

Identity, Empowerment and Change, Handout 28

Stories about us and them

(a) Non-Muslim perspectives

Points of contrast	Closed narratives	Open narratives
Uniformity/diversity	Muslims are all much the same	There is great diversity amongst Muslims
Difference/similarity	Muslims are significantly different from non-Muslims	Muslims and non-Muslims have a great deal in common
Inferiority/equality	Muslims are morally and culturally inferior to non-Muslims	There is both good and bad everywhere – both in Muslims and non-Muslims
Threat/trust	Muslims are a threat to non-Muslims	There are both real and perceived threats on both sides
Conflict/cooperation	There is no possibility of Muslims and non-Muslims living and working cooperatively together, either in the world at large or within individual European societies	It is both possible and urgent that Muslims and non-Muslims should work together on solving or managing shared problems and building mutual confidence

(b) Muslim perspectives

Points of contrast	Closed narratives	Open narratives
Uniformity/diversity	Non-Muslims are all much the same	There is great diversity amongst non-Muslims
Difference/similarity	Non-Muslims are significantly different from Muslims	There are many commonalities between Muslims and non-Muslims
Inferiority/equality	Non-Muslims are morally and culturally inferior to Muslims	There is both good and bad everywhere – both in Muslims and non-Muslims
Threat/trust	Non-Muslims are a threat to Muslims	There are both real and perceived threats on both sides
Conflict/cooperation	There is no possibility of Muslims and non-Muslims living and working cooperatively together, either in the world at large or within individual European societies	It is both possible and urgent that Muslims and non-Muslims should work together on solving or managing shared problems and building mutual confidence

Procedure

Young people apply the five features of us/them thinking in Handout 28 to various news cuttings, or else to stories they have heard about. The purpose is to expand the various statements in the boxes by adding illustrative examples.

They may then look at the seven views of the world summarized in Handout 30, and similarly expand some of the statements with illustrative examples. Again, the language here may well need simplifying or explaining, and some of the historical references will need to be explained.

Identity, Empowerment and Change, Handout 29

Muslims and the police, a news story

Scotland's first Muslim Police Association is being created in an attempt to encourage more Muslims to join and stay in the force.

Strathclyde Police hopes the group will also help tackle Islamophobia and improve understanding of Islam.

PC Amar Shakoor, who was Scotland's first Muslim officer, said negativity had recently been directed towards the Muslim community. He said the association hoped to put Islam in a more positive light.

'We want to highlight some of the positive things Islam can provide to the communities and not just the police services,' he said.

According to PC Shakoor, since the 9/11 World Trade Centre attack, London tube bombings and Glasgow airport attempted bombings, Muslims have faced suspicion and increasing scrutiny.

He said links were now more important than ever and one of the best ways to do this was to recruit more Muslim officers.

Strathclyde Police, which has more than 7,000 officers, has only about 31 Muslim officers among its ranks.

Earlier this year, Chief Constable Steve House met Muslim officers in England who had started a similar group. It has been quite successful, not only within the Muslim community, but also in tackling institutional issues within their own police forces.

But a big part of what the Muslim Police Association here in Scotland hopes to achieve is to encourage young Scottish Muslims, who might not otherwise consider a career with the police, to see it is a viable option - somewhere they can move up the ladder and become part of the establishment.

Chief Constable House said: 'The formation of the Muslim Police Association is a positive step'.

'These are officers who are positive about seeing the police force as a career and want to use their association to reach out to Muslims. They are not saying "Don't join the police, it's a bad career move", they are saying look, "Come and join, we're happy with our career choice, come and join".'

However, some young Scottish Muslims were not sold on the idea of becoming officers.