions to the GSH material than Muslims. However, Muslims were more likely to report proactive behavioural intentions in the GSH condition than Controls.

### **Additional analysis.**

When examining previous experience of hate crime 2\*3 ANOVAs were conducted with experience of indirect offline and online experience of hate crime as dependent measures, Group and Condition and the fixed factors and ‘active’ internet activities as the covariate. There were significant effects for Group for indirect offline experience ( $F(2,133) = 19.08, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$ ) with the Muslim group reporting significantly more.

As with Study 1 levels of tolerance in the control and level of group identity in the Muslim group were high (tolerance  $M = 5.20, SD = 1.04$ , identity,  $M = 5.63, SD = 1.20$ ) and there were no differences noted in one way ANOVAs with condition<sup>22</sup> (tolerance  $F(1,63) = .03, p = .97, \eta^2 = .00$ , identity  $F(1,69) = .36, p = .66, \eta^2 = .01$ ). As with Study 1 when these variables were included in the principal analysis ANCOVA models they made no difference to the results.

### **Mediation analysis.**

To test H2, the same serial mediation analyses were conducted as in Study 1, with Group and ‘active participation’ included as covariates.

As with Study 1, there were no significant serial mediation models although there was evidence of indirect effects between viewing hate material (C1), the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. Anxiety and anger mediated the relationship between C1 and avoidance behaviours both offline (anger ( $b = .10, SE = .05, \text{BCaCIs } .02/.23$ ), anxiety ( $b = .12, SE = .07, \text{BCaCIs } .01/.28$ ) and online (anger ( $b = .24, SE = .08, \text{BCaCIs } .12/.43$ ) anxiety ( $b = .12, SE = .07, \text{BCaCIs } .01/.29$ )). This was also true of shame for avoidance behaviour online only ( $b = .09, SE = .06, \text{BCaCIs } .00/.25$ ). There were no other significant mediation analyses (See Table 4.5).

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<sup>22</sup> One way ANOVAs were performed for the same reasons outlined in study 1

Table 4.4: Study 2 means, standard deviations and marginal means for each condition and ANCOVAS all controlling for 'active' internet activity

	GSH <i>M (SD)</i>			NSH <i>M (SD)</i>			Group Support <i>M (SD)</i>			Main effect of Group <i>F</i> (2,133), [ $\eta_p^2$ ]	Main effect of Condition <i>F</i> (2,133), [ $\eta_p^2$ ]	Interaction <i>F</i> (2,133) [ $\eta_p^2$ ]
	Muslim (n=24)	Cont (n=22)	Marginal	Muslim (n=24)	Cont (n=22)	Marginal	Muslim (n=22)	Cont (n=20)	Marginal			
Anger	4.30 <sub>(1.52)</sub>	4.93 <sub>(1.61)</sub>	4.62 <sub>ax</sub>	3.64 <sub>(1.53)</sub>	3.07 <sub>(1.53)</sub>	3.35 <sub>cx</sub>	1.64 <sub>(1.38)</sub>	1.38 <sub>(.64)</sub>	1.52 <sub>z</sub>	.10[.00]	52.49***[.45]	2.45[.04]
Anxiety	2.83 <sub>(1.42)</sub>	2.70 <sub>(1.01)</sub>	2.77 <sub>ax</sub>	2.78 <sub>(1.40)</sub>	1.83 <sub>(.79)</sub>	2.30 <sub>cx</sub>	1.38 <sub>(.67)</sub>	1.25 <sub>(.38)</sub>	1.33 <sub>z</sub>	1.59[.01]	21.70***[.26]	2.37[.04]
Positive	2.66 <sub>(1.47)</sub>	2.11 <sub>(.79)</sub>	2.39 <sub>ax</sub>	2.52 <sub>(1.15)</sub>	2.14 <sub>(.96)</sub>	2.32 <sub>ax</sub>	3.94 <sub>(1.40)</sub>	3.66 <sub>(1.49)</sub>	3.83 <sub>z</sub>	.36[.00]	21.05***[.25]	.01[.00]
Shame	2.49 <sub>(1.21)</sub>	3.55 <sub>(1.45)</sub>	3.02 <sub>ax</sub>	2.21 <sub>(1.25)</sub>	2.12 <sub>(1.20)</sub>	2.16 <sub>cx</sub>	1.27 <sub>(.55)</sub>	1.33 <sub>(.63)</sub>	1.32 <sub>z</sub>	5.73*[.04]	25.84***[.29]	4.16*[.06]
Proactive	4.13 <sub>(2.35)</sub>	2.32 <sub>(1.78)</sub>	3.23 <sub>ax</sub>	3.21 <sub>(1.91)</sub>	1.95 <sub>(1.43)</sub>	2.56 <sub>cx</sub>	2.68 <sub>(1.89)</sub>	2.70 <sub>(2.25)</sub>	2.74 <sub>x</sub>	2.44[.02]	1.45[.02]	1.79[.03]
Avoidance Offline	2.89 <sub>(1.87)</sub>	1.55 <sub>(.96)</sub>	2.22 <sub>ax</sub>	2.58 <sub>(1.76)</sub>	1.38 <sub>(.58)</sub>	1.97 <sub>ax</sub>	1.52 <sub>(1.20)</sub>	1.14 <sub>(.30)</sub>	1.35 <sub>z</sub>	8.95**[.07]	5.32**[.08]	1.29[.02]
Avoidance Online	4.42 <sub>(2.32)</sub>	2.82 <sub>(2.08)</sub>	3.62 <sub>ax</sub>	4.19 <sub>(1.79)</sub>	2.36 <sub>(1.13)</sub>	3.28 <sub>ax</sub>	2.20 <sub>(1.69)</sub>	1.90 <sub>(1.74)</sub>	2.05 <sub>z</sub>	11.59**[.08]	8.58***[.12]	2.10[.03]
Realistic	5.25 <sub>(1.17)</sub>	4.78 <sub>(1.24)</sub>	5.02 <sub>ax</sub>	5.45 <sub>(1.10)</sub>	4.40 <sub>(1.49)</sub>	4.92 <sub>ax</sub>	4.31 <sub>(1.39)</sub>	3.66 <sub>(1.84)</sub>	3.99 <sub>z</sub>	5.30*[.04]	7.20**[.10]	.57[.01]
Symbolic	4.75 <sub>(1.74)</sub>	4.16 <sub>(1.66)</sub>	4.45 <sub>ax</sub>	4.85 <sub>(1.47)</sub>	3.84 <sub>(1.90)</sub>	4.35 <sub>ax</sub>	4.07 <sub>(1.43)</sub>	4.18 <sub>(1.60)</sub>	4.11 <sub>x</sub>	3.68[.03]	.49[.01]	1.37[.02]
Offensiveness	4.58 <sub>(1.95)</sub>	5.50 <sub>(1.63)</sub>	5.04 <sub>ax</sub>	5.00 <sub>(1.41)</sub>	4.27 <sub>(1.75)</sub>	4.64 <sub>ax</sub>	2.45 <sub>(1.71)</sub>	2.15 <sub>(1.66)</sub>	2.30 <sub>z</sub>	.030[.00]	32.58***[.34]	2.81[.04]

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Among marginal means, subscripts indicate results of two planned comparisons (C1= hate vs NS hate, a and c; C2= 2 hate conditions vs support, x and z). Means not sharing a subscript are significantly different,  $p < .05$ .

Table 4.5: Serial mediation results for Muslim participants (Study 2)

DV	Mediators	Indirect paths	C1 Comparison			
			<i>b</i>	SE	95% CI Bias Corrected	UL
Proactive	Anger	Total Effect	.12	.09	-.04	.32
		Direct Effect	.18	.21	-.24	.60
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.00	.02	-.04	.07
		Threat and Anger	.00	.01	-.02	.04
	Anxiety	Anger	.12	.08	-.03	.30
		Total Effect	-.00	.05	-.12	.10
		Direct Effect	.30	.20	-.10	.71
		Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.00	.03	-.05	.09
		Threat and Anxiety	.00	.01	-.02	.01
	Shame^	Anxiety	-.01	.04	-.12	.07
		Total Effect	.03	.07	-.08	.19
		Direct Effect	-.13	.21	-.54	.28
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.02	.04	-.02	.16
Avoidance Offline	Anger	Threat and Shame	.00	.01	-.01	.02
		Shame	.01	.05	-.09	.13
		Total Effect*	.11	.07	-.01	.27
		Direct Effect	-.00	.13	-.26	.26
		Indirect effect via				
	Anxiety	Threat	.00	.04	-.08	.07
		Threat and Anger	.00	.01	-.02	.02
		Anger*	.10	.05	.02	.23
		Total Effect	.13	.09	-.03	.31
		Direct Effect	-.02	.11	-.24	.20
	Shame^	Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.00	.02	-.05	.04
		Threat and Anxiety	.00	.02	-.04	.05
		Anxiety*	.12	.07	.01	.28
		Total Effect	.07	.06	-.03	.22
Avoidance Online	Anger	Direct Effect	-.08	.13	-.33	.16
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.04	.05	-.04	.16
		Threat and Shame	.00	.00	-.00	.02
		Shame	.03	.03	-.01	.13
	Anxiety	Total Effect*	.25	.11	.05	.48
		Direct Effect	-.09	.18	-.46	.27
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.01	.05	-.11	.11
		Threat and Anger	.00	.02	-.04	.05
	Shame^	Anger*	.24	.08	.12	.43
		Total Effect	.12	.11	-.08	.35
		Direct Effect	.03	.17	-.32	.38
		Indirect Effect Via				
		Threat	.01	.05	-.10	.11
	Anger	Threat and Anxiety	.00	.02	-.04	.05
		Anxiety*	.12	.07	.01	.29
		Total Effect	.17	.10	-.01	.38
		Direct Effect	-.11	.18	.47	.25
		Indirect effect via				
		Threat	.06	.07	-.06	.22
		Threat and Shame	.01	.01	-.00	.05
		Shame*	.09	.06	.00	.25

^ Interaction between group and condition was used in the model

\*Significant effect

#### 4.5. General Discussion

The results indicate some support for H1. When viewing group specific hate materials participants were likely to be angrier and more likely to engage in proactive behavioural intentions than when viewing similarly unpleasant but not group-related material.

There was a difference between the stigmatised groups and the control participants for some of the emotional reactions tested: the LGB group felt more anxious after being exposed to group specific hate compared with the controls. However, the control participants in Study 2 generally indicated stronger emotional reactions than the Muslims in the GSH conditions (specifically anger, anxiety and shame). Muslim participants seemed to be more likely to report proactive behaviours in the GSH conditions whereas in Study 1 it was the controls that showed stronger tendencies for proactive behaviour after viewing the GSH material. That the stigmatised groups did not necessarily report more negative impacts of GSH than the controls has some potentially important implications which will be discussed shortly. Although any comparisons (and differences) between the stigmatised groups and the controls should be viewed cautiously, given the necessarily opportunistic (and hence non-equivalent) nature of recruitment of both sets of participants and the general absence of group \* condition interactions.

There was little support for H2 as the mediation analysis did not produce any significant overall mediation models. However, indirect effects indicating that stronger emotional reactions did mediate the relationship between viewing hate material and behavioural intentions offers some support for the links suggested by IET (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith, 1993). The relationships between emotions and behavioural intentions were slightly different between the two groups, anger and anxiety made Muslim participants more likely to consider engaging in avoidance tactics whereas the LGB group indicated links

between anger and proactive behavioural intentions too. These differences may be explained by how intergroup power/status relations can influence group-based emotions (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith, 2003). As Muslims in the UK are currently a target for victimisation (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Fearn, Walters & Brown, 2016), they may feel more vulnerable to abuse and therefore manifest a different set of action tendencies to protect themselves in a way that the LGB group felt was less necessary. Once again, though, we are inclined to be cautious in placing too much weight on these differences between the LGB and Muslim results in view of the small and non-equivalent nature of the two samples studied. The inclusion of some covariates in our analyses to statistically ‘equalise’ the groups only partly mitigates these difficulties.

Although threat did not mediate the relationship between viewing hate material and the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions as predicted, high levels of perceived threat, particularly realistic threat, were reported in both studies. So, viewing cyberhate did make our participants feel threatened, as with other forms of hate crime (Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012), even if those feelings of threat were not reliably linked to emotions and action tendencies. Theoretically it is not clear why this happened as perceived group threat has been demonstrated to mediate emotional reactions and behavioural responses for offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). There is the potential for the findings being a result of ceiling effects. However it also possible that this may suggest that the internet presents a different type of threat to that which occurs offline. This may affect how threat mediates the relationships between emotional reactions and behavioural intentions in IET models.

The shame experienced by the control participants in both studies in response to GSH material is consistent with other research which has shown that this emotion can sometimes be felt by groups that are perpetrators of discrimination (Allpress et al., 2014; Brown et al.,

2008; Gausel et al., 2012, Lickel et al., 2005). That the two stigmatised groups indicated feeling rather less shame when viewing the material is inconsistent with some research into hate crime (Bell & Perry, 2015). This may be suggestive of some important differences in the victimisation experiences and impacts of cyberhate as compared to offline hate. Perhaps the privacy associated with going online helps to ameliorate the feelings of shame associated with other hate crime victimisation experiences.

The findings in these studies underscore the harms of indirect cyberhate as found in previous research (Fearn, Brown & Walters, 2016). Reported levels of anger (and, less consistently, anxiety) were higher in response to the group-focussed hate material than to the equivalently unpleasant but non group-related material in both studies. This was true for both the stigmatised groups (LGB and Muslim) *and* for Control participants (the main effects for Condition on anger were both large and unqualified by any Group x Condition interaction). It is apparent that reading of a minority group being targeted by hate makes all those that witness it angry (and sometimes anxious). What is particularly important here is that the indirect impacts of hate crime extend further than to just other members of the stigmatised groups. This is a finding somewhat inconsistent with perspectives stressing the importance of identifying with the group for stimulating threat and group-based emotions (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Nevertheless, it may indicate that the indirect harms of cyberhate, and potentially offline hate crime, are even wider than previously thought (Bell & Perry, 2015; Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012).

One possible explanation for these findings could be that the control participants sample in this research scored highly on a measure of tolerance towards both groups (LGB and Muslim) and therefore may have been especially sensitive to abuse targeting these groups. If people are more tolerant then perhaps cyberhate becomes an affront to their general

and moral values and is reacted to accordingly. Future replications should endeavour to recruit more heterogeneous control participants.

There are some possible limitations to this research that should be acknowledged. The strong main effects for Condition observed throughout were driven mostly by the large and theoretically less interesting differences between the two hate conditions and the support condition (C2 comparison). Perhaps, in retrospect, a more neutral control group might have been more advisable. It also possible that there was not a clear enough distinction between the GSH and NSH conditions because of the legally required deletion of the group labels, which potentially could have weakened the impact of the group hate manipulation.

The removal of transgender participants from the analysis of Study 1 limits any conclusions to just the LGB community. Further work should be done on transgender specific cyberhate and its impacts. Conflating this diverse community into one group for research may mean that the nature, extent, and harms associated with transgender people's experience of hate crime is overlooked or misunderstood (Walters, Paterson, McDonnell & Brown, 2016).

Future research could expose members of stigmatised groups to material targeting *other* victimised groups to examine the possibility of generalised indirect impacts of hate crime, perhaps via a shared 'victim group' identity. It would also be worth examining other protected characteristics, such as disability, to see if the impacts of indirect cyberhate are similar across other stigmatised groups. Adding a non-stigmatised control to these studies would help to improve understanding on how widely the impacts of hate crime may extend. Nevertheless, as noted above, the difficulties of making comparisons between different opportunity samples should not be underestimated.

That cyberhate causes harms to both direct and indirect victims and potentially wider society highlights the importance and need for cyberhate crime to be properly defined,

monitored and the perpetrators punished. At the moment there is too little focus in hate crime research about hate crime on the internet.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **General Discussion**

This final Chapter will draw together and summarise the findings from the three papers and discuss how the results and conclusions meet the overall aims of the project outlined in the opening Chapter. The implications, both theoretical and practical, from the research will be discussed along with reflections on future research directions.

### **5.1. Summary of findings**

There are a number of key findings from the series of papers presented in this thesis. These are split into three distinct categories; the nature of cyberhate, the harms of cyberhate and the differences between cyberhate and offline hate crime. Each will be briefly outlined.

#### **The nature of cyberhate.**

The first aim of this thesis was to garner a better understanding about what cyberhate actually involves for those who are victimised by it. Cyberhate was revealed to be a common problem for the two groups under investigation. The results from the online survey (Chapter 2) indicated that over eighty per cent of both stigmatised groups had experienced direct online hate crime and that a greater number of people had experienced indirect cyberhate.

Not only was cyberhate a common experience but a frequent one too. Both groups reported a number of direct and indirect experiences, with between 4-10 incidents of direct cyberhate and 8-15 incidents of indirect cyberhate being the average amounts. These findings indicate that cyberhate against both groups is pervasive and almost ubiquitous whilst using the internet. This was reinforced by the qualitative interviews (Chapter 3) in which people reported that they had come to expect to receive, and see, abuse online as part of the nature of the internet.

The most common forms of cyberhate were hate speech. These tended to be comments on social media and other online forums, spam email, and abusive comments directed at a person or group. Other forms of cyberhate such as stalking and harassment,

threats of physical violence, and distributing offensive and inappropriate material were less common but still a feature of the victimisation experience.

Previous research has indicated that cyberhate is most likely to be perpetrated on social media (Awan, 2014; Burnap & Williams, 2016). However, the online survey and qualitative interviews revealed that social media was not the only place in which cyberhate occurred. The most crucial element of cyberhate perpetration was how openly accessible the website or internet activity was, so it was also a feature in forums, chatrooms, comments pages on news websites, among other places.

### **The harms of cyberhate.**

One of the key findings of the research is that cyberhate had very similar direct and indirect impacts on victims to those that have been observed for hate crime which occurs offline (Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek, Gillis, Cogan & Glunt 1997; Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 1999; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu, 2001; Paterson, Walters, Brown & Carrasco, 2016). The experimental evidence also demonstrated that these harms caused by cyberhate can potentially extend beyond identity groups into the wider community, in which non-stigmatised groups had equivalent negative reactions to material as the stigmatised groups. This finding suggests that the harms of hate crime, for both on and offline incidents may be highly impactful for people of all backgrounds.

All the studies in this thesis showed that there were a number of negative emotional reactions and behavioural intentions associated with experiencing cyberhate, both for direct and indirect victims. The most prominent emotional reaction was anger, which was reported in all three papers. While less prominent, anxiety/ fear reactions were also recorded after viewing cyberhate. These findings mirror the emotional responses noted for offline hate crime victims (Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012).

Shame also appeared to play a role in cyberhate victimisation experiences. There were some low levels of shame experienced by those in the two stigmatised groups after being exposed to cyberhate. It was the control group that reported feeling shame after exposure.

These negative emotional responses were stronger and more profound when viewing material that specifically targeted group identity rather than similarly unpleasant but non group targeted content. This supports previous findings for offline hate crime; that it is the group-based element of hate crime that results in incidents being more impactful for both direct and indirect victims. Such a finding supports IET's analysis of group-based emotions as reactions to group attacks (Devos, Silver, Mackie & Smith 2003; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer & Leach, 2004). This provides evidence supporting the second aim of the project.

As well as the expected emotional reactions outlined above, the qualitative interviews revealed a number of lower-level emotional responses associated with cyberhate. These included disappointment, sadness, and frustration, suggesting that there may be a broader range of negative emotional impacts not yet captured by prior research.

The behavioural intentions following cyberhate experiences were, as predicted by IET (Devos et al., 2003; Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000), avoidant and proactive in nature (the specific role of IET will be discussed in the next section). There were some reliable associations between the emotional reactions experienced and subsequent behavioural intentions. Anger was more likely to predict related behavioural intentions than any other emotion. This was followed by anxiety/fear. However the links between anger and proactive behaviour and anxiety/ fear and avoidance behaviour could not be as clearly established for cyberhate as they have been for offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). Correlational results indicated that for Muslims fear was linked with avoidance behaviours, and for LGB&T people anger was linked to proactive behaviours for direct experience only. There

were no significant links for indirect experience. The experimental studies found that there were some indirect effects, anger was linked to proactive behaviour and avoidance offline for LGB people and the control participants (Chapter 4, Study 1), whereas in Study 2 the indirect effects were that anger and anxiety was linked to avoidance behaviour online and offline for Muslims and the control.

Survey research revealed that help-seeking was also a common behavioural intention following cyberhate, either directly or indirectly. This help seeking behaviour was predominantly based on looking for support from informal channels, but included reporting to websites in a small number of cases. Reporting to websites was only really employed by respondents when this involved a simple process of clicking a couple of buttons. More arduous systems of reporting to websites or internet service providers were avoided.

Reporting hate crime to the police was a rare occurrence. This was because people were unsure about what constituted a hate crime online and whether the hateful material they had witnessed or been targeted by was in breach of the law. The few that had reported using formal channels indicated that the consequences for the perpetrators and the satisfaction from their experiences were mixed.

Relatively high levels of perceived threat were recorded after viewing group specific cyberhate material for both the stigmatised groups and the non-stigmatised controls (Chapter 4). However, this perceived threat did not mediate the relationship between the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions as found in other research for offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). However, it does imply that hate crime in cyberspace makes people feel vulnerable.

Group identification did not appear to mediate or moderate any of the emotional reactions or behavioural intentions associated with being a victim of cyberhate. Although it is worth noting levels of identification in the two quantitative papers were high (mean scores on

a 7 point scale were over 4.5), suggesting possible ceiling effects. Nevertheless, when group identity was explored using the qualitative techniques, it appears that there were some identity protection strategies being adopted. The primary one mentioned was minimising the motivations of perpetrators. By ascribing hate material to ‘trouble makers’ and ‘cowards’, who did not really dislike their group, meant that some elements of group identity could be protected.

### **Cyberhate vs offline hate crime.**

While the harms of cyberhate bear a striking resemblance to the harms that occur after offline hate crime victimisation (Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012), there were also some important differences noted in the results that are worth highlighting. There were low expectations of behaviour on the internet, lower than the behaviour expected of people offline. As a result, cyberhate was seen as a ‘necessary evil’ of going online. These low expectations fostered a level of resilience for people who witnessed cyberhate. They developed a ‘thick skin’ which helped to protect them from some of the associated harms.

Overall, there was more evidence of avoidance behavioural strategies being adopted by cyberhate victims than proactive ones. Interviewees indicated that it was much easier to engage in avoidance behaviours online than it was offline. Online avoidance could be as simple as increasing privacy settings or not going to certain websites. This had less impact on their day to day life, in a way that offline avoidance strategies may not, and this may be why these strategies were adopted more frequently. There was also some evidence that people would engage in avoidance behaviour offline, such as not responding to questions from strangers about their identity, supporting suggestions that what occurs online can impact life offline (Awan & Zempi, 2016).

## 5.2. Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework in which this thesis is situated focused on social psychological theories of group identity and how threats to that identity, in this case cyberhate crime, cause damage to members of that group, both directly and indirectly. The next section will explore the implications of the findings against this theoretical backdrop.

### **Cyberhate and theories of group identity.**

#### ***Group emotions and behavioural intentions.***

Intergroup Emotions Theory (Mackie & Smith, 2015; Smith 1993) states that group threat elicits specific emotional reactions and related behavioural intentions namely, that anger leads to proactive behaviours and that anxiety and fear lead to avoidance behaviours. Hate crime provides an excellent example of real world threat and the links between these emotional reactions and behavioural intentions have been established for offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). To demonstrate this relationship for cyberhate was the second key aim of the thesis.

This research has found, as predicted by the theory, that anger is the most prevalent emotion when experiencing cyberhate followed, somewhat less consistently, by anxiety. This mirrors previous research, indicating that these are the most common emotional reactions to group threat (Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus & Gordijn 2003; Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Van Zomeren et al., 2004) and hate crime more specifically (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; Paterson et al., 2016).

However, the links between these emotions and behaviours have not been as clearly established as has been the case with offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016). Anger was linked to avoidance behaviours as well as to proactive intentions, and there were different links between the emotions and behaviours across the two stigmatised groups.

There are a few explanations that could account for the differences from the traditional IET theoretical framework. It is possible that avoidance behavioural intentions were linked to both anger and fear reactions because of the ease in which avoidance behaviours could be enacted without excessive personal consequences (as discussed earlier). People may opt for the simplest and most convenient response to a group identity threat online. This idea is reinforced by the reports of help seeking behaviour. Generally, people only engaged in help seeking behaviour which involved minimal time commitment and effort from themselves. The path of least resistance seems to be most commonly applied online.

An alternative suggestion could be the social structure of the internet more generally. Being online may involve acting in a different social sphere in which other behavioural options are available and easy to enact following emotional reactions to some material. As noted, there are different expectations of behaviour online than there are offline, and this may help to redefine the codes of acceptable behaviour and therefore the subsequent reactions to that behaviour. This may change the relationships between the emotional reactions and the behavioural intentions previously established by IET and other research (Devos et al., 2003; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) and for hate crime offline (Paterson et al., 2016).

It is proposed that the differences noted between the two groups depend on the wider social context in which people are given freedom to act. The two groups under investigation are two commonly stigmatised groups within the UK but they are targeted in different contexts and for different reasons. The fact that the LGB&T group seemed to be more willing to engage in proactive behaviours (Chapter 2) or the control group on their behalf (Chapter 4), may suggest that they feel a sense of power by being able to challenge hate based behaviour, in a way that the Muslim participants, who are currently the subject of a great deal of negative social scrutiny, because of the conflation of Islam with terrorism (Chertoff, 2008), do not. Muslims may choose avoidance because it is less controversial and adversarial. In

fact, this was implied by some of the Muslim respondents in the interviews who indicated they felt it was their responsibility to portray Muslims in a positive way, a feeling that the LGB&T respondents did not express about their group. It has been noted that different social statuses can prompt different reactions and these can be complex (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Smith & Mackie, 2015) for example when there is existing conflict or tension (Devos et al., 2003) and the behaviours are a functional response to the emotions experienced (Maitner, Mackie & Smith, 2006). It is therefore plausible that there are some more subtle factors that further influenced the relationships between the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions reported here.

The overall findings offer partial support for the second aim of the thesis. The emotional reactions and the behavioural intentions were similar to those predicted by IET (Devos et al., 2003; Yzerbet et al., 2003). However, how they interacted on the internet and across social groups was different to the relationships established by previous research (Paterson et al., 2016).

There were some other important emotional reactions and behavioural intentions identified. The role of help seeking after experiencing cyberhate victimisation was a behavioural intention not previously examined within the current framework. This behavioural intention was linked to both anger and fear reactions, with different emotions predicting this behaviour for the two groups investigated. It is interesting that help seeking was important in cyberhate as reporting hate crime offline has been demonstrated to be very low (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014; Home Office, 2014). Admittedly, this help seeking largely involved accessing informal support rather than taking more formal routes, which were seen to be excessive, complex and unrewarding, as with offline hate crime (Chakraborti et al., 2014; Home Office, 2014).

It is possible that the help seeking behaviour identified here acts as a form of social support or an identity protection mechanism, both of which have been shown to limit some of the harms associated with group-based identity attacks (Van Knippenberg, 1989; Van Zomeren et al., 2004). It would be worth considering the role of help seeking in further models exploring links between emotional reactions and behavioural intentions following a group identity attack, possibly with the distinction between seeking support from formal and informal sources.

Shame has been indicated to be another important emotion in intergroup contexts (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna & Teroni 2014; Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi & Čehajić 2008). Theoretically this emotion has been explored in terms of shame at the behaviour and actions of other members of the ingroup who have perpetrated prejudice and discrimination. The findings outlined in Chapter 4 support this assertion. Both control groups reported moderate levels of shame after witnessing group specific hate material. This implies that there is a level of perceived responsibility for the behaviours of the ingroup when hateful material is distributed online.

Shame has also been theorised to be a feature of some crime victimisation (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Kanyangara, Rime, Philippot & Yzerbyt, 2007). This has been established to some extent for previous studies of hate crime (Bell & Perry, 2015; Gerstenfeld, 2013) but otherwise has generally been overlooked as an experience of being a *victim* of crime. The results indicate that shame, while not an overt feature of cyberhate victimisation, is felt to some extent by some individuals when viewing cyberhate material targeting a group that shares the same identity. Whether these levels of shame are more pronounced than when hate crime is experienced offline still needs to be determined. However, it could be argued that the solitary nature of going online may mean that levels of shame associated with viewing

cyberhate are lower than when victimised, and therefore exposed and humiliated, in public, as is usually the case for offline hate crime.

***The role of threat.***

One of the potential mediators of cyberhate impact, outlined in the third aim of the thesis, is level of perceived threat. Integrated Threat theory has examined the role of realistic and symbolic threats and the role that they play on group identity (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Previously, the theory has explored the role of threat from the dominant group perspective, outlining the threats that subordinate or stigmatised minorities pose to the ingroup (Croucher, 2008; Laurence & Vaisse, 2006). However, hate crime research has indicated that feeling threatened is a key element of the victimisation experience (Dick, 2008; Hall, 2013; Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Walters & Brown, 2016). The findings of these papers support the assertion that feeling threatened is a feature of cyberhate victimisation, particularly realistic threat (symbolic threat was a feature of cyberhate victimisation although less pronounced). This supports similar findings on offline hate crime (Paterson et al., 2016; Walter & Brown, 2016). Cyberhate, it appears, causes those who witness it to feel threatened and fear for their safety.

It has been proposed that, if cyberhate is considered a form of threat, then levels of threat should mediate the relationship between the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions (Paterson et al., 2016). When those links were tested, threat did not mediate this relationship. The most likely cause of this is a ceiling effect due to relatively high (mean above 4.5 on a 7 point scale across the GSH condition) levels reported, but other possible explanations are also explored below.

People did feel threatened but this did not appear to be related to the expected emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. This may mean that the level of perceived

threat that was not necessarily measured sufficiently during these studies. The threat measured here mainly focused on online threat. Perhaps measuring perceived threat with both an online and offline focus would produce a more comprehensive measure of threat, this may make it more likely to act as mediator as the full experience of threat is being measured. It has previously been demonstrated that threat online can make people fearful about hate crime offline (Awan & Zempi, 2016) so having a broader focus in the measure may have been useful.

It may also be that there are additional mediators that need to be added to this model to help establish a link between threat and the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions following cyberhate experience. Models that examine level of perceived threat with additional mediating factors such as ‘interpretation of threat’ or ‘group empathy’ may help to establish whether this link is actually present.

### **Indirect victimisation and wider community harms.**

One of the most crucial elements of hate crime, and a key theoretical concept for this project, is that the harms of hate crime extend beyond just the direct victim to other members of the same stigmatised group, so called indirect victimisation (Paterson et al., 2016). IET defines these as group level emotions (Smith & Mackie, 2015; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007) and there is strong evidence that the impacts of hate crime do extend beyond individual group members (Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016; Perry & Alvi, 2012). It is so widely accepted to be the case that UK law reflects this assertion with the role of enhanced sentencing for hate based crimes (Law Commission, 2014; section 28 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 & sections 145 & 146 Criminal Justice Act 2003).

This research demonstrates that these indirect effects are a feature of cyberhate victimisation. Witnessing hate crime online prompts similar emotions as being a direct victim and largely mirror those reported for offline hate crime (Noelle, 2002; Paterson et al., 2016;

Perry & Alvi, 2012). Cyberhate therefore has the potential to be as damaging as offline hate crime.

However, there are some crucial differences too, the lack of evidence of threat mediating emotional and behavioural responses, the role of resilience of the victims and the acceptance of some level of abuse on the internet means that there are also some qualitative differences in direct and indirect hate crime victimisation experiences on and offline. Fully understanding these differences is crucial to our overall strategy to combating hate crime – especially how it is to be regulated legally.

The other really important theoretical addition suggested by the findings in Chapter 4 is the possibility that witnessing hate crime can have a wider impact than just on the groups that are being targeted. This has so far been an area completely unexplored in research. Hate crime research has focussed solely on those groups that have been targeted. This is the first piece of research to suggest that the community impacts of hate crime may extend beyond the identity group to the community more generally, and cause similar levels of harm to those not sharing the identity of the group under attack. This suggestion does not fit well with the existing literature on group level emotions and group identity as it is meant to be being a member of the group that is important in precipitating these emotions (Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Yzerbyt et al., 2003).

There are a few potential explanations for this finding. If identity is an important factor in the victimisation experience, which the research evidence suggests, then it may be for members not in the stigmatised group that viewing group-based hate material may stimulate a different identity reaction. Perhaps viewing group specific hate material offends their identity of being a ‘reasonable and tolerant person’, and them not wanting to identify as racist, or homophobic or prejudiced more generally, and therefore it becomes a question of ‘moral identity’. Cyberhate material may act as an affront to people’s values of dignity,

equality and respect. It is therefore likely that hate material threatens an identity within the non stigmatised groups that is linked to their values and principles, which in turn stimulates similar emotions and behaviours as those experienced by stigmatised group members. More research will need to be completed to explore this further.

Alternatively, as with threat, there may be some other mediating factors that can help to explain the similarity of the reactions of the control groups to those of the stigmatised group. The studies in this paper measured tolerance for the stigmatised group, of which the scores were fairly high. This may have impacted the emotions experienced by the controls, although there was no evidence of any mediation effects. Other possible mediating factors may include levels of empathy. Having an additional mediating variable in the models of group threat and the emotional and behavioural reactions to this threat may help to explain this relationship more fully. These models would allow for the importance of group identity in the victimisation experience for the stigmatised group while potentially explaining why these impacts extend further to other non-stigmatised groups.

The key theoretical addition proposed here though is that hate crime appears to extend even further than initially anticipated. It is indeed a community based crime, but this community may be broader than some have previously envisaged (Perry, 2001).

### **Level of group identification.**

One of the other potential mediating factors outlined in the theoretical framework is the impact that the level of group identification may have on victimisation experiences and impacts. So far, literature on this topic has provided mixed results (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey, 1999; Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt & Spears, 2001; McCoy & Major, 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001), prompting different explanations about what role high levels of group identification play when groups are attacked. Notably, for this project this was focused on the opposing views proposed by Crocker and Major (1989) and Branscombe et al., (1999).

Although no prediction was made as to which theory was the most appropriate, the research results did not indicate that group identification either mediated or moderated reactions to viewing cyberhate. As a result, in this regard, the current research can do little to support either theoretical explanation.

The lack of evidence of group identification making a difference to victimisation impacts may be due to the generally high (mean levels >4.5 on a 7 point scale) level of identification reported by participants across both quantitative studies. This may have had a ceiling effect on the results. However, as the research base more generally appears to be mixed it is likely to be due to some other factors too.

A potential issue identified during the course of this research, and from previous literature, is the broad scope of social identity groups studied. In this case it was based on religious group, sexual orientation and transgender identity. In other cases it may be based on nationality or race. While these clearly do form part of someone's group identity, based on the identity scale ratings, perhaps these are classifications that are too large for people to feel like group-based attacks are really aimed fully at them. While it does prompt some identity based reaction, as noted by the higher levels of negative responses to group specific hate material, perhaps these would be greater if the identity groups being studied were smaller and more clearly defined.

The other possible explanation for the lack of impact of group identification may be due to how participants attributed the hate material that they saw online. This has been discussed in the 'discounting hypothesis' as a protection strategy when highly identified with a group under threat (Crocker & Major 1989; Crocker, Voelkl, Testa & Major, 1991; Major, Quinton & Schmader, 2003). It would seem that cyberhate, at least the type studied here, could easily be attributed to a number of other things rather than hatred towards group members. This was noted in the qualitative interviews when the respondents minimised the

motivations of the perpetrators. Perhaps through this process of attributing cyberhate material to something other than a 'hate' motivation helps to protect group identity. It may still be unpleasant to view, but there is not a reason for it to be more damaging if someone is more highly identified, because it is not really a reflection of a dislike towards the group, more of an attempt to cause trouble.

### **Online behaviour as a predictor of cyberhate experiences.**

The final potential mediator outlined in the thesis aims indicated certain behaviour may impact the likelihood of victimisation. Criminological theories have asserted that certain behaviours and actions may make people more at risk of being targeted for particular types of crime. Two of the theories considered as part of this research are the Routine Activities Theory and the Lifestyle Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfriedson & Garofalo, 1979). The research findings did indicate that there are certain internet behaviours and forums that are more commonly associated with hate crime. Unlike the other research in this area that has predominantly focused on social media being a key source of cyberhate material (Awan, 2014; Burnap & Williams, 2016), the results here suggest that it is how openly accessible online material is that puts users at risk, rather than social media per se. Some forms of social media can be highly controlled through changes in privacy settings, suggesting that some internet behaviours may *protect* users from cyberhate, while other actions can lead to higher rates of exposure.

That certain behaviours pose more of a risk seemed to be acknowledged by some interviewees, particularly the respondents who expressed their views and their identity openly online. However, they seemed willing to accept that risk. They felt that if they wanted to do the things that they wished to online then they expected some abuse. The role of resilience is also important here. It was the interviewee's choice about how they decided to respond and

react to abuse, again suggesting that they have a level of agency associated with cyberhate victimisation.

This helps to add to the theories outlined here because it does acknowledge that certain behaviours do carry more risks, but explores how people respond as ‘victims’. They are taking calculated risks and appreciate that some of their behavioural choices may lead to victimisation experiences. This helps to give power back to the victims because cyberhate is not necessarily something that just happens to them, they have a choice in how they react to their victimisation experience and can apply management strategies, such as developing resilience to abuse.

It may be people are less willing to behave in ways that puts them at risk of crime victimisation offline. However, it has been noted that hate crimes offline have been committed in areas where the group is known to frequent or because people have chosen to represent themselves in a certain way (Cramer, McNiel, Holley, Shumway & Boccelleri, 2011; Herek et al., 1999; Mason & Palmer, 1996; Perry, 2014) and people still engage in these behaviours despite the risk. It therefore seems relevant to add to the theories an addition of acceptance of risk on those who are targeted. It is likely that certain behaviours result in increased risk, that this is acknowledged by victims themselves who then develop coping strategies. Nevertheless methods still must be found to deter cyberhate.

Of the three proposed mediators or moderators in the aims of the thesis, it appears that it is only this final one, that certain behaviours can make people more at risk, which seems to have had an impact on those experiencing cyberhate. Although this only helps to explain the experience of cyberhate rather than the impacts, it is still worth highlighting. In order to understand the pervasiveness of cyberhate and its impacts we need to better comprehend how people’s routine activities online affect their levels of exposure to abuse. Taking these

activities into consideration will help policy makers, legislators and online providers devise ways which can limit such exposure.

### **5.3. Practical Implications**

This is the first project that has focused solely on the impacts of cyberhate and as such there are a number of practical recommendations and implications that can be taken from the current findings.

The lack of a clear definition of cyberhate is a real issue and producing an accurate and comprehensive definition of online hate crime is a crucial next step. At present the current definitions of hate crime do not explicitly refer to cyberhate, (College of Policing, 2014). This has a number of potential impacts on the reporting, monitoring and punishment of this type of crime. The lack of an agreed definition is not just a problem facing cyberhate but one that faces hate crime more generally (Hall, 2013). The Government's recent Hate Crime Action Plan (Home Office, 2016) has indicated that all police forces should have a clear definition of online hate crime, yet there is still no real clarity about what this definition should and should not involve. Steps should therefore be taken to rectify this as soon as possible.

There is real confusion amongst victim groups about what exactly constitutes hate crime online and where the freedom to express opinions, satirical humour or critiques of a person and their lifestyle choices may cross the line into something that is illegal. Interviewees indicated that the few who did report cyberhate to the police received a mixed response. This confusion means that people generally did not want to report cyberhate, even to formal bodies other than the police.

Any proposed definition of cyberhate must focus on the meaning of 'hate speech', as this is clearly the area where there was most confusion. It is where the line between legal and illegal speech is that is currently the most problematic. Although other forms of cyberhate

attacks, such as stalking and threats of violence, should be included there was less confusion about whether or not this behaviour was in breach of the law.

Improving the definition and thus the guidance on cyberhate could directly contribute to more accurate reporting of the cyberhate incidents. At present there are a small number of different monitoring systems, both formal and informal, but none are comprehensive and there is no system for collating or sharing figures, meaning the true scale of cyberhate is currently unknown.

Collating cyberhate statistics is part of the current hate crime management strategy (Home Office, 2016) but this is based on a ‘flagging’ system only for online hate crimes recorded by the police. There will need to be more comprehensive ways to capture cyberhate experiences that people do not want to report to the police. The inclusion of cyberhate in the existing Crime Survey of England and Wales (conducted by the Office for National Statistics) would be a good place to start, noting the difference in volume of offline hate crime reported to the police and through that survey (Corcoran, Lader & Smith, 2015).

Linked to the problems associated with the legal definition comes some practical questions about the victimisation impacts of hate crime and hate incidents, and the potential real world responses to these. This thesis has indicated that hate incidents can have the same negative emotional and behavioural responses as hate crimes, as IET states they are both forms of group-based targeting. However there is a legal distinction between a hate incident and a hate crime. This may cause some issues for victims who are targeted by hate-fuelled behaviour and experience the same negative consequences but their experience is not considered to fall into the legal category of a crime.

Potentially this means that those who have been victimised and report to the police, and their experience does not constitute a crime, may feel victimised or marginalised by a system that does not recognise their experiences. The negative impacts of this so called

‘double-victimisation’ experience have been noted for a number of other crimes when engaging in the justice system (Doerner & Doerner, 2010). This is not to say that the threshold of what constitutes a hate crime should be lowered, but that a range of third party and community support should be in place to ensure that victims do not feel that their experience is not recognised or minimised. There is some evidence of this happening already with a variety of support organisations available such as GALOP for LGB&T people and TellMAMA for Muslims. These support mechanisms need to be utilised effectively by developing working models between these support organisations, law enforcement and community organisations. This way victims can receive consistent support following a hate act, whether this constitutes a crime or not.

Management of cyberhate should not just focus on the ways in which incidents can be reported and monitored effectively but should also have a focus on reducing the perpetration of cyberhate and, when necessary, a way to punish those who do continue to do so.

Although this thesis has focused on the impacts for victims of cyberhate, that the control group experienced shame when witnessing the abuse of targeted groups suggests that there may be implications in the way perpetrators of hate crime should be managed. The IET literature does indicate that higher status groups may feel shame when witnessing those from an ingroup perpetrating prejudice (Allpress, Brown, Giner-Sorolla, Deonna & Teroni, 2014; Gausel, Leach, Vignoles & Brown, 2012; Lickel, Schmader, Curtis, Scarnier & Ames, 2005). It could be argued that punitive punishments and management measures that involve shaming (or increasing levels of existing shame), marginalising or criticising those who perpetrate hate crime may promote boomerang effects. This may entrench prejudiced views and make perpetrators feel that the target of their prejudice is to be blamed for any negative situation that arises following a hate incident thus, potentially, creating a vicious cycle of hate.

Similar boomerang effects have been noted for crimes such as domestic violence when introducing an advertising campaign to raise awareness (Keller, Wilkinson, Otjen, 2010) among other examples (Carmody & Carrington; Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Care should be taken to avoid these effects for interventions managing hate crime. Therefore, more supportive, contact based, educational interventions aimed at perpetrators may provide a more effective way of dealing with hate crime and the underlying prejudice that fuels this behaviour. Using psychological theories of reducing prejudice such as the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and extended contact hypothesis (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe & Ropp, 1997) could be used to help design and facilitate these. Interventions of this nature could be applied to perpetrators of hate crime, both online and offline, as a positive approach to reducing the level of perpetration.

There is some movement in the right direction on this. It is starting to become more normal to have a 'site rules' or moderation systems on websites, however the enforcement and consistency of these 'rules', both from site to site and within one website, are sporadic.

The qualitative interviews indicated that behaviour online could be managed to a greater or lesser extent by self-policing content on websites on which people frequent. Website providers should encourage enforcement of codes of conduct in which punishments are associated with not following the rules laid out by the specific websites (ADL, (2016) provides guidance on this). Those who produce and provide websites must share some of the responsibility for the material that they publish. Evidence that certain hate-based content results in damaging consequences, whether directly or indirectly, must be used to ensure that website providers actively protect the wellbeing of its users. At the very least providers must ensure that hate material is identifiable and accessible by statutory authorities and ultimately

removed. Where possible, providers must also be encouraged to find new and innovative ways of challenging the hate-based content that proliferates via their services.

Currently there is a focus in the literature on the harms of cyberhate on social media, with little attention given to other forms of online media and internet services. Future researchers should focus, where possible, on internet material that is openly accessible at all as well as on material that is sent privately. While this will include some of the most common forms of social media (such as Twitter and Facebook), other platforms, such as newspaper comments sections, and newer forms of less established social media forums should be explored further.

As part of this exploration, private forms of regulation should be examined more fully. For example, individual Facebook pages can be very keenly protected by their owners in a way that Twitter cannot. Other spaces such as comments pages on news websites can be more or less regulated depending on the owner of the site. Differences in how and when websites are moderated mean that hateful material on many sites often go unchecked and unedited. It is therefore important that a more diverse selection of internet platforms are explored, including the levels of self-regulation that they support, when policy makers determine how cyberhate can most effectively be tackled.

Finally, given the wider community harms of cyberhate outlined in this research, the last implication discussed here is that the role of enhanced sentencing ascribed to other hate crime offences has a place in the system of punishment for persistent perpetrators of cyberhate. Enhanced sentencing (Criminal Justice Act, 2003) is supposed to reflect the community harm associated with hate crime victimisation (Iganski, 2001; Perry, 2002; Tyner, 2016). This research has shown that these community harms exist when hate crime is perpetrated online. This research provides evidence that may be used to support the enhanced punishment of cyberhate crimes by demonstrating that incidents frequently have damaging

consequences to both direct and indirect victims. The deleterious consequences that cyberhate has on individuals and communities has been recently reflected in new legislation that increased of punishment for producing and posting hateful online material to twenty four months, up from a six month maximum (Section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act, 2015).

However, while the criminal justice responses to hate crime should be included in any response there also needs to be an acknowledgement about the limitations of what the police are able to do to manage the problem of hate crime, particularly hate crime which occurs online. The current research has indicated that hate crime is a common problem (Corcoran et al., 2015; Guasp, et al., 2013; Paterson et al, 2016), covering a multitude of crimes (Iganski, 2008b; Perry, 2001) and potential perpetrators (Levin & McDevitt 1993; Roberts et al., 2013; Walters & Hoyle, 2012) and therefore it is unreasonable to think that policing alone can tackle the problem. Reliance on police should remain a way of tackling cyberhate at the more extreme end (those occurrences that fall specifically within the remit of crime), but the reality is that there needs to be a number of other community or internet-based interventions that tackle hate crime, some of which are discussed above.

It is likely that a combination of approaches to managing hate crime needs to be applied comprising responses internet service providers, websites, internet users, community groups as well as legal responses. Whichever combination of interventions are applied these must be approached with caution as if they are handled carelessly, or condemn or shame perpetrators this may have the adverse effect of entrenching and increasing prejudice online, the so-called Boomerang effect (Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Perhaps approaches based on education, increased community cohesion and agreements on acceptable internet behaviour would be a good starting point.

Cyberhate, and its associated impacts, is a very new area of research and therefore the understanding and management of this phenomenon is at a very early stage. Defining it clearly and gauging an understanding of how prevalent it is are, in my opinion, the two most immediate steps to be taken.

#### **5.4. Limitations**

As with all research, there are a number of elements which could have been improved, both in terms of the design of the studies and the interpretation of the results.

One of the potential reasons why group identity did not make a difference to the impacts of cyberhate victimisation was possibly due to how large the identity groups were. Particularly for the LGB&T group it appeared that there were, at least, two separate identity groups, those who were identified by their sexual orientation and those who were identified by their transgender identity. This was particularly relevant for the transgender group. The abuse they experienced was qualitatively different than that faced by those because of a sexual orientation. In future it would be beneficial to focus on transgender as a separate identity group. This is starting to happen already (Tyner, 2016; Walters & Paterson, 2015) and research should continue in this vein. Although this was the most apparent difference in the large group, it could also be argued that men and women who identify as 'gay' may not really identify with each other and it could be other identity factors, such as gender, that play a more significant role in their identity formation. Once again, this supports the notion that more refined identity group sampling may be more appropriate (although the difficulties associated with recruiting the relevant numbers using this approach are appreciated).

Another issue relating to how the identities were grouped was that there was an assumption that cyberhate perpetration would be largely from members of groups not associated with any of our stigmatised groups. However, this was not the case; both LGB people and Muslims indicated that there was quite a lot of abuse from within the group.

Bisexual individuals experienced abuse from those who identified as Gay and Lesbian, and Muslims indicated some of the more personal abuse was directed at them from other Muslims who did not share their point of view or their branch of Islam. It is therefore possible that the conflation of these diverse and complicated identity groups meant some of the more nuanced group identity reactions were missed or overlooked.

There were also some potential issues with some of the measurement tools employed. The first is the accuracy of reporting previous experiences of hate crime. Participants were asked to recall experiences of hate crime from across their whole life. While this was not a problem for the more severe experiences of hate crime, no one forgets being assaulted with a weapon for example, it was extremely difficult for them to remember the more innocuous incidents. Many respondents reported that they had experienced verbal abuse because of their group identity on so many occasions that they found it extremely difficult to put a number to those experiences. As a result, this meant that the numbers that were being worked with were not very accurate. In future I think it would be more appropriate to ask people about experiences within a timeframe, for example the last six months. It also may be useful to separate 'low-level' experiences such as verbal abuse from 'more severe' experiences such as assault. This would not be done to minimise anyone's experience of a hate attack but to gain more accurate figures of previous abuse in order to determine whether the amount of previous victimisation did make a difference to the overall impacts of cyberhate. With the measurement strategy used in this project it was not possible to do this with any real accuracy.

There was another potential issue when measuring previous hate crime experience. Those in the GSH condition in Chapter 4 reported significantly more experiences of offline abuse than the other conditions. While this is likely to be due to a problem with the randomisation of the participants it may also be that viewing the hate based material made

those who viewed it more primed to remember to experiences of hate crime. Again this made analysing the effects of previous experience on the overall impacts of cyberhate difficult.

Additional randomisation and equivalence issues were present across the experiments in Chapter 4, both with the stigmatised groups and the non-stigmatised controls. Covariates were included to minimise these impacts as much as possible, but the sample sizes were small and the opportunistic nature of the sample meant that the results need to be treated with some level of caution.

There were additional sample issues in the surveys in Chapter 2. The survey sample size had to be cut down due to the amount of missing data therefore the results lacked statistical power. It also limited the amount of variables that could be included in the regression models and therefore impacted the breadth of the analysis that could be completed.

The other main issue with the samples recruited for the online surveys was that the recruitment method may have impacted the representativeness of the sample. The survey was advertised as a project on the impacts of hate crime online. Therefore it was likely that those who had been victimised by cyberhate and recognised cyberhate as a problem took part in the survey. This may have inflated the prevalence rates and subsequent emotional reactions and behavioural intentions. A different recruitment method may have produced a more representative sample.

The legal constraints when producing the GSH condition material in Chapter 4 was also a little problematic. That the hate specific condition had to be adapted to remove group targeted language<sup>23</sup> may have altered the way in which participants interpreted the material. Although checks were made to try and ensure the comprehension of the material was accurate, the material shown is not really a true reflection of the hate material that actually appears online. Therefore this may have impacted all the DVs measured after viewing this. It

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<sup>23</sup> Hate specific language removed for legal reasons so that the research team did not breach current UK hate crime legislation by distributing cyberhate.

may also mean that there was not enough separation between the GSH and NSH condition reflected by the non significant differences between those two conditions across some of the DVs.

That threat did not mediate the relationship between viewing cyberhate and the emotional reactions and the behavioural intentions, despite people feeling threatened when viewing the material, is not a finding that is well explained theoretically. It is therefore likely that there were some issues in the measurement of threat in relation to cyberhate. The scale used was one that focused specifically on cyberhate and it may mean that it missed some elements of threat experienced offline. Not measuring offline threat may have impacted the relationships between the emotional reactions and the behaviour intentions. Designing a scale that measures levels of offline and online threat specifically may have two advantages. The first is that it may have been possible to establish a relationship between perceived threat online the emotional reactions and behavioural intentions associated with cyberhate. Secondly it may have helped to unpick where the impacts of cyberhate extend offline and what types of threat online influence offline behaviour. Future research should endeavour to develop a scale that makes that distinction more clearly.

### **5.5. Future Directions**

As is customary, the knowledge acquired by these papers means that there are now even more questions about the impact of cyberhate that should be addressed by future research. As cyberhate is a relatively new area of investigation the list of future research possibilities could be endless. As a result, this section will focus on ideas that I believe will be the most impactful next steps.

That hate crime could have impacts on those who witness it, whether they share the same identity group or not, needs much more exploration. This research suggests the harms could be much broader and more negative than initially theorised. Obviously this cannot be

concluded from two, relatively small, experimental studies. However, it could be beneficial to include a non-stigmatised control on all hate crime research (design allowing). This would help to establish exactly how far the harms of hate crime actually extend. Although research studies would need to aim for comparability across stigmatised and non-stigmatised groups as far as possible.

Another potential way to examine this further would be to test whether members of one protected group recognise, and are harmed by, viewing members of other victimised groups being targeted. Examining this could be another good way to establish whether the harms of cyberhate extend beyond one's own group identity. This may reveal a common 'victim identity' that is shared among stigmatised and minority groups in which they experience a vicarious form of victimisation. Equally there may conflict across the two victimised groups, particularly for the two groups included in this thesis, and they may demonstrate prejudice towards each other. Research examining these two possibilities would help to establish which outcome is more likely.

To conduct the above research projects there would need to be a focus on some of the potential mediating or moderating variables that may explain why those not in the same identity group feel the same impacts as members of the group being targeted. This research examined tolerance, threat, and level of group identity without drawing any definitive conclusions. This work could be continued further but including other mediators as well, such as group empathy. As well as the inclusion of these mediators the research could examine what factors may facilitate or block empathy and tolerance towards the targeted groups (for example negative media coverage) and how that may impact the relationships between the threat experienced and the subsequent emotional reactions and behavioural intentions.

Different emotional and behavioural harms caused by cyberhate have been established for the two groups under investigation. Other research has also begun to note similar impacts

for other groups, such as Jewish communities (Community Security Trust, 2015). Employing experimental designs on the impacts of cyberhate, similar to that completed in Chapter 4, with other protected groups, such as disability and race could be beneficial. Arguably it may be worth including other marginalised groups that are not legally protected but are still targeted, such as alternative sub cultures (Chakraborti, Garland & Hardy, 2014). Including more groups could help to understand which characteristics are most targeted by perpetrators of cyberhate as well as comprehending more fully how each of these groups are affected by it. If the harms of cyberhate also extend to other marginalised, but non-legally protected groups, then arguments could perhaps be made to extend legislation and controls further to protect these groups.

## **5.6. Concluding remarks**

The papers in this thesis have expanded the knowledge base on the impacts of cyberhate in a number of ways. The thesis had three specific aims; to identify the nature and extent of cyberhate, to examine the harms of cyberhate within the theoretical framework of IET and to test a number of potential mediators and moderators on the impacts of victimisation.

The results here indicate that cyberhate is a common and frequent experience for the groups under investigation and that the harms experienced after victimisation are similar to those experienced after offline hate crime victimisation, both directly and indirectly. These harms are similar to those suggested by IET. However, there are also a number of differences in the online experience including low expectations of behaviour and a resilience to experiencing hate crime online.

That cyberhate has been shown to be harmful, both directly and indirectly, implies that there needs to be a number of steps taken to manage cyberhate, punish perpetrators and provide redress for victims.

Managing an ever changing, global, borderless medium such as the internet is one of the great challenges currently faced by our society, particularly in terms of jurisdictional responsibility. However, that the task is hard should not stop efforts to try and make the internet a more pleasant place for all. This research has revealed the internet can cause a number of harms to both stigmatised and non-stigmatised groups. Given the severity of these harms, the importance of finding new ways to monitor and regulate the internet is essential. The key to achieving this will be systematic and comprehensive joint working across criminal justice systems, website providers, government policy, internet service providers and internet users themselves.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Online Questionnaire (LGB&T version)

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime.

### Information Sheet

Thank you for your interest in the taking part in this study.

The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the impacts that hate crime/incidents have on people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGB&T). This study has a particular focus on hate crime targeting people that are LGB&T that happens on the internet. This includes e-mails, forums, blogs, websites, gaming, and any other communication or source online.

**The definition of hate crime/ incident is:**

**“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”**

The survey will ask you about any previous experiences you have had of hate crime/ incidents, including those committed over the internet. Your participation will also help us gain an understanding of the scale and frequency the LGB&T community experience anti-LGB&T hate crime/ incidents on the internet. So far there has been very little research in this area.

This survey should take no more than 25 minutes. **All** the information you provide to us in the survey is **anonymous**. All the data that we receive will be **treated in the strictest confidence**.

You may withdraw from the study at any point without having to provide us with the reason(s) why. However, please bear in mind that as the study is anonymous it will be difficult to withdraw your answers once the survey has been completed and submitted. The research is being conducted as part of a PhD at Sussex University. This research is being conducted by Harriet Fearn and is being supervised by Professor Rupert Brown and Dr Mark Walters.

The research is being funded by the Leverhulme Trust and has received ethical approval from the University of Sussex ([crecscitec@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:crecscitec@sussex.ac.uk)). If you would like any further information, or to receive a copy of the results please contact Harriet Fearn at [hjef20@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:hjef20@sussex.ac.uk).

By completing the survey you confirm that you are over 18 years old you have read and understood the information sheet and consent to take part in the research.

- 1. I confirm that I am over 18 years old, have read and understood the information sheet, and would like to participate in the research.**

☐ YES

☐ NO

# Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

## Demographics (page 1/15)

This first section is to find out about you. Please answer ALL the questions in this section.

Remember ALL the answers that you give are anonymous and confidential.

### 2. How old are you?

### 3. What is your gender? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Male
 ☐ Female
 ☐ Trans
 ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 4. Is your gender now the same as your gender assigned at birth?

- ☐ Yes
 ☐ No

### 5. What is your ethnic group or background?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab/ Arab British                | <input type="checkbox"/> Black British                 | <input type="checkbox"/> White Northern Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean               | <input type="checkbox"/> White Scottish       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Chinese     | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple/ Mixed ethnic groups | <input type="checkbox"/> White Welsh          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Indian      | <input type="checkbox"/> White British                 | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Pakistani   | <input type="checkbox"/> White English                 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black African                     | <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish                   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)            |  |   |

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Demographics (page 2/15)

**6. How would you describe your sexual orientation e.g. gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian, asexual etc.?**

**7. Do you consider yourself to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans (LGBT)?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**8. Do you consider yourself to be religious?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**9. IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO Q8; what is your religion? Please state below**

**10. Do you live in the UK?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**11. IF ANSWERED "NO" to QUESTION 10. Please state the country where you currently live?**

Identity (page 3/15)

These questions will ask about your LGBT identity.

**12. Thinking about your identity as LGBT please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements; where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree?**

[illegible]

# Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

## Internet behaviour (page 4/15)

The next set of questions is to get some information about your internet habits and behaviour.

**13. Approximately how many hours a week do you spend online? This includes any activities that you do on the internet such as e-mails, internet communication, gaming, and surfing etc. Please select only ONE option.**

☐ 0-5 hours    ☐ 6-15 hours    ☐ 16-25 hours    ☐ 26-35 hours    ☐ 35+ hours

**14. What are your main activities when you are online? Please rate each of the following options on a scale of 1-5.**

Where 1 = never taking part in these activities and 5=taking part in these activities very frequently.

	Never 1	2	3	4	Very Frequently 5
Contributing to online forums/ being part of online communities e.g. Reddit etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online gaming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using social network sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surfing the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with friends/ family (including Skype, Whatsapp, Viber etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising and dating e.g. matchmaking sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading the News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing a blog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shopping- buying and selling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking at pornography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using LGBT specific sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Own experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime and incidents (page 5/15)

Now we would like you to think of all the times YOU have been a victim of the following crimes and incidents. Please include all your experiences regardless of whether or not you informed the Police, and include incidents which were attempted (e.g., someone tried but failed to abuse or assault you). **Note:** These are any hate crimes/incidents that HAVE NOT happened on the internet.

**If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** Please answer all the questions. If you have not experienced any hate crimes or incidents please answer zero in the relevant category(ies).

#### 15. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?

Verbal abuse/ harassment (e.g. called names, shouted at, spat at etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

#### 16. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?

Vandalism (e.g. graffiti or destruction of property or belongings etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

#### 17. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?

Physical assault without a weapon (e.g. punched, kicked, grabbed etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

#### 18. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?

Physical assault with a weapon (e.g. things thrown at them, hit with an object, stabbed etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Own experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet (page 6/15)

This section is to explore anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents that you **may have experienced on the internet**.

Remember the definition of hate crime/ incident is:

“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”

Please answer all the questions. **If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** If you have not experienced anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet please answer 0 for the relevant category(ies).

**19. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

**Anti-LGBT responses to a comment/ post that you have written?**

---

**20. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

**Anti-LGBT abuse directed at you (e.g. through e-mail, twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Skype etc.)?**

---

**21. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

**Anti-LGBT written or verbal abuse through a chat interface (e.g. online gaming, chat rooms, etc.)?**

---

**22. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

**Anti-LGBT trolling? (e.g. posting inflammatory or offensive comments on your webpages)**

---

**23. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

**Anti-LGBT spam messages (e.g. irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent on the Internet to a large number of recipients)?**

---

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Own experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet (page 7/15)

**24. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to you?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**25. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to your family and/or friends?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**26. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Being stalked or harassed online? E.g. unwanted attention on more than two occasions.

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**27. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Threats of physical violence?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**28. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Other online abuse (please state)

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet that you know about (page 8/15)

This section is designed to gather information **about any anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents that you know about on the internet**. This could be anything that has been targeted at someone else or generally offensive material such as websites or spam targeting people who are LGBT.

Please answer all the questions. **If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation**. If you do not know about any online anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents please answer 0 for the relevant category(ies).

**29. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT responses to a comment/ post that they have written?

---

**30. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has had.....**

---

Anti-LGBT abuse directed at them (e.g. through e-mail, twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Skype etc.)?

---

**31. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has experienced....**

---

Anti-LGBT written or verbal abuse through a chat interface (e.g. online gaming, chat rooms, etc.)?

---

**32. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has had.....**

---

Anti-LGBT trolling directed to them or their comments online (e.g. posting inflammatory or offensive comments on their webpages)?

---

**33. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has had.....**

---

Anti-LGBT spam messages sent to them (e.g. irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent on the Internet to a large number of recipients)?

---

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

Anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet that you know about  
(page 9/15)

**34. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has had.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to them?

How many of these people do you think were targeted because the attackers thought they were LGBT?

**35. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has had.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to their family and/or friends?

How many of these people do you think were targeted because the attackers thought they were LGBT?

**36. On the internet how many times have you known about someone.....**

Being stalked or harassed online? E.g. unwanted attention on more than two occasions.

How many of these people do you think were targeted because the attackers thought they were LGBT?

**37. On the internet how many times have you known about someone receiving.....**

Threats of physical violence made towards them?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**38. On the internet how many times have you known about someone who has experienced.....**

Other online abuse? (please state)

How many of these people do you think were targeted because the attackers thought they were LGBT?

**If you answered 0 to all the questions asking you about your experiences of internet hate crime/ incidents. Please continue to page 11 of the survey.**

**If you answered 0 to all the questions about internet hate crimes/ incidents that you know about please continue to page 10.**

Impacts of the anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incidents that happened to you (page 10/15)

**Please pick an incident of anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incident that you have experienced that you felt had the most impact on you.**

--

**39. Please rate the emotions that you felt after experiencing the anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incident that you stated.**

[illegible]

This section explores some of the impacts on you of knowing about **anti-LGBT hate crime/incidents that has happened on the internet**. If you have not been aware of this please continue to page 13.

**In the box below please provide a brief description of that incident. Remember this survey is completely anonymous. . Information for support organisations are provided at the end of the survey if you need some help with any issues arising from this survey.**

--

**40. Please rate the emotions that you felt after you knew about the anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incidents.**

[illegible]

# Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

## Responses to internet hate crime/ incidents (page 12/15)

The aim of this section is to explore your responses to anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents that either you experienced or that you knew about. **Please answer these questions for how you responded to internet hate crime/ incidents only.**

If you have not experienced anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incidents or known about them then please continue to page 13.

Please answer ALL the questions below. The first Yes/ No column refers to the anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incidents you experienced and the second Yes/ No column refers to the anti-LGBT internet hate crime/ incidents that you know about.

### 41. When experiencing internet hate crime/ incidents which of the following responses did you choose?

	Hate crime/ incidents YOU experienced		Hate crime/ incidents that you know about	
Ignore it	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Retaliate - e.g. insult the perpetrators back?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Report the abuse to the website/ internet provider?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Report the abuse to the police?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss the abuse with friends/ family?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Changed your online profile or habits e.g. closed accounts, avoided certain chat rooms games etc	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Been more vocal or active online about your LGBT identity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Be more aggressive towards other people/ groups online?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Made sure that no one could tell your sexual orientation or gender identity from your online behaviour?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Started using substances to cope?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Reported the abuse to another group or person e.g. work colleague, support group (this could include online groups?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sought professional help for any feelings or emotions the abuse promoted? E.g. see a counsellor, Doctor etc.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Changed your behaviour offline? If YES: How?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

This section will explore your experiences of internet hate crime/ incidents that were directed at another group, **in this case I would like you to do this for people who are Muslim**. If you are not been aware of any incidents like this please continue to question 43.

**In the box below please provide a brief description of that incident. Remember this survey is completely anonymous. . Information for support organisations are provided at the end of the survey if you need some help with any issues arising from this survey.**

--

**42. Please rate the emotions that you felt after you knew about internet hate crime/ incidents targeting another group.**

[illegible]

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

### Views on internet hate crime/ incidents (page 14/15)

This last section is for you to answer some questions crime on the internet and what can be done to manage this

**43. What do you think should be done to manage/ control and punish people on the internet? Please rate how much you agree with the following statements where 7= strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Closer monitoring by website owners/ moderators							
New laws safeguarding people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refinement of existing laws to protect people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stronger responses from the police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harsher legal penalties for perpetrators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The ability to ban/ control people's use of the internet e.g. banning them from certain sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education about internet hate crimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tougher regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More police resources to deal with the problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More censorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**44. Please add anything else you think is relevant about internet hate crime/ incident, the punishments for it, and the impacts it has.**

## Experiences of anti-LGBT hate crime

Thank you! (page 15/15)

Thank you for completing this survey.

This is part of a larger study exploring internet hate crime/ incidents experienced by LGBT people. The main part of the study is likely to take place in 2014; this is going to involve a short interview about your experiences of internet hate crime. If you would like to be contacted about an opportunity to take part in the main study please enter your name and contact information below. Please indicate your preferred method of contact.

This information **WILL NOT** be kept with your answers and there will be no way to link your answers and your contact details together.

	Contact information	Preferred method of contact
Name		<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone number		<input type="checkbox"/>
e-mail address		<input type="checkbox"/>
Home address		<input type="checkbox"/>

If you would like further information on how to recognise and report a hate crime or hate incident please contact the following organisations who can provide information, support, and guidance. (You can copy and paste the websites into the search bar of your internet provider).

GALOP <http://www.galop.org.uk/aboutgalopshatecrimeservice/>

Stonewall [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/contact\\_us/](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/contact_us/)

True Vision – [http://www.reportit.org.uk/homophobic\\_and\\_transphobic\\_hate\\_crime](http://www.reportit.org.uk/homophobic_and_transphobic_hate_crime)

Thank you for completing the survey, your participation is greatly appreciated.

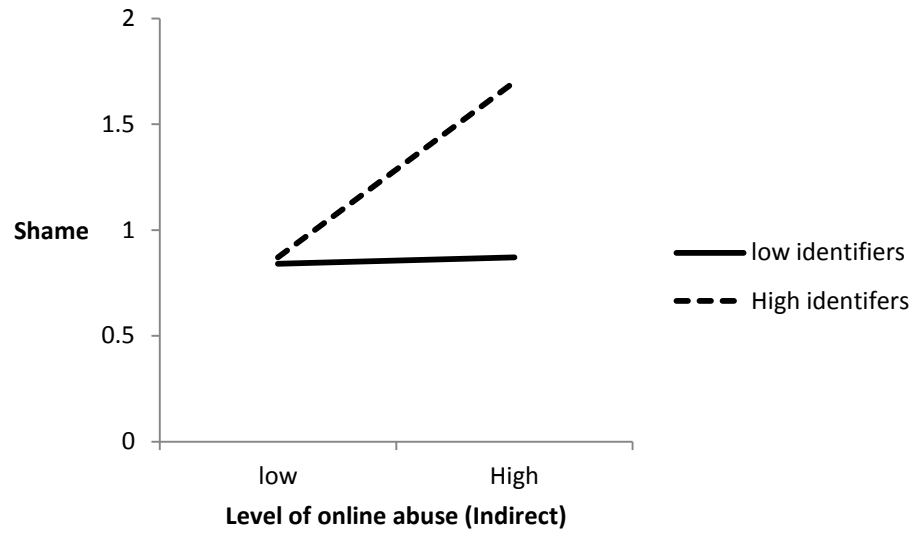
If you would like any further information about the study, please contact Harriet Fearn on [hjef20@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:hjef20@sussex.ac.uk)

## Appendix II: Mediation results Chapter 2 Study 2

*Emotions as mediators between direct and indirect online hate crime and different behavioural intentions (study 2).*

DV	Mediators	Direct online hate crime				Indirect online hate Crime			
				95% CI Bias Corrected				95% CI Bias Corrected	
		<i>b</i>	SE	LL	UL	<i>b</i>	SE	LL	UL
Avoidance	Total Effect	.01	.10	-.20	.22	.08	.08	-.09	.25
	Direct Effect	-.03	.09	-.21	.14	.07	.10	-.12	.27
	Indirect effect via								
	Fear	.05	.04	-.01	.16	.06	.04	.00	.17 <sup>^</sup>
	Shame	-.01	.02	-.09	.01	-.03	.03	-.13	.00
Help seeking	Anger	.00	.01	-.00	.04	-.02	.03	-.10	.04
	Total Effect	-.09	.09	-.02	.09	.14	.10	-.06	.36
	Direct Effect	-.07	.08	-.24	.08	.13	.11	-.10	.36
	Indirect effect via								
	Fear	-.00	.02	-.07	.02	-.03	.04	-.14	.04
Proactive	Shame	-.04	.04	-.16	.01	-.02	.03	-.12	.02
	Anger	.02	.03	-.02	.11	.07	.05	-.00	.20
	Total Effect	.01	.10	-.19	.21	.08	.09	-.11	.28
	Direct Effect	.03	.09	-.14	.22	.11	.10	-.08	.31
	Indirect Effect via								
	Fear	-.04	.03	-.14	.00	-.04	.03	-.13	.00
	Shame	.00	.01	-.01	.06	-.02	.02	-.09	.01
	Anger	.00	.01	-.00	.05	.03	.03	-.02	.11

<sup>^</sup>indirect effect significant

**Appendix III: Group identity and shame moderation diagram (Chapter 2, Study 2)**

## Appendix IV: Interview Schedule for Qualitative Interviews (Chapter 3).

### Discussion Guide: Interviews with Victims of Online Hate Crime

Introduce the project. This interview is part of a PhD project examining the impacts of being a victim of internet hate crime. This includes anything that has happened online that you feel you have been targeted because you are LGBT/ Muslim.

Everything that we talk about today is confidential and all the personal information that you provide will be anonymised. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to and if you want to leave the interview at any point (either to take a break or because you want it to finish) then please let me know.

I would like to record this interview to keep an accurate record of the conversation. The recording will be stored in a secure folder that only I will have access to and will be stored under an identifying code. If you do not wish to be recorded then please let me know.

There are some set questions that we should cover but this is also a chance to explore some of the issues that you think are important so the interview will be flexible, it should take approximately one hour.

If you have any questions that you would like to ask now or later then please ask.

### Section 1: Personal information

This section is just to get some basic information about you.

1. How old are you?

LGBT only:

2. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
3. Are you open about your sexual orientation with people? Probe: some people, trusted people. Why have you decided to be as open as you have?
4. How important is your sexual orientation to your individual identity?

Muslim only

2a. How would you describe your religion?

3a. How much is being Muslim part of who you are as an individual?

4a. Are you open with people about your religion? Why have you chosen to do that?

Both

The definition of hate crime that we are using is this **“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender OR religion or**

**perceived religion.**”However if you feel your experience does not fall into this definition but still had an impact on you then please tell me about it.

5. Have you ever been a victim of hate crime that has occurred which has not been on the internet? Can you tell me a about that experience?

IF YES

- a. What were your emotional reactions to these experiences? Probe: Immediately after, after a period of time, changes?
- b. Did this change your behaviour in any way? How? Get examples.

## **Section 2: Your experiences of online abuse**

This section is to explore your experiences of online hate crime. This includes hate speech. GIVE EXAMPLE

6. Please tell me about your experiences of online hate crime: Prompts. Gain information about frequency, reason for being targeted, method for targeting, different forms (type of threat).
7. How did this make you feel? Prompt short –term emotional impacts, long-term emotional impacts. Changes across those periods
8. IF RELEVANT: Did you find different types of hate crimes prompted different emotional responses? (gain examples)
9. Did anything happen as a result of these emotional reactions?
10. Did you notice any short-term changes in your behaviour online?
11. Did you notice any long-term changes in your behaviour online?
12. Did you notice any changes in your behaviour in the real world?
13. Has anything happened as a result of these behaviour changes?

## **Section 3: Your responses to online abuse**

This section is designed to explore the actions you took as a result of being a victim of internet hate crime.

14. When you first received the abuse did you take any action? Eg report it to the website provider, police, changed your online information, avoided certain websites.
15. Have you taken any action subsequently? Why?
16. What were the outcomes of any of the actions that you have taken?
17. Were you satisfied with this? IF NO what would you have liked to happen?
18. What more do you think should/ could be done to protect people online?
19. Have you spoken to any people who have offered support for your experiences? IF YES. Which people? Why them? How important was their support?

## **Section 4: Awareness of other online victimisation**

This section is to get an idea about what other online hate crime you have witnessed or been aware of.

20. Have you been aware of any of your friends/ family being a victim of internet hate crime? If YES, can you tell me a bit about what they experienced?

IF YES

21. What was your emotional reaction to seeing your friends and family being targeted?
22. Did witnessing this change your behaviour in anyway, both online and in the real world? Get details.
23. Did you take any action as a result of this? How? Why? Get details
  - a. Were you satisfied with the outcome of these actions?
  - b. What more do you think could have been done?

CONTINUE IF NO EXPERIENCE OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY

24. Have you witnessed any online hate crime that has not been aimed directly at you or anyone that you know?

IF YES

25. Can you tell me exactly what you witnessed and where you saw it?
26. What were your emotional responses to this? Get details
27. Did witnessing this change your behaviour in any way, both online and in the real world? How? Why? Get details
28. Did you take any action as a result of witnessing this? Get details
  - a. Were you satisfied with the outcome of these actions?
  - b. What more do you think could have been done?

## Section 5: Anything else?

29. Is there anything else that you want to add, or anything that you feel you have not had an opportunity to talk about?

Thank you!

What happens now?

If your interview has been recorded a transcript of the interview will be written (with all the identifying information removed) and both the recording and the transcript will be held electronically on a secure server and be password protected.

If you would like a copy of the transcript then please let me know. The study is due to be finished in June 2016. If you would like a summary of the findings then please also let me know.

I appreciate that some of the things we have talked about may have been upsetting or reminded you of unpleasant experiences. We are working with some organisations who offer emotional support to victims of hate crime so if you would like their information then let me know.

## Appendix V: Experiment Questions (LGB&T version)

### Internet Study

#### Demographics (1)

This first section is to find out about you. Please answer ALL the questions in this section.

Remember ALL the answers that you give are anonymous and confidential.

**45. How old are you?**      years

**46. What is your gender? Please tick all that apply**

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female  
☐ Trans  
☐ Intersex  
☐ Other (please specify)

**47. Is your gender now the same as your gender assigned at birth?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**48. What is your ethnic group or background?**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab/ Arab British                | <input type="checkbox"/> Black British                 | <input type="checkbox"/> White Northern Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean               | <input type="checkbox"/> White Scottish       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Chinese     | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple/ Mixed ethnic groups | <input type="checkbox"/> White Welsh          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Indian      | <input type="checkbox"/> White British                 | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/ Asian British- Pakistani   | <input type="checkbox"/> White English                 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black African                     | <input type="checkbox"/> White Irish                   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)            |  |   |

**Internet Study****Demographics (2)**

**49. How would you describe your sexual orientation e.g. gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian, asexual etc.?**

**50. Do you consider yourself to be religious?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**51. IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO Q6; what is your religion? Please state below**

**52. This section will explore your emotional reactions to the internet material you have just seen. Please rate how strongly you feel each emotion on a scale of 1 to 7. Where 1= did not feel at all and 7 = felt extremely strongly.**

[illegible]

This section will ask you about how at risk from hate crime you feel Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are

**“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”**

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

[illegible]

This section is your chance to tell us what you thought of the specific internet material.

**55. Was there any internet material that you have just seen that you found particularly unpleasant?**

Please say which one(s) it was and why

--	--

**56. Please add anything else that you wish to say about your feelings viewing the internet material.**

[illegible]

**57. For the next questions please mark from 1 to 7; where 1=Not at all offensive and 7=Extremely offensive.**

[illegible]

## Internet Study

### Previous Experiences of Hate Crime

This section will explore your previous experiences of hate crime.

**The definition of hate crime/ incident is:**

**“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”**

Now we would like you to think of all the times YOU have been a victim of the following crimes and incidents. Please include all your experiences regardless of whether or not you informed the Police, and include incidents which were attempted (e.g., someone tried but failed to abuse or assault you). **Note:** These are any hate crimes/incidents that HAVE NOT happened on the internet.

**If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** Please answer all the questions. If you have not experienced any hate crimes or incidents please answer zero in the relevant category(ies). If they are not applicable please put NA.

**14. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?**

Verbal abuse/ harassment (e.g. called names, shouted at, spat at etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

**15. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?**

Vandalism (e.g. graffiti or destruction of property or belongings etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

**16. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?**

Physical assault without a weapon (e.g. punched, kicked, grabbed etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

**17. Throughout your life how many times have you been a victim of....?**

Physical assault with a weapon (e.g. things thrown at them, hit with an object, stabbed etc.)?

How many of these incident(s) did you think occurred because the attackers thought you were LGBT?

## Internet Study

### Previous Experiences of Internet Hate Crime (1)

This section is to explore anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents that you **may have experienced on the internet**.

**Remember the definition of hate crime/ incident is:**

**“Any criminal offence or incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation OR against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”**

Please answer all the questions. **If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** If you have not experienced anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the internet please answer 0 for the relevant category(ies). If they are not applicable please put NA.

**18. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT responses to a comment/ post that you have written?

---

**19. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT abuse directed at you (e.g. through e-mail, twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Skype etc.)?

---

**20. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT written or verbal abuse through a chat interface (e.g. online gaming, chat rooms, etc.)?

---

**21. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT trolling? (e.g. posting inflammatory or offensive comments on your webpages)

---

**22. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

---

Anti-LGBT spam messages (e.g. irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent on the Internet to a large number of recipients)?

---

## Internet Study

### Previous Experiences of Internet Hate Crime (2)

**23. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to you?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**24. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to your family and/or friends?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**25. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Being stalked or harassed online? E.g. unwanted attention on more than two occasions.

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**26. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Threats of physical violence?

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

**27. On the internet how many times have you experienced.....**

Other online abuse (please state)

How many of these incidents do you believe occurred because you were LGBT?

## Internet Study

### Witnessing Hate Crime (1)

This section is designed to gather information **about any anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents that you know both in the real world and online.** This refers to your experiences outside of the experiment throughout your life. This could be anything that has been targeted at someone else or generally offensive material such as websites or spam targeting people who are LGBT.

**28. How many times have you witnessed someone be the victim of hate crime in the real world?**

Please answer all the questions. **If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** If you have not witnessed anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the please answer 0 for the relevant category(ies). If they are not applicable please put NA.

	Number of times you have witnessed hate crime	Number of times you believe this happened because the victim was LGBT
Verbal abuse/ harassment (e.g. called names, shouted at, spat at etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Vandalism (e.g. graffiti or destruction of property or belongings etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Physical assault without a weapon (e.g. punched, kicked, grabbed etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Physical assault with a weapon (e.g. things thrown at them, hit with an object, stabbed etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Internet Study

### Witnessing Hate Crime (2)

#### 29. How many times have you witnessed someone be the victim of hate crime on the internet?

Please answer all the questions. **If you are unsure of the specific number, please give your best estimation.** If you have not witnessed anti-LGBT hate crime/ incidents on the please answer 0 for the relevant category(ies). If they are not applicable please put NA.

	Number of times you have witnessed hate crime	Number of times you believe this happened because the victim was LGBT
Abusive responses to a comment/ post that they have written?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Abuse directed at them (e.g. through e-mail, twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Skype etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Written or verbal abuse through a chat interface (e.g. online gaming, chat rooms, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Abusive trolling directed to them or their comments online (e.g. posting inflammatory or offensive comments on their webpages)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Spam messages sent to them (e.g. irrelevant or inappropriate messages sent on the Internet to a large number of recipients)?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to them?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Indecent, personal, and/or offensive images/ materials sent to their family and/or friends?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Being stalked or harassed online? E.g. unwanted attention on more than two occasions.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Threats of physical violence made towards them?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other online abuse? (please state)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Internet Study

### Internet Behaviour

The next set of questions is to get some information about your internet habits and behaviour.

**30. Approximately how many hours a week do you spend online? This includes any activities that you do on the internet such as e-mails, internet communication, gaming, and surfing etc. Please select only ONE option.**

☐ 0-5 hours    
 ☐ 6-15 hours    
 ☐ 16-25 hours    
 ☐ 26-35 hours    
 ☐ 35+ hours

**31. What are your main activities when you are online? Please rate each of the following options on a scale of 1-5.**

**Where 1 = never taking part in these activities and 5=taking part in these activities very frequently.**

	Never 1	2	3	4	Very Frequently 5
Contributing to online forums/ being part of online communities e.g. Reddit etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online gaming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using social network sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surfing the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with friends/ family (including Skype, Whatsapp, Viber etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising and dating e.g. matchmaking sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading the News	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing a blog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shopping- buying and selling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking at pornography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using LGBT specific sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Internet Study

# Identity

These questions will ask about your LGBT identity.

**32. Thinking about your identity as LGBT please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements; where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree?**

[illegible]

**33. On a scale of 1-7 please rate how important being LGBT is to your identity?  
Where 1= not at all important and 7= very important**

[illegible]

## Internet Study

Thank You!

**Thank you!**

You have now completed the experiment. Please let the researcher know so they can debrief you and give you information on any support organisations you may need.

## Appendix VI: Examples of Internet Material Across Three Experimental Conditions (Muslim version, Chapter 4).

### GSH condition.

The screenshot shows a Facebook interface from the GSH condition. The left sidebar lists navigation options: News Feed, Messages (1), Events, Photos, Browse, Anti-LGBT Internet..., Saved (1), Find Friends, FRIENDS (Close Friends, Acquaintances 20+), and APPS (Games, Pokes, Music, Gifts, Top Friends, Happy Hour!, On This Day, Games Feed 20+).


The main news feed features a post by **Cher** (11 mins · 🌐) titled "OK to be Muslim, OK". Below the title, it says "Like · Comment · Share" and "You and 30 others like this." The post has several comments:





- Mich**: Hey [missing word] people.....see you in hell! Just now · Like
- David**: Maybe if you leach [missing word] ever left England 57 mins · Like
- Eli**: [missing word] are the ones that cause all the shit! 52 mins · Like · 1
- Chris**: Fuck the [missing word] and Andrew [NAME] who supports them 49 mins · Like
- Sharon**: Fuck all of you, [missing word] 1 hr · Like



Below the comments is a text input field: "Write a comment..." with a camera icon.

The right sidebar contains two advertisements:


- One Year Biggest Discount** from **lulubuy.com**. Text: "Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm, Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon, Code: 2014". The ad shows two dark blue dresses.
- Discover Beautiful Dresses Online!** from **www.stylefruits.co.uk**. Text: "Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!". The ad shows three dresses: a tan patterned one, a black one with a white triangle, and a tan one.



Home
Find Friends





 Update Status
  Add Photos/Video

What's on your mind?



**Robin**
20 hrs · Felling ·
Add Friend


Be proud to be Muslim


Like · Comment · Share


Alishia and 15,027 others like this.


[View previous comments](#)
54 of 664



**Robin** Aww now we can [missing word] the entire family, but as unit  
14 hrs · Like



**Melanie** [missing word]  
14 hrs · Like · 1



**Lucie** I'd like to bash your head in  
14 hrs · Like


**Wesley** Fucking [missing word] ruin everything!  
14 hrs · Like


**Dylan** You are [missing word]  
14 hrs · Like · 5


**Micky** Yeah and I hope you get lucky enough to to burn in hell  
14 hrs · Like


**Sharon** [missing word] make me sick  
14 hrs · Like





**One Year Biggest Discount**  
 sidebuy.com  
 Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm, Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon, Code: 2014



**Discover Beautiful Dresses Online!**  
 www.stylefruits.co.uk  
 Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!

News Feed

Messages 1

Events

Photos

Browse

Anti-LGBT Internet...

Saved 1

Find Friends

FRIENDS

Close Friends

Acquaintances 20+

APPS

Games

Pokes 1

Music

Gifts

Top Friends

Happy Hour!

On This Day

Games Feed 20+

[Home](#)
[Notifications](#)
[Discover](#)
[Me](#)

**MCC**  
@Cy  
TWEETS 1,040   FOLLOWING 884   FOLLOWERS 233

### Tweets

[View 50 new Tweets](#)

**Sadiq** @Sadiql · 35 mins  
#Justin, Justin aint nothing but a bitch ass boy ahah [missing word]  
[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**Iami** @Iami · 35 mins  
@Mike T is a dirty [missing word]  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**Sabbiyah** @sabbiyah · 36 mins  
@anthony sorry about my asshole neighbour last night. He's getting what he had coming for him right now [missing word]  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by Feast  
**WPM** @wolves · 18 hrs  
@Bubble I #beatup a [missing word] guy named Jacky once in the hood. I ran his face across barbwire  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**strengtl** @trench · 2 hrs  
These [missing word] are disgusting. They make me sick!  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by William  
**Ian** @Manco · 2 hrs  
You guys are [missing word] and I hope you die in house fire. You losers  
[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

### Who to follow

[Refresh](#) · [View all](#)


**Stuart** @Stuart  
Followed by Rob  
[Follow](#)   Promoted





**Hamzah** @Ham...  
[Follow](#)



**Sadia** @SadiahKaus...  
[Follow](#)

[Popular accounts](#) · [Find friends](#)


NSH condition.




[Home](#)
[Find Friends](#)





 [Update Status](#)
 [Add Photos/Video](#)


What's on your mind?




**Cher**  
11 mins · 


Ok to be yourself, OK

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)


 You and 30 others like this.





**Mich** Hey people...see you in Hell  
Just now · [Like](#)




**David** Maybe if you leaches ever left England  
57 mins · [Like](#)




**Eli** Stop causing all the shit!  
52 mins · [Like](#) ·  1




**Chris** Fuck you and Andrew [NAME] who supports you  
49 mins · [Like](#)



**Sharon** Fuck all of you!  
1 hr · [Like](#)







**One Year Biggest Discount**  
tidebuy.com  
Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm,Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon,Code: 2014



**Discover Beautiful Dresses Online!**  
www.stylefruits.co.uk  
Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!

 **News Feed**

 **Messages** 1

 **Events** 12

 **Photos**

 **Browse**

 **Anti-LGBT Internet...**

 **Saved** 1

 **Find Friends**

**FRIENDS**

 **Close Friends**

 **Acquaintances** 20+

**APPS**

 **Games**

 **Pokes** 1

 **Music**


 **Gifts**


 **Top Friends**

 **Happy Hour!**

 **On This Day**


 **Games Feed** 20+




[Home](#)
[Find Friends](#)


[Update Status](#)
[Add Photos/Video](#)


What's on your mind?


**Robin**
[Add Friend](#)


20 hrs · Felling · 



Be proud of who you are


[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)


 [Alishia](#) and 15,027 others like this.



[View previous comments](#) 54 of 664



**Robin** Now we burn the entire family but as a unit  
14 hrs · [Like](#)



**Melanie** Pedophiles  
14 hrs · [Like](#) ·  1



**Lucie** I'd like to bash your head in  
14 hrs · [Like](#)



**Wesley** Fucking idiots ruin everything  
14 hrs · [Like](#)


**Dylan** You are disgusting  
14 hrs · [Like](#) ·  5


**Micky** Yeah and I hope you get lucky enough to to burn in hell  
14 hrs · [Like](#)


**Sharon** You make me sick!  
14 hrs · [Like](#)







**One Year Biggest Discount**  
sidebuy.com  
Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm, Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon, Code: 2014



**Discover Beautiful Dresses Online!**  
www.stylefruits.co.uk  
Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!

[News Feed](#)

[Messages](#) 1

[Events](#) 12

[Photos](#)

[Browse](#)

[Anti-LGBT Internet...](#)

[Saved](#) 1

[Find Friends](#)

**FRIENDS**

[Close Friends](#)

[Acquaintances](#) 20+

**APPS**

[Games](#)

[Pokes](#) 1

[Music](#)

[Gifts](#)

[Top Friends](#)

[Happy Hour!](#)

[On This Day](#)

[Games Feed](#) 20+

[Home](#)
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[Me](#)

**MCC**  
@Cy  
TWEETS 1,040   FOLLOWING 884   FOLLOWERS 233

### Tweets

[View 50 new Tweets](#)

**Sadiq** @Sadiql · 35 mins  
#Justin, Justin aint nothing but a bitch ass boy ahah #idiot  
[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**Iami** @Iami · 35 mins  
@Mike T is a dirty bastard  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**Sabbiyah** @sabbiyah · 36 mins  
@anthony sorry about my asshole neighbour last night. He's getting what he had coming for him right now  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by Feast  
**WPM** @wolves · 18 hrs  
@Bubble I #beatup a called Jacky, once in the hood. I ran his face across barbwire  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**strengtl** @trench · 2 hrs  
@Tahi you are disgusting, you make me sick  
Expand   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by William  
**Ian** @Manco · 2 hrs  
You guys are **fucking morons** and I hope you die in a house fire, you losers  
[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

### Who to follow

[Refresh](#)   [View all](#)

**Stuart** @Stuart  
Followed by Rob  
[Follow](#)   [Promoted](#)

**Hamzah** @Ham...  
[Follow](#)

**Sadia** @SadiaKaus...  
[Follow](#)

[Popular accounts](#)   [Find friends](#)

## Support condition.

Facebook interface showing a news feed with a post by Cher and several comments, along with a sidebar menu and a right-hand advertisement for dresses.

**Facebook Header:** Search for people, places and things | Home | Find Friends

**Left Sidebar:**

- News Feed
- Messages 1
- Events
- Photos
- Browse
- Anti-LGBT Internet...
- Saved 1
- Find Friends
- FRIENDS
- Close Friends
- Acquaintances 20+
- APPS
- Games
- Pokes 1
- Music
- Gifts
- Top Friends
- Happy Hour!

**News Feed:**

**Update Status** **Add Photos/Video**

What's on your mind?

**Cher** 11 mins ·

OK to be Muslim, OK

Like · Comment · Share

You and 30 others like this.

**Comments:**


- Mich** Hey Muslim people do what makes you happy  
Just now · Like
- David** Agree! and proud to be one  
57 mins · Like
- Eli** Hey you guys are love  
52 mins · Like · 1
- Chris** Ignore the haters and listen to those who support you  
49 mins · Like
- Sharon** Indeed it is  
1 hr · Like




Write a comment...

**Right Hand Ad:**

**One Year Biggest Discount**  
lidaybuy.com  
Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm, Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon, Code: 2014


**Discover Beautiful Dresses Online!**  
www.stylefruits.co.uk  
Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!




[Home](#)
[Find Friends](#)




[Update Status](#)
[Add Photos/Video](#)


What's on your mind?


**Robin**
[Add Friend](#)


20 hrs · Felling · 



**Be proud to be Muslim**


[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)


 [Alishia](#) and 15,027 others like this.



[View previous comments](#) 54 of 664



**Robin** I love being able to express myself and showing people the real me  
14 hrs · [Like](#)



**Melanie** Exactly  
14 hrs · [Like](#) ·  1



**Lucie** This is so true  
14 hrs · [Like](#)



**Wesley** I'm Muslim and proud  
14 hrs · [Like](#)




**Dylan** Sounds good to me  
14 hrs · [Like](#) ·  5


**Micky** Support your people in who they are and what they do  
14 hrs · [Like](#)



**Sharon** I'm not Muslim but, those who are...stand up and be counted as...well...normal  
14 hrs · [Like](#)





**One Year Biggest Discount**  
tidebuy.com  
Beautiful you need best dresses show your charm, Shop with \$50 To Us \$10 Coupon, Code: 2014



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[www.stylefruits.co.uk](http://www.stylefruits.co.uk)  
Gorgeous dresses for every occasion!

**News Feed**

[Messages](#) 1

[Events](#)

[Photos](#)

[Browse](#)

[Anti-LGBT Internet...](#)

[Saved](#) 1

[Find Friends](#)

**FRIENDS**

[Close Friends](#)

[Acquaintances](#) 20+

**APPS**

[Games](#)

[Pokes](#) 1

[Music](#)

[Gifts](#)

[Top Friends](#)

[Happy Hour!](#)

[On This Day](#)

[Games Feed](#) 20+

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**MCC**  
@Cy

TWEETS 1,040   FOLLOWING 884   FOLLOWERS 233

Compose new Tweet...

### Tweets

[View 50 new Tweets](#)

**Sadiq** @Sadiq · 35 mins

I'm seeing lots of good in the [#Muslim](#) community- thank you

[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**lami** @lami · 35 mins

[@Islam](#) all you need is love

[Expand](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**Sabbiah** @sabbiah · 36 mins

We need to be courageous in a world paralysed by fear. Speak up against injustice

[Expand](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by **Feast**

**WPM** @wolves · 18 hrs

Be yourself no matter what. Some will adore you, some will hate everything about you. But who cares! It is your life, make the most of it.

[Expand](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

**strengtl** @trength · 2 hrs

Great to see [@Asifa](#) discussing [#Muslim](#) issues

[Expand](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

Retweeted by **William**

**lan** @Manco · 2 hrs

Hold onto whatever keeps you happy

[View summary](#)   [Reply](#)   [Retweet](#)   [Favourite](#)   [More](#)

### Who to follow

[Refresh](#) · [View all](#)

**Stuart** @Stuart  
Followed by [Rob](#)

[Follow](#)   [Promoted](#)

**Hamzah** @Ham...

[Follow](#)

**Sadia** @SadiaKaus...

[Follow](#)

[Popular accounts](#) · [Find friends](#)