DCPsych thesis

The psychological dimension of living with fear of terrorism: Social identity, existential anxiety, and media influence

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The psychological dimension of living with fear of terrorism: Social identity, existential anxiety, and media influence

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Seyfullah Karacan

March 2024

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate various dimensions of fear, terrorism, existentialism, and the wider societal implications of fearing terrorism, as well as examine the mechanisms influencing such fear and review existing literature. To achieve these objectives, the study recruited eight participants who are therapy patients and reside in Greater London and employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the analytical method.

The study revealed that fear of terrorism encompasses multiple dimensions, influencing individual experiences, media portrayals, and societal narratives, leading to a variety of coping mechanisms being adopted by individuals. There are many ways in which fear manifests, including feelings of entrapment and uncertainty, anger-driven responses, and a desire for security. Further, participants' narratives highlighted the significance of media in shaping fear perceptions and fostering a culture of blame and scapegoating.

This study made original contributions to the literature, particularly regarding Eurocentric and hyper-militaristic comments, which shed light on societal ideology and attitudes having a pervasive effect on fear responses. Considering novel findings regarding hyper-militaristic comments in this study, it is imperative for future research to further examine the underlying factors that contribute to such perspectives. Understanding the factors influencing fear perceptions can help develop more targeted and effective strategies for addressing terrorism-related concerns and promoting safety, well-being, and resilience.

Keywords: Terrorism, fear, Eurocentrism, Orientalism

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growth in profound ways. In the vast expanse of existence, where intellect, resilience, and human connection converge, I stand humbled by the interconnectedness of all beings and the boundless possibilities of knowledge.

Thank you.

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Preface

Being a subjective individual in this study provided me with an advantage when it came to analytical reasoning. As a guest worker of Turkish/Kurdish parents who grew up in Copenhagen in the 1980s, I believe I have an excellent background that allows me to gain a thorough understanding of cultural sensitivity and their dynamics from the point of view of an individual. As a result of my relationship with the subject, I have always been fascinated by the contradictions between Western and Eastern perspectives regarding violence, history, politics, and terrorism. These contradictions between Western and Eastern perspectives on violence, history, politics, and terrorism offer a rich field for analysis and critical thinking. Examining these contrasting viewpoints can give a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances surrounding these issues, ultimately improving one's analytical reasoning abilities.

In addition, as a child of Turkish/Kurdish parents, I was already thrown into the abyss of politics and history. I had to learn to navigate the political world and its sensitivities from an early age. Western and Eastern perspectives on violence, history, politics, and terrorism often differ due to cultural, historical, and ideological differences. As a result of the differences in interpretations, values, and priorities assigned to these issues, misunderstandings, conflicts, and differing approaches to problem-solving can emerge. One must have a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics and the ability to critically analyse and synthesise diverse viewpoints to understand and navigate these complexities. Being raised in a politically charged environment, I have witnessed first-hand how history and politics affect individuals. These experiences have fuelled my passion for understanding these subjects' complexities and given me a unique perspective that will greatly enhance my analytical reasoning in this study.

As a result of the tragic events of 9/11, there has been a palpable fear of living under the ominous shadow of terrorism that has cast a pervasive veil of uncertainty over individuals of Middle Eastern descent, including myself. I was born and raised in Copenhagen, a cultural crossroads between East and West. As a result, my identity is inextricably linked with the dichotomy of belonging yet feeling estranged—a perpetual outsider within my own home. A period of profound introspection followed the events of 9/11, causing individuals of Middle Eastern descent to grapple with the harsh reality of being perpetually cast as suspects, lingering on the fringes of societal acceptance. This seismic shift in perception precipitated, for many individuals like myself, a desperate attempt to delineate the boundaries between the "good guys" and the "bad guys," not only from a social and psychological perspective but also from a philosophical perspective.

During these times of fear and uncertainty, individuals of Middle Eastern descent face a litany of challenges, including heightened scrutiny, insidious discrimination, and stigmatisation. Prejudice and suspicion exert a heavy toll on us, breaking down our fragile bonds of belonging and instilling a pervasive sense of alienation and fear within us. Yet, amidst the turmoil and tribulation, there is a glimmer of hope, a beacon of resilience and grit calling us towards an inclusive and harmonious future. As denizens of a world rife with division and discord, it is our obligation to face these challenges head-on, transcending the narrow confines of fear and prejudice.

We must embark upon a journey of profound introspection and collective enlightenment to achieve true societal transformation, a path based on inclusivity, empathy, and mutual understanding. Our collective identity can be forged in unity and compassion when we foster an environment of genuine acceptance and appreciation for our shared humanity. As I navigate the complex interplay between my Eastern heritage and Western upbringing, I am

acutely aware of the myriad complexities and contradictions that define my existence. As a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity, I find solace in the crucible of cultural confluence. In this regard, the path to a more harmonious and tolerant society is fraught with challenges and endless potential. In my view, it is possible to transcend the barriers that divide us by embracing our common humanity and championing the values of inclusivity and understanding, paving the way for a brighter, more equitable future for everyone.

I am driven by an intense desire to illuminate the nuanced intricacies that underpin this complex subject by delving into the intricate web of perspectives surrounding the dialectic nature of security discourse. By exploring individuals' personal narratives and shared experiences, I hope to unravel the complexities underlying their feelings and perspectives on this challenging subject. The central element of my approach is a profound commitment to self-awareness and reflexivity, as well as an unwavering acknowledgement of my positionality as both an individual and a researcher. I embark on a journey of introspection while paying close attention to my biases, expectations, and preconceptions, recognising that my background and experiences profoundly impact the research process. In my research, reflexivity is a guiding principle, enabling me to examine and interrogate my subjectivity in its tiniest detail. To navigate the complexities of the research process with clarity and insight, reflexivity becomes an indispensable tool as I navigate sensitive topics. As a result of cultivating a keen awareness of my own biases, I strive to approach the subject matter with empathy and understanding, ensuring that the voices and experiences of those involved are honoured and respected.

Our role as researchers is not to be detached, neutral observers but rather to actively construct knowledge. In addition to our personal beliefs, political affiliations, cultural heritage, and professional pursuits, several factors shape our perception of the world. By embracing

reflexivity as a cornerstone of the research process, I aim to overcome the limitations of my own subjectivity, enabling me to gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play. With integrity, humility, and intellectual rigour, I seek to navigate the intricacies of the research terrain through rigorous introspection and critical self-reflection. Ultimately, reflexivity is a beacon of light that illuminates the path towards a better understanding of the intricate interplay between researcher and subject. Through self-awareness and introspection, we can ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and honoured in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, which is essential to cultivating a more inclusive and empathetic approach to research.

It was decided to leave sufficient time between the participants' interviews to discuss the results with my supervisor or colleagues to be more reflexive. As a result of these perspectives, I drew upon some preconceptions I may have brought to the interview. During the study, I kept a daily diary of how I felt. As I refer to the diary to record my feelings, I can draw conclusions based on this data. My research process was greatly enhanced by seeking external perspectives, as it enabled me to challenge and broaden my own biases and preconceived notions during the research process. Through discussions with supervisors and colleagues, I gained valuable insights and alternative perspectives that otherwise may have been overlooked. This external input enhanced the reflexivity of the study and ensured a more comprehensive and well-rounded analysis.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Context

The overarching aim of the present study is to explore the existential threat posed by terrorism and gain a nuanced understanding of the subjective experiences of individuals in the context of Eurocentrism. The present study presents an in-depth exploration of how individuals navigate and interpret their lives in the face of perceived existential terrorism-related threats, emphasising the influence of Eurocentrism on their experiences. It specifically explores the research question: "How do individuals make meaning of their experiences and perceive life under the existential threat of terrorism, particularly through the lens of Eurocentrism?"

Terrorism presents a global threat due to various political, cultural, and social factors. For example, although Afghanistan was removed from the Global Terrorism Index in 2022, it is hypothesised that terrorism deaths have since increased by 4 per cent. At the same time, according to the Global Terrorism Index 2023, there has been an increase in the number of fatalities attributed to unknown jihadists in countries where Islamic State West Africa operates despite Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates being the deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2022 (Asongu et al., 2021). There has been a steady decline in the number of countries affected by terrorism caused by IS for the last three years. There has also been a seven-fold increase in deadly attacks in countries engaged in violent conflict compared to countries enjoying peace. The Sahel region of Sub-Saharan Africa is now the epicentre of terrorism, with Burkina Faso and Mali accounting for 73 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2022 and 52 per cent of terrorism deaths in total (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023). In the Sahel, which has witnessed a dramatic increase in terrorism since 2021, there have been six coup attempts, four of which succeeded. The number of terrorism deaths in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 8 per cent in 2021, reversing the slight improvement recorded in

the previous year. The 791 deaths in 2022 represented the lowest number in the MENA region since 2013 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023).

In this year, there were also fewer suicide bombings. Despite this, Afghanistan and Pakistan remained among the top ten countries most affected by terrorism in 2022. The Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) is responsible for around a third of these deaths. Despite the decline in attacks in the West, the number of deaths continues to rise, with 11 deaths related to terrorism recorded in the United States in 2011. There were no reported deaths in either the United Kingdom or Germany as of 2022 as a result of Islamist extremism. However, it is important to note that there have been instances of deaths resulting from other forms of terrorism in both the United Kingdom and Germany during that period. It is crucial to differentiate between Islamist extremism and the broader concept of terrorism to avoid generalizations and misconceptions. In Europe, there were two attacks in 2022 and eight in the United States. This indicates that most terrorist attacks occur outside Europe. Several terrorist groups, including IS, Boko Haram, and the Houthi rebels, are utilising drones for attacks, with AI supporting launch-and-forget operations (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023).

Despite most global terrorist attacks occurring in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, and Somalia (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023), most research on fear of terrorism is Eurocentric. In this study, Eurocentrism is understood as a worldview that places European culture, history, and experiences at the centre of understanding global issues, often viewing them as the norm against which all other cultures are measured. This perspective has significantly shaped the discourse surrounding terrorism, framing it primarily as a European problem while neglecting the diverse realities faced by non-European communities. Such framing not only distorts the understanding of terrorism but also

reinforces harmful stereotypes about specific groups, particularly those from Muslim backgrounds, who are often unjustly branded as "terrorists." The dominant narrative in much of Western media and political discourse tends to portray terrorism as a primarily European issue, focusing heavily on attacks in cities like Paris, London, and Brussels. This framing creates the illusion that terrorism is a phenomenon predominantly affecting European nations, sidelining the fact that many non-European countries have long been grappling with various forms of terrorism and political violence. For instance, nations in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia have faced significant terrorist threats for decades, often linked to local conflicts, geopolitical dynamics, and historical grievances.

As of 2022, South Asia continues to have the lowest average global terrorism index score. In 2022, 1,354 people died because of terrorism, a 30 per cent decline compared to the previous year; however, if Afghanistan's improvement had been excluded, terrorism deaths would have been seen to have increased by 71 per cent. IS and the emerging National Resistance Front (NRF) both pose serious threats to Afghanistan. A significant increase from 292 deaths in 2021 to 643, a 120 per cent increase from Afghanistan and Pakistan, remains among the ten countries most affected by terrorism in 2022. Pakistan's BLA was responsible for a third of these deaths, a nine-fold increase from last year, making it the world's fastest-growing terrorist group (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023). Despite the overall decline in global terrorism deaths in 2022, excluding Afghanistan's improvement, it reveals a significant increase of 71 per cent. This suggests that terrorism remains a serious threat in Afghanistan, with the emergence of groups like IS and the National Resistance Front (NRF) contributing to the rise in deaths. Additionally, Pakistan's BLA has become the world's fastest-growing terrorist group, responsible for a substantial number of fatalities in the region.

The number of attacks in the West continues to decrease, with successive declines since 2017. As compared to 55 attacks in 2021, 40 attacks were recorded in 2022, a 27 per cent decrease. The number of deaths increased from nine in 2021 to 19 in 2022, with 11 of them occurring in the US; thus, the number of deaths more than doubled, albeit from a low base (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023). This marked the first increase in terrorism deaths in the West since 2019. In Europe, Islamist extremists carried out two attacks in 2022. During 2022, only eight US attacks were recorded. None were linked to known terrorist groups. In the UK, only four attacks were recorded, and no deaths were reported, marking the lowest number of attacks since 2015. In Germany, only four attacks were recorded, and no deaths have been reported since 2014 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023). The numerical data presented highlight the global trends and geographical distribution of terrorist incidents, providing a context for understanding the subsequent analysis. By demonstrating the concentration of attacks in specific regions and the decrease in the number of attacks in the West, the data emphasises the need to challenge the Eurocentric perspective on the fear of terrorism and consider a more comprehensive approach to studying and addressing this issue.

Due to the dominant focus on European incidents, the broader global landscape of terrorism is simplified, leading to an incomplete and skewed understanding of its complexities. This Eurocentric view not only diminishes the experiences of communities outside Europe but also perpetuates the stereotype that Muslims and other marginalised groups are synonymous with terrorism. Such narratives contribute to the stigmatisation of entire communities, fostering fear and division. When terrorism is framed solely as a European issue, it ignores the nuanced motivations behind terrorist acts, which can include political, economic, and social factors deeply rooted in specific historical contexts. Moreover, this limited perspective overlooks the contributions of diverse voices in addressing and understanding terrorism. Communities

affected by terrorism outside of Europe often possess valuable insights and experiences that can inform a more comprehensive approach to countering violence and fostering peace. By centring European experiences in the discourse, the opportunity for cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration is significantly diminished.

This study aims to challenge the prevailing Eurocentric narrative surrounding terrorism, advocating for a broader and more inclusive understanding that acknowledges the diverse experiences of all communities impacted by terrorism. By recognising that terrorism is a global issue that transcends geographic and cultural boundaries, we can foster a more nuanced dialogue that respects the complexity of human experiences and the varied contexts in which fear and helplessness manifest. Ultimately, this shift in perspective is essential for developing effective responses to terrorism that consider the unique challenges faced by different communities around the world.

Most acts of terrorism are designed to alter government policies, create fear among the population, or challenge existing power structures (Pelletier & Drozda-Senkowska, 2019). One significant type of terrorism is political terrorism, which occurs when weak actors utilise violence to disrupt an established order, gaining attention for their cause. According to Kaldor's "New Wars" framework, political terrorism can often be intertwined with other forms of violence, including criminal activities, identity conflicts, and economic struggles. These new types of wars may be defined by their non-state nature, the involvement of non-state actors, and the blurring of boundaries between war and crime. Terrorism may be motivated by a variety of factors. It is believed that the motivations for terrorism can vary widely depending on the circumstances and context. These include ideological beliefs, religious extremism, nationalism, separatism, or a combination of these. According to Krueger (2019), poverty and a lack of education can serve as fertile soil for terrorist recruitment (Krueger, 2019), while others emphasise perceived injustices and political grievances (Crenshaw, 1981). It has also been

noted that religious ideology and extremist interpretations of religious texts are significant factors contributing to terrorist acts (Juergensmeyer, 2008).

In addition to attempting to establish independence for a specific region or community, terrorists may also wish to impose their own religious or ideological views upon society as a means of gaining power and control, as argued by Crenshaw (1981). Political terrorism can be understood as a motivated effort to shape societal beliefs and norms, as it seeks both to disrupt and replace existing power structures with its own vision, as well as to disrupt existing power structures. To create fear and instability, terrorists often use psychological warfare, propaganda, and violence, as noted by Kydd and Walter (2006). Ultimately, the aim of these strategies is to gain attention and support for their cause, regardless of whether it is political, ideological, or religious in nature.

In some cases, terrorism may also be employed as a tool of coercion or to make a statement against or send a message to a particular group or government. It can also create a sense of fear and instability among civilian populations or draw international attention to a cause. For instance, the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has used terrorist tactics, such as suicide bombings and beheadings, to spread its radical jihadist ideology and to gain international attention (Telhami & Grewal, 2016). For example, the group claimed responsibility for the 2015 Paris attacks, which resulted in the deaths of over 130 people (Telhami & Grewal, 2016). The Taliban, another extremist group, has also used terrorist tactics to gain power in Afghanistan (Sheikh, 2016). For example, in 2001, the Taliban destroyed two giant Buddha statues in Bamyan Province to intimidate the population and demonstrate its power (Boggs, 2017). The destruction of the Buddha statues by the Taliban can be classified as an act of cultural terrorism. By targeting cultural and historical symbols, the Taliban aimed

to instil fear and exert control over the population, demonstrating their disregard for cultural heritage and promoting their extremist ideology.

Overall, it is evident that extremist groups have resorted to terrorist tactics to further their aims. According to Pape (2008), the common thread linking suicide bombers is a political objective – the wish to drive out an occupier from one's homeland, which they see as furthering the common good of their society. This challenges the commonly accepted interpretation that religious motives are the principal reason for individuals volunteering for suicide missions. From the Taliban's perspective, engaging in terrorist tactics has been a means to exert control and establish their version of governance in Afghanistan. They view acts of violence as a way to resist foreign occupation and assert their authority rather than being solely driven by religious motives. This complicates the notion that religious extremism is the primary motivation behind individuals volunteering for suicide missions. (Sheikh and Khan, 2019; Sheikh and Greenwood, 2013).

Historically, terrorism has been used to influence power structures as well as spread fear and uncertainty throughout countries and societies. As an effective mechanism by which to spread both fear and uncertainty, terrorism has always had a profound impact on societal and individual meanings, as well as trust in the apparatus of the state. It is a powerful form of political communication, as it seeks to send a message of defiance and disrupt the current order (Sheikh and Khan, 2019). As a result, terrorism can have a lasting psychological impact on individuals, groups, and societies, and it can, in turn, lead to a decrease in trust in the state and its institutions (Horgan, 2019). For example, after a terrorist attack, many people may feel a decreased sense of safety and security, resulting in a decrease in trust in the government's ability to protect them.

Increased awareness of terrorist attacks has raised the alarm among populations in the West and the USA in terms of a recognition that they pose a serious threat to people's mental health (Fischer et al., 2006). US polling in the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks confirms the negative effect of terror salience on mental health. When Americans were surveyed about the feelings they experienced in the wake of terrorist attacks, they expressed frustration, panic, depression, and anxiety more frequently than they would normally have done. According to Fischer et al. (2006), more than 60 per cent of respondents stated that the attacks adversely affected their personal sense of security. The number of Americans who were concerned about being a victim of terrorism increased from 24 per cent to 54 per cent (Fischer et al., 2006). Taking Israel and Palestine as an example, which has been targeted by terrorism since Israel was established in Palestine in 1948, terrorism has become a permanent part of Israeli and Palestinian society, causing the deaths of many people as well as significant property damage. The threat of terrorism is chronic, unavoidable, and uncontrollable (Saka & Cohen-Louck, 2014).

The widespread fear which arises in the face of the threat of terrorism has a dramatic impact on the lives of individuals as well as their future choices, some of which are subsequently dictated by how to live in a world surrounded by threats (Schmid, 2023). As a case in point, on 21 July 1905, a car bomb exploded in Istanbul after the Friday Prayer, killing 26 people and injuring 58. The attack was an attempt to assassinate Sultan Abdülhamid II, but he survived. As described by the *Times* newspaper, this was 'one of the most sensational and significant political conspiracies of modern history' (Alloul et al., 2018). After Ottoman police discovered Armenian revolutionaries were behind the plot, several people, including Belgian anarchist Edward Joris, were arrested and convicted. However, despite the failure of the assassination attempt, the plot faded from memory and became nothing more than a footnote in early twentieth-century history (Alloul et al., 2018). However, it is not an overstatement to

assert that the event significantly impacted society and instilled a great deal of fear. This incident serves as a reminder of the long-standing history of political conspiracies as well as the enduring fear of terrorism that has shaped the world.

The event described above at the Yıldız Hamidiye Mosque in 1905 had a lasting impact on society and politics (Ibid). It fuelled the existing fear of terrorism and intensified the surveillance and control measures implemented by authorities. Within the Ottoman Empire, the incident contributed to deepening political divisions and increasing tensions between different communities. The fear of terrorism endures to this day due to the unpredictable nature of terror acts and the potential for large-scale destruction and death they may cause. A terrorist attack in Paris in 2015, for example, horrified most French citizens, challenging their basic sense of security and safety and resulting in a vacuum of uncertainty (Pelletier and Drozda-Senkowska, 2019). The attack was unexpected and unprovoked, and it had a significant impact on the lives of the victims as well as on the entire French population. It caused fear and uncertainty as people began to question whether they were safe in their own country. Over a matter of hours (Pelletier & Drozda-Senkowska, 2019), people's life circumstances had changed dramatically. According to Pelletier and Drozda-Senkowska (2019), people's attempts to understand the threat level and the nature of the attack were replaced by the effort to understand the motive, reasoning and meaning. The attack had a clear purpose, and the people needed to understand the broader implications of the event to make sense of it. Pelletier and Drozda-Senkowska (2019) found that people were trying to understand why people would do such a thing. Ultimately, the attack was a reminder of the importance of understanding the motivations of others.

The audacity and brutality of terrorism, as exemplified in the Istanbul example, leave a lasting impression on society. As a result of such incidents throughout history, people have been reminded that no place is truly safe and that individuals or groups with radical ideologies

have the potential to carry out devastating attacks at any time. Furthermore, the lasting impression and fear of terrorism in society have resulted in heightened security measures and increased surveillance as authorities strive to prevent future attacks and protect their communities. Collective memory around such incidents serves as a constant reminder of the potential dangers that exist and the need for ongoing vigilance in the face of terrorism.

Terrorism instils fear and interferes with daily routines in a similar way to the patterns seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many people felt anxious and distressed due to the uncertainty and disruption of their everyday lives. However, it is essential to note that the motivations and impacts of terrorism and the pandemic differ significantly. Just as individuals who fear terrorism adopt behavioural adaptations to minimise the risk of victimisation, the fear and distress caused by the invisible threat of COVID-19 also led to similar behavioural changes in some instances. Both terrorism and pandemics create a sense of uncertainty and the fear of not knowing where or who the threat will come from, prompting individuals and communities to adjust their behaviour to mitigate perceived risks.

Akin to COVID-19, terrorism affects not only individuals but entire communities. Fear and distress associated with security and terrorism have been ongoing experiences throughout history (Haner et al., 2019). Individuals adjust their behaviour even when not directly attacked by terrorism (Denovan et al., 2017). The sources of each threat are vastly different. Terrorism is a geopolitical threat triggered by humans. The attacks harm random victims, damage, kill people, and cause fear and chaos beyond the immediate victims(Perry & Alvi, 2011; Romanov et al., 2012). Geographic location is correlated with terrorist fears, according to Besser and Neria (2012). Meanwhile, when dealing with pandemics, it is difficult to pinpoint the perpetrator; COVID-19, therefore, was seen as an invisible health threat.

Despite these discrepancies and differences, individuals and the public appear afraid and distressed after exposure to security and terror events (Haner et al., 2019) and fears of

infection (Lin, 2020). Long-term exposure to threatening and stressful situations can lead to habituation (Stein et al., 2018). Researchers have shown that people living in conflict areas, such as Israel and Palestine, who are exposed to ongoing security threats experience less fear and distress (Shechory et al., 2019). Individuals who fear terror attacks adopt several behavioural adaptations to minimise the risk of becoming victimised again. It is possible to reduce perceived vulnerability by avoiding certain places or events. While terrorism and pandemics may appear to be distinct threats, both have the potential to evoke fear and distress not only in individuals but also within entire communities. It is common for people to adjust their behaviour and make various adaptations to mitigate the risks they perceive when faced with such uncertainties. To navigate the challenges posed by both terrorism and pandemics, it is important to understand these psychological responses.

There is the suggestion that the experience of enduring security threats over time may contribute to the development of adaptive coping mechanisms that can be applied to different types of crises based on evidence from Israeli communities that have experienced terrorism and security threats, as well as the invisible threat concomitant with COVID-19. Such studies have analysed whether resilience developed during terrorism, following prolonged exposure, also affected resilience during the pandemic (Shechory Bitton &Laufer, 2021; Shelef et al., 2022). Researchers examined whether central Israelis and people living in areas that terrorists constantly threatened differed in their fear of the pandemic and coping mechanisms (Shechory Bitton &Laufer, 2021; Shelef et al., 2022). While central Israelis are less likely to be exposed to belligerent incidents, border dwellers are more likely to encounter that kind of threat (Shechory Bitton &Laufer, 2021; Shelef et al., 2022).

Residents in conflict zones have been attacked directly or indirectly by their friends and either injured or killed. Against this backdrop, it was found that those living in areas constantly threatened by terror display greater resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic compared

to individuals living in central regions of Israel (Leshem et al., 2023). While terrorism and pandemics may evoke similar fear and distress, the coping mechanisms employed by individuals differ. In the face of terrorism, people adapt by increasing security measures and vigilance, whereas during pandemics, individuals tend to focus on hygiene practices and social distancing. However, the experience of enduring security threats over time can contribute to the development of adaptive coping mechanisms that can be applied to different types of crises, including pandemics (Kimhi et al., 2021). These effects can persist even during relative peace, influencing how individuals cope with future crises such as pandemics.

Resilience and coping skills greatly influence the ability to cope with stress (Besser et al., 2015; Hu et al., 2015). Bonanno (2004) and Straud et al. (2018) define resilience as the ability to cope effectively with stressful and traumatic events. Bonanno et al. (2012) posit that resilience is the most common response to traumatic events. It is a human response to adversity to be resilient (Finklestein et al., 2020). Resilience has been shown to improve physical and mental health, as well as lower depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and Parkinson's disease. By combining past experiences with current circumstances, Connor and Davidson (2003) define resilience as the ability to bounce back from adversity. The resilience of individuals is also associated with adverse events (Reich et al., 2010). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984, 1991), coping can be either problem-focused, resolving stress sources, or emotion-focused, reducing emotional stress (Rodrigues & Renshaw, 2010). More emotional coping is associated with more psychological distress. Research shows that problem-focused strategies are negatively correlated with distress and are associated with good mental health and resilience. The results are positive but not unequivocal (Barzilay et al., 2020). Positive coping is associated with lower anxiety and depression (Man et al., 2020).

Researchers have found a positive relationship between pathogenic (e.g., distress, fear, PTS symptoms) factors and coping strategies when investigating terrorism and security threats(Hassett & Sigal, 2002; Peleg & Mass-Friedman, 2013; Ursano et al., 2004). When confronting uncontrollable situations or when there is no viable solution (e.g., terrorism), emotional strategies are even more critical (Besser & Neria, 2012). Different coping strategies depend on the appraised controllability of an event due to the goodness of fit hypothesis. A problem-focused strategy is adaptive in controllable situations, whereas in uncontrollable situations, it is maladaptive. Emotional coping improves adaptation. An emotion-focused coping strategy may even reduce psychological effects (Shechory et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to recognise which coping strategies are more suitable in each situation to maximise adaptive outcomes.

Van Der Does et al. (2019) propose that while terrorism poses a minor risk to individuals, it can induce great public fear. This collective fear of attacks alters the behaviours of individuals in public environments, and this causes a "real physical danger" by leading people to engage in riskier activities (Gray & Ropeik, 2002). The perceived danger of a terrorist attack and associated fear is so impactful that it can lead to widespread behavioural changes. Individuals who fear terror may make alternative lifestyle decisions regarding transportation methods, holiday preferences, travel plans, and the choice of tourist destinations (Denovan et al., 2017). Following the 9/11 attacks, this effect contributed significantly to an increase in catastrophic highway crashes in the United States. Even though driving is riskier than flying, countless Americans chose to drive rather than fly after the attacks, which in turn increased road collision fatalities (Deonandan & Backwell, 2011). This is an example of indirect damage wrought by a fear of terrorism (Gigerenzer, 2006). In addition, Sunstein (2003) cites increased stress and health concerns and the costs associated with supplementary security processes because of public fear.

Studies have shown that perceived risk correlates with direct and indirect behavioural effects. From a social and human standpoint, terrorist violence deepens anxieties, intensifies exposure to future threats, and raises the probability of more behavioural transformation (Denovan et al., 2017). Behavioural adjustment occurs in response to an individual's risk assessment (likelihood and severity). According to Vos (2018), people recognise and interpret dangerous circumstances, when they know that they do not have adequate resources to cope with the danger, and they feel psychological distress related to their well-being. Danger awareness is crucial here because detailed research has argued that the greater the precision of health risks, the more people are involved with it (Vos, 2018).

1.2 Research Focus

The aim of this study is to explore individuals' experiences and perceptions regarding the fear of terrorism and its profound impact on their lives. The study investigates various dimensions of fear, terrorism, existentialism, and the wider societal implications of fearing terrorism including an examination of the mechanisms influencing such fear. The study explores how individuals construct meaning and perceive life in the face of terrorism. It will focus on the influence of Eurocentric perspectives. By examining the interplay between personal experiences, cultural influences, and the broader socio-political context, it seeks to shed light on the complex dynamics at play in this context.

The potentially long-term psychological consequences of living with the fear of terrorism make this research pertinent. The fear of terrorism can lead to chronic health issues that adversely impact overall well-being. Moreover, these impacts transcend individual experiences with potential impacts for families and communities in environments where terrorism poses a chronic threat. Understanding these psychological impacts is imperative for designing effective interventions and policies that can promote mental health and resilience.

The findings of the present study can thus inform mental health services and promote support systems that can mitigate the negative consequences of living in fear due to terrorism.

In this study, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is utilised to address the research question. This qualitative methodology aims to explore and understand how individuals interpret their lived experiences. Participants' subjective experiences are examined in detail, aiming to identify the underlying themes and meanings. The context of this study warrants the use of IPA because it allows for a comprehensive study of the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals in relation to the intersection of terrorism perceptions and fear/anxiety. Through the IPA process, researchers can gain insight into the lived realities and psychological processes that underpin participants' experiences through rich and nuanced narratives. As a result of IPA, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between societal influences, personal experiences, and psychological responses to terrorism and fear/anxiety by closely examining how individuals construct and interpret these experiences. By using this approach, it is possible to explore in detail the unique perspectives and meanings attributed to the phenomenon, thus contributing to an improved understanding of the lived experience of terrorism fear.

The following chapters delve into the extensive literature surrounding the fear of terrorism, elucidating the psychological and existential impacts of terrorist attacks. These impacts encompass a range of factors, including fear, risk perception, and threat perception, as well as social identity and Islamophobia. Moreover, the chapters delineate the research question, methodology, and the distinctiveness of the chosen topic for the anticipated study, providing insights into the process undertaken to conduct the research. One of the primary ramifications of terrorism on the social fabric is the pervasive sense of fear and disruption in terms of normal daily routines. Terrorism can exert a profound psychological, physical, and

financial toll on individuals and communities alike (Perry & Alvi, 2011). It is imperative to recognise that terrorism not only affects individuals but also has far-reaching consequences for entire communities. Studying the fear of terrorism is crucial as it allows us to understand the profound impacts it has on individuals and communities. By examining the psychological and existential effects, we can develop strategies to mitigate these impacts and promote resilience in the face of terrorism. Additionally, understanding the social identity and Islamophobia elements of the issue can help address prejudice and discrimination that may arise from fear and uncertainty.

Individuals and the public have been found to be distressed and afraid after being exposed to security or terrorism events (Haner et al., 2019). Even if they have not been directly affected by terrorist attacks, researchers have found that individuals adjust their behaviour to reduce their risk of becoming victims in the future. This is supported by studies by Eisenman et al. (2009) and Denovan et al. (2017). There are, however, many ways in which these threats can manifest. Geopolitically speaking, terrorism refers to acts committed by human beings motivated by ideology who are aiming to achieve political goals (Haner et al., 2019). According to Haner et al. (2019), terrorism can take various forms, including bombings, assassinations, hijackings, and cyber-attacks, among others. These acts can lead to loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, and instil fear in populations, making terrorism a significant global concern. In addition to causing damage and death to victims, such attacks plant the seeds of fear and chaos in the wider community, affecting many people beyond their immediate victims (Perry and Alvi, 2011; Romanov et al., 2012). Thus, according to Besser and Neria (2012), fear of terrorism may also be related to a person's geographical location (Benzion et al., 2009).

As a result of exposure to terror events and security threats, it appears that individuals and the public experience high levels of anxiety and distress because of these stressors. Several

studies (Laufer and Shechory Bitton, 2020) have demonstrated that habituation results from long-term exposure to stressful and threatening situations. According to numerous studies (e.g., Itzhaky et al., 2017), populations living in conflict zones, such as Israel and Palestine, who are exposed to ongoing security threats, do not experience high levels of fear or distress. Having said that, even if a person has not been directly affected by a terror attack (Denovan et al., 2017), they may adjust their daily behaviour to minimise their risk of being victimised due to fear and worry (Eisenman et al., 2009).

1.3 Contribution of the study

This study offers a deeper understanding of the fear of terrorism. Through the analysis of individual experiences, this study sheds light on the interaction between fear, behaviour, and societal dynamics. By employing IPA, this study provides a unique and nuanced understanding of participants' feelings, thoughts, and coping mechanisms in the face of the fear of terrorism. Several major themes are identified as contributing to the deepening of fear-related experiences, including defensiveness, control, media restrictions, family dynamics, and vulnerability. Scholars such as Said (1978), Sartre (1943), Foucault (1978), Sageman (2017), Kundnani, (2014), Fanon, (1961) and Amin (2010) have integrated their theoretical perspectives to interpret and contextualise the findings. As a result of the incorporation of diverse theoretical perspectives, the analytical rigour and depth of this study have been enhanced. Kundnani's (2014) *The Muslims Are Coming!* and *The Nature of Fascism*, as well as Fanon's (1961) and Amin's (2010) works, contextualise the fear of terrorism within a broader historical, cultural, and political context. As a result of this contextualisation, the findings can be interpreted in a more nuanced manner.

In this study, less-recognised factors, such as media portrayals and family dynamics are revealed, providing new insights into the fear of terrorism. There is new insight that adds to the

existing knowledge of fear as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that is constantly evolving. To prevent and reduce the fear of terrorism, further research is required to understand how these factors interact. It is also possible to tailor social policies and interventions to reduce fear by addressing the identified factors. Through the exploration of how media portrayals and family dynamics influence the fear of terrorism, novel insight into how external factors influence perceptions and responses to terrorism is gained. By acknowledging and discussing the racist, Eurocentric, and hyper-militaristic comments that emerged during the research, this study helps to make people aware of the ethical implications of fear-driven narratives. According to the study, fear of terrorism is primarily caused by a lack of understanding and knowledge of terrorism, as opposed to personal experience. To reduce fear and hatred, it is imperative to promote education and dialogue that promote empathy and understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

In terms of practical implications, this study can be beneficial to policy makers, mental health practitioners, and security agencies. Understanding the factors contributing to a fear of terrorism can provide the basis for targeted interventions to address and mitigate its negative effects. By contributing to the broader academic discourse on fear, terrorism, and society, this research encourages critical reflection on the complexities and consequences of fear. It is important to contextualise fear of terrorism within historical, cultural, and political contexts to gain a deeper understanding of this complex phenomenon. This research emphasises the importance of understanding how dominant forms of media, public policy, and institutions have influenced and perpetuated the fear of terrorism. It is also important to consider the implications of these discourses in terms of how they shape people's attitudes and behaviours towards terrorism and how they affect the way people think and act in the world. Consequently, this study provides insight into individuals' experiences, offers new perspectives, incorporates diverse theoretical perspectives, and promotes ethical awareness in the field of the fear of

terrorism. Additionally, the study contributes to the advancement of scholarly discourse on fear and its impact on society and individuals by providing the foundation for future research in this area..

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review aims to address each element of the topic under study, exploring the various subheadings and their corresponding areas of coverage. Additionally, the review will provide a clear aim and structure to guide the reader through the analysis and findings. The review will address fear, terrorism, existentialism, fear of terrorism, the broader Impact of a fear of terrorism and mechanisms impacting fear of terrorism. This section will include a definition of fear, its causes and effects, strategies for coping with fear, its implications for society, and its long-term implications. As part of this review, the chapter will discuss the need for further research into fear and terrorism and the implications of this research for public policy. Fear will also be considered as a political and economic tool, and the implications of this for society will be examined. Finally, this review will conclude with a discussion of possible strategies for preventing and managing fear. In conclusion, this review will explore the relevance of fear and terrorism and their implications for society.

2.2 Fear

Terrorist threats are abstract and inherently cause drama and chaos, exerting existential death threats that convey the notion of random violence and imminent destruction (Wolfendale, 2016). To understand the emotional fallout of terrorism, a psychological and existential perspective must be applied to the concept of "fear". Fear plays an important role in an individual's mental health and emotional well-being, in addition to anxiety, distress, uncertainty, and vulnerability (Palmer, 2007). The fear of terrorism often results in behavioural changes as individuals attempt to manage perceived threats; these may include increased

awareness and avoidance behaviours (Huddy et al., 2004). Fear has a positive effect on the actions and coping mechanisms of individuals because of the threat of terrorism, which is correlated with changes in behaviour and existential perspectives (McBride, 2011). Explicitly, on the one hand, the fear of terrorism can be an affective state in the immediate aftermath of an acute terrorist threat (Bakker, 2012). In this context, fear constitutes a healthy and natural response that supports individuals to make rapid and accurate decisions to save their lives (Bakker, 2012). This type of fear of terrorism is mitigated when the immediate threat has disappeared (Braithwaite, 2013). Contrastingly, the fear of terrorism may be more persistent and present even after the actual threat has vanished (Walsh, 2017).

The fear of terrorism may be manifested at the collective or individual level. The latter reflects individual concerns about personal safety (Elmas, 2021), while societal fear is concomitant with complexities (Bakker, 2012). Societal fear encompasses a widespread fear of terrorism within a significant segment of society and provides information about the emotional vulnerability of this population. A perceived collective fear of terrorism can elevate the real fear of terrorism. The perception that others are afraid can instigate individual experiences of fear, which can strengthen the collective fear of terrorism via emotional contagion (Godefroidt & Langer, 2020).

The fear of terrorism is concomitant with various behavioural outcomes. Various research studies have linked heightened fear to the fear of terrorism to ingroup-favouritism and the stereotyping of other groups, for example, in the face of existential threats (Bakker, 2012; De Coninck, 2022). The fear of terrorism as an immediate response and as a prolonged state of mind can foment hyper-emotional overreactions, which undermine political and social unity, thus fuelling societal tensions as opposed to counter-terrorism (Bakker, 2012). Fear may also affect social dynamics, trust in institutions, relationships within a community, and perceptions of safety and security (Oksanen et al., 2020; Sjøen, 2021). Thus, fear influences collective

perceptions and societal responses to terrorism, which revolve around themes such as mistrust, anger dynamics, and global risk. Fear of terrorism raises existential questions about life, death, and one's role in the world. It challenges one's perception of security and stability, causing one to rethink one's values and priorities (Elmas, 2021). Considering how fear of terrorism affects people's existential beliefs and quests for meaning as a consequence of perceived threats, this section aligns with existential perspectives. It encompasses the psychological, behavioural, and societal aspects of fear of terrorism. Accordingly, it provides an in-depth understanding of the multifaceted effects of fear on individuals and communities affected by terrorism based on the identified themes.

2.2.1 *Definitions*

Whilst it has been argued that fear is a psychological construct, an individual's perception of a danger or threat can lead to fear, a deeply unpleasant emotion (Gross & Canteras, 2012). As a result of physiological changes caused by fear, a person may display behavioural responses such as mounting an aggressive response or fleeing from danger (Blanchard & Blanchard, 2008). Individuals may experience fear due to a current stimulus or as a result of anticipating a future threat. Fear responses can be classified into two types: fight-or-flight and freeze (Bracha et al., 2004). The fear response occurs when there is a perception of danger, which leads to a confrontation with the threat or an attempt to escape or avoid it (Eysenck & Keane, 2020).

Humans and animals modulate their fear through cognition and learning (Lang et al., 2000). Accordingly, fear is judged according to its rationality and appropriateness, as opposed to its irrationality and inappropriateness (Eysenck & Keane, 2020). Individuals with an irrational fear have a phobia (Olsson & Phelps, 2007). Fear is closely related to anxiety since it is a response to perceived threats that the individual perceives to be uncontrollable or unavoidable

(Davis, 1992). As a result of its contribution to survival, humans have retained their capacity to fear throughout evolution. According to sociological and organisational research, people's fears are not solely determined by their natures but also by their social relationships and cultures, which aid them in determining the appropriate amount and duration of their fear (Farrall et al., 2009). It is commonly believed that fear is the opposite of courage (Rachman, 1984). To be courageous, one must be willing to overcome adversity, and fear is a condition that makes courage possible (Eysenck & Keane, 2020). Numerous studies have also explored the physiological and cognitive aspects of fear, shedding light on the complex interplay between the brain, body, and emotions. For example, research by LeDoux (1998) has highlighted the role of the amygdala in fear conditioning, while Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have emphasised the appraisal process in determining the subjective experience of fear. These academic references provide further insight into the multifaceted nature of fear and its impact on human behaviour and well-being.

2.2.2 *Origins and biology*

The fight-or-flight response describes a set of physiological changes associated with fear (McCarty, 2016). An innate response for coping with danger, it works by accelerating the breathing rate (hyperventilation), heart rate, and vasoconstriction of the peripheral blood vessels. These physiological responses lead to blood pooling, increasing muscle tension, including tension in the muscles attached to each hair follicle contracting and causing "Goosebumps", or more clinically, piloerection (making a cold person warmer or a frightened animal look more impressive), sweating, increased blood glucose (hyperglycaemia), increased serum calcium, increase in white blood cells called neutrophilic leukocytes, alertness leading to sleep disturbance and "butterflies in the stomach" (dyspepsia) (Eysenck & Keane, 2020). According to the research conducted by Cannon (1915), the fight-or-flight response is a survival mechanism that prepares the body to either confront a threat or flee from it. Similarly,

Selye (1950) proposed that this response is triggered by the release of stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, which activate various physiological changes in the body.

A living organism survives by running away from danger or fighting it. Fear is experienced as consciousness of physiological changes (Ax, 1953). People who are scared have physical reactions (Gross & Canteras, 2012). In addition to dizziness, light-headedness, feeling choked, sweating, shortness of breath, vomiting, nausea, numbness, and shaking, there are several other similar symptoms that can be experienced by individuals (Eysenck & Keane, 2020). A person's bodily reactions indicate that they are afraid and that they should move away from the source of their fear.

2.2.3 *Fear responses*

By understanding fear responses in the context of terrorism, this study seeks to explore how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to threats, thereby offering valuable insights into the psychological impact of terrorism on individuals and society. This understanding can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to mitigate fear and promote resilience in the face of such threats (Cacioppo et al., 2011).

Various prisms have been used to understand fear responses to terrorism in the literature. Appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 1990, 1993; Roseman & Smith, 2001), for example, which is predicated on a cognition-emotion model, offers insights into the conditions that elicit various emotions and has been utilised in psychological studies on terrorism-related emotions (Iyer, 2014; Sadler et al., 2005; Marshall et al., 2007; Lerner & Keltner, 2000). Appraisal theory proposes that emotions are not independently produced by events, situations or objects but rather the cognitive appraisals made by perceivers about those things (Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1991) suggests that discrete emotion-eliciting cognitions combine to produce specific emotional responses in people. Against this backdrop, two key

appraisals are imperative for eliciting fear: appraisals of personal relevance and appraisals of prospective harm (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). This model further suggests that fear is elicited via secondary appraisals when individuals have concerns about their ability to cope with the existing threat (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). This secondary appraisal element is inextricably linked to Lazarus' (1991) concept of core-relational themes, which is the "synthesis of the separate appraisal components into a complex, meaning-centred whole [which] determines the nature of the emotional response" (p. 64). According to Appraisal Theory, the experience of fear is linked to a core-relational theme of existential threat or danger (De Castella & McGarty, 2011).

Against this backdrop, studies have linked fear responses to terrorism to various forms of appraisals. There is evidence that, on average, individuals overestimate the personal impact that terrorism might have on them, especially when a terrorist attack has already occurred (Sunstein, 2003; Sunstein & Zeckhauser, 2011; Sinclair & Antonius, 2012). As shown by Tversky and Kahneman (1974), individuals assess the probability of an attack using exemplars of attacks. The fear of a recurrent attack is elicited where the example of a risk is more salient for an individual (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Studies have shown that the September 11, 2001 attacks increased the risk saliency for people in the surrounding area for the probability of a subsequent attack, causing them to fear that it might happen again (Coppola, 2005; Lerner et al., 2003; Larabee, 2003).

In contrast to the literature that focuses on cognitive appraisals and how these shape fear responses, LeDoux (2014) explores how emotional experiences are shaped by the underlying neural mechanisms of emotions. According to LeDoux (2014), the amygdala plays an essential role in processing emotions, particularly fear, due to its ability to process sensory information and trigger emotional reactions when faced with a threat. He illustrates how different brain regions and circuits interact to generate and regulate emotions, such as fear, and

how memories associated with fear are stored in the brain, which can be recalled and used to inform behaviour. According to LeDoux (2014), emotions can be regulated through conscious and unconscious processes. Other studies support LeDoux's findings on the role of the amygdala in processing fear. For example, Adolphs et al. (1995) conducted a study that demonstrated how patients with amygdala damage showed deficits in terms of recognising and experiencing fear. Similarly, Cahill et al. (1995) conducted a study that further supports LeDoux's (2014) findings by showing that the amygdala is also involved in the modulation of emotional memory. Their research revealed that emotional memories are more vivid and better remembered when the amygdala is activated during encoding. This emphasises the crucial role of the amygdala in both the processing and regulation of emotions, particularly fear.

Damasio's (1994) work, *Descartes' Error,* complements LeDoux's (2014) work by exploring the relationship between emotions, rationality, and decision-making through the lens of neuroscience. As Damasio (1994) argues, emotions play a crucial role in guiding actions, and they are a vital component of overall wellbeing. The work *Descartes' Error* offers valuable insights into the complexity of emotional experiences and their impact on individuals' daily lives. As Damasio (1994) emphasises, emotions play an integral role in rational decision-making and rational thinking. Damasio (1994) asserts that emotions provide valuable information and guidance that shapes choices and ultimately impacts individuals' overall well-being. In contrast to LeDoux's (2014) work, Damasio's (1994) research explores the relationship between feelings, rationality, and decision-making by exploring the neural pathways and mechanisms that influence our emotional experiences.

Similarly, Joseph E. LeDoux's work on fear and emotions has been paralleled by the research of Lisa Feldman Barrett (2006), who argues that emotions are not hardwired in the brain but are constructed through a complex interplay of neural processes and cultural influences. Barrett's (2006) perspective offers a complementary viewpoint to LeDoux's,

shedding light on the intricate nature of emotional experiences. Barrett (2006) suggests that cultural influences play a significant role in shaping emotional experiences. These cultural influences include societal norms, values, and beliefs that influence how individuals interpret and express their emotions. By acknowledging the impact of culture, Barrett's (2006) research highlights the dynamic and context-dependent nature of emotions, challenging the notion of universal emotional experiences.

2.3 Terrorism

This section explores concepts of terrorism. To gain a nuanced understanding of the fear generated by terrorism, it is imperative that what constitutes terrorism is defined. Thus, terrorism involves the deliberate creation of fear and the targeting of civilians to achieve ideological, political, or social goals (Silke, 2020). This section of the literature review aligns with the fear theme by identifying the sources and nature of perceived threats. As well as the related physical acts, terrorism instils a sense of vulnerability, uncertainty, and anxiety in individuals and communities. Furthermore, understanding terrorism can assist with understanding psychological and emotional responses to fear, as well as providing insights into how individuals perceive and experience terrorism (Silke, 2020).

It is well known that terror acts have significant societal repercussions, including changes in security measures, government policies, and social dynamics. Terrorist acts can provoke mistrust, alter community interactions, and affect social structures (Silke, 2020). Thus, this section also explores themes such as mistrust, behavioural changes, and societal implications to understand how terrorism influences collective perceptions and societal responses to fear (Moghaddam & Marsella, 2005).

In recent history, terrorism has led to existential questions regarding life, death, and social values. Terrorism has caused individuals to examine their beliefs and perceptions,

provoking introspection and meaning-making (Silke, 2020). Based on an existential perspective, understanding the impact of terrorism aligns with themes such as meaning-making, existential beliefs, and the impact of fear as a whole. This section provides an overview of the nature of this kind of threat, along with its psychological, social, and existential implications, all of which contribute to the fear experienced by those affected by terrorism.

2.3.1 *Definitions*

There are various types of terrorism, including religious terrorism (Jurgensmeyer, 2006), state-sponsored terrorism, ideological terrorism, and nationalist terrorism (LaFree, Morris, & Dugan, 2009). These different types of terrorism all involve different motivations and goals, but they share the common element of using violence and intimidation to achieve their objectives (Moghaddam & Marsella, 2005).

Whilst a universally agreed definition of terrorism is hard to pinpoint, owing to different legal frameworks, international agreements, and cultural norms, a terrorist act may be defined as the unlawful use of violence and intimidation against civilians, particularly for political purposes. More broadly, according to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), terrorism is defined as acts of violence perpetrated by non-state actors against civilian populations to cause fear for the purpose of achieving a political objective (LaFree, Morris, & Dugan, 2009).

"Violent acts" are generally classified according to their perpetrator, victim, method, and purpose. Thus, different definitions highlight different characteristics according to the significance of the specific activity (Coady, 1985). The threat of terror used to be considered enough to constitute terrorism in the past. Currently, the classification of terrorism involves the following elements: the actions need to be well-calculated and well-planned in order to have extensive psychological consequences among those who are not the immediate victims and targets (Schmid, 2012). The acts must also be horrendous in terms of brutality, lack of

discrimination, dramatic or symbolic impact, and disregard for the rules of warfare (Schmid, 2012; Moghaddam & Marsella, 2005). Additionally, the targeting of non-combatants or neutrals who are not engaged in hostilities is necessary for an act to be classified as terrorism, but this is not enough to make it a terrorist act (Arie et al., 2006).

2.3.2 *Types*

Throughout his work on the *Psychology of Terrorism,* Borum (2004) identified three main types of terrorism: terrorism in support of national liberation, leftist terrorism, and Islamist terrorism. In his book *The Psychology of Terrorism* (2014), Horgan (2014) also delved into the subject of terrorism and expanded on Borum's categorisation. He explored additional types, such as lone-wolf terrorism and right-wing terrorism, highlighting the complex and diverse nature of this phenomenon. Whilst it may be narrowly defined, “terrorism” relates to a variety of intentions and acts. In addition to sub-state terror, social revolutions, nationalist separatism, religious extremism, and religious fundamentalism, it is also the case that right-wing terrorism, left-wing terrorism, communist terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, regime terrorism, criminal terrorism, and pathological terrorism all exist. Styles of terrorism have changed throughout history. The book *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era* by Mary Kaldor (1999) examines the evolution of terrorism over time. Throughout the book, she examines the concept of "new terrorism" as well as the various styles and motivations behind terror acts, including both traditional and emerging forms. The term "new terrorism" refers to a change in the nature and tactics of terrorist attacks (Kaldor, 1999). New terrorism differs from traditional forms of terrorism, which were primarily motivated by political ideology or nationalism, in that it has global reach, involves religious extremism, and the use of technology (Kaldor, 1999). As a result of these new forms of terrorism, national security is increasingly threatened, and innovative strategies are needed to combat them effectively. Religious extremism, political grievances, and a desire to have a global impact are among the

motivators behind new terrorism. In contrast to traditional forms of terrorism that were primarily motivated by political ideology or nationalism, new terrorism seeks to establish a worldwide presence and impose its extremist views on a global scale, utilising technology as a means of conducting attacks and spreading propaganda. As the dynamics across the world change, so do the forms of terrorism (Borum, 2004). Today, terrorism is more prevalent than it was in the 1960s and 1980s, when left-wing and communist terrorism was on the rise (Moghaddam & Marsella, 2005). Accordingly, access to theoretical knowledge and physical materials may contribute to the perception of fear and the threat of terrorism. In addition, advancements in technology may also have provided terrorists with new tools and capabilities. The internet and globalisation appear to have facilitated the spread of extremist ideologies and tactics. As a result of this increased accessibility and knowledge base, fear and the need for effective counter-terrorism measures have been heightened.

2.3.3 *The psychological impact of terrorist attacks*

2.3.3.1 Exposure

The psychological impact of terrorist attacks upon both primary and secondary exposure victims can be debilitating and long-lasting. Primary exposure victims are those directly affected by the attack itself, while secondary exposure victims are those affected indirectly, such as family members, friends, or members of the community (Huddy et al., 2003). For instance, primary exposure victims may experience feelings of fear, anxiety, or depression, while secondary exposure victims may experience feelings of guilt, anger, or sadness. According to a study by Norris et al. (2002), the psychological impact of terrorist attacks extends beyond immediate victims and can have a ripple effect on the entire community. This includes heightened levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), increased rates of substance abuse, and a decrease in overall psychological well-being.

Moreover, secondary exposure victims can also be exposed to psychological trauma through media coverage of the attack (Huddy et al., 2003). They may feel a sense of fear, anxiety, and helplessness. For example, secondary exposure victims may experience flashbacks of the event, difficulty sleeping, or depression. Professional help is often necessary to help victims cope with these psychological effects. Not only do direct and indirect exposure to terrorist acts have psychological consequences, but both individuals and communities can suffer significant psychological and social consequences from living in fear of terrorism (Huddy et al., 2003). This form of isolation can lead to depression and loneliness. It is important to recognise that the psychological impact of terrorist attacks is just as significant as the physiological impact, which can include injuries, trauma, and even death.

When faced with external threats, it is common for people to experience existential crises, anxiety, and fear owing to a heightened sense of their own mortality, life's unpredictability, and related powerlessness. While protecting ourselves and our communities from terrorism is important, it is equally important to recognise the psychological and interrelated social consequences of living in fear and the need for individuals to retain a sense of purpose and connection with life (Huddy et al., 2003).

Following the 9/11 attacks, 12 per cent of the American population recorded extraordinary levels of depression, about 30 per cent reported signs of fear, and 27 per cent reported avoiding circumstances that reminded them of 9/11 (Silver, 2002). This spike in depression, fear, and avoidance was likely caused by a combination of the shock of the attack as well as the emotional toll of witnessing the horrific events. For instance, people who were in the vicinity of the attack reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and avoidance than those who experienced the attack remotely.

Despite these spikes in stress, studies have shown that in isolated cases, the prevalence of stress symptoms rapidly returns to normal levels, for example, among the people of New

York City after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Schlenger, 2004). In addition to the study conducted after the 9/11 attacks, other research has also found similar results. For instance, a study conducted in Japan following the Fukushima nuclear disaster showed a similar pattern of stress symptoms returning to normal levels over time (Yabe et al., 2014). Similarly, a study conducted in communities affected by natural disasters, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, also revealed a decrease in stress symptoms as time passed (Norris et al., 2002). However, it is important to note that while the study in Japan showed a similar pattern of stress symptoms returning to normal levels over time, the long-term reaction to terrorist attacks may still differ due to the intentional nature of the event and the potential for ongoing fear and anxiety related to security concerns. Further research is needed to fully understand the differences in long-term reactions to different types of traumatic events. Additionally, a study by Bonanno et al. (2006) has demonstrated that individuals exposed to traumatic events, such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks, often exhibit resilience and can recover from stress symptoms over time. These findings suggest that while initial stress reactions may be intense, resilience and adaptation can lead to a recovery of normal functioning. This suggests that people can adapt to stressful situations and quickly regain a sense of normalcy. This could be due to their ability to recognise the importance of social support or to a release of endorphins or adrenaline that helps to reduce stress levels. It is important to note that the study by Bonanno et al. (2006) primarily focuses on the medium-term effects of traumatic events. While individuals may experience intense stress reactions initially, their ability to adapt and recover over time suggests that resilience plays a significant role in their overall well-being.

2.3.3.2 Individual-level Factors

The literature illustrates that individual-level factors shape psychological responses to terror (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007). For example, studies show that having a positive outlook on life can help people cope with stressful situations, as well as having a strong support system (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007). Gender differences have also been established in psychological responses to terrorism. Female gender has been linked with worse short-term psychological outcomes in various studies (Sever et al., 2008; Cohen-Louck & Levy, 2020). For example, a survey illustrated that women were more likely to experience signs of post-traumatic stress and depression than men (Solomon et al., 2005). Women's odds of experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms are six times higher than men's (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007). Pat-Horenczyk et al. (2007) have also found that an ongoing chance of a terrorist attack promotes risk-taking behaviour in men. Pat-Horenczyk et al. (2007) conducted a survey that explored the link between gender and mental health symptoms in the context of terrorism. The survey revealed the differential impact of terrorist attacks on men and women, pointing to several potential reasons why women may be more vulnerable to post-traumatic stress and depression in the context of terrorism; biological factors, such as hormonal differences, may play a role in women's heightened emotional response to trauma (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007; Cohen-Louck & Levy, 2020). Women also face unique challenges, such as higher rates of victimisation and limited access to support services, which can contribute to their increased vulnerability (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007). In a study by Wadsworth et al. (2018) that examined gender differences and similarities in fear responses to the September 11 terrorist attacks, the scholars contrastingly found that women used emotion-based coping strategies as compared to males, leading to better functioning. Further, males showed more disengagement and, thus, worse functioning (Wadsworth et al., 2018).

Age has also been identified in the literature as a moderating factor that shapes psychological responses to terrorism. However, the evidence is inconclusive (Wadsworth et al., 2018; MacCauley & Stout, 2004; Scott et al., 2013; Walker & Chestnut, 2003; Hoven et al., 2002, 2003, 2005). Hoven et al. (2002) found that students in the fourth and fifth grades were more likely to show PTSD symptoms after the September 11 terrorist attacks, as compared to their cohorts in grades six through twelve. Wadsworth et al. (2018), however, found that older groups have more intrusive thoughts, although rumination decreases with age.

Ethnic and racial minority status has also been identified as a moderating factor that shapes psychological responses to terrorism (Walker et al., 2003; Chu et al., 2006). For example, Norris et al. (2002) found that ethnic majority groups have better outcomes as compared to minority groups. In Galea et al.'s (2002a, 2002b, 2003)study, Hispanic minorities showed more symptoms of depression and PTSD after the September 11 2001, terrorist attacks. Hoven et al. (2002) similarly found that Hispanic students were more likely to have symptoms of PTSD following the attacks, as compared to their African-American, white, or Asian cohorts (Hoven et al., 2002).

2.3.3.3 Event-related Characteristics and Normalisation of Violence

The literature suggests that event-related characteristics such as the type and duration of the attack can shape psychological responses to terrorism (Butler et al., 2003). How the duration of terrorist attacks shapes psychological responses has been particularly explored in the case of Palestinian and Israeli citizens who have experienced chronic terrorism linked to protracted conflict (Shalev et al., 2006; Gelkopf et al., 2008; Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016; Waxman, 2011). Zemishlany (2012) found that Israeli and Palestinian citizens experience feelings of insecurity and vulnerability emanating from perpetual fear and interference, regardless of whether they are directly or indirectly involved (Canetti, Hall, Rapaport, &

Wayne, 2013). According to Klar et al. (2002), the majority of Israelis and Palestinians believe that terrorist attacks are beyond their control and that they are not immune to their effects (Klar, Zakay, & Sharvit, 2002).

Stress-related disorders associated with those who live in perpetual fear of terrorism have a detrimental effect on the emotional and psychological well-being of the individuals affected (Gelkopf et al., 2013). People often respond to terrorist threats by sharing their thoughts and feelings, seeking social support from family and friends, and participating in activities that contribute to a sense of community. In times of uncertainty and helplessness, some people behave in ways that have been shown to be helpful (Bleich et al., 2003); others, however, avoid information in an attempt to forget the attacks (Schuster et al., 2001).

Alternatively, according to Horgan and Braddock (2010), individuals who live in constant fear may become desensitised to the threat of terrorism over time, leading to a normalisation of violence and acceptance of oppressive measures (Horgan & Braddock, 2010). Fear of terrorism may be further fuelled by this normalisation of violence, which leads to a sense of despair and hopelessness. Individuals may begin to perceive violence as an inevitable part of their lives, which can result in a sense of despair and a loss of hope. As a result of constant exposure to violence, fear and hopelessness can feed into each other, exacerbating the negative impact on mental health.

2.3.4 Anger and Frustration

Studies have linked the fear of terrorism with anger in the literature (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004). Drawing from Intergroup emotion theory (IET; E. R. Smith, 1993, 1999), anger linked to the fear of terrorism emanates from appraisals of intergroup conflicts which generates affective responses. Anger and frustration, as these affective responses, shape how individuals respond to out-groups. Drawing from this theory, anger

initially emerges as a result of appraisals of in-group strength; where intergroup conflict occurs, individuals respond with anger, resentment and frustration. On the contrary, appraisals of in-group weakness evokes fear and avoidance in response to intergroup conflict. From the perspective of TMT, fear has been linked with intolerance for dissent, grievance, anger, hostility towards individuals conceptualised as different, vengeance as well as nationalism and patriotism (Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004).

Anger in this context, is concomitant with an attribution blame whereby individuals conceptualised as different are held accountable for terrorists act through scapegoating. Against this backdrop, the concept of ressentiment is important for understanding the psychological foundations of such reactionary emotions and politics. According to Salmela and Capelos (2021), ressentiment can be defined as "an emotional mechanism which, reinforcing a morally superior sense of victimhood"(p.191). Ressentiment stems from an inefficacious anger and sense of vulnerability and its outcomes include emotions of resentment, hatred and indignation targeted at the 'other' (Capelos & Demertzis, 2022; Capelos et al., 2022). In the context of terrorism, this affective response stems from the fear of terrorism and the desire of individuals to be 'seen' in terms of their need for security. Ineffective policies and the prevalence of terrorism serves as a breeding ground for insecurities and frustrations which plants seeds of ressentiment in citizens (Salmela & Capelos 2021). Such affective responses, which result in anger, must be understood in as reactions to socio-political issues such as terrorism.

2.4 Existentialism

Considering the existential concerns individuals may experience in the face of such threats, this section of the literature review is pertinent to understanding the fear of terrorism. It aligns with the study's identified themes: existentialism examines fundamental fears and

anxieties related to existence, death, meaning, and purpose. Fear of terrorism is often associated with existential dread as individuals confront their mortality and life's unpredictable nature. This subheading connects to themes related to the existential impact of fear by emphasising how individuals grapple with existential questions triggered by the fear of terrorism. When faced with adversity, existence is considered essential for finding meaning and purpose to cope with the existential angst generated by terrorism; individuals can employ coping mechanisms. It is important to note that the concepts of existentialism are interconnected with themes such as meaning-making, coping strategies, and how individuals seek meaning and purpose to cope with their fear of terrorism. In the context of existential concerns, we can see how individuals construct their worldviews and how their existence is subjective. Individuals may alter their perceptions of the world as a result of the fear of terrorism, thereby altering their values, beliefs, and existential perspectives. As part of this section, we explore the impact of fear of terrorism on individuals' existential beliefs, perspectives, and worldviews, as well as themes relating to individual perceptions and worldviews. It is common for individuals who fear terrorism to experience existential growth, re-evaluating their lives, values, and priorities. Existentialism encompasses personal growth and resilience when faced with adversity. Through a connection to existentialism and themes such as resilience, growth, and existential responses to fear, it is apparent how individuals navigate the existential challenges posed by terrorist attacks. Overall, the subheading "Existentialism" sheds light on the existential impact and coping mechanisms resulting from existential reflections in the face of fear, as well as possible growth resulting from existential reflections.

2.4.1 *Definitions*

2.4.1.2 Meaning Making

"Existentialism" refers to a school of thought based on the thinking of Kierkegaard (1843; 2013), Nietzsche (1889; 2004), Yalom (1980), and Frankl (1959), who viewed people as constantly seeking meaning in the context of both their inner and outer worlds. In addition to Nietzsche (1889; 2004), Yalom (1980), and Frankl (1959), existentialism is also explored in the influential works of philosophers such as Camus (1942), Sartre (1946), and de Beauvoir (1949). These thinkers further explored the themes of individual freedom, choice, and the absurdity of human existence, shaping the rich and diverse landscape of existential thought. Thinkers in a variety of fields have conducted the study of existential anxiety in an attempt to find meaning in life. Existential anxiety refers to a deep sense of unease and uncertainty that arises from contemplating the fundamental questions of existence, such as the meaning of life, the inevitability of death, and the nature of one's purpose. It is a psychological and philosophical concept that explores the human struggle to find significance and purpose in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world (Yalom, 1980). According to Frankl (1959), meaningful activities are essential to human happiness.

2.4.1.3 Existential Anxiety

People have also been studied in terms of how they mitigate anxiety and find meaning in their lives. Tillich (1962) has argued that people cling to ideologies that promise certitude and are propagated by reputable and authoritative institutions. While Frankl (1959) emphasises the importance of engaging in meaningful activities to find happiness and purpose in life, Tillich (1962) suggests that individuals may seek solace in ideologies and institutions that provide a sense of certainty and security. Both perspectives highlight the human desire to learn to live with existential anxiety and find meaning; however, their approaches are different. An

understanding of existential anxiety is relevant to an understanding of existentialism because it highlights the central themes and concerns of this philosophical and psychological perspective. Existentialism explores the inherent tension and struggles that individuals experience when confronted with the existential questions of life's meaning, death, and their own purpose (Yalom, 1980). By studying how individuals cope with and find meaning in the face of existential anxiety, one can gain insights into the human condition and the ways in which individuals navigate the complexities of existence (Yalom, 1980).

Baumeister (1991) defined meaning as the collective representation of possible relationships between things, events, and relationships. Thus, meanings are primarily the result of relationships or associations that link and connect various elements (Baumeister, 1991). As a concept, meaning-making refers to the ways in which humans construct and validate their understanding of themselves and their environments; in other words, according to Baumeister (1991), meaning is rooted in four basic needs: purpose, value, efficacy, and self-worth. Our lives are shaped by these frameworks. Our actions are given meaning if we have a purpose behind them (Proulx, Markman, & Lindberg, 2013). Existentialism emphasises the individual's responsibility for creating their own meaning in life. According to existentialist thinkers like Sartre (1946), meaning is not inherent in the universe but rather something that individuals must actively seek and create for themselves. In this sense, Baumeister's (1991) concept of meaning-making aligns with existentialist philosophy, as it suggests that humans have the power to construct and validate their understanding of themselves and their environments. Both Baumeister's (1991) concept of meaning-making and existentialist philosophy emphasise the individual's role in creating and validating their own understanding of meaning. They both suggest that meaning is not inherent or predetermined but rather a result of personal agency and active engagement with the world.

2.4.1.4 The Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM)

The Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) proposes the most comprehensive illustration of "meaning" as a specific set of articulate relational patterns that are responsible for the perception of the world as being certain (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). MMM also states that meaning encompasses the expected relationships or associations that humans construct and impose on their worlds (Heine et al., 2006).

Through the association, the breakdown is perceived, and the subsequent reorganisation of meaning-making becomes larger and larger. Additionally, the hydraulic style of the MMM leads to clarification of the individual's compensatory mechanisms for threats. The hydraulic style refers to the way in which the meaning-making process expands and adapts when faced with breakdowns and threats. It involves the individual's ability to reorganise and make sense of their experiences, ultimately leading to the development of compensatory mechanisms that help them cope with these challenges. Considering this, one can think about threats affecting numerous areas, such as self-esteem, certainty, belongingness, and symbolic immortality (Heine et al., 2006). Other scholars, such as Park and Baumeister (2017), have also highlighted the importance of meaning-making and compensatory mechanisms in the MMM model. They argue that when individuals experience threats to their sense of meaning, they engage in various strategies to restore and reaffirm their sense of significance. These strategies can include seeking social validation, engaging in self-enhancement, or finding alternative sources of meaning. The MMM posits that individuals need meaning; that is, they require an understanding of their environment through conceptual images of planned interactions that coordinate their impressions of it. To reclaim the meaning of a mechanism known as fluid compensation, individuals reaffirm alternate meanings when their sense of identity is challenged.

According to the model, people reassert significance when presented with contexts different from the context within which a hazard has occurred (Heine et al., 2006). In the context of social risks, fluid rewards can be identified as accruing after some of these risks, including self-esteem threats, feelings of insecurity, interpersonal rejection, and mortality (Heine et al., 2006). The Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) proposes that people need to actively re-evaluate situations and create meaning to maintain a sense of coherence and stability. In other words, people strive to make sense of their experiences to maintain a sense of control and meaningfulness in their lives. This need for control and meaningfulness is deeply rooted in our evolutionary past, where being able to make sense of our environment was essential for our survival. We use our experiences to create stories about our lives, and these stories are essential for our mental and emotional well-being.

2.4.2 *Existentialism and fear of terrorism*

The fear of terrorism can negatively affect an individual's daily life and sense of security (Cottee & Hayward, 2011). Existential philosophy provides a framework for understanding how individuals perceive and cope with their fears. A key assumption of this philosophy is that individuals are inherently responsible for creating meaning in their lives and that anxiety is an inevitable component of that process (Sartre, 1946). Thus, people's fear of terrorism is related to their perception of the potential threat to their existence and meaning in life.

Sartre (1946), Said (1978), and Foucault (1991) all provide varying existential perspectives on the fear of terrorism. Through Said's (1978) focus on representation, Foucault's (1991) focus on power and discourse, and Sartre's (1946) existential philosophy, we can understand the impact of terrorism on individuals and societies. Sartre's (1946) existential philosophy sheds light on the fear of terrorism by emphasising the existential anguish that individuals experience in the face of violence and oppression. His depictions of the anti-

colonial movement highlight the intersection between political struggles and the existential fear that terrorism instils in individuals and societies. However, it is important to note that while Sartre (1946) and Camus (1942) both had existentialist philosophies, they disagreed fundamentally regarding the Algerian liberation movement. Sartre (1946) supported the movement and believed in the use of violence as a means of resistance, whereas Camus (1942) advocated for a more peaceful approach. This divergence in their perspectives highlights the complexity of the fear of terrorism and how different philosophical viewpoints can shape our understanding of it. Sartre's (1946) support for the Algerian liberation movement demonstrates how philosophical perspectives can influence political beliefs and actions. His endorsement of violence as a means of resistance reflects his existentialist philosophy, which emphasises individual freedom and the need to take responsibility for one's actions. However, it also raises questions about the ethical implications of endorsing violent methods in pursuit of political goals. Camus (1942), on the other hand, advocated for a more peaceful approach, reflecting his belief in the importance of preserving human life and avoiding unnecessary violence. These differing philosophical viewpoints not only shaped their political beliefs and actions but also highlighted the ethical considerations involved in the pursuit of political goals.

The nature of the existential crisis caused by terrorism means that acts of terrorism often target civilians indiscriminately, forcing individuals to confront their mortality and the fragility of life. Such existential crises can cause people to experience a profound sense of helplessness and loss because of fear and uncertainty (Camus, 1947; Fanon, 1963). Some people seek comfort in religion or spirituality while others are unable to comprehend. Camus (1947) explored the idea of a person living in an absurd world where death has the final say and life is meaningless. This sense of absurdity can only be dealt with by embracing it and living life to its fullest, according to Camus (1947). By accepting death and living in the present moment, one can experience clarity and freedom. He argued that by accepting death, one can live a life

of meaning and purpose without fearing life's meaninglessness. Camus (1947) believed that one should embrace life's absurdity to pursue one's passions, take risks, and live the fullest life possible. Camus (1947) posits accepting death can also make one appreciate the short amount of time we have and how limited our lives are. Rather than being a source of fear, he believes death is a reminder that life should be lived to the fullest and the fullest extent possible. Approximately two-thirds of people fear death, a natural response to the limited amount of time we have. In contrast to death, terror is the fear of the present, the fear of the unknown, and the fear of what may happen. Further, Camus (1947) suggests that terror is an irrational response to the unpredictable nature of life.

An existential crisis may result from the senseless violence experienced by many people who fear terrorism. This relates to fundamental questions of what good and evil are, what life is worth, and whether justice exists. People can find meaning in their experiences by reflecting on and contemplating their experiences to gain a greater sense of purpose and personal growth. Existential inquiry is characterised by philosophical questions such as "What is the purpose of life?" and "Why do good people suffer bad consequences?" (Sartre, 1946). By answering these questions, an individual can gain a deeper understanding of the existential dilemma he or she is facing and, in some cases, a greater understanding of oneself as well. Using Sartre's famous quote, "Existence precedes essence," we can see that the individual's identity is not determined by external factors but by their choices and actions. People, however, may believe that a person's identity and essence are determined by external influences such as family, community, and society. These external influences shape a person's choices and actions. Hence, the individual's responsible for defining the individual's responsible for defining their identity and essence.

Existential philosophers have explored themes related to violence, oppression, and human nature in addition to Camus (1947), Fanon (1963), and Sartre (1943). A theoretical framework for understanding terrorism fear is provided by Camus (1947), Fanon (1963), and Sartre (1943) in their works. ,The authors suggest that individuals should be proactive in dealing with fear rather than solely relying on the government or military to protect them. In this approach to fear management, individual responsibility and self-determination are emphasised. Developing a sense of solidarity with others is important as part of this approach since fear can be managed more effectively when shared with others. Understanding the root causes of terrorism and taking action to address them is important in preventing future acts of terror. This approach emphasises the importance of taking responsibility for one's fear and taking action to reduce the underlying causes of terror and fear. To promote peaceful and inclusive societies, it is essential to have access to justice, accountable institutions, and respect for human rights (United Nations, 2023).

To gain a deeper understanding of terrorism's psychological impact on human existence, we examine it through an existential lens, revealing the lived experiences and philosophical reflections on terrorism of individuals. A fear of terrorism reflects individual powerlessness, a response to collective trauma, and a reflection of fear of death and mortality. By understanding these deeper levels of fear, it is possible to reduce the impact of terrorism more effectively. Considering the persistent threat of terrorism and the profound implications of it for individuals' perceptions of life, death, and meaning, this perspective has become increasingly important. Increasing one's internal control can be achieved by becoming more self-aware and connected to a larger community to manage fear. It is also important to acknowledge that fear is a natural and normal reaction to threat and can be used to enhance positive change. Finally, fear is integral to the perpetuation of racism and other forms of discrimination. As a result, it is important to identify and challenge fear-based rhetoric and

policies which restrict access to education and healthcare. Many of these policies are based on fear of immigrants and outsiders.

2.4.2.1 Responsibility

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1991), individuals cope with the fear of terrorism by engaging in problem-focused coping, which involves taking practical steps to address the threat, or emotion-focused coping, which regulates their emotions. In addition, existential philosophers argue that individuals can find meaning and purpose in life despite adversity, including the fear of terrorism. By embracing one's authentic self and accepting the uncertainty of existence, Laing (1998) suggests that individuals can find meaning. Similarly, Leyens and colleagues (2007) proposed that through interaction with intergroups and by recognising the common humanity of all people, one can overcome so-called "infra-humanisation". The term dehumanisation corresponds to extreme violence between groups, as seen in cases of genocide, whereas intra-humanisation refers to the tacit belief that one's in-group is more human than one's outgroup. To clarify, Leyens and colleagues (2007) distinguish between two concepts: dehumanisation, which involves viewing outgroups as less human, and outgrouping, which involves perceiving one's own ingroup as more human than the outgroup. The potential consequences of dehumanisation and out-grouping are significant. Dehumanisation can lead to a complete disregard for the rights and well-being of the outgroup, making it easier to justify acts of violence and discrimination (Bandura, 1999). Out-grouping, on the other hand, can create a sense of superiority and entitlement within the ingroup, leading to prejudice, exclusion, and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes. These attitudes and behaviours can have profound social, psychological, and even physical impacts on individuals and communities. Existential philosophers and researchers like Laing (1998), Leyens (2007), and their colleagues shed light on the importance of recognising the shared humanity and embracing diversity to combat dehumanisation and out-grouping. By doing so, it can foster empathy and understanding and

ultimately work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society. A sense of existential crisis can develop in the context of terrorism when individuals are vulnerable, anxious, and uncertain about the future (Sartre, 1946).

Heidegger (1962) has contributed significantly to understanding the fear of terrorism. A fundamental aspect of human existence is fear, according to Heidegger (1962), resulting from an awareness of our mortality and the fact that we live in an uncertain and uncontrollable world. According to Heidegger (1962), we are "thrown" into a world we did not choose and are powerless to change the circumstances. As a result of terrorism, individuals may feel as if they have been thrown into a world of fear and uncertainty, where they have no control over events that could harm them.

Likewise, Sartre (1946) proposes that fear arises from an awareness of our freedom and responsibility in the world. As a result of external threats like terrorism, individuals may feel a sense of responsibility to protect themselves and their loved ones, which may lead to anxiety and fear. The realisation that certain aspects of life are beyond our control can be a source of anxiety and fear. Sartre (1946) argues that such fear can lead to a sense of self-alienation, whereby individuals feel separated from their true selves and the purpose of their lives (Sartre, 1946).

2.4.2.2 Freedom, Agency and Choice

According to Sartre (1946), humans struggle continuously to find meaning and purpose in life, and this struggle may lead to feelings of anxiety and despair. However, Sartre (1946) also argues that it is through this very struggle that individuals can create their own meaning and purpose, ultimately finding a sense of freedom and fulfilment. Sartre's argument implies that personal growth and development are closely tied to the ability to confront and embrace the existential struggle for meaning. By actively engaging in this struggle, individuals can

shape their own identities, values, and goals, leading to a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. This process of self-discovery can foster a sense of empowerment and personal agency, ultimately contributing to a more authentic and fulfilling life. In his view, individuals are responsible for creating their own values and making meaningful choices in their lives. Strecher (2016) argues that having a clear sense of purpose can serve as a guiding force in navigating the existential struggles of life. By aligning our actions and decisions with our core values and beliefs, we can find meaning and fulfilment even in the face of chaos and uncertainty. Strecher's (2016) perspective aligns with Sartre's (1946) notion that individuals have the power to create their own meaning and purpose in life.

Sartre (1946) describes this anxiety as resulting from the realisation that humans are fundamentally alone in the world and that life has no inherent meaning or purpose. Fear of terrorism can further exacerbate this sense of isolation, as individuals may feel cut off from society and powerless to prevent violent attacks. The random nature of terrorist attacks adds an additional layer of meaninglessness, as anyone can become a victim at any time and in any place. This further intensifies the sense of isolation and powerlessness that individuals may experience in the face of such violence. Sartre (1943) also believed that the choices and actions we make in our lives can transcend our circumstances, creating meaning in our lives. Empirical studies have shown that the process of meaning-making is not only important for personal growth and development but also for overall well-being. In a study of 1,064 adults, researchers found that individuals who reported a greater sense of meaning in life also experienced higher levels of physical, mental, and cognitive functioning (Aftab et al., 2019). This suggests that actively engaging in the existential struggle for meaning can have profound positive effects on one's overall quality of life. The study also found that individuals who reported a greater sense of meaning in life had higher levels of subjective well-being, lower levels of depression and anxiety, and better cognitive functioning. These findings highlight the importance of finding

purpose and meaning in life for overall health and well-being (Aftab et al., 2019). This understanding suggests that, when faced with a fear of terrorism, individuals can take proactive measures to increase their sense of control and agency, for example, by volunteering, donating to charities that fight violence, or taking self-defence classes. People can achieve a sense of purpose and direction by participating in these sorts of activities and becoming more connected with their communities, potentially remedying fears which impact how they govern their lives and giving purpose to their lives.

Accordingly, existential philosophy can be used to understand how people live with the fear of terrorism. Through such ideas, we can find a way to confront fear by recognising that we have the ability and responsibility to create meaning and purpose throughout our lives regardless of external threats.

2.4.2.3 Uncertainty

Camus (1955) and his works on human absurdity can shed further light on the fear of terrorism. The human condition, fear, and anxiety are often themes in Camus' writings. Camus' views can help us understand and cope with the fear of terrorist attacks in the context of living with the fear of terrorism. He asserts that fear is part of the human condition. According to him, humans are constantly faced with absurdity, uncertainty, and death by virtue of their very existence. Camus, in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus", describes how this confrontation between our need for certainty and the uncertainty of the world can lead to feelings of anxiety and fear (Camus, 1955).

Nevertheless, Camus (1955) believed that facing this fear is a necessary aspect of living a fulfilling life. In his novel *The Plague*, Camus explores the theme of fear using the context of a town ravaged by a deadly disease. In their struggle against the plague, the characters in the novel must confront their fears (Camus, 1955). To live a meaningful life, Camus (1955)

suggests acknowledging and confronting our fear of terrorism. Fear cannot dictate our actions or control us. It is vital that we find a way to cope with our fear of terrorism and to find meaning in this fight. As part of his existentialist philosophy, Sartre (1946) emphasises the importance of individual freedom and agency when confronted with oppressive or threatening conditions. Despite feeling trapped or oppressed, Sartre (1946) believes individuals have the freedom to choose their actions, and this is an interesting extension of Camus' understanding of the need to acknowledge and confront our fears. Sartre's philosophy emphasises the need to resist the fear and anxiety generated by acts of violence, especially in the context of terrorism. Sartre (1946) would argue, however, that it is crucial not to allow a fear of terrorism to lead to a retreat into passivity or a surrender of individual freedom (Sartre, 1946).

2.4.3 *The existential impact of terrorist attacks*

2.4.3.1 Intolerance

During extreme situations, such as terrorism and terrorist attacks, previous representations of reality tend to collapse. Following a terrorist attack, people often feel compelled to understand the situation (Weick, 1993).

A rise in the number of individuals becoming involved in terrorism has been attributed to the fact that more people are relying on violence to prove loyalty to a cause (McBride, 2011). People become more intolerant and violent against outgroups when reminded of death, and this leads them to advocate military intervention in intergroup disputes more actively. As a result of human efforts to monitor a sense of terror-related to their mortality, terror management analysis (Greenberg et al., 2003; Pyszczynski et al., 2015) has clarified these phenomena. This angle suggests that standing together, protecting societal worldviews, and promoting self-esteem ensures that people have a symbolic communal life and a sense that death can be transcended (Greenberg et al., 2003). Jonas and Fritsche (2013) argue that humans eventually

become embroiled in intergroup war due to existential danger. Based on the theory of terror management (TMT), people who are aware of death are motivated to protect their communities and their worldview to achieve a sense of abstract immortality and, thus, to alleviate existential anxiety. As a result, mortality salience (MS) results in aggressive acts, such as the exclusion of outgroup participants, bigotry, stereotyping, hostility, and racism, which can result in violent intergroup confrontation and, therefore, an escalation of conflict (Jonas & Fritsche, 2013). An examination of the recent literature on terror control indicates that, in response to this understanding, there are several conditions under which existentially dangerous conflicts can be minimised if not reversed (Greenberg et al., 2003).

As a result of these circumstances, it is important for us to understand how a hazard is perceived, what anxiety buffers are available, and what in-group norms and self-categories are most important to the social situation. Such analysis would shed light on what circumstances lead to an escalating intergroup dispute and the acceptance of war. In addition, the framework proposes possible methods for preventing escalating conflict and war between groups (Greenberg et al., 2003).

2.4.3.2 Angst

Several studies have discussed existential angst and terrorism. As mentioned earlier, as a result of the 9/11 attacks, many individuals experienced existential crises, questioning life's meaning and purpose (Bonanno et al., 2012). Terrorism studies have also indicated that exposure to terrorism can lead to a sense of meaninglessness and nihilism as well as pessimism, as individuals struggle to find meaning in a chaotic and unpredictable world. A person's fundamental values and beliefs can be challenged when they are exposed to traumatic events or threats of violence. Research has shown that traumatic events can have a lasting impact on a person's values and beliefs and that these changes can be long-term. Additionally, research

has found that individuals who experience trauma may struggle to rebuild their sense of meaning and purpose, leading to feelings of helplessness and disorientation in the present. This may result in feelings of anxiety and depression, as well as difficulty forming relationships or trusting others. They may also have difficulty managing their emotions and making decisions. All in all, trauma can have a serious and lasting effect on a person's mental health.

2.5 Fear of terrorism

This section examines the psychological effects associated with terrorism-induced fear. It begins with a subsection that seeks to understand fear in the context of terrorism, focusing on the psychological effects associated with terrorism-induced anxiety, stress, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This section also examines the literature which can shed light on the influence of fear of terrorism on mental well-being and emotional responses. Individual perceptions and responses to the threat of being directly or indirectly affected by terrorist activities are characterised by an assessment of perceived risks and potential threats. The study of terrorism aligns with themes such as risk perception, anxiety, and behaviour changes, which illustrate how individuals assess threats and respond accordingly.

As discussed already, people's fear of terrorism triggers existential concerns, such as a sense of mortality, meaninglessness, and existential uncertainty, leading them to question life's purpose and their place within it (Bonanno et al., 2012). This section, therefore, explores how people's fear of terrorism influences their existential beliefs, coping mechanisms, and efforts to make meaning in uncertain times. To manage their fears and enhance their sense of security because of their fear of terrorism, individuals adopt various behavioural changes and coping strategies. As a result of the fear of terrorism, individuals adjust their behaviours and use coping mechanisms, which are aligned with themes such as changing behaviour, coping strategies, and broader impacts on society. For example, individuals may choose to avoid crowded places or

public transportation, opting for alternative routes or modes of transportation. They may also become more vigilant and aware of their surroundings, constantly scanning for potential threats. Additionally, some individuals may seek solace in community support groups or engage in activities that promote a sense of unity and resilience in the face of terrorism (Braun-Lewensohn & Mosseri Rubin, 2014). It is thus important to understand the multifaceted aspects of fear induced by terrorism, including psychological, existential, and behavioural aspects. While fear, in general, can be a natural response to perceived threats, the fear of terrorism specifically carries unique psychological implications due to its association with violence, unpredictability, and the potential for mass casualties. Understanding the distinct characteristics and impacts of fear of terrorism is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies to address its effects on individuals and society.

The fear of terrorism is also situated within specific cultural contexts and considerations, which are discussed in the ensuing parts of this section. This section also discusses the fear of terrorism within the context of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which offers a prism for understanding subjective fear responses to terrorism due to the effects of social identification. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals may identify with particular groups and ideologies, leading to an "us versus them" mentality that can further exacerbate terrorism fears (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Following this discussion, the section also outlines Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986), which encourages people to adopt worldviews that protect their self-esteem, worthiness, and sustainability while making them feel that they contribute to a meaningful world.

2.5.1 *Context*

As defined by Feldman et al. (2005), fear of terrorism is a reaction to potential terrorist attacks. According to most terrorism researchers, terror is, by definition, intended to evoke an emotional response in the public in order to achieve political objectives (Horgan, 2003; Lancaster, 2015; Thorup, 2019). Due to the potential high impact and emotional response of terrorist attacks, people tend to overestimate their risk (Fishman et al., 2006). The results of a YouGov poll in 2016 revealed that the perceived threat of terrorism has tripled across Britain, resulting in anxiety and some people believing they will become victims of terrorism in the future. According to the poll, over 2,000 British adults were surveyed, and 38 per cent stated that they felt terrorist threats were "high" or "very high". According to the survey, 10 per cent of respondents avoided certain activities due to the perceived risk of terrorism, with 64 per cent citing fears of attacks in public places.

According to Nikolopoulou (2023), the findings of the YouGov poll can be attributed to the availability heuristic, where people overestimate the likelihood of events based on their ability to recall examples of them. The availability heuristic refers to the cognitive bias in which people rely on their ability to easily recall or remember information when making judgments or decisions. In the case of the YouGov poll findings, people may overestimate the likelihood of certain events because they can easily recall instances or examples of those events happening. This cognitive bias can have significant implications for decision-making. When people rely on the availability heuristic, they may prioritise information that is easily accessible in their memory, even if it is not representative of the true probability of an event. This can lead to biases and errors in judgment, as important information may be overlooked or disregarded simply because it is less readily available in memory.

For instance, following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, a survey conducted by YouGov found that 69 per cent of British adults said they were very or worried

that a terrorist attack could happen in the UK. This fear was compounded by the fact that people had seen similar terrorist attacks happen in other locations around the world and felt that it could happen in their country, too. Furthermore, the media coverage of the Paris attacks heightened people's anxiety levels, as they could see and hear stories of what happened, which made it seem more real and possible.

The perceived threat of terror has led to increased anxiety, fear, and feelings of helplessness among the population. This suggests that the British public has become accustomed to expecting terrorist attacks because of constant media coverage of security risks, as well as potential media coverage of terrorist attacks in the media, and therefore, uncertainty and anxiety have become features of their lives (Basu, 2021). Results of the poll also indicate that the majority of Britons believe a terrorist event could take place at any time on British soil; 84 per cent believe an attack on British cities and other targets is probable, more than ten times the 8 per cent who believe it is unlikely. During the past six years, perceptions and understandings of the threat of terrorism have steadily increased. This was in comparison to 2010, when only 25 per cent of Britons perceived the threat of terrorism to have risen, while 17 per cent said it had declined, and 53 per cent said it had stayed the same or not changed. Interestingly, 74 per cent of individuals believe that the threat has increased, while only 1 per cent believe that it has decreased (YouGov, 2016). The increase in the perception of the threat of terrorism in Britain after 2010 can be attributed to the active involvement in the war on terror and the rise in terrorist attacks during that period. The heightened fear of terrorism among the British population is a consequence of these factors and the impact they have had on the overall sense of security (Foley, 2015). The history of terrorism in the UK, particularly with the IRA, has indeed contributed to a longstanding perception of the country as a potential target. This historical context may have influenced the current belief among Britons that a terrorist event could take place at any time on British soil.

2.5.2 *Cultural factors*

Terrorism is commonly understood in a cultural context and these cultural factors are discussed in the ensuing parts of this subsection. While terrorism is rooted in specific cultural contexts, much contemporary anthropological and sociological scholarship is suspicious of such unreflective culture-centred accounts, and there is growing consensus that antagonistic worldviews rarely cause terrorism (Malešević, 2019). Terrorism, from a cultural perspective, emphasises the normative underpinnings of social behaviour, the situational logic of violence, and the flexible and contested nature of discourses and narratives. The Neo-Durkheimianism movement is rooted in Emile Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity as a form of communication aimed at challenging, provoking, or affirming established normative universes.

Prominent scholars such as Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith have extensively written about the Neo-Durkheimianism movement and its theoretical foundations. Their works, such as *The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology and The Cultural Turn in Sociology: Can It Last?* provide valuable insights into the academic discourse surrounding this movement and its contributions to the field of sociology (Lynch & Sheldon, 2013). This movement draws heavily on Durkheim's theory of social cohesion and conflict, as well as on other sociological theories and empirical research. It seeks to understand how cultural norms, social structures, and power dynamics intersect with terrorism and to explore alternative explanations beyond cultural factors alone (Malešević, 2019). There is a strong emphasis on binary representations of actors, which characterise people as "good" and "evil", as well as the significance of cultural coding in generating collective meaning (Malešević, 2019). By emphasising collective interpretations of social reality, symbolic interactionists view culture as changing perceptions of social reality.

According to Blumer (2009), a prominent symbolic interactionist, culture is not an independent entity but rather a product of ongoing social interactions and shared interpretations within a society. These interpretations shape and reshape our understanding of social reality, highlighting the dynamic nature of culture. For example, symbolic interactionists would argue that the perception of terrorism as a cultural phenomenon is not fixed but rather evolves through social interactions and shared interpretations (Collins & Sanderson, 2016).

Different societies may have different understandings of terrorism, influenced by their unique historical, political, and cultural contexts. This highlights the fluid and changing nature of culture in relation to social reality. Cultural perceptions play a crucial role in shaping social reality. They influence how individuals interpret and respond to various social phenomena, including issues like terrorism. For instance, societal beliefs and values surrounding terrorism can shape public policies, security measures, and even international relations. In this way, cultural perceptions not only reflect social reality but also have the power to shape it. The media plays a significant role in shaping cultural perceptions of terrorism (Collins & Sanderson, 2016). Through its presentation and framing of terrorist events, the media has the power to influence how individuals perceive and understand acts of terrorism. The way in which the media portrays terrorists and their motivations can shape public opinion, policy responses, and even societal fear levels. As such, media representations of terrorism become an important factor in the construction of cultural perceptions and the shaping of social reality.

According to Collins and Sanderson (2016), terrorism requires the use of unique emotional and social dynamics, and they distinguish violent acts committed by individuals from those committed by groups (Collins & Sanderson, 2016). As symbolic interactionists, sociologists Collins and Sanderson (2016) view culture as an ongoing process of meaning-making through social interaction. They argue that terrorism involves unique emotional and social dynamics that are shaped by collective interpretations of social reality, challenging the

simplistic "good" versus "evil" binary representations commonly associated with terrorism (Collins & Sanderson, 2016).

Cultural construction, politicisation, and context are explored in post-structuralism to challenge the concept of terrorism. Cultural framing is a crucial component of terrorism, requiring communication, symbolism, and mediated interaction. Cultural approaches need sociological explanations and micro-sociological analysis. It is also important to note that epistemological idealism supports many cultural explanations of terrorism, emphasising cultural values, discourses, norms, ideas, symbols, and signs without considering material aspects. Understanding terrorism's social dynamics requires long-term historical and sociological analysis. This approach overlooks the complex interplay between material conditions, socioeconomic factors, and political grievances that contribute to the emergence of terrorist organizations. A comprehensive understanding of terrorism necessitates an examination of both cultural and material factors, as they are intricately intertwined in shaping the dynamics of this phenomenon.

2.5.3 *Social Identity Theory*

Social offers a prism for understanding subjective fear responses to terrorism due to the effects of social identification. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals may identify with particular groups and ideologies, leading to an "us versus them" mentality that can further exacerbate terrorism fears (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A cycle of violence can be perpetuated by feelings of anger, resentment, and revenge. In studies examining the relationship between race and fear of victimisation, researchers typically ask one of two questions. One question is whether individuals of different races have different levels of fear of victimisation. Another question is whether race plays a role in the factors that contribute to the fear of victimisation, such as socioeconomic status or neighbourhood characteristics. These questions are discussed

below. War (1994), for instance, finds that African Americans have a significantly greater fear of crime than white people. This raises the question of whether different races experience different levels of fear. It has been shown that racial differences in terms of fear of crime are rather consistent with objective risk, unlike differences across ages and genders. African Americans, on the other hand, are much more likely to live in high-crime neighbourhoods (Skogan & Maxfield, 1982). However, Eitle and Taylor (2008) found that even after controlling for neighbourhood characteristics such as crime, race, and social incivilities, African Americans report higher levels of fear than white people.

As well as African Americans and Caucasians, other races and ethnicities have been considered in research on race and crime fear (e.g., Chiricos et al., 2001), with some evidence suggesting that Latinos are even more fearful of crime than African Americans (Chiricos et al., 2001). Research until the early 1980s indicated that age is positively correlated with fear of crime; that is, as people age, they become more apprehensive about crime (Skogan & Maxfield, 1982). For example, as a result of their fear of victimisation, the elderly became "prisoners in their own homes" (Chiricos et al., 2001). These early findings are contradicted by more recent studies, suggesting that age and fear may have a more complex relationship (Ferraro, 1995). When separated by offence, findings generally show that the elderly are not statistically more frightened of crime (Brück & Müller, 2010). In fact, Ferraro's (1995) research found that older women were the only ones who felt more fear when approached by a beggar.

According to Tajfel (1972), social identity refers to a person's internalised sense of belonging to a specific group and has implications for a variety of social responses, including perception, pro- and antisocial behaviour, judgment, and social influence (Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). A recent study has shown that social identities are important determinants of a person's response to external stressors when they are salient (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Haslam, 2004; Haslam

& Reicher, 2006; Terry, Callan, & Sartori, 1996). People's ability to cope with various stressors has been found to be strongly influenced by these factors. According to Fischer et al. (2010), terrorism-related social identity threat affects perceived threats, aggression, revenge desires, and support for counterterrorism. Levine and Reicher (1996) conducted previous research in which they manipulated the experimental conditions to highlight either the participants' national identity or gender identity throughout the study. Additionally, the type of collective threat participants were exposed to was manipulated so that it was either an attack on their national identity or an attack on their gender identity. By presenting statements about the Taliban's treatment of women and associated images, participants' gender identity was threatened; by presenting statements about the 2005 London bombings and associated images, participants' national identity was threatened. The pre-test results also indicated that members of the target population (female British students) perceived the Taliban as having a stronger anti-female agenda than an anti-British agenda and the London bombers as having a stronger anti-British agenda than anti-female agenda.

The perception of terrorist threat, aggression, and support for military-based retaliation will be lower in cases of reduced fit (i.e., when gender identity was prominent, and the threat was associated with the London bombings or when national identity was prominent, and the threat stemmed from the Taliban's treatment of women).

To support the arguments above and principles drawn from self-categorisation theory (e.g., Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), it was hypothesised that the highest levels of perceived terrorist threat, aggression, and support for military-based retaliation would be found when there was a high degree of fit between participants' salient social identity and the form of collective threat to which they were exposed (i.e., when gender identity was salient and threat emanated from the Taliban, or when national identity was salient and threat was associated with the London bombings).

The article "Dusting for Fingerprints: Review of the Aarhus Approach to Islamism" by Crone et al. (2008) critically examines how research has perpetuated stereotypes about Islam, portraying it as violent and radical. This problematic portrayal not only undermines the diverse and nuanced nature of the Islamic faith but also contributes to the stigmatisation and discrimination faced by Muslim individuals and communities (Crone et al., 2008). This perpetuation of stereotypes about Islam can be understood through the lens of Social Identity Theory, which suggests that individuals tend to categorise themselves and others into social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When these groups are portrayed negatively in research or the media, it reinforces stereotypes and can lead to prejudice and discrimination against those who identify with that group (Crone et al., 2008).

Social Identity Theory highlights the role of categorisation and group identification in shaping intergroup relations. When negative stereotypes are perpetuated through research or the media, it not only reinforces biases but also strengthens ingroup-outgroup dynamics. This can lead to increased prejudice, discrimination, and social division, hindering efforts towards inclusivity, understanding, and social cohesion (Durante & Fiske, 2017). Examples of how stereotypes about Islam are perpetuated in research or the media include the selective portrayal of acts of violence committed by individuals claiming to be Muslim, the generalisation of these acts to the entire Muslim community, and the framing of Islam as inherently violent or incompatible with Western values. Additionally, the overrepresentation of negative stories and the underrepresentation of positive stories about Muslims contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes. The perpetuation of stereotypes about Islam can have serious consequences, both at the individual and societal levels. It can lead to increased prejudice and discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, resulting in social exclusion, limited opportunities, and unequal treatment. Moreover, it can fuel Islamophobia and contribute to the polarisation of societies, hindering efforts towards inclusivity, understanding, and social

cohesion. It is crucial to challenge these stereotypes and promote a more accurate and nuanced understanding of Islam to foster a more tolerant and inclusive society.

According to McBride (2011), heightened mortality salience makes people embrace stereotypes, thereby exacerbating us-versus-them paradigms, as stereotypes alleviate existential anxiety. Researchers have suggested that assigning stereotypical traits to outgroup members is a way of verifying one's perception of social reality by assuming that members of various social categories share the characteristics attributed to them by cultural stereotypes. Moreover, stereotypes provide anxiety-assuaging benefits by implying that the actions of members of an out-group are predictable and orderly. Even though stereotyping may appear illogical, it is also extremely effective. Regardless of how stereotypically we view outgroup members, death cannot be avoided and does not even have a logical or semantic relation to it. In such a way, these conceptions contribute to the meaning-providing conception of reality that enables individuals to live out their daily lives without encountering death's inevitable conclusion (McBride, 2011). The discussion about death in this context is relevant because heightened mortality salience, or the awareness of one's own mortality, influences people's behaviour and attitudes. McBride (2011) argues that this heightened awareness leads individuals to embrace stereotypes as a way to alleviate existential anxiety and create a sense of order and predictability in a world where death is inevitable. Stereotypes serve as a coping mechanism, allowing individuals to navigate their daily lives without constantly confronting the reality of their own mortality.

2.5.4 *Terror Management Theory*

This section examines the principles and implications of Terror Management Theory (TMT) in greater depth. In the following section, a comprehensive analysis is offered on how individuals cope with the realisation of their own mortality and existential anxieties that result

from this awareness. TMT research focuses on how people think and behave based on their fear of death. Death anxiety, according to TMT, encourages people to adopt worldviews that protect their self-esteem, worthiness, and sustainability while making them feel that they contribute to a meaningful world. These views can lead to troubling behaviours.

TMT suggests that humans are biologically inclined towards survival, just like all animals, according to Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon (1986). People, however, are aware that they will die at some point because they have the unique capacity for self-reflection. According to TMT, thoughts of death, especially one's own, create a sense of terror. Many people seek a sense of immortality, either literal (e.g., the promise of an afterlife after death) or symbolic (e.g., being remembered by others after death), to escape this terror. Death-related anxiety is, therefore, mitigated by faith in one's cultural worldview. This is where fear of terrorism leads to complications since it reminds individuals of death.

According to TMT, cultural worldviews provide individuals with a sense of purpose, value, structure, certainty, predictability, and control. It also recognises that it is important to maintain a pragmatic sense of certainty about a coherent, well-structured, predictable, and controllable understanding of one's world to control death-related fear. When people fear death, they pursue these psychological entities differently, choosing what best manages their anxiety rather than what allows an accurate understanding of reality to enable them to achieve goals to satisfy their needs. Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Koole, and Solomon (2006) provide a comprehensive discussion of death fear and other psychological motivations from a TMT perspective. By strengthening one's worldview, a sense of meaning, certainty, and control can help people manage death-related anxiety.

Cultural worldviews are fragile as they are socially constructed, and to remain valid, they must be continually validated through consensus. Even though most people cannot be sure they are correct, this anxiety-buffering system is generally effective for most people most of

the time. It is easier for people to be confident in their worldview when others share their values and beliefs. If adherents of one culture encounter adherents of another culture, the effective protection against anxiety provided by a worldview is undermined. In the presence of alternative belief systems, one's own belief system may not be valid. An individual perception of death may cause anxiety because it has as its context a different worldview than one's own. For an individual, their sense of a meaningful world can be threatened by this perception. The undermining of the protection provided by one's cultural worldview is even more significant when others actively challenge, derogate, or belittle an individual's cultural worldview and undermine it. Numerous studies have shown that consensually validated worldviews act to protect people from existential anxiety. These kinds of thoughts become more conscious when an individual's worldview is threatened (e.g., Schimel, Hayes, Williams, & Jahrig, 2008).

Further, when people become aware of death, they are more likely to prefer those who share their cultural beliefs, and they can become aggressive against those who threaten those beliefs (Greenberg et al., 1990; McGregor et al., 1998). TMT suggests that one can defend one's worldview in a variety of ways. By increasing support for their worldview, individuals may be able to convert those who are threatening others, strengthening their own belief system at the same time. As a result of successfully converting others to their worldview, the individual increases their self-confidence by increasing the number of followers of their ideology. By incorporating the belief that one worldview is threatening another, believers of one worldview often denigrate the worldview threat if conversion and accommodation fail. Several prominent terrorism researchers support this analysis (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). When faced with targets that threaten their worldview, religious terrorists claim non-believers are heretical infidel slaves of an evil empire (Lifton, 1999). Sometimes terrorists believe it is more expedient to simply destroy the adherents of particularly dangerous outgroups. In history, this can be seen

in genocides which have occurred, such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan conflict, as well as terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Death salience hypothesis offers the most widely tested support for TMT as one of the five conceptually distinct hypotheses that support it. The other four are the cultural worldview defence hypothesis, the self-esteem striving hypothesis, the anxiety-buffering hypothesis, and the proximal defence hypothesis. These hypotheses propose that individuals defend their worldview and increase their self-esteem to cope with the existential fear of mortality (Schindler et al., 2020). These five hypotheses that support TMT are significant because they explain how individuals defend their worldview and cope with the fear of mortality. These hypotheses provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological mechanisms behind the defence of beliefs and the maintenance of self-esteem in the face of existential threats.

In contrast to other theories of existential psychology, the five hypotheses that support TMT also provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals defend their worldview and cope with the fear of mortality. While other theories may focus on specific aspects of existential fear or individual psychological mechanisms, TMT encompasses multiple dimensions, including the role of the individual's cultural worldview, self-esteem, anxiety-buffering, and proximal defence, offering a more holistic understanding of the psychological processes involved in worldview defence. The implications of TMT for understanding existential psychology are significant. Using the concept of Being-in-the-World as part of its framework, TMT delves into the existential aspects of human experience and sheds light on how individuals navigate the intricate interplay between their cultural worldview and the existential anxieties associated with mortality. This comprehensive approach deepens our understanding of how individuals construct meaning, maintain self-esteem, and employ defence mechanisms to mitigate existential threats. Unlike other theories in existential

psychology that may focus on specific aspects of human experience, TMT takes a more comprehensive approach. This holistic perspective allows for a deeper exploration of the existential aspects of human experience and provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between cultural beliefs, existential anxieties, and the construction of meaning. By highlighting the role of cultural worldview, self-esteem, anxiety-buffering, and proximal defence, TMT offers a more holistic understanding of how individuals cope with the fear of mortality and defend their beliefs. This framework allows researchers to explore the ways in which individuals strive to maintain meaning and psychological well-being in the face of mortality. In therapy or counselling settings, the insights from TMT can be utilised to help individuals address and cope with existential fears and concerns about mortality. By understanding the role of each element of TMT, therapists can tailor interventions to help clients confront their fears, re-evaluate their beliefs, and develop healthier coping strategies to enhance their psychological well-being. Additionally, TMT can inform the development of interventions that promote resilience and meaning-making in the face of existential challenges, ultimately facilitating personal growth and transformation.

When people are aware of mortality (mortality salience; MS), they hold onto their worldviews, respond positively to those who support them, respond negatively to those who threaten them, and work towards strengthening their self-esteem (Goldenberg et al., 2003; Greenberg et al., 1990; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989). To test this hypothesis, mortality reminders are compared to dental pain, intense physical pain, meaninglessness, public speaking, social exclusion, and uncertainty as aversive. Mortality salience refers to the awareness and reminder of one's own mortality. When individuals are confronted with their mortality, they tend to cling to their belief systems, seek support from others who share the same beliefs, and exhibit defensive responses towards those who challenge or threaten their worldview. This phenomenon can be observed through various

experimental manipulations, such as comparing mortality reminders to other aversive experiences like dental pain or social exclusion. According to Pyszczynski et al. (2006), death reminders do not have a consistent effect across cultures, suggesting they are a response to death. However, existential uncertainty and meaninglessness have been shown to trigger defensive responses similar to death reminders (Marigold, McGregor, & Zanna, 2010). The threat of death also increases people's ability to think about death (Schimel et al., 2008). In accordance with mortality salience studies, individuals who are self-assured or have information validating their worldviews are less anxious when faced with threats, have lower death thought accessibility, and do not respond defensively when faced with threats (Harmon-Jones et al., 1997). According to Dechesne et al. (2003), considering scientific evidence suggesting that there is a literal afterlife, mortality salience does not influence a striving for self-esteem or defence of a worldview (Dechesne et al., 2003). Based on the findings of Dechesne et al. (2003), the presence of scientific evidence supporting the existence of an afterlife does not appear to have an impact on individuals' desire for self-esteem or the need to defend their worldview when faced with thoughts of their own mortality. This suggests that other factors may play a stronger role in shaping these psychological responses. In addition to Greenberg, Solomon, and Arndt (2008), Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2003) provide a review of these hypotheses. This study suggests that individuals must defend their cultural belief systems and perceive themselves as valuable contributors to their heritage to maintain their cultural identity.

In TMT research, existential fears are extensively explored. According to early TMT studies (Greenberg et al., 1990; McGregor et al., 1998), reminders of death increase hostility toward outgroup members and people with different cultural beliefs. This research has directly impacted counter-terrorism strategies and terrorism. According to Pyszczynski et al. (2006), Iranians and Americans conducted parallel studies. Death reminders increased American

support for extreme military action against Middle Easterners, even if they cost tens of thousands of innocent civilians. Death reminders also influenced Iranians' preference for martyrdom attacks. It has been suggested that intergroup conflict is fuelled by existential motives (Hirschberger and Ein-Dor, 2006).

People are more inclined to defend their cultural beliefs when they think about their own deaths. According to TMT analysis of terrorism, this is an important factor in making people contemplate war and destruction scenes. Incidental environmental cues can also trigger violent worldview defences. A cemetery or funeral home can enhance death-thought accessibility and invoke worldview defence (Gailliot et al., 2008). For example, Veranasians are a cultural group known for their strong attachment to their traditional beliefs and practices. Their cultural identity is deeply rooted in their history, customs, and rituals, which they fiercely protect and defend. When Veranasians are confronted with thoughts of their own mortality, their commitment to their cultural beliefs becomes even stronger, leading to a heightened sense of protection and a tendency to resist any perceived threats to their worldview.

A burial ground reminds Veranasians of death every day, leading to chronic worldview defence. Veranasians are people who belong to a culture or community that values and embraces the concept of death as a part of daily life. As a result of this constant reminder that death is everywhere, they develop a chronic worldview defence mechanism, making them more likely to defend their cultural beliefs when confronted with ideas and events that challenge their worldview (Fernandez et al., 2010). In this study, Landau et al. (2004) investigate the effects of environmental cues on death perception in war and terrorism.

In their study, Gillespie and Jessop (2007) found that participants were more responsive to an ambiguous word-stem completion task after being exposed to newspaper articles about major terrorist attacks, such as the September 11, 2001, attacks or the July 7, 2005, bombings

in London. To further explore this phenomenon, they conducted a follow-up experiment where participants were shown images of buildings in different conditions, including intact, under construction, bombed, or damaged due to attacks. Vail et al. (2020) found that participants who viewed war and terrorism images were more likely to be attracted to death thoughts. Similar cognitive accessibility was found in representations of buildings reduced to rubble, presumably caused by war or terrorism. Images of war-torn countries can increase radicalisation and support for violence, according to Vail et al. (2020). Viewing scenes of past and current destruction increased support for violence through death-thought accessibility. As a result, war remnants may perpetuate death awareness and chronic worldview defence, thereby exacerbating intergroup conflict.

Studies conducted by various research organisations and academic institutions indicate that suicide bombings in Iraq have increased threefold since 1992. These studies provide valuable insights into the alarming rise of this devastating form of violence in the region. According to Mogahed (2006), terrorism in the Middle East increased threefold between 2004 and 2006. There are many factors contributing to the increase in terrorism, most notably the Iraq War and the overthrow of the Iraqi government. According to Vail et al. (2009), constant reminders of death may have increased terrorism during this war. To combat existential anxiety, it is important to believe that one contributes to a fundamentally right cultural viewpoint. Self-esteem rooted in one's cultural milieu can lead to aggressive actions to avenge attacks or insults directed at one's group. Both Mogahed (2006) and Vail et al. (2009) provide valuable insights into the increase in terrorism, particularly in the Middle East. While Mogahed (2006) focuses on the overall increase in terrorism in the region, Vail et al. (2009) delve into the psychological factors, such as the feelings of humiliation and injustice, that contribute to terrorist actions. The relationship between power dynamics and feelings of humiliation in terrorism is a complex one. As Vail et al. (2009) suggest, terrorists often feel humiliated and

unjustly treated by more powerful nations, which can lead to a desire for revenge and aggressive actions. This sense of humiliation and perceived power imbalance can be a driving force behind their motivations to engage in acts of violence. Cultural self-esteem can play a significant role in driving individuals towards aggressive actions and seeking revenge. When individuals feel a strong attachment to their cultural identity and perceive attacks or insults directed at their group, they may be motivated to retaliate to defend their cultural beliefs and restore their sense of self-worth. This connection between cultural self-esteem and aggression highlights the complex interplay between power dynamics, feelings of humiliation, and acts of violence.

Psychological equanimity is built on self-esteem and worldviews, but these can be threatened. By motivating people to defend themselves and settle the score, playing into the image that the other is evil, and encouraging violence to avoid moral responsibility, violence leads to more violence. Moreover, violent attacks leave a wake of death and destruction that drives even more extreme responses. Psychological forces can blind people to peace and coexistence but are inextricably linked to real-world grievances and injustices. In a world where conflict is ubiquitous, intergroup relations can be sour. These violence-promoting tendencies can, however, be tempered and even reversed by TMT. In recent years, psychology has increasingly focused on finding paths to peace to reduce violence and improve intergroup relations.

According to Landau et al. (2004), when people are concerned about their mortality, charismatic leaders are more likely to be appealing to them. Based on their study of Americans' attitudes toward George W. Bush and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it was found that when they were reminded of their mortality (mortality salience), they were more likely to support his counter-terrorism policies. It has been shown that subliminal exposure to 9/11-related stimuli increased support for Bush. As the participants became more aware of the mortality salience,

they became more in favour of Bush and voted for him in the upcoming election. However, in a later study conducted by Landau et al. (2004), participants became less favourable towards John Kerry and instead voted for Bush. This contradicts the previous findings and raises questions about the consistency and reliability of the relationship between mortality salience and political preferences.

As Gordon Allport discussed in his 1954 classic text *On the Nature of Prejudice*, social psychologists have made some attempts to examine this activist assertion empirically. The activist assertion being referred to here is the belief that intergroup bias and prejudice can be reduced through certain interventions and strategies. These studies by Sherif (1961) and Dovidio (2009) provide evidence that supports this claim, showing that cooperation and extending group inclusiveness can help mitigate intergroup bias.

In the classic Robber's Cave experiment, Sherif (1961) demonstrated that rival groups that are generally hostile can cooperate when faced with superordinate threats and intergroup tasks. Dovidio (2009) developed the common in-group identity model, which argues that intergroup bias can be mitigated greatly by extending group inclusiveness to a larger group of people (Dovidio, 2009).

Several key aspects of TMT make it a valuable framework for understanding and interpreting human responses to terrorism (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, et al. 2006). TMT explains why individuals and societies can be profoundly affected by the threat of terrorism. It sheds light on the deep existential anxiety faced by such a threat. The psychological effects of terrorism can manifest in a variety of ways, such as increased feelings of fear and anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. It can also lead to helplessness and a decreased sense of safety and security. TMT explains how these effects come about; it suggests that the threat of terrorism triggers a fundamental fear of mortality and can lead to a heightened sense

of vulnerability. It also suggests that the fear of terrorism can be so pervasive that it can lead to a disruption in daily functioning and a decrease in quality of life. Political behaviour in the context of terrorism can be analysed through this theory. It explains why some people support certain policies and others oppose them, particularly security measures. Examining the political behaviour of citizens concerning terrorism can help to better elucidate the motivations behind their choices. It can also provide insights into how to better manage the issue of terrorism, both in terms of policy and public opinion. Additionally, this theory can provide a comprehensive framework for examining the political environment related to terrorism, including how public opinion can shape governmental decisions. By studying the political behaviour of citizens in relation to terrorism, it is possible to make more informed decisions about how to approach the issue in terms of both policy and public opinion. This could lead to more effective strategies for combating terrorism and a better understanding of the role public opinion plays in shaping governmental responses.

Public perceptions of terrorism can be influenced by media coverage of terrorism, especially extensive coverage. Besides promoting existential anxiety, it also influences people's attitudes, emotions, and behaviours. It can also create a sense of fear and insecurity, and it can lead to self-censorship or suppression of dissenting opinions, which may result in a decrease in civil liberties and a higher level of support for stronger security measures. After the 9/11 attacks in the US, for example, the media's portrayal of terrorism and the subsequent fear generated among the public prompted Congress to pass the Patriot Act, which expanded government surveillance capabilities. This process of securitisation involves framing an issue, such as government surveillance, as an urgent matter of national security. By linking it to the fight against terrorism, the public is more likely to accept and support measures that would otherwise be seen as intrusive or unwelcome. The Patriot Act is a prime example of securitisation in action, as it was justified as a necessary response to the threat of terrorism. However, the

consequences of securitising can be far-reaching. When an issue is framed as a matter of national security, it often leads to a loss of civil liberties and a concentration of power in the hands of the government. This can result in the erosion of privacy rights, increased surveillance, and a decrease in individual freedoms. By associating the issue with terrorism or threats to national security, it creates a sense of urgency and a perception that strong measures are necessary to ensure safety. This fear-driven response can override concerns about civil liberties and individual freedoms, making the public more accepting of intrusive or unwelcome measures. A historical example of securitisation and its impact is the Cold War era, when the United States used the perceived threat of communism to justify various measures, such as widespread surveillance, censorship, and the McCarthyite era of political witch hunts. These actions were seen as necessary to protect national security, but they also resulted in the infringement of civil liberties and the suppression of dissenting voices (Wilde, 2009). However, critics argue that the use of securitisation can lead to the erosion of civil liberties and individual privacy. They raise concerns about the potential abuse of power by government agencies and the infringement of citizens' rights. Balancing national security with ethical considerations is a complex challenge that requires scrutiny and oversight.

By recognising the psychological impact of threats, TMT can also inform interventions aimed at increasing resilience in the face of terrorism. These interventions can include measures to increase public understanding of the terrorist threat and to promote effective coping strategies. Additionally, TMT can help to inform policies that seek to reduce the impact of terrorist attacks and mitigate the potential for further damage. Policymakers and other stakeholders can use TMT to develop strategies to promote resilience and reduce the potential for terrorist attacks. These strategies can include public education campaigns and more effective security measures.

TMT can inform us of the psychological underpinnings of fear and how it affects human cognition, emotions, and behaviour. As individuals may perceive terrorism as a direct threat to their cultural beliefs, values, and way of life (Pyszczynski et al., 2004), feelings of fear may intensify. In the face of perceived threats to individuals' cultural worldviews and sense of security, TMT helps us understand how they might respond. It provides valuable insight into psychological mechanisms that underlie fear-based behaviours and decision-making in the face of terrorism (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). By understanding the role of existential anxiety and cultural worldviews in shaping human behaviour, it is possible to develop more effective strategies to address the fear of terrorism and foster resilience among individuals and communities.

Moreover, TMT examines the manipulation and use of fear of terrorism by political leaders and extremist groups to influence public opinion. By using existential fears, these actors can gain support for their ideologies or policies by appealing to individuals' need for meaning and security. Extremist groups may appeal to vulnerable individuals who are afraid of death and desire a sense of significance because they seek belonging and purpose in extremist organisations. Additionally, TMT stresses the importance of addressing the underlying causes of existential anxiety and insecurity along with understanding the psychological dynamics underlying fear of terrorism. It is essential that social cohesion is promoted, meaningful engagement is provided, and basic needs are met to accomplish this (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

2.6 The broader impact of a fear of terrorism

This section critically reviews the wide-reaching effects that the fear of terrorism has on individuals, societies, and various aspects of life. Due to the association between terrorism and certain extremist groups, Islamophobia is often associated with the fear of terrorism. As a result of this fear-driven prejudice, attitudes and behaviours toward Muslims in society are influenced. Identifying the influence of fear on those sentiments and behaviours is crucial for understanding the broader implications of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim communities (Abu Khalaf et al., 2023; Davids, 2009; Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008). Fear of terrorism may increase death anxiety for individuals and communities (Aly & Green, 2010). Fear can also have a broader impact on existential anxieties and death-related concerns associated with terrorism (McBride, 2011).

People and communities may experience trauma, anxiety, and distress because of exposure to actual or perceived acts of terrorism. There is an emphasis on the traumatic consequences of exposure to terrorism, focusing on the impact of fear-induced trauma on mental health and society at large (Kiper & Sosis, 2015). An individual's fear of terrorism triggers various behavioural changes, from changes in personal safety to changes in security protocols and policies within society (Kiper & Sosis, 2015). To understand the broader impact of terrorism, it is necessary to examine how fear affects individual and societal behaviour, highlighting the impact of changes in security measures, public policies, and interpersonal interactions. In essence, this section comprehensively examines the multifaceted repercussions of the fear of terrorism, including topics such as Islamophobia, death anxiety, trauma, and behavioural adjustments. A broad range of fear-induced responses is observed, from psychological effects to social changes to intergroup dynamics.

2.6.1 *Racism and Islamophobia*

It is imperative to distinguish between Islamic and Islamist terrorism. While Islamic refers to the Muslim faith, Islamist refers to an ideological, often extremist, and violent, interpretation of Islam (Cagaptay, 2010). Against the backdrop of the increased prevalence of terrorist activity globally, Western European countries and the US are concerned about Islamist terrorism's potential impact on security and stability. Much of the discourse has been centred on the massive influx of refugees into Europe, most of whom originate from predominantly Muslim countries (Galantino, 2022; Baker-Beall, 2009; Duffy, 2023). In Germany, right-wing populist parties, as well as nationalist populist parties, have been quick to blame the refugee crisis for the apparently growing problem of Islamist-motivated terrorist attacks (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). The relationship between violence and Islam is not stronger than with the links between violence other religions (mainly at a national level, see, for example Piazza, 2009; Fish et al., 2010; Gleditsch & Rudolfsen, 2016). However, 9/11, the recent terrorist attacks, as well as the current socio-political climate have contributed to creating the perception of an association between Islam and violence (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). This association is further reinforced by the media, as news outlets tend to focus more heavily on terrorist attacks that are associated with Islam than those associated with other religions (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). Orientalism, Eurocentrism, historical events such as 9/11, as well as a complex interplay of factors can be attributed to this fear and focus on Islamist-motivated terrorism, rather than other forms of terrorism.

As a paramilitary organisation, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has, historically, fought to end British rule in Northern Ireland and to establish a united Ireland. Several terrorist attacks have been carried out by the IRA in pursuit of its political objectives against military and civilian targets in the UK (Clubb, 2016). Despite this, public perception and fear are predominantly centred on Islamist terrorism, reflecting deep-seated biases and stereotypes perpetuated by societal narratives and the media (Lewis et al., 2016). Far-right extremism, eco-

terrorism, and domestic terrorism are some other forms of terrorism that receive less media attention (Saleem et al., 2021). Despite the significant threat and impact posed by these types of terrorism, they are often underrepresented in the media, contributing to the distorted public perception and fear that often surrounds Islamist-motivated terrorism.

Political decision-makers experience pressure in the face of fear, which affects their behaviour. Islamophobia has directly impinged on attitudes to Muslims and Islamic practices at both the macro and micro-level. For example, in some countries, the religious rights of Muslims are being slowly curtailed with Muslim women in some European countries for example, facing restrictions on wearing hijabs (Corral, 2013). Additionally, there has been an increase in surveillance measures targeting Muslim communities, fostering alienation and discrimination (Al-Faham, 2021). This atmosphere of fear and prejudice not only affects the lives of innocent individuals but also undermines the principles of inclusivity and tolerance that are essential for a democratic society. This has resulted in a climate of intolerance and an increase in discrimination against immigrants, particularly those who are Muslim (Verkuyten, 2013). This climate of intolerance and discrimination against immigrants paradoxically leads to their alienation from society, which in turn can engender a sense of exclusion and marginalisation among immigrants, pushing them towards extremist political positions as a means of finding belonging and identity (Badea, 2023). This not only perpetuates a cycle of radicalisation but also undermines social cohesion and integration efforts, ultimately posing a threat to the stability and harmony of the entire community (Choudhury, 2007). Many countries have implemented policies that are seen as hostile to immigrants, leading to a rise in xenophobia and racism (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). The climate of fear and prejudice described above can be seen as a manifestation of reactionary politics and resentful affect in populist times. Political leaders may exploit these feelings of resentment to gain support and advance their agendas, often targeting marginalised groups such as immigrants. This further

exacerbates the cycle of discrimination and alienation, posing a threat to social cohesion and the principles of inclusivity and tolerance (Capelos et al., 2021).

A myriad of studies have documented the correlation between fear and discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants. For example, a study conducted by Esses (2021) found that individuals who experienced higher levels of fear were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards immigrants. Similarly, another study by Stockemer et al. (2020) found that anti-immigration attitudes were prevalent among the far-right electorate. The study revealed that individuals who identified with far-right political parties showed higher levels of fear towards immigrants, which in turn influenced their discriminatory attitudes. These findings highlight the complex relationship between fear, political ideologies, and attitudes towards immigrants. In addition to fear, economic factors can also contribute to the rise of xenophobia and racism (Hjerm & Nagayoshi, 2011). High unemployment or economic instability can create a sense of competition for resources, leading some individuals to scapegoat immigrants as the cause of their economic troubles (Hjerm & Nagayoshi, 2011). Furthermore, political rhetoric and media portrayal of immigrants as threats or burdens can exacerbate existing prejudices and stereotypes, fuelling discriminatory attitudes and actions (Babula et al., 2022).

The fear of terrorism has created a culture of suspicion and distrust, leading to a rise in hate speech and hate crimes. This further exacerbates the problem, as it increases the sense of insecurity among citizens and sets the stage for more violent outbursts (Esses, 2021). Understanding this growing concern seems necessary to alleviate it. The situation is especially pressing considering Europe's refugee crisis, as well as the widespread notion that Muslims are being conceptualised as a "threat from within" (Sheridan, 2006). To tackle this issue, it is imperative not only to consider the causes of this growing insecurity but also to work towards creating policies that ensure the safety and security of citizens without compromising the rights

of minorities. One potential reference that can provide further insight into the correlation between fear and discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants is the study by Dixon et al. (2020).Their research delves into the cognitive processes underlying the formation of biased attitudes, highlighting the role of fear as a motivator for these biases. By examining the psychological mechanisms, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between fear and discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants. Another relevant study that sheds light on the relationship between fear and discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants is the research conducted by Turner and Mangual Figueroa (2019). Their findings suggest that fear of cultural change and perceived threats to national identity can significantly influence negative attitudes towards immigrants. By examining the psychological and sociological factors at play, this study further enhances our understanding of the complex dynamics underlying xenophobia and racism.

Several studies have examined how terrorist attacks affect public fear (Ahmed, 2015; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Huddy et al., 2004), while others have examined how the media impact fear (Altheide, 2006; Nellis & Savage, 2012). Only a few studies have explored the fear of terrorism using a theoretical framework developed for fear of crime (Huddy et al., 2002). According to research, many Europeans and Germans believe that Muslims harbour terrorist sympathies. In a survey conducted from 2003 to 2005, over 60 per cent of German respondents agreed that Muslims support Islamist terrorism and see Islamist terrorists as heroes (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). According to Fish et al. (2010), German citizens tend to believe that Muslims are more intrinsically religious, more closely identified with their religion, and more violent than Christians. Fish et al. (2010) also found that Germans believe Muslims support religiously motivated terrorism. It was also found that, on average, about a third of Europeans viewed Islamist terrorists as heroes, and about a quarter regarded Islamist terrorism as justified (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). These beliefs and perceptions may stem from various factors,

including media portrayals, societal stereotypes, and personal biases. Prevalent negative narratives about Islam and Muslims can contribute to the formation of such beliefs, while limited personal interactions and cultural misunderstandings may further perpetuate these misconceptions. Additionally, the influence of historical events and geopolitical factors cannot be overlooked when shaping public opinion. Germans showed the least agreement with the statements (27.9 per cent and 17.1 per cent, respectively). Fear of terrorism, therefore, is inextricably linked to negative attitudes toward Muslims, and perspectives from fear of crime literature do not provide sufficient explanations for varying levels of fear (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018).

According to Andersen and Mayerl (2018), fear of terrorism is strongly influenced by attitudes toward Muslims and the seemingly random nature of terrorism, resulting in a lack of explanatory power for crime-related variables. In addition, it is believed that previously observed relationships between vulnerability and social control approaches and fear of terrorism are spurious since attitudes towards Muslims are likely predictors of fear of crime. This is because negative attitudes towards Muslims can result in an internalised fear of terrorism, as well as an increased perception of risk. The study conducted by Scheitle (2017) found that negative attitudes towards Muslims are often influenced by one's political orientation and religious beliefs. These factors can contribute to the perpetuation of Islamophobia in the United States, leading to an increased perception of risk and internalised fear of terrorism. This perception can lead to an increased demand for security measures, even if those measures are not necessarily effective at preventing terrorism. People who are older, poorer, and more conservative are likely to be more fearful of terrorism and Islamophobic. It therefore seems that attitudes toward Muslims are directly responsible for fear of terrorism if these individuals are not considered as unique individuals with their own beliefs, values, and experiences. According to Sides and Citrin (2007), individuals with strong conservative beliefs

and lower socioeconomic status are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards immigration and perceive a higher risk of terrorism. Therefore, it is important to consider these factors when analysing the relationship between attitudes towards Muslims and fear of terrorism (Abbas, 2019).

Consequently, it is important to understand the attitudes of these demographic groups, as well as the wider public, to develop effective policies that can address the fear of terrorism without causing further marginalisation of Muslims (Abbas, 2019). To understand the complex relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, beliefs, values, attitudes towards Muslims, and fears of terrorism, Ajzen and Fishbein's (2002) correspondence assumption provides a useful framework. This model suggests that these factors are interconnected and that a hierarchical approach, moving from the general to the specific, can help shed light on the underlying dynamics. Specifically, sociodemographic characteristics are likely to influence stable values the respondent deems important and more contextual beliefs about causal relationships in their daily lives. As such, these characteristics may shape an individual's perspective on the world and how they interact with it. There is a close relationship between values and beliefs, likely to vary over time. This implies that individuals' values and beliefs may be subject to change based on their social and demographic context, suggesting that values are not intrinsically stable but are likely to vary according to the individual's circumstances. These values and beliefs, including affective and cognitive components, should influence a respondent's broad attitudes towards Muslims. In as much as those attitudes toward Muslims influence fear of (Islamist-) terrorism, it is possible that those attitudes also influence fear of terrorism as well. Therefore, it is important to identify and assess the factors that shape attitudes towards Muslims, as they may have significant implications for fear of terrorism. A strong fear of Islamic terrorism is likely to lead to suspicion of Muslims, and those with a negative attitude towards Muslims are likely to be suspicious of them (Andersen & Mayerl, 2018). Therefore, it

is essential to recognise the correlation between attitudes towards Muslims and fear of terrorism, as it could have a significant impact on how people perceive the Muslim community.

Fear of terrorism can lead to terrorism. Berger (2016), for example, examines how texts such as *The Turner Diaries* have motivated white supremacist groups to engage in violence. This book emphasises the significance of such literature as a source of inspiration and motivation for those engaged in far-right extremism. Throughout this study, the author provides an in-depth analysis of the tactics and strategies employed by white nationalist groups, providing insight into their organisational structures and methods of operation. The author also examines the potential dangers of far-right extremism and its long-term implications for society. Finally, Berger (2016) offers significant recommendations on how to counter the influence of white nationalist groups. As part of its objective to provide a deeper understanding of white nationalism, *The Turner Legacy examines* its ideological underpinnings along with its link to violence perpetrated by far-right extremists. This book provides valuable insight into contemporary far-right terrorism by tracing its historical roots and examining its enduring impact (Berger, 2016).

These examples from European countries further illustrate the dangerous consequences of a fear of terrorism. The rise of far-right populist movements and parties, such as Generation Identitær in Denmark and the Nordic Resistance Movement, demonstrates how societal anxieties can fuel extremist ideologies and lead to acts of violence. Researchers (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018) provide valuable insights into the growth of radical right-wing movements in the Nordic countries. These examples highlight the alarming trend of extremist ideologies gaining traction in European countries. The rise of far-right populist movements and parties demonstrates how societal anxieties and fears can be manipulated to fuel acts of violence. The dangerous consequences of fear of terrorism are evident in the growth of radical

right-wing movements that threaten the social fabric of these nations (Widfeldt, 2023). The potential long-term effects of far-right populist movements can include the erosion of democratic values, the marginalisation of minority groups, and the normalisation of extremist ideologies. These movements often exploit societal fears and anxieties, leading to societal polarisation and a breakdown of social cohesion (Kondor & Littler, 2024).

Additionally, the rise of far-right ideologies can have a lasting impact on political discourse, policymaking, and the overall stability of a nation. One method used to manipulate societal anxieties is disseminating propaganda and misinformation. Extremist groups exploit fear by spreading false narratives, creating a sense of threat and urgency among the population. They amplify existing grievances, scapegoat marginalised communities, and exploit economic and social insecurities to further their agenda. Through these tactics, they manipulate public sentiment and recruit individuals who are susceptible to their extremist ideologies.

According to Kundnani (2014), Muslims are stigmatised and marginalised because of fear of terrorism, right-wing populism, and the influence of fundamentalist religious right-wing movements. Fear of terrorism has resulted in a climate of hostility and suspicion towards Muslims, leading to discriminatory narratives and practices against them. Kundnani (2014) suggests that media outlets, politicians, and think tanks associated with the religious right promote Islamophobic discourse. This discourse is based on a range of falsehoods and exaggerations, which ultimately legitimise the marginalisation of Muslims and create a climate of fear and suspicion. This fear and suspicion further justify discriminatory practices against Muslims, leading to a cycle of marginalisation and Islamophobia. They discuss how religious and political actors have utilised fear of terrorism to advance their agendas, along with advocating for tighter immigration policies, increased surveillance measures, and the erosion of civil liberties. In his book, Kundnani (2014) critiques the dominant narrative that portrays

Muslims as monolithic and inherently dangerous. A significant increase in hate crimes and violence has been associated with racialised scapegoating, as discussed in the book about Islamophobia's broader impact on social cohesion, counter-terrorism efforts, and democratic principles.

Furthermore, the rise of right-wing movements and populist parties adds another layer to the issue. These movements often promote anti-democratic measures and engage in extreme behaviour, exacerbating hate crimes and violence. Symbolic legislation, such as the jewellery law in Denmark, targeting specific groups further contributes to the marginalisation and scapegoating of minority communities (Hardman, 2022). Symbolic legislation refers to laws primarily enacted for their symbolic value rather than their practical impact. In the case of the jewellery law in Denmark, it specifically targeted Muslim women who wear face-covering veils, further stigmatising and isolating them within society. This type of legislation not only perpetuates discrimination but also sends a message of exclusion and intolerance to minority communities. Symbolic legislation targeting specific groups not only reinforces negative stereotypes but also creates a hostile environment for marginalised communities. By singling out certain religious or ethnic groups, these laws validate discriminatory attitudes and further stigmatise them, leading to increased marginalisation and scapegoating. This perpetuates a cycle of division and alienation, making it even more challenging for minority communities to fully participate in society and access their rights. Kundnani (2014) discusses the intersection between Islamophobia, the religious right, and terrorism fears. He emphasises the need to challenge and address these harmful narratives and practices to promote inclusion, social justice, and effective counter-terrorism strategies.

A broader and socio-historical perspective can be seen in the suggestions of Said (1978), who extensively wrote about the relationship between the West and the Middle East in

his works. As Said (1978) points out, the West has constructed a dichotomous relationship between the "Orient" and the "Occident", which has dehumanised the East and its people. Furthermore, stereotypes and misconceptions have been used to construct this narrative. A legacy of violence and conflict has resulted from the justification of Western imperialism and intervention in the Middle East (Said, 1978). According to Said (1978), this construction of a dichotomous relationship between the "orient" (global south) and the "occident" (global West) has not only dehumanised the people of the East but also perpetuated stereotypes and misconceptions concerning the East. This narrative has not only justified Western imperialism and intervention in the Middle East but has also resulted in a legacy of violence and conflict in the region. Said's ideas about Orientalism and the construction of the Other (Said, 1978) are relevant to the experience of living with the fear of terrorism. The media often portrays terrorism as coming from the Middle East and Muslim countries, perpetuating the idea of a monolithic "Other" that is inherently violent and dangerous. These constructed narratives are used as justification to dehumanise and 'control' the global south. These narratives reinforce power dynamics and perpetuate a sense of superiority in the West.

According to Said (1978), these narratives damage the East and the West. As a result of Said's (1978) analysis, the notion that the West is inherently superior to the East is challenged by pointing out that historical facts do not support this narrative that the East is barbaric and underdeveloped. As a result, he explains that Mesopotamia, the birthplace of science, was part of the East, dispelling the myth that progress and development are exclusively Western. We must re-evaluate our understanding of different cultures and acknowledge their contributions to humanity. These constructed narratives not only serve as justifications for Western imperialism and intervention in the global south, but they also perpetuate a sense of superiority and control over these regions. As a result of these narratives dehumanising and demonising the global south, discrimination and marginalisation are exacerbated, particularly against

Muslim communities, which contributes to the rise of Islamophobia. In order to foster understanding, respect, and equality among different cultures, it is imperative to challenge and dismantle these narratives.

2.6.2 *Enhanced death anxiety*

For as long as humans have recorded their history, they have known and feared death (Abdel-Khalek, 2002). Many cultures honour the dead through rituals and ceremonies. In the face of death, people often turn to religion for comfort and solace. Death is often viewed as part of life and a source of strength and resilience. However, it is important to note that not all cultures and individuals turn to religion in the face of death. Different cultural and personal beliefs may lead people to find comfort and solace in other ways, such as through personal reflection, therapy, or support from loved ones. Personal reflection allows individuals to process their emotions and thoughts surrounding death, providing an opportunity for introspection and self-discovery. It can help individuals make sense of their own mortality, find meaning in their lives, and come to terms with the inevitability of death. Through personal reflection, individuals can find their own unique ways to cope, heal, and find solace in the face of death. Yalom (2008) argues that humans have the constant shadow of knowing they will grow, blossom, and eventually, diminish and die. Death and death wounds have been prominent in ancient and modern art. For some individuals, fear of death can negate fulfilment and happiness (Yalom, 2008). The fear of death can be rooted in cultural beliefs and values, as well as shaped by personal experiences (Solomon et al., 2000). Death is a fear that can be mitigated by talking about it and facing it head-on, for example, after witnessing the death of a loved one or observing a traumatic event. The fear of mortality can only be overcome by confronting it (Furer et al., 2007).

While human beings are believed to develop adaptive coping mechanisms during periods of stress or threats to their own or loved ones' health (Yalom, 2008), some individuals may develop inefficient and pathological modes of coping. Therefore, death anxiety is considered a basic fear underlying a wide range of psychological conditions (Strachan et al., 2015), and psychologists and therapists often encounter individuals who are experiencing difficulties understanding death (Yalom, 2008). Therefore, death anxiety is an important issue to consider in psychotherapy, as it can assist individuals in coping with their own mortality and alleviate their anxiety. It is thus important to understand how it interplays with fear of terrorism.

For example, TMT emphasises proximal and distal defences against death anxiety (Abeyta et al., 2014). Pyszczynski et al. (1999) suggest that people use proximal and distal defences to prevent death fears. Using a dual process model (Pyszczynski et al., 1999), proximal defences (conscious, threat-focused) are activated to prevent death-related thoughts from being focused on. Some of these proximal defences are suppression of death thoughts and denial of mortality. In addition, they include strategies such as maintaining optimum physical health. When fear of death moves out of conscious awareness, distal defences are unconscious, symbolic triggers. Distal defences generally include strategies for reducing death-related thoughts and protecting the symbolic self, as well as maintaining cultural worldviews, shared identities, and interpersonal relationships (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). These strategies increase self-esteem, promote personal significance, and enhance self-confidence. According to a substantial number of experimental studies based on this dual process model (Greenberg, 2012), death-related thoughts trigger defensive responses to reduce death fears.

Among the important components of terror management is experimental existential psychology, which examines how existential concerns influence human behaviour and thought (Fiske et al., 2010). Experimental Existential Psychology (Greenberg et al., 2004; Pyszczynski

et al., 2010) states that human beings contribute to human behaviour even when they are unaware of existential concerns (death, freedom, isolation, identity, and meaning). The mortality salience paradigm (Koole et al., 2006) has been used in many experimental studies of Experimental Existential Psychology to assess terror management defences against death anxiety. In addition, these studies have demonstrated that existential concerns affect human behaviour in a subtle yet pervasive manner (Koole et al., 2006) as well as contributing to social behaviour (Hayes et al., 2010).

TMT has been evaluated experimentally, allowing conceptual progress beyond theoretical contemplation (Hayes et al., 2010). Research has examined death-related cognitions in hundreds of studies, showing how they may influence behaviour. McGregor et al. (1998) examined participants' aggressive reactions to people with challenging worldviews. The participants were asked to write a paragraph about their views on American politics that they believed other participants would share. The next phase involved randomly assigning participants to either mortality salient conditions or control conditions. In the mortality salient condition, participants were asked to describe how they felt when they contemplated death, along with what would happen after death and after they died. After receiving the bogus paragraph, participants were asked to confirm or refute their political views in the control condition (Greenberg, 2012).

As an example, mortality salience can influence behaviour and perception in religion, politics, interracial conflict, driving, acts of violence, and terrorism (Burke et al., 2010). Burke et al. (2010) analysed 277 mortality salience experiments for various variables related to worldview and self-esteem. According to Pyszczynski et al. (2006), mortality salience reduces death-thoughts and increases support for extreme military interventions. When participants perceive driving as related to self-esteem, it may be possible to improve access to information about the deaths of people from a different religion and attribute more blame to injured victims

(Hayes et al., 2008). Mortality salience may motivate individuals to resolve conflicts as a way to regain self-esteem and avoid blame (Burke et al., 2010).

The effect of mortality salience on worldview defence is well known (Hayes et al., 2010). Death reminders can increase defensive needs, affecting rational thought processes and behaviour (Hirschberger, 2006). Death salience leads to "unconscious and counterintuitive" coping responses. According to cognitive biases, some individuals report higher levels of positive affect after being reminded of death.

These findings confirm that death and impermanence affect human behaviour in a broader context. As a result, being primed with thoughts of death, humans consistently responded hurtfully to individuals with alternative worldviews, indicating we are troubled by our own mortality. Many interpersonal conflicts are caused by our mortality, and recognising this may help individuals better communicate and coexist. Psychopathology is considered a maladaptive way of coping with death (Strachan et al., 2007). As such, recognising mortality as a potential source of conflict can lead to more effective communication and understanding between individuals, while psychopathology is an unhealthy approach to coping with those fears. Death anxiety is a trans-diagnostic construct that requires consideration in assessing and treating psychopathology.

For example, in a study conducted in Israel with more than 17,000 Israelis, scholars showed that long-term exposure to terrorism increased resting heart rate and mortality risk. This study indicates that constant exposure to terror threatens the health of individuals and increases mortality rates. According to this study, long-term terrorism exposure can negatively impact an individual's health and increase their mortality risk. People exposed to global terror outbreaks are at risk of mental health problems for years to come. A previous study also found that sudden stressful and drastic situations like earthquakes increase heart rate and heart attack risk. There is no evidence that long-term exposure to terror poses physical health risks in and

of itself, however. During annual check-ups of healthy Israeli subjects, researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem examined factors affecting basal heart rates and observed how these rates changed over time to better understand health risks related to a fear of terror. A series of wars and terror attacks have stressed Israel repeatedly over the past 60 years, affecting the entire society (Shenhar-Tsarfaty et al., 2014). In the 21st century, disasters, whether natural or manmade, have become the most pressing issue. In addition, terrorism, which is difficult to define, is more than what the media portrays. As discussed in earlier sections, terrorism is a complex phenomenon with multiple motivations, including political, religious, and socio-economic factors. It is also intertwined with issues such as Islamophobia and marginalisation of communities. While the media shapes public perceptions, terrorism's root causes go beyond media influence. Terrorist attacks have adversely affected social fabrics, the economy, and political systems. Meanwhile, catastrophe is defined as the process of thinking exclusively about negative events and is a major cause of psychological disorders (Nayab & Kamal, 2010). As a consequence of being apprehensive about future terrorist attacks, survivors of terror attacks are significantly more likely to exhibit behavioural changes and symptoms of anxiety, depression, physiological stress, and mortality salience.

Pakistan has experienced immense insecurity as a result of terrorist attacks, which has adversely affected the public's everyday lives as well as individual’s financial situations. According to a study conducted by the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (Nayab & Kamal, 2010), dysfunctional behaviour can be caused by apprehension or panic caused by terrorism. According to a 1946 study, stress can be classified as either eustress or distress, which is characterised by anxiety or withdrawal. In studies conducted to assess the psychological impact of terrorist attacks, distress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety attacks have been linked. Several psychiatrists and psychologists in Pakistan have argued that individuals who have been affected by suicide attacks or any other form of terrorist activity need immediate

treatment for psychological illnesses (Nayab & Kamal, 2010). The concept of death anxiety has been defined in several conditions, and it can be characterised as a universal phenomenon. Death anxiety is usually characterised by anxiety and fear throughout one's life span.

Several studies have shown that the concept of death generally causes anxiety, according to studies on death anxiety. Aside from anticipating death, death anxiety is also accompanied by apprehension about the death of relatives, fear of the death process, and anxiety about the act of dying. According to TMT, death awareness and the realisation that death is inevitable become widespread in public following major terrorist attacks. As a result of terrorist attacks, adolescents have become more aware of death as a threat. According to Nayab & Kamal, (2010) there were many crises in Pakistan in 2009, including an increase in terrorist attacks, a decline in the economy, damage to the socio-cultural fabric, instability in politics, and a lack of trust among stakeholders in the war on terror. As a consequence, children and young people have unfortunately been affected by terrorism and its pathological aftereffects (Nayab & Kamal, 2010). It has been found that hospitals with patients who are already ill have been left unprotected as a result of deadly terrorist attacks. The study detailing all of the above collected data from university students from different cities to determine the real picture of mental health during times of terrorism. Nayab and Kamal (2010) found a highly significant positive relationship between terrorism catastrophising, perceived stress, and death anxiety. It was found that female students were significantly more anxious about death than their male counterparts. There was a significant difference between death anxiety levels among Peshawar University students and the rest of the university students, and perceived stress and terrorism catastrophising were significantly associated with death anxiety. Consequently, there has been a rise in anxiety and fear of death in the country as a result of terrorism, as well as behavioural changes and symptoms of anxiety, depression, physiological stress, and mortality salience (Nayab & Kamal, 2010).

In addition to separation anxiety and hypochondriasis, death anxiety has been associated with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and disordered eating, among other adverse psychological phenomena. Although death anxiety has been associated with several disorders, few studies have utilised clinical samples, which precludes generalisations. As part of their study, Menzies and Dar-Nimrod (2017) examined the relationship between death anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder severity, distress and impairment, hospitalisations, medications, and diagnoses. Death anxiety remained significant when neuroticism was controlled for. When faced with real or symbolic threats, our attachment system appears to reduce existential fears by influencing us to seek security from others or to rely on ourselves. According to preliminary research, meaning in life may protect individuals from existential dread. A secure attachment style is associated with lower fears of death. A recent systematic review determined that treatments that create meaning improved death attitudes and general well-being. Menzies and Dar-Nimrod (2019) examined whether death anxiety is associated with psychopathology across a variety of disorders, and whether attachment style and meaning in life moderate the relationship between death anxiety and psychopathology within clinical samples. A composite measure of psychopathology, as well as its individual components, was found to be strongly correlated with death anxiety. For all six disorders with more than twenty participants, significant and large correlations were observed between death anxiety and the severity of disorder symptoms. The presence of meaning in life was associated with psychopathology, but death anxiety was not moderated by either attachment style or meaning in life (Menzies & Dar-Nimrod, 2019).

Considering that people with mental health problems tend to have lower levels of meaning in life and secure attachment styles, it may be difficult to detect a moderating relationship between death anxiety and mental health. The non-significant findings regarding

attachment style and meaning in life in the present study may be associated with methodological differences between the current correlational study and previous experimental manipulations, but future studies may uncover other potential moderators within clinical populations. In Menzies and Dar-Nimrod's (2019) study, death anxiety was shown to be a transdiagnostic construct, and the correlation between death anxiety and psychopathology appeared significant after controlling for neuroticism. According to the composite measure of psychopathology, this measure appears to be valid and internally consistent in terms of broad mental health. The results of the study offer support for the claim that death anxiety is trans-diagnostic and that innovative treatments targeting death anxiety are necessary to improve mental health long-term. While only a few intervention studies have specifically addressed death anxiety in the context of mental health, death fears have been addressed in other settings. Cognitive behaviour therapy was particularly effective in treating death anxiety, but further research is required. According to Menzies and Dar-Nimrod's (2019) study, which included 200 individuals with a diagnosed mental illness seeking treatment, there is an association between death anxiety and a variety of mental health conditions.

Given the increasingly deadly outcomes of terror attacks (Menzies & Dar-Nimrod, 2019), fear of terrorism is inextricably linked to a fear of death. Death is a dominant human concern commonly theorised as a powerful motivational force in human behaviour and emotion, as has been discussed in earlier sections. “Death anxiety” is a term used to intellectualise the uneasiness caused by death awareness (Abdel-Khalek, 2005). For humans to be able to experience and comprehend their own mortality, they need to learn, digest, and adapt to the concept and consciousness of their own finiteness (Becker, 1973). Therefore, cultural systems provide symbols of death that represent its occurrence and provide a context for its transcendence (Becker, 1973; Kübler-Ross, 2002). Although death is an unavoidable reality, it remains a psychological dilemma that affects millions of people around the world.

Death anxiety consists of six attributes: affect, cognition, experience, development, socio-cultural shaping, and motivation (Abdel-Khalek, 2005). In conjunction with the hippocampus and other cortical structures, death anxiety is rooted in ancient limbic structures that are hardwired and adaptive to survival (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). The amygdala and related structures play an important role in the development of implicit (nonconscious) fear memories. Due to this, both human emotional memory systems are activated simultaneously (in parallel) when death is imminent (LeDoux, 2008).

A major insight of Kelly's (1955) research is that death cannot be reconciled with living and, therefore, cannot be reconciled with cognition. Life experiences support individuals to develop enduring cognitive structures, and death threatens these structures because they focus on living. Kelly (1955) found that death is perceived less as a threat if it is integrated or becomes part of core cognitive structures. The use of cognitive structures impacts perceptions of threat and the degree to which an individual experiences death anxiety (Jost et al., 2007); these factors are, in turn influenced by individual differences in order, structure, tolerance for ambiguity, and ability to cope with uncertainty. Adaptive behaviour involves repressing death anxiety to prevent paralysing fear or terror from hindering the ability to survive (see Becker, 1973; Yalom, 1980).

It is rare for people to experience death anxiety consciously. Goldenberg et al. (2006) have found that manipulation of death awareness increases death anxiety (Greenberg et al., 1994; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). Furthermore, conscious death anxiety leads to active defences, such as distraction, that target the perceived threat directly, reducing conscious death anxiety, but not unconscious death anxiety, which manifests in other ways (Greenberg et al., 1994; Jost et al., 2007). As a result of these processes, one can establish boundaries and exert will, which includes self-control and inhibition. The management of death thoughts over time fatigues self-regulatory mechanisms, according to

Gaillot, Schmeichel, and Baumeister (2006), heightening death anxiety. Death anxiety manifests itself overtly (Pyszycynski et al., 2004). Self-esteem is linked to people's responses to death anxiety. Pyszycynski et al. (2004) define self-esteem as a cultural construct derived from social validation, essentially defensive in nature, and designed to protect against core fears. In addition to high self-esteem, cultural identification has been found to buffer death anxiety (Pyszycynski et al., 2004; Tomer, 1992).

There are different manifestations of death anxiety at different stages of development. According to developmental theorists, identity development is a healthy and vital process characterised by age-appropriate identity crises that lead to ego strength and maturity (Erikson, 1959; Fortner & Neimeyer, 1999). As reported by Sterling and Van Horn (1989), identity crises increase death anxiety among male college undergraduates. People experiencing an identity crisis, characterised by high apprehension and uncertainty, are on the verge of transformation. Foreclosure status signifies that an individual is committed to their identity without exploring it. Diffusion status is defined by Erikson in 1959 as the absence of both identity crisis and commitment. In Erikson's work on life span developmental tasks, midlife crises are characterised by genitivities versus stagnations, whereas old age crises are characterised by ego integrity versus despair.

Depending on the culture, death anxiety can have different experiential, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. It is the responsibility of culture to protect people from death-related knowledge and fear (Becker, 1973). Meanings and beliefs related to death stem from conventional religious dogma and blended rituals (Becker, 1973; Schumaker et al., 1988). According to Kübler-Ross (2002), different cultures have different ways of articulating and understanding death, and some cultures are better at reducing death-related side effects. As Schumaker et al. (1988) explain, Western societies hide sick and older adults from view as a means of preventing others from realising their terminal condition.

Consequently, death can become a phenomenon disassociated from the natural order (Schumaker et al., 1988). The predominant death attitude in America is denial, and death anxiety is avoided via an elaborate system that offers few reminders of disability, ageing, illness, and death (Martz & Livneh, 2003). Death anxiety is shaped by a cultural context in cognitive, experiential, and possibly emotional ways. Despite the lack of research on death anxiety among non-White ethnic and racial groups in the United States, one study indicated that older African Americans had different concerns regarding death than older White people (DePaola et al., 2003). Death is not the only cause of physical destruction but rather a catalyst for personal growth and the pursuit of a meaningful existence.

Exploring the cultural context of death anxiety can provide a framework for embracing mortality as a catalyst for personal growth and the pursuit of meaning in life. As a result of acknowledging the limitations of our lives, individuals may be inspired to find spiritual fulfilment by living their best lives, ultimately transcending the fear of death. Mortality can be viewed as a catalyst for personal growth when individuals realise their existence is limited, motivating them to reflect upon their values, prioritise what is important, and seek meaningful experiences. As a powerful reminder to live authentically, pursue one's passions, and cultivate deeper connections with others, death's inevitability can be a powerful motivator supporting people to lead a more fulfilling and purpose-driven life. To maximise one's limited time on earth, individuals can embrace the inevitability of death to gain a sense of urgency and perspective. As a result, they can be inspired to give up trivial concerns and focus on what truly brings them joy and fulfilment, leading to a more fulfilling and authentic existence. Individuals must accept and embrace their mortality as a prerequisite to living a purpose-driven and authentic life. Individuals can gain a greater sense of urgency and perspective by acknowledging the inevitability of death, which motivates them to seek out meaningful experiences aligned with their values and passions and prioritise what truly matters. An

individual who adopts this mindset can let go of trivial concerns and make the most of their time, resulting in a more fulfilling and purpose-driven existence.

2.6.3 *Exposure to terrorism and associated trauma*

Neuroscience-based observations have led to many significant advances in understanding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other forms of trauma. Despite this, we do not have enough knowledge to predict who will develop pathologic reactions. To facilitate the recovery of individuals and society after terrorism, such knowledge is crucial for developing appropriate mental health response strategies (Danieli, 2005).

The definition of pathological responses to terrorism requires the determination of whether and to what extent conclusions about trauma exposure arising from other situations apply to the issues related to terrorism and mass violence. For those who directly experience a threat to their life or physical integrity or who experience loss, including the sudden loss of a loved one, terrorism is a prototypic traumatic event; for example, according to the DSM-IV, it meets both objective and subjective criteria. Terrorism, however, is not just about threatening individuals' lives or even small groups of people but also about instilling fear in society at large. As a result, terrorism has a direct effect on those who suffer from it, as well as collateral effects. It is also possible for those who are not near the target of the terrorist attack or those who were not directly affected by the loss of someone important to them to suffer from mental health outcomes, mainly since such events are often covered on television and other media channels. As a result, there are gaps in the literature regarding whether mental health consequences for individuals indirectly exposed to terrorism differ qualitatively or quantitatively from those for individuals directly exposed. A real threat of imminent attack may also be determined by the speed with which those exposed to terrorism can recover from its effects, but the additive effect of anticipatory anxiety is also unknown. Moreover, it is unclear whether the mental health

consequences of indirect exposure to terrorism are cumulative or transitory and how these consequences might manifest over time (Danieli, 2005).

If a terrorist event begins or continues a situation or threat, as it often does, Yehuda et al. (2005) indicate, the recovery timeline may be shifted. Therefore, it may be appropriate to extend the period during which initial symptoms are considered normal responses in determining whether the effects of terrorism are pathological. It may be more realistic to conceptualise normal responses to terrorism as continuing beyond 30 days after the initial trauma. Identifying persistent disorder may be more accurate only after the immediate threat of terrorism has been substantially reduced in the context of ongoing terrorist threats. However, this caveat does not imply that people do not have mental health needs that must be addressed within this timeframe. A normative response may involve strong stress reactions if there is still a threat, and disorder must be defined in the context of an actual ongoing threat.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that although identifying persistent disorders may be more accurate only after the immediate threat of terrorism has been substantially reduced, this does not suggest that people do not need mental health support during this period. Mental health support should be prioritised in order to ensure that people can cope with the stress of terrorism and feel safe. It is also important to remember that people's reactions and responses to terrorism can be difficult to predict and vary from person to person. Mental health professionals should be available to help individuals cope with their reactions.

It has been shown by Yehuda et al. (2005) that those who are exposed to terrorism or other catastrophic events and do not panic, do not experience dysphoric emotions, and do not experience PTSD-like symptoms in the first days or weeks after exposure are less likely to develop it. Some people with high levels of symptoms in the first days or weeks will recover, and others will not. This suggests that early intervention is critical to preventing PTSD.

Furthermore, early intervention can also reduce the risk of long-term psychological effects. According to Stolorow (2007), trauma is a relational experience that emphasises that humans are interconnected and that empathic attunement and supportive relationships are necessary for navigating traumatic experiences. Trauma disrupts a person's ability to engage in relationships and regulate their emotions, as well as their sense of safety and coherence (Dorahy et al., 2013). It ruptures an individual's existential fabric, leading to profound feelings of alienation and disconnection (Zurbriggen et al., 2012). According to Stolorow (2007), this occurs due to existentialist themes such as existential isolation and search for meaning. In contrast, he argues that individuals can regain agency over their lives and rebuild their sense of self through authentic relational encounters and validating their subjective experiences (Stolorow, 2007).

Authenticity, responsibility, and relationality are crucial to facing the existential challenges of human existence, according to Stolorow (2007). His insights are consistent with Sartre's (1946) and Camus's (1943) existential philosophy. Our understanding of trauma must be enriched by Stolorow's (2007) relational perspective if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between psychological suffering, relational dynamics, and the search for existential meaning. It has been suggested by Stolorow (2007) that empathic connection and relational attunement play an essential role in assisting individuals after trauma to achieve integration and wholeness. Stolorow's (2007) emphasis on the importance of relationality in trauma recovery is particularly relevant in the context of the fear of terrorism. As a result of trauma, individuals may feel alienated and disconnected from others because of events like acts of terrorism that shatter their sense of safety and coherence. For individuals to rebuild their sense of self and regain agency over their lives, Stolorow (2007) suggests that empathic attunement and supportive relationships are crucial.

2.7 How to mitigate against these effects

The psychological effects of terror attacks are often similar to those of other traumatic events, despite the various definitions of terror and aspects of terror. In addition to mild, moderate, or severe symptoms, trauma victims are often treated for stress disorders in general, such as acute or post-traumatic stress disorder. Sprang (2003) points out that terrorism destroys communities' social, emotional, and economic fabric. In the early 1900s, civilian deaths in conventional wars and the “blitz” of London in the Second World War were both viewed differently to today's terrorist victims. Trauma experienced by terrorism victims differs qualitatively from trauma experienced by victims of other crisis events. As well as causing physical harm, terrorism can have a devastating psychological impact on individuals, families, and communities for years to come.

According to Stern (2014), terror differs from conventional forms of trauma in two keyways. It intentionally inflicts terror, which creates a political, social, and ideological dimension, unlike other types of disaster. Intentional disasters provoke stronger and longer psychological reactions than other disasters because of this intentional aspect. In addition, terror attacks often occur unpredictably, involve unfamiliar details, and disrupt social systems. The effects persist because the event focuses on ideological change rather than purely geopolitical objectives, unlike conventional wars. Consequently, terror attacks can have long-term psychological and social effects, including fear and anxiety.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the American Psychological Association (APA) released a fact sheet explaining how to cope with psychological symptoms. APA stressed that most individuals could cope with even high levels of stress and challenge despite the emphasis on the symptoms and pathology of debriefing. In citing Masten's (2001) view that resilience is an important component of human adaptation, the authors reinforce the notion that interventions are not always necessary (Masten, 2001). The APA defines resilience as the ability to cope

effectively with trauma, adversity, and tragedy. As a trait for survivors and those facing difficult life situations, resilience is the ability to build and maintain hope and optimism in the face of adversity. While some people may develop PTSD symptoms, individuals can still challenge and cope effectively with even highly stressful and traumatic events if they focus on their own resilience as well as their social systems and specific coping strategies. In contrast to this strategy-based approach emphasising coping, pathology-centred approaches emphasise symptoms and symptom mitigation. As opposed to emphasising mitigating symptoms themselves, this approach emphasises developing strategies for coping with the symptoms.

There has been considerable evidence that the vast majority of those exposed to terrorism either show remarkable resilience or rapidly recover (Weiss, 2011). This resilience can be attributed to various factors, including individual coping mechanisms, social support networks, and the ability to find meaning and purpose in the face of adversity. It is important to acknowledge and study these positive outcomes to better understand and support those affected by terrorism. The findings of Foa et al. (2005) dispel the myth that large proportions of people behave irrationally when faced with large public disasters. According to the researchers, a prolonged but contained traumatic event like the Gulf War is unlikely to adversely affect a significant number of people. Despite public anxiety, no behaviour could be regarded as mass panic. According to Foa et al. (2005), it is important to evaluate the damage caused by an attack realistically, build resilience, and implement specific interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy, medication, etc. Individuals at high risk of suffering a severe stress reaction should be treated. According to Blythe and Slawinski (2004), a "resiliency management model" can be used for debriefing and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). This model focuses on enhancing individual and organizational resilience to help individuals cope with and recover from traumatic events. They suggest that post-crisis interventions should be based on strengths.

Their social support model consists of a post-incident informational meeting not debriefing, a review of group sessions that provide coping strategies based on social support, individual sessions for those who need them, and additional resources when necessary. Unlike the CISM model, the post-incident phase (debriefing) phase of this approach does not dive into traumatic events. Adaptation and coping methods are more important than venting emotions. Various clinical approaches have been reported which are consistent with the notion of resilience. Jennings (1992) has proposed a model for intervention that emphasises individual strengths and resources.

In Jennings '(1992) model of drama therapy, BASIC Ph stands for beliefs, affect, social skills, imagination, cognition, and physical reactions. Because individuals have different reactions to stress that fall into one or more of these categories, developing resources based on those factors is the best way for them to successfully cope with the challenges that stress presents. Those with Ph who are fidgety, jittery, or trembling may find it helpful to exercise or do household chores as a Ph coping mechanism. If one has strong religious beliefs, "B" coping relies on ceremony and rituals in stressful situations to cope with worry and anxiety. Based on this model, children in Israel prefer to remain with their families and not be evacuated, despite shelling and danger, despite experiencing BASIC Ph reactions. Even though this appears counterintuitive, it points once again to the uniqueness of reactions to terror attacks and stress in general (Jennings, 1992).

According to Caplan's (1981) "mastery" concept, social support enhances problem solving and coping mechanisms during stressful times. Mental Health Response to Mass Violence and Terrorism, published by the US Department of Health and Human Services, discusses psychological first aid for terror victims, focusing on practicality, flexibility, empowerment, and respect for survivors' needs to pace exposure to harsh realities. It emphasises empathic listening and social support for terror victims in accordance with

Caplan's (1981) principles. In psychological first aid, accurate information is provided, emotional expression is allowed, and problem-solving is encouraged. The manual cautions against over-involvement with victims with serious needs, as with all resilience-based models. Workers should consult mental health professionals if they encounter victims with emotional disorders or exacerbations of mental illnesses. In addition to supportive interventions without severe symptoms, responders are important, but it is crucial to convey confidence that the individual is capable of handling challenges, coping, and being resilient. To support the role-playing for coping techniques, terror victims were provided support by Mansdorf et al. (2007). They used social support, mastery, and BASIC Ph techniques. As a result of the feedback and direction provided during these role-plays, a "controlled coping" process developed within a social support system. As a result, victims were able to master their fear and cope meaningfully.

As discussed already, terrorism is a style of violence which aims to create anxiety and to draw attention to force radical political, social, and behavioural change. According to Schmid (2023), terrorism is a form of action that is unpredictable; therefore, it is the unanticipated nature of such calculated and extreme violence which produces fear and uncertainty. It is living with this long-term fear and uncertainty which provokes collective trauma (e.g., Cohen-Louck & Ben-David, 2017; McCormack & McKellar, 2015). Terrorist attacks and other societal threats have the potential to cause long-lasting disturbances in the usual dynamics between individuals. Long-term threat can create a shift between members of minority groups and their interactions with one another. Collective threats to society create unpredictable and unstable feelings in people which change and impact their ideas of being an individual in a terrorised society and this influences their psychosocial phenomena at various levels which can result in tensions, depression, anxiety, and family problems (Orfali, 2005; Updegraff, Silver, & Holman, 2008).

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, trauma is a highly distressing experience that leaves lasting emotional shock and pain (Vale et al., 1996). Trauma can result from various causes, such as accidents or natural disasters. In the immediate aftermath of an event, denial and shock are common reactions. Long-term reactions can also cause physical symptoms such as headaches and nausea, as well as unpredictable emotions and flashbacks. Although these feelings are normal, some people struggle to move on. While most people have experienced a stressful event at some point in their lives (Haner et al., 2019), a traumatic event is characterised by a great deal of stress generated by the event itself or a series of events. It is commonly believed that feelings of horror, helplessness, and serious injury or death characterise traumatic events. Trauma events have a profound impact not only on the survivors but also on rescue staff, family members, and friends of the victims. Additionally, it is possible that those who have watched the event either live or on television may also be affected (Haner et al., 2019).

According to Levine (2015), trauma experiences have profound effects not only on the brain, but also on the body. These experiences are related to collective memories of societies affected by terrorist events. Through critical reflections on trauma, particularly from a global perspective, and the politics of trauma, psychological, social, and political implications of trauma in the context of terrorism can be explored. For instance, trauma has been used to reinforce certain political narratives, such as in the case of post-9/11 terrorism, in which certain groups have been portrayed as a threat to national security (Haner et al., 2019). Muslims and individuals of Middle Eastern descent have often been portrayed as a threat to national security following the trauma of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This portrayal has perpetuated stereotypes and led to discriminatory policies and actions against these communities.

In accordance with Stampnitzky (2013), coping with terrorism and security threats is positively correlated with pathogenic and salutogenic factors (e.g., distress, fear, PTSD symptoms). An Israeli study mentions that 152 mothers were involved in the study, all of whom

were from the Western Negev region of Israel (Shechory Bitton & Laufer, 2021). Despite not having been injured or hit by missile attacks, respondents were adversely affected by prolonged exposure. In the study, the relationship between post-traumatic growth (PTG) and PTSD was found to be positive. PTG is when a person who has experienced PTSD finds a way to harness the meaning of their experiences to live their lives differently from how they did before. Problem-focused coping mediates the relationship between PTSD and PTG; the greater the PTSD, the more problem-focused coping was used, and the greater the PTG. Shechory Bitton and Laufer (2017) provide insight into the relationship between PTSD and PTG. The research suggests that emotion-focused strategies may prove particularly effective in dealing with situations that appear uncontrollable or lack a viable solution (e.g., terrorism and security threats) (May et al., 2011; Besser and Neria, 2012; Braun-Lewensohn and Mosseri Rubin, 2014).

2.7.1 *Resilience as a protective factor*

Potentially traumatic events (PTE), including wars, natural disasters, and economic crises, can adversely affect the mind. Prolonged stress has been linked to adverse physical and psychological effects (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In accordance with studies, civilians exposed to continuous rocket attacks are more likely to exhibit post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and have a higher level of life satisfaction compared to those not exposed to similar stresses. The correlation between life satisfaction and PTSD is significant (Besser & Neria, 2009). Adaptability to adversity, disturbance, or distress is known as resilience (Norris et al., 2007). In recent years, resilience has been used to discuss people's ability to cope with stress despite having a high-risk status, chronic distress, prolonged trauma, or severe trauma. According to Kimhi & Eshel (2009), resilience buffers the psychological effects of trauma. In

some studies, social resilience has been referred to as the last two levels of resilience. Several studies have identified three levels of resilience: individual, community, and national.

As there is no universal perception of security or insecurity, resilience is a personal trait that should be considered. In Bonanno (2005), individual resilience is defined as maintaining a stable level of functioning following traumatizing events and maintaining a trajectory of healthy functioning over a period. Antonovsky (2002) defined individual resilience in terms of sense of coherence. Individual resilience is crucial when discussing environmental stressors. Despite being exposed to similar levels of risk, some individuals can cope with stress and adversity. Studies indicate that genetics, biological processes, and various environments influence PTE resistance. Both are necessary to explain why individuals show resilience or vulnerability when faced with adversity (Bowes & Jaffee, 2013). It has been shown that individuals may be more resilient to certain stressors based on their phenotypic responses to different environmental stresses (Bowes & Jaffee, 2013).

Additionally, it represents one's feelings and attitudes toward their community, including perceptions of threats, community resources, cohesion, and trust in leadership (Obrist et al., 2010). As well as individual resilience, community resilience greatly affects how people cope with trauma. Kimhi and Eshel (2009) found that community and national resilience affected distress symptoms and post-traumatic recovery. Communities with high resilience are more likely to survive and cope with stressful situations, and recover more quickly (Buikstra et al., 2010).

In addition to the studies mentioned above, resilience has been examined as a societal phenomenon in terms of national resilience and social resilience (Obrist et al., 2010). National resilience is the ability of a society to endure adversity while maintaining its values is also a key aspect of national resilience. (Obrist et al., 2010) National resilience entails several factors

related to a society's sustainability and strength. According to Kimhi and Eshel (2009), belonging and identity within a community or nation are both forms of resilience. National resilience is characterized by patriotism, optimism, social integration, and political trust among citizens. The economic conditions of respondents had a positive effect on community and national resilience, while war exposure had a negative effect (Breton, 2001), according to one study that examined the antecedents of community and national resilience. Communities and nations are resilient primarily as a result of their familiarity and social cohesiveness, but further research is required to identify differences that may exist. Rather than conceptualizing and measuring resilience at the national level, resilience is better measured at the individual and community levels. While factors such as patriotism and political trust may contribute to national resilience, it is the collective strength and adaptive capacity of individuals and communities that truly define resilience.

Edkins (2003) suggests traumatic events have broader political and social consequences, influencing collective memory and shaping political narratives. In her book, collective trauma, such as war, genocide, and political violence, are examined to elucidate memory, forgetfulness, and political instrumentalisation. Edkins (2003) examines the possibilities of harnessing traumatic memories for political purposes. The author argues that the role of political institutions, such as states and international organisations, in creating trauma narratives and using those narratives to justify specific policies and practices is crucial. Additionally, Edkins (2003) examines the ways that trauma can be manipulated and suppressed, often leading to contested memories and ongoing conflicts. She also examines how trauma, memory, and power are intertwined. Using memory as a tool to perpetuate or challenge power structures, Edkins (2003) argues that it can shape future reconciliation and justice opportunities and shape how societies cope with past traumas. To illustrate the complex dynamics between trauma, memory, and political action, she examines a variety of case studies,

including the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and the Iraq and Afghan wars. Moreover, Edkins (2003) discusses the ethical implications of engaging with traumatic memories within a political context. The author raises questions about the role played by individuals, communities, and political actors in remembering and addressing past trauma and the potential consequences of commemoration and memorialisation (Edkins, 2003). Foucault's (2002) book *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, though not specifically focused on terrorism, provides insights into trauma politics as well as the dynamics of power associated with fear management and study. To analyse trauma and the fear of terrorism, Foucault's (2002) analysis of medical practices and the role of power within healthcare can be applied. This encourages a critical examination of the structures and discourses of trauma by challenging our understanding of trauma and its political implications (Foucault, 2002).

Foucault's (2008) analysis of power and discourse provides a different lens through which to view the experience of living with the fear of terrorism, which asserts that power is not solely possessed by institutions or individuals but rather by social structures and discourses that influence our thinking, actions, and perceptions. Likewise, Foucault argues that our understanding of and response to terrorism is shaped by the discourse surrounding it. Foucault (2003) discusses the ways in which terrorism is defined, the security measures implemented, and justifications for military intervention (Foucault, 2008). By applying Foucault's (2003) analysis of power and discourse, one can examine how the fear of terrorism is constructed and perpetuated through societal structures and narratives. This approach allows for an exploration of the underlying power dynamics and the ways in which they influence our understanding, response, and policies related to terrorism. Additionally, Foucault's examination of the role of institutions and discourses in defining and justifying terrorism can provide valuable insights into the complexities of this issue. By considering Foucault's (2003) analysis of power dynamics and the role of institutions in defining and justifying terrorism, we can gain valuable

insights into the complexities of this issue and its impact on policies. This perspective critically examines how power shapes our understanding, response, and formulation of counter-terrorism measures, highlighting the need to challenge dominant narratives and structures that perpetuate fear and exclusion. Furthermore, it is important to consider the role of the media in shaping our understanding of terrorism, as well as the Eurocentric view that often dominates the discourse. Taking a critical approach informed by Foucault's (2008), analysis can help us deconstruct these narratives and challenge the dominant discourses that contribute to the perpetuation of fear and exclusion.

2.8 Mechanisms encouraging fear of terrorism

This section is relevant to understanding the fear of terrorism, as it identifies various factors and processes that impact or shape the fear of terrorism within individuals and societies. It is through coverage, sensationalism, and framing of incidents that the media shapes perceptions and fear responses to terrorism. The theme of the effect of media on fear perceptions aligns with the theme of how fear of terrorism is disseminated, amplified, or moderated in society. Public perceptions and responses to potential threats are influenced by government and security initiatives aimed at countering terrorism. To better understand how counter-terrorism efforts affect fear levels, societal trust, and people’s sense of security, and the direct relationship to behavioural adjustments and societal responses to fear, it is necessary to examine counter-terrorism efforts. The impact of fear can be mitigated by providing protective measures and coping mechanisms for individuals and communities. The theme of understanding coping mechanisms and the psychological aspects of fear-induced responses aligns with the concept of resilience as a protective factor against terrorism. The subheadings in this section explore the mechanisms that either exacerbate or alleviate terrorism fear. As a result, they provide insight into the media's influence on perceptions, the impact of counter-terrorism strategies on fear levels, and the protective role of resilience in reducing

psychological and societal fears. The subsections explore multiple factors that influence fear regarding terrorism, in line with the study's identified themes.

2.9 The Media

The literature indicates that the media have a significant impact on an individual's perception of terror-related threats that may occur in the future.-Media formats shape audience assumptions and preferences by selecting, organising, and presenting information. The mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public agendas in the way they package and present news and events. According to research, the problem route has been emphasised by communication formats and has in turn led to an increase in the use of "fear" in American society. The use of "fear" in American society refers to the tendency of media formats to prioritize sensationalism and alarming narratives in order to attract viewership and generate higher ratings. This emphasis on fear-inducing content has resulted in a distorted perception of reality and has contributed to the perpetuation of anxiety and insecurity among the public. A variety of news formats have been designed to transform some experiences into reports that are accepted as "news" by the audience. A discourse of fear has developed as a result of the association between crime and fear (Altheide, 1997, 2002).

This discourse of fear has been perpetuated by the media, which tends to focus on stories of crime, danger, and risk, rather than stories of hope and resilience. As a result, people are more likely to feel afraid and anxious, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health (Silva & Guedes, 2022). For example, people living in areas with higher levels of crime are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Silva & Guedes, 2022). One possible reason for this correlation is the constant portrayal of their areas in a negative light by the media.

It is common for people to feel fear when they do not have sufficient power, either because they have lost it or because they do not possess power in line with their expectations. Since terrorist attacks involve feelings of powerlessness or vulnerability (Barbalet 1998), fear is shaped by culture, varies over time, and takes on different forms (as examples, see Furedi, 2018; Glassner, 1999; Stearns, 2006). According to Stearns (2006), American society has shifted from encouraging Americans to master their fears to socialising them to avoid them. The media has been accused of promoting fear to attract viewers and readers and thus profit from advertising. This has led to a culture of fear, where people are constantly exposed to news and images of violence, terrorism, and other threats (Silva & Guedes, 2022).

As a result of terrorism, Altheide (2017) argues that the American media operate in line with the "politics of fear", whereby fear creates entertainment value, generates profits, and controls audiences. In this sense, fear is a social construct, and in the opinion of Altheide (2017), the topic of terrorism is sufficiently threatening to induce extensive fear in audiences.

Said (2001) argues that media representations of terrorism and political rhetoric often exacerbate the fear of terrorism. The media portrays terrorism as a monolithic and universally threatening force, which fuels fear and a desire for security measures that often curtail civil liberties. According to Said (2001), the language used to describe terrorism, such as the phrase "war on terror", reinforces a binary world view in which the West is viewed as civilised, democratic, and morally superior, while terrorism is perceived as barbaric and anti-Western (Said, 2001). Therefore, the people of the West might see themselves as more prone to fear as they see themselves as the victims of the civilised world, which also links this with Social Identity Theory, as presented in earlier sections. The language used to describe terrorism reinforces the idea that the West is superior to those who commit acts of terror, which creates a sense of in-group loyalty and out-group animosity. This aligns with Tajfel and Turner (1979), who state that people are more likely to identify with their group and be hostile towards out-

groups. This language also reinforces the idea that terrorism is a foreign problem rather than a problem within the West and that the perpetrators of terrorism do not have the same moral standing as Westerners. This reinforces a sense of superiority and the idea that terrorism is something to be fought against. For example, the narrative of "us versus them" can be seen in the use of terms such as "war on terror" and "clash of civilisations" which suggest that there is a fundamental difference between the West and the notional perpetrators of terrorism.

It is possible to gain a more nuanced understanding of the experience of living with the fear of terrorism by comparing these different perspectives. In contrast to Said's (2001) emphasis on media representations, Foucault (1978) emphasises the importance of understanding the broader social and political context in which fear is constructed.

It has been shown by research that the media influence people's perception of risk and fear of crime (Chiricos et al., 1997). Fear and media consumption can be examined from two different perspectives. According to the first perspective, media consumption increases fear of crime by emphasizing sensational and violent incidents, causing people to believe that such incidents are far more prevalent than they are. According to the second perspective, however, media consumption can also reduce crime fear by providing individuals with information and awareness, enabling them to take appropriate precautions and make informed decisions. According to communication studies, the cultivation hypothesis suggests viewers' perceptions of the world are distorted by frequent media consumption that emphasizes violence and other extreme events (Gerbner, 1969). Moreover, excessive fear of crime may also result in other distortions. It has been well documented how exposure to local and national news impacts health (Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003) as well as crime dramas (Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003).

Model misspecification refers to a situation where the statistical model used to analyse data does not accurately represent the underlying relationship between the variables. This can lead to biased or misleading results and has been a subject of criticism in cultivation studies. This is where researchers examine media effects on individuals' beliefs and attitudes. Using actual crime rates in viewers' areas, Doob and Macdonald (2007) demonstrated that actual victimisation risk and crime experiences did indeed influence the impact of media exposure on crime fear. Crime fear was higher in high-crime areas. According to Nellis and Savage (2012), the resonance of the news should mediate the effects of overall exposure. The effects of frequency and resonance of media exposure on fear of crime continue to be tested (e.g., Chiricos et al., 2000).

A telephone survey of 1,188 adults across the country was used by O'Keefe (1984) to assess how awareness of crime news impacts fear of crime. Watching television news increases one's fear of being burglarised, assaulted, and the perception that one is not safe walking alone at night in one's neighbourhood, according to O'Keefe (1984). According to O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987), paying more attention to the news increases crime fear. A study by Sotirovic (2003) found that media content related to political, economic, and social issues both locally and nationally led to greater support for crime prevention. The fear of crime and support for punitive crime policies are more associated with simple infotainment-style news. Additionally, several researchers believe that perceived credibility or realism of content affects fear of crime (Chiricos et al., 2000). Fear of crime is affected by the perceived realism of news, according to O'Keefe (1984). Scepticism about the credibility of the news media may mitigate exposure to it, according to Chiricos et al. (2000). As a result of a lack of studies, the relationship between news credibility and crime fear remains unclear. Media coverage may play a larger role in creating terrorism fears. The media do not provide local crime information in most neighbourhoods, but terrorism is a very rare phenomenon that does not occur in most areas.

The media is the only source of information about terrorism for most Americans. The media may not provide local crime information in most neighbourhoods, but it is important to note that terrorism is a global issue that can occur in any part of the world. Therefore, relying solely on the media as the primary source of information about terrorism may not provide a comprehensive understanding of its occurrence or the potential threats in one's own community. In a controlled environment, Slone (2000) conducted an experimental study of 237 viewers' reactions to media images of terrorist threats to test her hypothesis that viewers would experience heightened anxiety levels. According to her findings, such images do cause anxiety, and anger and fear are closely correlated with policy preferences and risk estimates.

The relationship between media consumption and fear of terrorism is explained by individual-level differences e.g., locus of control, gender, victimisation experience, etc. as described earlier and also by Rubin et al. (2003). It was found that fear of terrorism was not affected by overall or terrorism-related television exposure, but motivation to watch was strongly influenced. The study found that those who intentionally watch news about terrorism are more fearful and feel less safe. According to Nellis and Savage (2012), elevated fear is associated with perceived terror risk. According to research, fear of oneself differs from fear of others (Nellis & Savage, 2012). Research indicates that females are more likely to be afraid of terrorism than males. Although this is consistent with the findings regarding crime fear, it contradicts the argument that women are more afraid of crime due to fear of sexual assaults because terrorism is less likely to be interpreted in this manner. It is not possible to determine whether women may include in their estimates their fears for the safety of their children based on these data.

According to fear of crime studies, older participants were less worried about terrorism (for themselves, but not for their families), but they still did not perceive future attack risks as

lower (Nellis & Savage, 2012). Fear estimates differ from risk estimates, and sometimes don't make sense rationally. People with a longer life context may be able to recognise rarity better.

As a result of controlling for other factors in the models, white people are significantly less fearful of an attack and have lower likelihoods of terrorist attacks. Similar findings have been found elsewhere (Nellis & Savage, 2012). Minorities tend to fear crime more than non-minority's; Chiricos et al. (1997) noted that neighbourhood context (specifically, whether a neighbourhood is diverse or homogeneous) may contribute to this.

2.10 Counter-terrorism initiatives

While terrorism poses only a small threat of victimisation, it influences public policy through fear. In addition to changing citizens' behaviour in public spaces, it can also lead people to engage in riskier activities that pose a physical threat, according to Gigerenzer (2006). As a result of 9/11, highway crashes increased dramatically. Even though flying is much safer, many Americans chose to drive after the 9/11 attacks. As a result of public fear, additional security measures increased costs, in addition to increasing stress levels and concomitant health problems (Gigerenzer, 2006). People may engage in riskier activities due to fear because they have a perception of control over these activities. Driving, for example, allows individuals to feel in control of their own safety, whereas flying may be seen as relinquishing control to others. This perception, combined with the influence of fear, leads people to make choices that may increase the physical risk to themselves. The costs associated with increased security measures, such as the hiring and training of additional personnel, the installation of advanced surveillance systems, and the implementation of stringent screening procedures, have placed a burden on businesses, transportation systems, and government budgets. These increased costs not only affect the financial bottom line but also have ripple effects throughout the economy, potentially leading to higher prices for goods and services and reduced economic growth.

The impact of terrorism adversely affects public health, safety, and finances (Grosskopf, 2006). Security measures may not decrease fear or even increase citizens' feelings of insecurity after terrorist attacks. We argue that building trust in government can reduce citizens' terrorism fears. Nevertheless, terrorism fears influence public trust rather than the other way around (Huddy et al., 2012). Huddy et al., (2012) have largely treated trust as a unidimensional construct. This means that when it comes to addressing terrorism fears and building trust in government, it is important to consider trust as a multi-dimensional construct rather than a singular concept. Considering the various dimensions of trust can help in developing more effective strategies and policies to alleviate terrorism fears and enhance public trust in the government. Government trust has already been extensively explored in terms of risk perception. A brief overview of the relevant literature is provided to formulate hypotheses about the relationship between trust in the government and fear of terrorism.

To explain risk perception, Wachinger and colleagues (Wachinger et al., 2013) use two types of trust. Trust in scientific experts and authorities, i.e., relational trust, and confidence in protective measures, i.e., calculative trust is among the second most important factors for the perception of natural hazards. Trust and perceived technological hazards are correlated (Wachinger et al., 2013). Both forms of trust appear to negatively correlate with citizens' perceptions of risk across various hazards (Wachinger et al., 2013). The study by Terpstra (2011) finds that trust in public flood defences significantly reduces Dutch citizens' perceptions of flood risk. Relational trust in government and involved authorities decreases the risks people associate with various hazards, including hazardous waste disposal, nuclear power, and electromagnetic fields (van Dongen et al., 2013). Note that while these studies may use different targets of perceived risk, e.g., risk to oneself, to others, or in general, in the end, they all tend to formulate some version of the following conclusion: the more people trust authorities, the less risk they associate with the relevant hazard (Houston & Harding, 2013).

Affective relations between the trustor and the trustee (the basis of relational trust) are thought to explain the comparable patterns across the two dimensions of government trust. However, empirical evidence tends to be limited to observational data. Some studies show a positive relationship between genetically modified food and trust, but they caution that more systematic experimental research is required to clarify its direction. According to risk perception research, relationship trust influences calculative trust as well. Despite existing evidence showing that trust leads to lower perceptions of risk across a wide range of hazards, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between trust in government and other trustees remains thin (Van Der Does et al., 2019).

Van Der Does et al., 2019 examined the relationship between government trust and terrorism fears. In contrast to the initial assertion, terrorist activity is not a fear of future attacks, but rather a form of violence designed to create terror and fear among the general population. A sense of confidence in the government, on the other hand, plays an important role in addressing terrorism by fostering a sense of security and confidence in its ability to protect its citizens. As opposed to a fear of future attacks, terrorism can be understood as an intentional tactic intended to instil fear and terror in people. There is consensus that terror is meant to stimulate emotional responses. Because of their emotional impact, people tend to overestimate risks while ignoring their actual likelihood. Due to the high levels of uncertainty and strong emotions associated with terrorism, people tend to react experientially rather than analytically. It has been demonstrated in the study that cognitive shortcuts such as similarity to values can reduce uncertainty. When individuals perceive a similarity in values between themselves and the government, this reduces their uncertainty about the government's ability to protect them from terrorism. By creating a sense of shared values, individuals are more secure and less fearful of terrorism, which leads to a feeling of trust and confidence in the government.

Relational trust reduces people's fear of terrorism if their government shares their values (Van Der Does et al., 2019).

Though terrorism-related deaths are relatively low compared to other health risks, people seek comfort in ill-advised security measures that are detrimental to their well-being. Even though groups that use terrorism rarely get what they want, it persists because societies engage in self-injurious behaviour while seeking security. Governments can help people save themselves, say others. Israeli leaders, for instance, believe military operations against Hamas make Israelis feel safer (Ganor, 2017). On the surface, this seems like a reasonable conjecture. After all, robbing perpetrators of their power to kill is a simple way of making them less intimidating. The government's efforts to neutralise the psychological effects of terrorism are often met with scepticism, however. As a result of counterterrorism, people are reminded about threats rather than reassurence (Ganor, 2017).

As a result of effective counterterrorism, people are less concerned about traveling to potentially dangerous places. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) conducted counter-terrorism training exercises, and people who saw the presentations expressed greater willingness to visit Israel despite insecurity causing avoidance behaviour. Those who saw the IDF video expressed just as much interest in visiting Israel as those who were not reminded of it after seeing it (Ganor, 2017). According to Gelpi et al. (2006), success boosts public morale during foreign military campaigns (Fiorina, 1981). As discussed in an earlier section, a terrorist attack occurs when non-state actors use force or threaten to use force to secure political goals through intimidation (Enders and Sandler, 2012). According to all accounts, it is an example of psychological warfare. While PTSD-like symptoms are more common among people exposed to terrorism directly or through the mass media, it is also more common for them to take measures that harm them rather than protect them from attacks. A few examples include driving rather than flying, even though automobile travel is more dangerous than air travel (Sjöberg,

2005) and visiting Italy instead of Israel (Drakos and Kutan, 2003). Another example of psychological warfare is the fear and anxiety surrounding public spaces after a terrorist attack. People may avoid crowded areas or events, limiting their freedom and social interactions. This psychological impact can have long-lasting effects on individuals and society.

In response to threats, anxiety is a natural reaction. However, targeted communities react in ways that amplify the social and political consequences of terrorism. Those who inflict harm on themselves exacerbate the damage caused by terrorists. These responses also encourage further attacks by showing perpetrators their strikes work. These tendencies can be reduced by making terrorism less threatening (Fromkin, 1975). Despite not paying much attention to terrorism's psychological effects, political scientists are well positioned to help reduce them. Governments are ultimately responsible for protecting people from terrorism. However, experts believe that government counter-terrorism efforts make people feel more vulnerable to terrorism. Sunstein (2017) is a prominent legal scholar and professor who has extensively studied the psychological impact of counter-terrorism measures. His views align with other experts who argue that focusing on counterterrorism can perpetuate a climate of fear and insecurity among the public. According to Sunstein (2017), counterterrorism magnifies people's feelings of insecurity and governments should discuss something else and let time do the rest. Despite his harsh criticism of counter-terrorism's counterproductive psychological effects, he is not the only person who believes counterterrorism increases insecurity. Counterterrorism unnerves people by focusing on mortal threats, according to Friedman (2011). In New York, police standing on Fifth Avenue can have unintended psychological effects, as Jervis (2002) noted, and Grosskopf (2006), van de Veer et al., (2012) confirm that this can unnerves people by constantly reminding them of potential threats and increasing their feelings of insecurity. The presence of police standing on Fifth Avenue in New York City can have a negative psychological effect on individuals. The Darwinian argument that anxiety

keeps people alive contributes to the notion that counter-terrorism alarms rather than reassures people. According to this view, anxiety is part of a system people rely on to alert them to threats to their well-being (Mercer, 2005).

Counterterrorism relies heavily on fighting fear. It has been argued that crises such as terrorism cannot be resolved individually, which is why people seek assistance from government when terrorism threatens. However, if one looks for research linking fear to state characteristics, there is a lack of studies which examine how specific characteristics of a state, such as its political structure or cultural values, affect the level of fear experienced by its citizens when faced with terrorism. It is important to conduct further research in this area in order to better understand the complex relationship between fear and state characteristics in the context of counterterrorism. This gap has been filled by asking whether democracies reduce fear better or worse than autocratic regimes. Democracies can have different effects on citizens' fear, depending on different arguments. Democracies can increase citizens' fears regarding terrorism when political leaders and parties employ fear-based tactics. A democratic system, on the other hand, can reduce fear through open debate, nonviolent conflict resolution, and impartial government, for example. According to the 2014 World Values Survey, national concerns about terrorist incidents differ considerably (Christensen & Aars, 2017). This is in line with the suggestions of Capelos et al., (2021) *Reactionary Politics and Resentful Affect in Populist Times*, fear can often be exploited by leaders to gain support and consolidate power (Capelos et al., 2021). This can be particularly concerning in the context of counterterrorism, as populist leaders may employ fear-based tactics that increase citizens' fears regarding terrorism. It is therefore crucial to examine how different political structures and cultural values within a state can either exacerbate or alleviate these fears.

This result alone proves the need to study contextual determinants when trying to disentangle fear of terrorism. Therefore, the ability of states to combat citizens' fear of terrorism

varies widely. In countries exposed to terrorism, citizens also worry more about terrorism before including our democracy indicator. Nevertheless, even in countries not often exposed to terrorism, fear of terrorism is significant (Christensen & Aars, 2017). By introducing democracy into the analysis, it was found that citizens living in countries with a democratic system worry less about terrorism than citizens living in countries with a non-democratic system, which were controlled for terrorist attacks and living conditions. Democracies, regardless of how they are measured, are the country-level predictors that are most consistent in influencing citizens' fears of terrorism. According to Chenoweth (2013), existing research on terrorism suggests that an effective means of defending oneself against terrorism is to enhance one's legitimacy, both at home and abroad, by embracing democratic practices as well as liberal practices. Despite the prevalence of fear in democracies as well, our analysis suggests that democratic governments possess a resilient characteristic (Chenoweth, 2010). It is possible for political actors who are prone to playing with fear or seeking to stir up anxiety to advance their office ambitions to participate in public discussion within democratic regimes. It appears, however, that democratic government, in the long run, produces counterweights to those who promote scares. Thus, frightening messages are counterbalanced by counterarguments (Christensen & Aars, 2017).

Grosskopf (2006) states that despite the implications for public health, safety, and finance, there is still a limited understanding of how terrorism can be alleviated. Security measures established after terrorist attacks have demonstrated, in plenty of studies, that the tactics and measures used might not be effective in reducing fear (Göritz and Weiss, 2015). As a result, people may feel even more insecure and uncertain (Grosskopf, 2006).

Most research relies on the literature on risk perception to support the argument that trust in states may be a potential strategy for mitigating fear of terrorism. However, it remains unclear how fear of terrorism influences trust in states. According to Stampnitzky (2013), in

her book *Disciplining Terrorism: Enduring Consequences for Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Security*, counter-terrorism measures have influenced and shaped human rights, security, and terrorism. Stampnitzky (2013) suggests that counter-terrorism efforts have resulted in a disciplined society and citizens, which has resulted in the erosion of civil liberties and the expansion of state power. The government, security agencies, and the media construct and perpetuate the notion of terrorism as an ongoing threat through discourses and practices. Using case studies from various countries, including the US, the United Kingdom, and Israel, Stampnitzky examines how counter-terrorism measures have affected human rights, democratic principles, and global security. In doing so, she reveals how the fear of terrorism is created and maintained, and how counter-terrorism measures have been used to suppress minority populations and limit civil liberties. She argues that counter-terrorism measures are often based on fear, rather than facts, and that these measures are often implemented without considering the potential consequences of their actions.

Stampnitzky (2013) examines the influence of experts, academics, and intellectuals on the discourse around terrorism and their impact on policy decisions. Her argument illustrates the predominant narrative and representation of terrorism by marginalising alternative perspectives and voices. In this book, the language, assumptions, and strategies used to study and manage terrorism are critically examined. Stampnitzky (2013) argues that these dominant voices not only shape the discourse on terrorism, but also influence policy decisions. Her analysis reveals how this can lead to power imbalances and political inequality (Stampnitzky 2013). Stampnitzky's (2013) book suggests that the fear of terrorism can be used to legitimise policies which ultimately serve to perpetuate existing power structures and inequalities. She suggests that those with the most dominant voices can shape the narrative around terrorism and use it to justify policies that further their own interests while neglecting the interests of others. This could lead to the creation of policies that are biased against certain groups, or that serve

to further oppress certain populations. As a result, Stampnitzky (2013) argues that it is important to consider who is speaking the loudest when it comes to terrorism policy.

2.11 Summary

The literature illustrates how the primary goal of terrorism is to instil fear, not only in the immediate victims but in a broader population. The fear responses triggered by terrorism, such as vigilance, hyperawareness, and anxiety, transcend biological and physical reactions to encompass deeper existential concerns. These existential concerns revolve around questions pertaining to the meaning of life, the reality of death, and the fragility of existence. The studies reviewed in this chapter show that terrorist events disrupt the stability and safety that individuals typically take for granted, compelling them to directly confront not only their mortality but also the unpredictability of the world. These above mentioned existential threats are exacerbated by the unpredictability of when and where terrorism may strike next, threatening the individual sense of stability. The existential theories discussed in this chapter, specifically, Terror Management Theory, provide a useful conceptual framework for conceptualising how terrorism compels individuals to confront their death anxiety. TMT posits that the awareness of death constitutes a notable driver of human behaviour, and exposure to terrorism can magnify this anxiety, leading to coping strategies such as group conformity, aggression, or social division.

This literature review has also demonstrated how terrorism challenges existential assumptions about freedom, choice, and meaning. Drawing from existential philosophy, terrorist events cause individuals to confront the meaninglessness of life. Terrorist attacks often provoke existential anxiety which triggers a process of meaning-making whereby both individuals and communities seek to reassert control over their lives in the wake of violence.

The MMM, which delineates the need for individuals to reaffirm their worldview after traumatic events, provides insight into how people may reconstruct meaning following a terrorist attack. Ultimately, terrorist acts instigate individuals to engage in existential reflection concerning their freedom, and agency, as well as the choices that they make. This literature review has shown that although these constitute core tenets of existential thought, the existential threat posed by terrorism exacerbates them. Thus, the fear of terrorism does not only relate to personal survival but also to the erosion of personal agency and the freedom to live without constant fear. This heightened awareness of one's vulnerability leads to the search for meaning-making which relates to how individuals cope with, rationalise, or redefine their experience of fear, violence, and existential uncertainty.

This search for meaning is not only a psychological reaction but is rooted in important sociocultural dimensions. Explicitly, as individuals cope with the existential threat concomitant with terrorism, they often draw from their social identity to make sense of their fear. SIT delineates how individuals define themselves via their membership in social groups. Against this backdrop, the fear of terrorism can heighten ingroup solidarity and outgroup hostility, especially when particular cultural or religious groups are blamed for terrorism. The fear of "the other" intensifies, often engendering Islamophobia, xenophobia, or heightened nationalism. These responses are not only psychological but socially constructed as well, shaped by cultural narratives and collective memory.

Direct exposure to terrorism and the resulting trauma can have profound psychological impacts such as PTSD and hyperarousal, often compounded by anger and frustration. This emotional fallout is not just a personal experience but affects entire communities, who may collectively process trauma and adjust their behaviours in response to fear. The normalisation of violence — when communities become accustomed to living under the threat of terrorism — further exacerbates this trauma, making recovery more difficult. Additionally, terrorism can

indirectly shape individuals' social identities whereby their sense of self becomes inextricably linked to the broader community response. Thus, for example, individuals from a group perceived to be connected with terrorism may experience discrimination and stigmatisation, heightening anxiety while perpetuating ingroup/outgroup dynamics. Consequently, anger and frustration may not only be directed at terrorists but also at perceived enemies within—those who are viewed as either complicit or indifferent to the violence. This can worsen social divisions and polarisation in society. The fear of terrorism often encourages the proliferation of Islamophobia and racism, illustrating the linkages between fear and social identity. When individuals project their fears of terrorism onto an entire group, they create and reinforce stereotypes. Some of the studies reviewed in this chapter demonstrated how the media plays a central role in these dynamics by shaping how certain groups are depicted contributing to the rise in cultural prejudice and discrimination.

Such fear-based prejudices feed into the societal dynamics of death anxiety. When people perceive others as threats, the fear of death which is a crucial component of TMT, becomes intensified. When individuals seek to reaffirm their safety, they reinforce ingroup solidarity but at the same time, marginalise those who are conceptualised as part of the outgroup. These dynamics can culminate in hate crimes and the stigmatisation of entire communities, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of fear and violence. Additionally, the sensationalism of media reporting can cause risks to be overestimated which in turn, may distort how the public perceives and understands the actual danger posed by terrorism. This skewed perception can reinforce hypervigilance, increased social anxiety, and xenophobia.

When there is a proliferation of the fear of terrorism, governments respond via counter-terrorism initiatives which are inherently designed to prevent attacks, but often paradoxically exacerbate the fear that they aim to control. Such policies can inadvertently heighten social divisions by targeting specific groups due to markers such as religion and ethnicity. This can

produce social exclusion and alienation among vulnerable groups, ultimately perpetuating a cycle of fear. Some of the studies pointed to how some counter-terrorism strategies seek to mitigate fear via initiatives that seek to build resilience by directly addressing the root causes of extremism and supporting individuals to navigate the existential challenges concomitant with terrorism. The literature suggests that resilience constitutes a salient factor in reducing the impact of terrorism on individuals and communities. Building resilience means fostering the ability to cope with trauma and uncertainty by focusing on meaning-making and reasserting a sense of personal agency.

2.12 Research Gaps and Focus

In the UK, there is limited research on the psychological existential perspective of living with terrorism threats. The main literature on fear of terrorism tends to focus on countries that have experienced terrorist attacks in recent years, and some factors explaining why it happened, or micro-level studies exploring how people have become terrorists. While much of the existing research on the psychological impact of terrorism focuses on the individual level, there is a growing recognition of the need to consider the broader societal and macro-level dynamics that contribute to the experience of fear. This includes examining the role of media, government responses, and cultural factors in shaping collective fears and anxieties in the face of terrorism threats. While studies like John Horgan's focus on understanding the individual psychology of terrorists, it is also important to consider the broader societal dynamics that contribute to the collective fear of terrorism. Exploring the macro-level factors that fabricate and perpetuate this fear can provide valuable insights into the psychological and existential perspective of living with terrorism threats in the UK. Examples of macro-level factors that promote and perpetuate the fear of terrorism include media coverage that sensationalises terrorist attacks, government responses that emphasise national security and surveillance measures, and political rhetoric that stigmatises certain religious or ethnic groups as potential

threats. These factors can contribute to a climate of fear and anxiety, shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards terrorism.

Examples of political rhetoric that stigmatises religious or ethnic groups as potential threats include statements that generalise all members of a particular religion or ethnic background as terrorists or terrorist sympathisers. Such rhetoric not only fuels prejudice and discrimination but also perpetuates the fear of terrorism by creating an "us versus them" mentality. This can further contribute to the psychological and existential challenges faced by individuals living with terrorism threats in the UK. Living in a climate of fear and anxiety due to terrorism threats can have profound psychological effects. It can lead to increased stress levels, heightened vigilance, and a constant sense of fear and insecurity. Individuals may experience symptoms of anxiety, such as restlessness, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. The constant anticipation of an attack can also disrupt people's daily routines and social interactions, impacting overall well-being and quality of life. In addition, studying the fear and threat of terrorism in the UK can offer a new analytical approach presenting a novel perspective. Such research could help us to address the potential problem whereby trust in government does not affect fear, but rather fear influences trust in government (Gray & Ropeik, 2002).

As a result of terrorist attacks, individuals tend to have high expectations of the government. It is imperative to understand the psychological impact of terrorist attacks on individuals and society to identify effective strategies to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks, as well as to ensure that society is resilient in the face of terrorism. New research has revealed that terrorist attacks can have both short-term and long-term psychological effects on individuals and society, and it is important to understand these effects to create effective strategies to respond to terrorist attacks (Spencer, 2000). The short-term effects can include shock, fear, and anger, while the long-term effects can include post-traumatic stress disorder,

anxiety, and depression. It is important to recognise these psychological effects to properly address them and provide support to those in need.

There has been a pervasive sense of insecurity in the world due to unprecedented global terrorism in recent decades. News and events are constantly triggering existential concerns about people's safety and mortality (Solomon et al., 2004). In response to this fear, stress and anxiety have increased, causing feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. It has also led to the emergence of social movements and political organisations that seek to combat terrorism. Several measures have also been implemented in order to combat the threat of terrorism, including border controls, enhanced security, and increased surveillance (Abrahms et al., 2023). These measures, however, have also resulted in negative consequences, such as racial profiling and civil liberties violations (Fredrickson & Siljander, 2002). As a result, governments have had to balance security measures with protecting civil liberties, often resulting in tensions between the two. This is proving especially problematic in countries which already have limited civil liberties. For example, the Patriot Act in the US, which gave the government more power to investigate its citizens, has been criticised for violating their rights to privacy and freedom of expression. In addition, governments have also instituted more stringent security measures in other countries, such as China, which has further restricted citizens' civil liberties (Towadi et al., 2020). This is primarily due to increased surveillance and control rather than solely being driven by concerns about terrorism. The government's aim is to maintain social stability and control dissenting voices, often under the guise of national security.

The pervasive sense of insecurity caused by global terrorism has had far-reaching effects on individuals, societies, and governments. While measures have been taken to combat terrorism, it is crucial for governments to strike a balance between security and protecting civil liberties to address the root causes of terrorism and promote a safer and more inclusive world. A more

inclusive approach to combating terrorism can have several potential benefits. By addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as socio-economic inequality and political grievances, governments can work towards long-term solutions that promote stability and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies. Additionally, inclusivity can foster stronger relationships between communities and law enforcement, leading to better intelligence gathering and prevention efforts. Ultimately, a more inclusive approach can build trust, empower marginalised groups, and create a more resilient society in the face of global terrorism. It is essential to understand the complex nature of the fear of terrorism by exploring the psychological and cultural factors that contribute to their development and perpetuation.

Against this backdrop, the research question that arises is: “How do individuals make meaning of their experiences and perceive life under the existential threat of terrorism, particularly through the lens of Eurocentrism?” By delving into the psychological and cultural factors that influence the fear of terrorism, we can uncover key insights into how these fears are formed and sustained. This knowledge can help inform strategies and interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of terrorism on individuals and society. Moreover, Eurocentrism, as a dominant cultural perspective, can significantly influence individuals' perception of terrorism. It may shape their understanding of the threat and their interpretation of the motives and ideologies behind terrorist acts. By examining how Eurocentrism affects individuals' meaning-making processes and perceptions, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between culture, identity, and the fear of terrorism. I aim to explore how individuals construct meaning and perceive life in the face of terrorism. I will focus on the influence of Eurocentric perspectives. By examining the interplay between personal experiences, cultural influences, and the broader socio-political context, I hope to shed light on the complex dynamics at play in this context.

This research question encompasses the central focus on exploring the existential threat posed by terrorism and aims to understand the subjective experiences of individuals in the context of Eurocentrism. The question invites an in-depth exploration of how individuals navigate and interpret their lives in the face of perceived terrorism-related existential threats, emphasising the influence of Eurocentrism on their experiences.

Moreover, this question aims to explore the intricate interplay between psychological processes, such as media influences, personal experiences, and individual vulnerability, as well as cultural and social factors, including societal narratives, government responses, and interpersonal influences. The multifaceted dynamics shaping individuals' fear of terrorism can be addressed by developing targeted interventions, policies, and support systems that address these factors. By exploring psychological and cultural factors influencing fear and its perpetuation, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the issue, resulting in the development of more comprehensive strategies for reducing and resolving the impact of fear of terrorism on individuals and society.

This research is unique in that it takes a holistic approach to understanding fear of terrorism, examining both psychological and sociocultural factors. This provides a more comprehensive view of the issue, which can help to inform more effective strategies for managing fear and its effects. The research is necessary in order to gain a better understanding of the complexities of fear of terrorism and its impact on individuals and communities. It is also important to provide insight into how fear can be managed in various ways to reduce its negative consequences. Furthermore, this research aims to challenge the Eurocentric perspective often associated with fear of terrorism by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and experiences. By acknowledging and understanding the context-specific nature of fear, we can develop strategies that are sensitive to different cultural and societal factors, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to managing fear of

terrorism. This research also delves into the existential aspect of fear, exploring how the fear of terrorism can be viewed as a manifestation of the human condition and the quest for meaning in an uncertain world and its societal impact. By examining the psychological and cultural aspects alongside existentialism, we can gain a deeper understanding of the roots of fear and develop strategies that address the existential concerns underlying it.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to elucidate the methodological underpinnings of the present study. It distinguishes between the overarching research method, conceptualised as the "general approach" and the specific procedures employed to conduct the analysis (Willig, 2013, p. 8). This chapter will outline the researcher's epistemological style, detailing how it informs the research process. Further, it will document the specifics of the research procedure, delineating the choice of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the primary method. It will discuss the recruitment and selection of participants, the data collection and analysis methods, and ethical considerations. Finally, this chapter will offer an overview of the researcher's positionality via a reflexive account of their research experience. The discussion in this chapter will offer a solid foundation for conceptualising the design and implementation of this research.

3.2 Researcher's Position and Epistemology

The epistemology that underpins this study is rooted in constructivism and interpretivism in alignment with the present study's aim to unpack the subjective experiences of individuals living with the fear of terrorism in London, in a nuanced way. These epistemological frameworks focus on understanding social phenomena and human behaviour via subjective interpretation and constructing new social and theoretical constructs (Creswell, 2009). They also acknowledge the diverse and changing nature of reality within different social and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2009). Interpretivism aims to conceptualise the meaning that shapes human behaviour, thereby challenging the positivist notion of objectivity, truth and

generalisation to focus on the role of subjective meaning in knowledge production (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). A central tenet of interpretivism is that individuals construct knowledge based on their subjective experiences and knowledge (Willis, 2007). Ontologically, this epistemological framework is thus rooted in subjectivity. Consequently, researchers that subscribe to this epistemology aim to understand the unique experiences and viewpoints of their research subjects and how this impinges on their understanding of the world (Willis, 2007).

Constructivism, on the other hand, is grounded upon the assumption that reality is socially constructed through shared meanings and interpretations (Pilarska, 2021). This framework emphasises how social interactions, culture and language shape individuals' understanding of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Thus, a central tenet of constructivism pertains to the conceptualisation of knowledge as a product of interactions between individuals and their socio-cultural context or environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, constructivism espouses the idea that multiple realities exist in contrast to positivist viewpoints; within these multiple realities, different individuals or groups hold different accounts of what constitutes the truth or knowledge, according to their social contexts (Pilarska, 2021). Constructivist researchers also practice reflexivity to illustrate self-awareness about their biases and assumptions throughout the research process. This self-awareness assists researchers to unpack the complexities concomitant with understanding realities that are socially constructed (Creswell, 2009).

One of the aims of the present study is to investigate participants' perceptions of the likelihood of a terrorist attack to determine how these perceptions shape their sense of safety and belonging within their communities. This research aim necessitates an interpretivist viewpoint since understanding participants' perceptions requires their narratives to be deeply

engaged as they express the meanings they assign to their lives and experiences. Interpretivism ascribes an importance to context which is important for the present study since individuals' feelings of safety are ultimately shaped by a combination of their personal histories and broader social, cultural and political narratives surrounding terrorism. Further, the present study concerns itself with how participants' experiences of fear have changed over time through their reflections on specific examples to attest to these changes. This reflective process aligns with the tenets of constructivism in the sense that knowledge about fear is contingent upon ongoing interactions and experiences as opposed to being static. The exploration of this research aim is inherently constructivist since how individuals actively construct their idea of risk and safety according to their lived realities is investigated.

Moreover a central aim of the present study is to gain a nuanced understanding of how the fear of becoming a victim of terrorism shapes different aspects of individuals' lives such as their social interactions and personal relationships. Against this backdrop, the epistemological lens of the present study encourages a comprehensive exploration of the influence of fear on participants' daily behaviours and routines. Both epistemological frameworks that have been adopted emphasise the richness of subjective, individual experiences, which can facilitate a holistic understanding of how the fear of terrorism might permeate different aspects of the participants' lives. Finally, the present study seeks to unpack the coping mechanisms that individuals take up to manage their fear as it relates to terrorism. This requires insight into their subjective understanding of risk, the strategies they employ to mitigate it, and how they actively engage with it; both constructivism and interpretation support this exploration due to their emphasis on subjective meanings linked with lived experiences.

3.3 Qualitative research

A researcher's choice of epistemological framework invariably determines the research methodology and design (Creswell, 2009). Research designs influenced by constructivism and interpretivism typically focus on understanding individuals' subjective experiences, meaning and interpretations and are thus mainly qualitative in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions may be used to elicit rich data about participants' perspectives (Silverman, 2013). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is:

> multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p.2)

From the definition above, qualitative research is rooted in interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a multi-method, it involves the collection and use of various materials and approaches (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Silverman, 2013; Flick, 2007). Qualitative research focuses on individuals' subjective meanings that they ascribe when explaining their experiences, attitudes, behaviours, motivations and phenomena in specific social and temporal contexts (Creswell, 2009; Clark et al., 2021). According to McIntyre (2005), qualitative research can be conceptualised as an interpretive science.

A qualitative research design is justified for this research for a myriad of reasons. Firstly, the aims of the present study necessitate the exploration of subjective experiences, emotions and perceptions, which aligns with the goals and tenor of qualitative methodologies. Participants' fear of terrorism entails complex psychological and emotional dynamics that are

subjective and thus inherently qualitative—they cannot be nuancedly captured through quantitative measures. Qualitative research also privileges context and depth, which is relevant for producing rich, detailed narratives about participants' fear of terrorism and how it impinges on their social dynamics and personal interactions.

A qualitative approach and its ontological roots in subjectivism are also vital for a sensitive topic such as terrorism, which elicits diverse and sometimes conflicting viewpoints which are derived from experiences and social backgrounds. Qualitative research also involves an iterative approach to data collection, which ensures that the research study can be responsive to the lived realities of participants (Clark et al., 2021). This is important for the present study as it enables the dynamic nature of participants' fear to be capture. Finally, qualitative methodologies place value on participants' voices, ensuring that their perspectives are comprehensively captured in the research process. This approach enables the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced the fear of terrorism to be centred, fostering detailed insight into the social and psychological implications of such fears.

3.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The qualitative research method employed for this study was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is rooted in psychological research aimed at conceptualising human experiences, specifically, phenomenology and hermeneutics (Smith, 2006). This foundation in psychology renders IPA especially apt for exploring the emotional dynamics linked with the fear of terrorism in the present study. IPA was developed by Smith (2006) and his colleagues (Smith et al., 2009) with the goal of capturing the nuances of individuals' lived experiences. IPA's focus on understanding personal meaning draws from psychological questions about how individuals perceive and cope with their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). According to Smith (1996), the aim of IPA is to "stake a claim for a qualitative

approach central of psychology, rather than importing one from different discipline" (p. 4). Due to its focus on subjective interpretation, this method permits researchers to unpack the emotional and cognitive processes which underpin how individuals respond to life events, including fear in the context of terrorism. Invariably, Smith et al. (2009) posit that "IPA's core interest group [is] people concerned with the human predicament" (p. 5). The scholars note that IPA must be conceptualised "as psychological – its core concerns are psychological, and psychology needs space for approaches concerned with the systematic examination of the experiential" (Smith et al., 2009,p. 5).

As a qualitative research method, IPA has been proven as effective for unpacking and interpreting research participants' lived experiences. Notably, Smith et al. (2009) valued phenomenological research and its capacity to reflect on lived experiences, stating that their approach is participant-oriented or focused on the "human lived experience, and posits that experience can be understood via an examination of the meanings which people impress upon it" (p. 34). According to the scholars, "making sense of what is being said or written involves close interpretative engagement on the part of the listener or reader. However, one will not necessarily be aware of all one's preconceptions in advance of the reading, and so reflective practices and a cyclical approach to bracketing are required" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 35).

Thus, IPA researchers take up two roles; as Smith et al. (2009) articulate, in IPA research, the "researcher is making sense of the participant, who is making sense of X" (p.35). This dual role implies that the researcher is concurrently like and unlike the participant. On one hand, the researcher shares similarities with the participants in the sense that they draw upon every human resource in order to make sense of the world. On the other hand, the researcher is unlike the participant, as their insight into the participant's experiences is only based on the latter's account in as much as the researcher may have their own experiential lens. The strength

of IPA is that it permits multiple participants with experiences of similar events to narrate their stories in an unelusive way.

Against this backdrop, IPA is suitable for this research for various reasons when compared to other qualitative methods such as narrative research and grounded theory. Firstly, this method has the capacity to reveal how individuals construct meaning from their experiences of terrorism. Terrorism has psychological and internal experiences, which IPA can explore due to its focus on interpreting research participants' lived experiences. The exploration of these internal experiences is vital for understanding how fear manifests in participants' lives and shapes their perceptions of safety, belonging and identity. IPA is also concomitant with an idiographic approach which permits comprehensive examinations of individual cases (Love et al., 2020). Unlike other qualitative methods, the focus of IPA is on how individuals make sense of their lived experiences and the meanings that they attach to these experiences. Its focus on individual perspectives resonates with the research focus of this study. Each of the participants in this study stems from unique backgrounds and has diverse experiences and responses to fear. IPA tools are useful for exploring these variations as they involve significant granularity (Shinebourne, 2011).

Other approaches, such as grounded theory, although qualitative, are predicated on goals of theory development based on primary data (Silverman, 2013). Thus, this method is more suitable for studies that seek to generate theories or conceptual models. The current study does not seek to develop a new theory; rather it seeks to unpack and conceptualise pre-existing experiences comprehensively, making IPA more suitable due to its idiographic approach, which permits more detailed explanations of the fear of terrorism to be garnered, according to participants' specific experiences. Narrative research methods also focus on storytelling, prioritising how individuals frame and convey their subjective experiences via narratives (Creswell, 2009). Although this approach can offer comprehensive insights into cultural

contexts and personal histories, it does not elicit the same level of depth that IPA allows due to its systematic approach to identifying themes and patterns within participants' accounts.

The process of IPA entails several important steps. Researchers commence with immersion to familiarise themselves with the data through repeated readings and reflections. Next, the researcher engages in inductive analysis which entails identifying and coding the emergent themes and patterns within the data (Alase, 2017). This is followed by interpretation, whereby researchers evaluate the significance of the identified themes in relation to the research questions and broader theoretical frameworks (Alase, 2017). Research findings are then contextualised and situated within sociocultural, historical and situational factors. Finally, researchers maintain reflexivity throughout the analysis process; they critically evaluate their own assumptions, biases and the potential consequences of their interpretations. IPA provides researchers with an in-depth understanding of individuals' subjective experiences, which can inform the development of theories and practical interventions.

3.5 The Research Sample

3.5.1 *Sample Recruitment*

Using purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016), the researcher leveraged various social media platforms for the purpose of accessing and engaging relevant political forums where political and social issues such as terrorism are actively discussed. Platforms that were accessed included the "Political Psychology Forum," the "UK Political Forum Group," the "UK World Politics Debate Forums," the "Democratic Socialism UK Forum," and "The Heart of British Politics" forum. They were conceptualised as ideal spaces for accessing individuals with experiences and insights linked to the research focus, owing to the tenor of their discussions.

Further, a Facebook page was purposely created for this study as a centralised location where prospective participants could access information about the research study. It also served

as a platform for facilitating interactions with prospective participants. Outreach efforts for accessing research participants were expanded by leveraging similar online communities, within which themes of political psychology and terrorism are prevalent (See Appendix G). Prospective participants leveraged the Facebook page to contact the researcher and express their interest in the study.

Throughout the recruitment process, the researcher took various precautions to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of prospective participants. Posts were carefully monitored and deleted if prospective participants publicly expressed their desire to participate in the study, as opposed to messaging the researcher privately. Participants who expressed interest in the study received a detailed information sheet (see Appendix E) that delineated the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and their rights as participants. This information was crucial for ensuring informed consent, which was obtained before proceeding with any interviews (see Appendix F). These steps were crucial for upholding the ethical standards of the study.

3.5.2 *Selection criteria*

A selection criteria was delineated to ensure that the sample of this study aligned with the research objectives and could offer rich data to respond to research questions. The selection criteria was as follows:

- Men and women from different ethnic backgrounds who lived in Greater/Central London: This criterion was outlined in response to publications regarding terrorist attacks, which concluded attacks were more likely to occur in metropolises (YouGov, 2016). Moreover, experiences of different ethnicities in London can vary greatly, influenced by factors such as racism, Eurocentrism, and discrimination. It was important to acknowledge and address these issues when considering the impact of

terrorist attacks on diverse communities, as the fear and concerns may differ based on these experiences. Focusing geographically on Greater/Central London, a multicultural metropolis, was also crucial for challenging Eurocentric assumptions by contextualising the discussion with a broader sociocultural framework. The inclusion of men and women from various ethnic backgrounds and communities ensured that how the fear of terrorism is experienced differently across communities within a diverse urban environment was captured nuancedly. This diversity was salient given that factors such as discrimination and racism can impact how different communities conceptualise and respond to terrorism threats.

- People who self-identify as and report being afraid of terrorism: This criterion was outlined to ensure that only individuals who had experiences that are relevant for the study's research questions were included.
- Individuals undergoing therapy: This criterion was outlined based on the belief that individuals already undergoing therapy would have a more intuitive understanding of their experiences and emotions. The focus on individuals in therapy allowed for a more detailed exploration of how they understand their fears, rendering their viewpoints and insights especially relevant to the research aims.

3.5.3 *The Participants*

Based on the criteria above, a sample of eight participants were selected to join the study. The table below illustrates the participants selected for the thesis with their characteristics: age, ethnicity, location, and duration of living in London. The participants are described using pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity.

Table 1. Overview of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Lived in London Since	Location
Ali	42	Turkish/Kurdish	Male	2007	West London
Aris	38	British/Cypriot	Male	2008	West London
Sule	43	White British/Dutch	Female	Since 2000	North London
Amy	36	White British	Female	Born in London	North London
Martin	52	White British	Male	Born in London	South London
Jon	48	White British	Male	Born in London	South London
Maria	39	White British	Female	Since 2013	South London
Veron	37	White British	Female	Since 2009	West London

The participants in this study do not have first-hand experiences of trauma from terrorism, however, they are suitable for addressing the research aims of this study, which focus on exploring individuals' experiences and perceptions of the fear of terrorism and its profound impact on their lives. It is imperative to clarify that this study does not seek to investigate the direct trauma experienced by individuals who have lived through terrorist events; rather, this study seeks to explore how the *fear of terrorism* is experienced and perceived. Against this backdrop, in the UK, as is the case in many other countries, terrorism is often experienced indirectly via political discourse, the media, and general societal anxiety (Elmas, 2021). As a country, the UK has experienced both domestic and international terrorist threats, which in

turn, has shaped a climate of fear and anxiety that has permeated the population (Bakker, 2012). Media portrayals, public discourse on security, government policies and the ongoing presence of terror-related threats have had profound effects on how people perceive terrorism, even in the absence of direct exposure (Williamson & Miles-Johnson, 2019). Thus, the research participants, who are drawn from the UK context are uniquely positioned to offer nuanced insights into the psychological and emotional repercussions of living in a society where terrorism is a persistent concern. While they may not have personal experiences of a terrorist event, their perceptions of terrorism, informed by the national and global environment, can offer a critical understanding of how the fear of terrorism is experienced and perceived.

While the research sample is suitable for this study, a key limitation pertains to the generalisability of the findings. Since the participants do not have first-hand, direct experiences of terrorism, this may affect the depth of their perceptions of fear as compared to those who have lived through a terrorist event. While the study focuses on the experience and perception of the fear of terrorism rather than trauma itself, those who have lived through a terrorist event may have a different, more intense relationship with fear, shaped by personal exposure. Their perceptions could be more visceral or complex, potentially influenced by a heightened sense of vulnerability or distrust. In contrast, participants in this study, who experience fear primarily through media and societal discourse, may offer a more abstract or detached perspective. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of those with direct exposure to terrorism, limiting the extent to which the study's conclusions can be generalised to this group.

Additionally, although the sample size of participants might be conceptualised as small, it is important to highlight that IPA places an emphasis on depth as opposed to breadth, meaning that a smaller sample that is well-defined is suitable for researchers to achieve a comprehensive analysis of each individual’s lived experience (Alase, 2017). The sample size

was thus manageable and enabled a detailed qualitative analysis. It was advantageous because it enabled a thorough exploration of the participants' accounts, enabling a comprehensive analysis that unpacked the nuances of the experiences in relation to the fear of terrorism. The story of each of the participants contributed to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, fostering a detailed interpretation of the workings of the fear of terrorism. The contextually rich account of the participants' experiences might have not been possible in a larger sample as the subtleties of their individual accounts might have been overlooked (Love et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the use of a small research sample in this study reflects the foundational principles of IPA and its idiographic approach (Love et al., 2020). It is reflective of a commitment to unpacking the richness of individual experiences, in this case, the dynamics of terrorism-related fear. Further, this study implemented a pre-set criterion for saturation according to the richness of the collected data and the emergence of recurring themes across the interviews that were conducted (Chitac, 2022). The researcher reached a point at which additional interviews could no longer provide new insights due to these recurring themes. Saturation ensured that the data collected in the present study was robust enough to offer a meaningful exploration of the emergent key themes.

While the use of a small sample is supported by the foundational principles of IPA, it is important to underscore some limitations regarding the generalisability of the research findings. The uniqueness of the participants recruited in this study regarding their therapeutic experiences, cultural backgrounds, geographic location and personal histories means that their experiences may not fully represent other demographics. The present study included only individuals already in therapy, which limits its generalisability further. Explicitly, this population might have different levels of self-awareness due to therapy, which individuals who are not in therapy might not have. Further, they might have developed different coping mechanisms when compared to other populations, ultimately impinging on how they interpret

fear related to terrorism. Despite these limitations, the richness of the qualitative data in this study offers valuable insights into the complex ways in which individuals experience the fear of terrorism.

3.6 Method and data analysis

This thesis utilised the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the phenomenology approach perceives the self as interconnected with the world through intentionality, which negates Cartesian subject-object divisions. By studying a phenomenon through the perspective of individuals who have experienced it, phenomenology aims to describe the essence of the phenomenon. It is more relevant because it is based on reality rather than intangible theoretical notions. Husserl developed a method of bracketing our preconceived notions and assumptions to confront the ultimate constructs of consciousness. As Heidegger (1927/1962) diverged from this view, bracketing was implicit in his belief that knowledge was derived from social, political, and historical contexts. The representation of lived experience, including articulation of that experience through language, is already a step removed from its experience, as Van Manen (1990) argued. For this reason, interpretation, or hermeneutics, is an integral part of phenomenology (Shinebourne, 2011), and interpreters are responsible for locating hidden meanings within texts. Heideggerian (1927/1962) phenomenology holds that individuals are intrinsically linked to the sense in which they are born since there is no universal truth or universal essence but rather a relationship-based understanding through which all individuals discover and establish meanings about the world.

According to Heidegger (1927/1962), the individual's consciousness does not exist independently of the universe but emerges through historical knowledge. Koch (1995) summarises Heidegger's emphasis on the historicity of perception as our place or context in the

universe, which implies that understanding is not about how we perceive the universe but about how we are (Polkinghorne, 1983). An individual's history is determined by what society teaches them at birth and passes down to them, providing them with an understanding of the world. According to Munhall (1989), Heidegger often assumed that context is not always explicit, so one determines what is "true". His understanding of the world and people was influenced by their context. Thus, as mentioned above, I wanted to incorporate more than just participant perspectives into the study by connecting them to cultural, social, and historical contexts. Among the key components of this mechanism is interpretation, which, according to Heidegger (1927/1962), must be taken into consideration when interpreting any experience.

Due to Smith's (1990) development of IPA, which gained rapid popularity in the social sciences because of its emphasis on phenomenology, as well as its detailed description of subjective lived experiences in participants' worlds (Smith et al., 2009), the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of each participant's world as a result. In addition to serving as an effective psychological tool for identifying lived experiences, IPA can also explain specific individual cases and events. Considering the importance of the views and experiences of individuals living with terrorism fear and uncertainty, this methodology was selected. A dialogical framework was used to conduct the interviews, equivalent to the constructionist approach of IPA; it includes, for example, individuals' stories about their lives as shaped by sociocultural and historical processes, according to social constructionism. My ontological position is defined by a relativistic ontology, which holds that reality is a subjective experience that cannot be separated from our thoughts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to relativism, reality cannot be distinguished from subjective experience (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Furthermore, I followed the subjectivist epistemology style since truth is expressed through a variety of metaphors and language structures, and it is stretched and shaped to suit

individuals' intent in such a way that people can impose meaning on the universe and perceive it in a manner that makes sense to them. In my opinion, people facing the threat of terrorism will benefit from this approach. In addition to providing philosophical insights, it will expose my conclusions regarding my study, which will result in decisions relating to the intent, nature, methodology, and methods of the research and how to analyse and interpret the results.

Based on phenomenology and a description of participants' lives, IPA was developed by Smith to provide a descriptive account of the participants' lives. As a researcher seeking to understand the participants' endeavours and worlds, I believed IPA would provide the most effective opportunity to explore participants' lived experiences regarding terrorism by engaging in a double hermeneutic as a researcher (Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, IPA is idiographic in that it is meticulous when examining each case separately. This means it is analysed from a specific perspective rather than an overall one. Rather than hypothesise universally, this method was chosen to give participants a voice. In addition to emphasising minorities' lived experiences, I participated in dialogical encounters per the IPA philosophy of constructionism.

To maximise the effectiveness of this study, I used Smith and Osborn's (2003) non-prescriptive guidelines, which included examining each participant interview according to the following four initial stages.

In accordance with Smith and Osborn's (2003) non-prescriptive guidelines, I analysed each interview in four stages before moving on to the next.

1) Detailed reading via the text several times to familiarise myself with the information, taking notes of thoughts in the left-hand margin.

2) Returning to the transcript's opening, recognising, and remarking on developing themes in the right-hand margin.

3) Linking themes, developing clusters, and establishing dominant themes.

4) Creating a clear themes table after forming and designating the clusters via step three.

Finally, the amalgamation of the cases produced a list of dominant directing themes pooled by participants and compiled into a composite or complete picture to capture the phenomenon's significance (Willig, 2001, p. 68).

It was also possible that I would use Critical Narrative Interpretation (Langdridge, 2007) as an alternative; however, I was aware that the reliance on narrative events may result in immersion in the past rather than the present or future. Moreover, I rejected Grounded Theory as it disregards the investigator's embeddedness, resulting in a misunderstanding of the investigator's important role in data collection and explanation of behaviour (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

I considered using thematic interpretation but decided it would not be a good fit for describing individual meanings in terms of living under the eternal threat of terrorism (Willig, 2001). Since quantitative data provides evidence of magnitudes, I preferred qualitative data to quantitative data, which is descriptive and more in-depth and provides insight into events that can only be observed, not measured. As such, a qualitative method is most appropriate for studying the experience of living under a terrorist threat (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

3.7 Data collection

The rationale was to use open-ended inquiry to get the complete picture of the feelings and descriptions of the lived experiences of participants; thus, the aim was to catch the richness of the descriptions with meticulous details, and I employed a qualitative methodology, specifically IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2003) under that umbrella, to aim to improve our

understanding of how an individual, in a specific context, makes sense of a given phenomenon. This research aimed to explore the meaning-making of the participants' experiences and understand how they view life under the perceived threat of terrorism. I asked open-ended questions to elicit responses in the following way: a phenomenological questioning approach will take the participants on a reflective journey and help them gain a different perspective.

Table 2. Interview Questions

Table 2: Questions during interviews:	
1.	**What are your thoughts regarding the likelihood of a terrorist attack taking place in London?**
2.	**Have your experiences of living with fear of terrorism changed over time? If so, what examples can you provide?**
3.	**How has living with the fear of terrorism affected your life?**
4.	**How have you experienced living in a country where you may be at risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack?**
5.	**How does the fear of terrorist attacks affect your daily life? Please provide examples.**
6.	**In what ways do you cope with the fear of terrorism?**

3.8 Reflexivity

Throughout the research process, I found that my personal background and experiences significantly impinged on how I related with my research participants and how I approached the research itself. I grew up in Copenhagen as a child of Turkish and Kurdish parents. Thus, from an early age, I have navigated the complexities of cultural identity, which intertwines with discourses about terrorism. Due to this background, my approach to the topic of terrorism has been one that is built on the foundation of empathy and critical awareness. My upbringing in a

politically charged environment has ultimately shaped my understanding of issues pertaining to violence, history and fear and how they are interlinked.

During the interview process, my aim was to ensure that my participants had an open and safe environment within which they could comfortably express their experiences regarding the fear of terrorism. This was important to me because I recognised that some individuals might already feel marginalised by virtue of their socio-economic background or ethnicity. This understanding stemmed from my own experiences of stigmatisation and scrutiny as an individual of Middle Eastern descent. Concurrently, I recognised the potential for my personal experiences to introduce biases into the data collection process. I was aware of the importance of remaining neutral during the interviews to ensure that my participants could share their narratives without imposing my own viewpoints, experiences or interpretations on them.

Nevertheless, during the interviews, I often experienced tension between my role as a researcher and my position as a member of a community that has been affected by terrorism. As much as I wanted to listen and understand my participants, I also grappled with my own emotions concerning terrorism. Adopting a reflexive approach was important for setting aside my personal feelings and ensuring that my participants were heard and felt heard. I maintained a diary which helped me to document my feelings and thoughts through the research process; the research diary was useful as a tool that permitted me to reflect on how my background was shaping my interpretations.

When analysing the data, my aim was to ensure that my interpretations were balanced with the participants' voices to ensure that their accounts and experiences were authentically represented. I frequently discussed my findings with my colleagues and supervisors, who served as important sources of valuable feedback. In some instances, they challenged my assumptions, assisting me in navigating some of the biases that emanated from my

positionality. This approach was useful for ensuring that my interpretation of the participants' narratives was more nuanced.

Throughout my research journey, I learned about the importance of self-awareness and reflection. Being aware of my biases and the tensions present in my positionality as a researcher assisted me in approaching the research process with integrity.

3.9 Ethical considerations

During the recruitment process, I explained the purpose of the study. I assured the participants that the study would be confidential and that participants could withdraw at any time, which was intended to increase their sense of comfort and flexibility during the recruitment process. As part of the commitment procedure, I detailed the right to refuse and withdraw from the study until the methodology and data collection phase. I followed the BPS ethical guidelines (2014) to ensure safe and ethical research. Since the research project was critically personal and may create unwanted memories and emotions, I stressed the importance of protecting participants from potential harm and elements that might undermine their independence and dignity.

Additionally, I consulted the government website for advice on assisting victims of terrorism. Moreover, I provided them with my contact information and that of my supervisors if they changed their minds or wanted further reassurances about the study. While subjects of a sensitive nature might raise a risk of discomfort among participants, in the same way that emotions such as tears or frustration in the therapy room could be considered cathartic rather than negative, it is often considered that the presentation of these feelings to the investigator is not intrinsically harmful (Holloway & Jefferson, 2000), but instead that counselling skills such as sensitivity to distress and an empathetic manner are important to make the participant feel safe (Finlay & Evans, 2009).

The aim was to record the interviews and store the recordings on my computer, which is locked with a password. Although I transcribed the interviews, I also informed the participants that supervisors might view the transcripts, but they would be anonymised. As part of the interview process, I changed any identifying data for each participant and their associates (Etherington, 2004). Once the thesis has been marked, I will delete the data and recordings. The study does not involve vulnerable participants but acknowledges that fear is a topic capable of inducing distress. All the interviews took place online through COVID-19 using Zoom, a safe platform. Additionally, I ensured the interviews were confidential so that participants could discuss their experiences without hesitation or reservations. I also ensured their anonymity and the ability to withdraw at any time.

3.10 Dissemination

The results will be disseminated to an existential therapy journal and any political psychology journal which will accept them. It is important to share the outcome of such an important security subject relating to terrorism seen from an existential philosophical perspective. It is rare as it may add to policy decision-making and allow decision-makers to consider alternative routes forward for this multifaceted subject of terrorism.

3.10.1 *Transcription*

Transcribing was done by hand, with an outline in place, and the details were filled out. Names of institutions and participants' identities were anonymised. While time-consuming and laborious, I could immerse myself in the participants' experience as I listened closely to the background noise and fast speech. Even if IPA does not risk the same level of exposure as case studies, it may compromise participant anonymity due to its idiographic nature and desire for a rich narrative. Despite that, I removed participants' real names from the transcripts and used pseudonyms to protect their identities.

3.10.2 *Analysis and interpretation*

I followed the analysis and interpretation process based on Smith et al. (2009) and Smith and Osborne (2015). To analyse the text line-by-line, I printed out a copy with a wide margin and highlighted meaningful words and phrases. My exploratory comments were written as descriptive, content-related, and conceptual comments, where I noticed deeper meaning in the text. In addition to marking the words and phrases that were most impactful, I also noted participants' use of superlatives, vocal emphasis and slang. An example can be found in Appendix B.

At the transcription stage, emerging themes became more apparent as comments were recorded. Spider grams became my tool for capturing emergent themes and developing their relationships. As part of the analysis, a hermeneutic circle was generated. After entering emergent themes and drafting tentative relationships, I checked their origins in the transcript to see if they reflected each participant's experience and whether they represented meaningful themes. After a few iterations and revisions, during which I developed the main and sub-themes, I had eight diagrams showing each theme label to illustrate each of the eight main themes. I reviewed the labels, ensuring they were sufficiently descriptive, and selected a few verbatim extracts. The master themes, represented by the codes [Experience of Fear], [Anger Dynamics], [Defensiveness], and [Helplessness], serve as crucial directives in the analysis and sorting of the research data. These codes allow for a comprehensive exploration of the participants' experiences and their alignment with the research objectives and questions. Using these codes, I established thematic categories that provided a logical narrative of the findings, highlighting the interplay between the participants' experiences and the overarching research goals.

4 Results

In this chapter, the research findings are considered in relation to the main research objectives and question, “How do individuals make meaning of their experiences and perceive life under the existential threat of terrorism, particularly through the lens of Eurocentrism?” An overview of the participants' phenomenological experiences is provided. These codes were selected that most closely reflected the data as presented to me by the research respondents (see Appendix B). Verbatim excerpts from the interviews are used to illustrate the master themes. The themes are presented in such a way that a logical narrative of the findings is provided rather than an indication of their importance in an ordered manner. They are interdependent and not mutually exclusive. In this chapter, I intend to analyse the participants' experiences and share my reflexive interpretation of their reactions to their experiences of fear of terrorism. Each theme is illustrated with a selection of relevant extracts. The discussion chapter provides additional insights and interpretations of the findings related to contemporary literature and clinical practice. The presentation of the master themes and their sub-themes forms the basis of the rest of this chapter.

4.1 The master themes.

After analysing the interview data, four master themes were identified, each with associated sub-themes, as shown in the table below. Furthermore, this section will be structured as the themes indicate:

Table 3. Themes and Subthemes

Master themes	*Sub-themes*
Experience of Fear	Sense of being trapped
	Uncertainty of the unknown

	Avoidance of fear
	Death anxiety
Anger Dynamics	Political behavioural consequences
	Blaming and scapegoating
	Security that leads to anger
	Choices fuelled with anger
Defensiveness	Control and obsession
	Family and the sore point
	Restriction of media
Helplessness	Global risk
	Change without being in control
	Vulnerability of being
	Media and power

4.1.1 *Overview of themes*

As stated earlier, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the fear of terrorism has been used to identify the key themes. An analysis of the psychological processes and lived experiences of individuals affected by terrorism related to fear, anger dynamics, defensiveness, and helplessness was conducted. An iterative process of coding and interpretation was undertaken in this study to capture participants' personal narratives and subjective perspectives. There follows a discussion of the themes that emerged: in the study, fear was a central theme, with participants citing heightened anxiety, hyper-vigilance, and an ongoing feeling of threat as examples of emotional and cognitive responses. Terrorist incidents not only resulted in fear immediately after the incident but also remained an ongoing emotional

burden for many years to come. Several factors influenced participants' perceptions of risk and fear, including their characteristics, cultural beliefs, and socio-political contexts.

Anger dynamics emerged as an important theme in this study due to the complex interplay between fear and anger. The participants expressed anger and betrayal towards terrorist perpetrators. The interplay between fear and anger among participants in this study can be understood through the lens of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which posits that individuals derive a sense of self from their group memberships. The participants' expressions of anger and betrayal toward terrorist perpetrators reflect a deep-seated need for recognition and justice not only for themselves but also for their social groups. This anger often arises from experiences of perceived threats, marginalisation, and discrimination, which can heighten group cohesion and solidarity against external adversities. The varying intensity of anger, shaped by personal history, cultural norms, and socio-political context, underscores the significance of group identity in navigating these emotions. In response to the pervasive fear of terrorism, participants engaged in defensive behaviours—such as avoiding certain spaces or advocating for restrictive policies—as a way to protect their identities and affirm their group's values. Thus, their anger becomes a catalyst for both individual and collective actions aimed at countering perceived threats, revealing how social identity significantly influences emotional dynamics and responses to fear. Anger dynamics revealed a need for recognition, justice, and empowerment among participants and anger towards perceived threats, marginalisation, and discrimination on an interpersonal and societal level. The intensity and expression of anger varied depending on a person's history, cultural norms, and socio-political circumstances. Cultural norms, risk assessments, and perceived threats influenced defensiveness.

Moreover, defensiveness was critically examined, highlighting the potential for stigmatisation, prejudice, and the erosion of civil liberties. The theme emphasised the significance of nuanced approaches to security and the importance of considering broader

social implications. A significant theme emerged throughout the study, conveying a sense of vulnerability and powerlessness associated with terror fears. Participants reported feeling out of control, incapable of protecting themselves and their loved ones, and dependent upon external authorities for security. Helplessness was intertwined with anxiety, resignation, and disempowerment. As a result of fear and helplessness, it is imperative that individuals and communities are empowered, that resilience is fostered and that collective action is encouraged. Based on the IPA analysis, it was discovered that fear, anger dynamics, defensiveness, and helplessness were interconnected themes. These themes influenced perceptions, emotions, and responses in a complex manner. They highlighted the importance of examining power dynamics, critical reflection on fear-based narratives and security measures, and taking individual experiences into account with the broader social and cultural contexts. By examining the findings of this study, we can better understand and address the psychological and societal impacts of terrorism and develop strategies to promote social justice, inclusivity, and resilience.

4.2 Experience of fear

In this section, the participants discuss their experiences of fear in varying ways and how they have shaped their identity and way of living.

Participants interpreted these experiences and ways of living to make sense of who they were and where they live. It is demonstrated that different experiences, such as first-hand and second-hand experiences, lead to similar experiences of fear. This section is divided into five categories: Sense of being trapped, Uncertainty, Avoidance, Sense of dread, and Death anxiety. A variety of sub-themes run throughout the participants' lives, most of which are based upon information learned from the media. Sub-themes are interconnected because negative effects characterise them. It is also important to note that they each play a pivotal role in how the participants make sense of their daily lives and everyday experiences. The sub-themes of fear,

including a sense of being trapped, uncertainty, avoidance, a sense of dread, and death anxiety, hold significant meaning in the participants' lives. These sub-themes are interconnected and shape the way individuals navigate their daily experiences, influencing their perceptions, decision-making, and overall sense of identity and well-being. By understanding these sub-themes, we gain insight into fear's profound impact on individuals' lives and the strategies they employ to cope with it.

For example, the media plays a significant role in shaping the sub-themes of fear experienced by the participants. Information learned from the media influences their perception of being trapped, uncertainty, avoidance, sense of dread, and death anxiety, as it exposes them to narratives and images that reinforce these fears and anxieties. This underscores the power of media in shaping individuals' lived experiences and their understanding of the world around them. The potential long-term effects of media-induced fear on individuals' mental health cannot be overlooked. Constant exposure to narratives and images that reinforce fears and anxieties can lead to heightened levels of stress, anxiety disorders, and even depression. It is crucial to balance staying informed and protecting one's mental well-being in an increasingly media-saturated world.

4.2.1 *Sense of being trapped.*

In both a physical and emotional sense, terrorism can cause people to feel trapped or confined. In public spaces such as airports, shopping malls, or other crowded areas, the threat of terrorism can create a sense of insecurity and vulnerability. It is possible for individuals to feel trapped or confined because of this, and they may avoid such places as a means of minimising their perceived risk of being exposed to a terrorist attack. Moreover, terrorism may contribute to a sense of being trapped or constrained emotionally, especially among those who believe their values or way of life are threatened by the ideology of the terrorist group.

Consequently, people may feel powerless and frustrated as they cannot protect themselves or their communities from perceived threats.

Further, the reaction to terrorism can also create feelings of confinement or being trapped. Individuals may feel trapped or constrained by security measures such as increased surveillance, restrictions on travel, or limitations on civil liberties, especially if they view such measures as invasive or unnecessary. Overall, there is a complex relationship between terrorism and feeling trapped, which has negative consequences for both individuals and society. Therefore, to mitigate the potential adverse effects of feeling trapped or constrained, it is essential to address the root causes of terrorism, including through effective policy responses and community-based initiatives.

"Sense of being trapped" was chosen to refer to a state of being, not solely because of the sense of being trapped, but also due to an underlying emotional state of fear common to all participants. Most participants described the feeling of being trapped and not being able to control what might be coming or what they hear from the media, particularly when there is a daily focus on terrorism in the news agenda. As a result of not knowing where a threat may originate and not knowing what to do, people make choices that they are in control of. They prefer to avoid the chaos or potential chaos of the big city and remain closer to home. In the case of Aris, when hearing about a potential danger that he may have been near, he made drastic changes, such as working closer to home and feeling less trapped when he was away. For Aris, it was difficult to cope with the overwhelming thoughts and imaginings about how things might evolve:

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years): "Yes, it has, and it coincides with the news. When the news about a potential attack or terrorist stuff gets minimised, my fear lessens; this is what I have noticed. It's in line with what we hear and listen to. People on the street*

talk about what the media gives us. For example, there were times where I feared taking public transport, especially underground trains. I would feel trapped, and the thought about terrorism was overwhelming, so I stopped that for a while and found a job somewhere local."

According to him, media shapes perceptions as well as conversations. Aris' fear of terrorism can be influenced by the information he receives from the media and the conversations he hears from people around him. He consciously chose to change his behaviour and find a job closer to home, presumably to reduce his exposure to perceived risks, as he felt trapped and anxious.

Martin, on the other hand, does not want to stay indoors. In other words, he does not want to be trapped so the people who cause danger can gain the upper hand. He, therefore, mentioned that he would be creative to escape the sense of being trapped. While he may feel as if he is in danger, he does not see staying at home as an option:

Martin (White British, male, 52 years): "Of course, what happens is that when a bad event like that happens, you live low profile where you don't go out to high profile places or the famous places, and when a few days have passed, I just continue my life. I work in the city, and I must find a way to go to work. We had the option to not go in in the last attack on the London Bridge. But I don't like that; if I stay indoors, that means they are winning against me, and I am not letting that happen!"

Thus, Martin acknowledged that he did not want to let fear completely control his life. This behaviour can be seen as an attempt to protect himself from potential risks. This demonstrates his determination to maintain normalcy and not allow fear to dictate his actions, unlike staying indoors out of fear. According to Martin, adaptive behaviour is necessary to cope with fear, while resilience is necessary to avoid letting fear dominate. In addition to

avoiding certain high-risk areas, he remains committed to living his life and not succumbing to fear-induced restrictions. He displays resistance against the intended impact of terrorism and a refusal to let it undermine his daily activities and freedom.

Identifying commonalities and differences in how individuals navigate feelings of vulnerability and being trapped in the context of fear of terrorism can provide insights into how they manage their feelings. As a result, the sub-theme "Sense of being trapped" suggests that people may feel trapped or vulnerable in certain situations or places when they are afraid of terrorism. Depending on the severity of this experience, Aris and Martin may modify their behaviour, for example, by avoiding specific modes of transportation or places at higher risk. Individuals employ coping strategies to manage their fears based on their experiences and emotional and psychological responses to the fear of terrorism.

Some individuals, like Martin, choose to maintain their regular routines and not let fear dictate their actions, believing that staying indoors would give in to the terrorists. They demonstrate resilience and a refusal to allow fear to control their lives. On the other hand, individuals like Aris may modify their behaviour by avoiding high-risk areas or modes of transportation, seeking to minimise their exposure to potential threats. Feeling trapped or vulnerable due to terrorism can have significant psychological consequences. It can lead to heightened anxiety, hypervigilance, and a constant state of fear. These emotions can greatly impact an individual's overall well-being and quality of life, as they may constantly feel on edge and unable to fully relax or enjoy their surroundings. Individuals need to find healthy coping mechanisms and support systems to navigate these challenging emotions.

Aris and Martin have different approaches to managing their fear of terrorism. While Martin chooses to maintain his regular routines and not let fear dictate his actions, Aris modifies his behaviour by avoiding high-risk areas or modes of transportation. Both strategies reflect

their resilience and determination to cope with fear, but they differ in how much they modify their behaviour. Martin's approach of not letting fear dictate his actions can be empowering and allow him to maintain control and normalcy in his life. However, this approach may expose him to potential risks and increase his vulnerability. On the other hand, Aris's approach of modifying his behaviour to avoid high-risk areas or modes of transportation may provide him with a sense of safety and reduce his anxiety. However, it may also limit his freedom and restrict his ability to fully participate in certain activities or experiences.

The sense of being trapped, both physically and emotionally, in the context of terrorism can be deeply analysed through social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which highlights how individuals' self-concepts are influenced by their group memberships and social contexts. For participants like Aris and Martin, the feelings of confinement are not just about the immediate threats of terrorism but also about how these threats challenge their social identities and values. Aris's response—seeking to minimise exposure to risk by avoiding public transport—reflects an adaptive behaviour shaped by his emotional state and a perceived need to protect his identity and way of life from external threats. In contrast, Martin's determination to resist feelings of entrapment by maintaining his routines embodies a defiance against the terrorists' intent to instil fear, showcasing resilience and a commitment to his identity as an active member of society. Both responses illustrate how social identity influences individual coping strategies: while Aris's avoidance may provide a sense of safety, it can also lead to feelings of restriction, whereas Martin's approach, though potentially riskier, affirms his social role and agency. The complexity of their experiences underscores the psychological toll that terrorism can inflict, compelling individuals to navigate the precarious balance between safety and freedom, all while grappling with the broader implications of their social identities in a climate of fear.

4.2.2 *Uncertainty of the unknown*

Furthermore, the analysis shows a feeling of uncertainty that can arise among individuals when they are afraid of terrorism, particularly when it comes to their personal safety and security. Individuals are often concerned about their safety and the safety of their family members when faced with the threat of terrorism, which can occur at any time or in any place. Further, fear of terrorism can contribute to broader feelings of uncertainty about the future, particularly regarding global security and stability. In such a situation, individuals may feel anxious and uncertain about their prospects. Moreover, this uncertainty among individuals can be fuelled and contributed to via the government's response to terrorism, particularly if they feel that it is inadequate or ineffective. As a result, feelings of distrust and uncertainty about the ability of political leaders to address the threat can exacerbate anxiety and insecurity.

There is a complex relationship between fear of terrorism and uncertainty, which can have significant negative consequences for individuals and society. As the results of the interviews indicate, individuals who experience high levels of fear of terrorism often exhibit heightened levels of uncertainty in their daily lives. For example, Veron mentioned that she constantly questions her safety and second-guesses her decisions, leading to increased stress and anxiety. This combination of fear and uncertainty can ultimately erode community trust and foster a culture of fear-driven decision-making. For individuals to mitigate the potentially negative impacts of uncertainty, it is imperative to address the underlying causes of fear and anxiety, including through effective policy responses and community-based initiatives that promote resilience. The term "Uncertainty" was chosen due to the need to know and the intolerance toward uncertainty I observed in each participant. There was a variation in how this was experienced throughout each interview, which became more intense as the interviewees reflected upon the questions. As a result, they realised how much they did not know about the

fear factor and how much they were living on autopilot, but it was felt that this was an endless area of unknowns.

As a result of the uncertainty in Veron, she began to profile individuals with a Middle Eastern look and check them out more carefully in case they posed a threat. It was a method of alleviating her anxiety and uncertainty about travelling and catastrophising what might occur. As well as discussing the fact that she was taking steps before she went out, she also stated that this was a means of reducing the chances of experiencing the feared outcome, as stated below:

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "Well, it's not around, as often we don't hear it. I haven't made many changes other than the usual precautions – you don't want to go to dodgy places, do you? I can't help it, and sorry to say this, but when I see Middle Eastern-looking people on the plane, I check them out a few times."*

As a result of Veron's growing uncertainty, she began to monitor social media regularly, for example, Twitter, to determine whether there was a danger. It has been so difficult for her to deal with the uncertainty that she has been obsessing over news alerts. Veron mentioned that reading the news contributed to her obsession and uncertainty. Veron's constant social media monitoring and obsession with news alerts can be seen as a form of avoidance behaviour. By immersing herself in the news, Veron may be unconsciously trying to avoid confronting her own fears and uncertainties, seeking temporary relief from her anxiety through external sources:

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "I tend to read newspapers. I don't want to watch the news. Reading them helps me to rationalise more. I don't want to watch the news whilst relaxing, cooking or in the toilet. Also, I check Twitter regularly to see the most spoken subject so if there is a danger or if the world is going down, people will tweet it. There was a point where I obsessed with the news, but no more – life is too*

good to make myself miserable. We have government people who are trained and paid to take care of that side of the business."

Veron expressed a sense of awareness and caution about terrorism, saying she avoided "dodgy places" and checked out people who appeared Middle Eastern on the plane. In other words, Veron's fear of terrorism affects their perceptions and behaviours, leading to heightened suspicions and vigilance. As a result of societal stereotypes or media portrayals, Veron may have associated a Middle Eastern appearance with a potential threat. Veron's fear of terrorism and her association of a Middle Eastern appearance with a potential threat can be attributed, in part, to Eurocentric biases prevalent in society. Eurocentrism perpetuates stereotypes and fosters a climate of fear and suspicion towards individuals from non-Western backgrounds, ultimately shaping Veron's perceptions and behaviours.

Veron's fears of terrorism and her association of a Middle Eastern appearance with a potential threat are influenced by media portrayals that perpetuate Eurocentric biases. These biases create a climate of fear and suspicion towards individuals from non-Western backgrounds, shaping Veron's perceptions and behaviours. It is important to recognise the impact of media on shaping our fears and to challenge these biases for a more inclusive and understanding society. The media plays a crucial role in shaping our perceptions and behaviours by perpetuating biases and fostering a climate of fear and suspicion. Through its portrayals of certain groups, such as Middle Eastern individuals, the media reinforces Eurocentric biases and contributes to the creation of stereotypes. These stereotypes then influence individuals like Veron, leading to heightened suspicions and vigilance based on appearance. It is essential to critically analyse media narratives and challenge these biases to promote a more inclusive and understanding society.

For example, certain news outlets may disproportionately focus on acts of violence committed by individuals from non-Western backgrounds, creating a narrative that associates these acts solely with a particular ethnicity or religion. Additionally, movies and television shows often depict Middle Eastern characters as terrorists or villains, reinforcing the stereotype that they are inherently dangerous. These portrayals contribute to Veron's fear of terrorism and her association of a Middle Eastern appearance with a potential threat.

She preferred to read newspapers rather than watch the news as it allowed for a more controlled and detached engagement. Veron also discussed her media consumption habits to rationalise her fears. Veron also used Twitter to keep up with current events and believed that if there was a significant danger, it would be widely discussed on Twitter. Using specific media sources and platforms indicates that these individuals need curated information to rationalise and reassure them. Veron's comments show us how fear, media consumption, and societal narratives interact in complex ways. Veron's comments illuminate the intricate relationship between fear, media consumption, and societal narratives. As supported by previous studies (Silva & Guedes, 2022), the media plays a pivotal role in shaping societal narratives, which can influence individuals' fears and anxieties. By critically analysing Veron's insights, we can understand how these interconnected factors contribute to the construction of our collective consciousness. In the context of terrorism, Veron's experiences and coping strategies provide insights into how individuals attempt to rationalise their fears. Veron's coping strategies included reading newspapers instead of watching the news and using Twitter to stay informed. These strategies let her have a more controlled and detached engagement with the information, enabling her to rationalise her fears and seek curated information to reassure her. By employing these coping mechanisms, Veron was able to navigate her fear of terrorism and mitigate its impact on her perceptions and behaviours.

In addition, Sule expressed a sense of uncertainty about the safety and security of everyday life. Attending events and participating in activities involved some risk that was not entirely within Sule's control. It appears that the Manchester attack increased her awareness of this uncertainty, and she is now more cautious when making decisions. There may be a feeling of powerlessness or a lack of control on the part of the individual when facing a potentially dangerous situation:

> *Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years)* : *"It's not in our control anymore; this kind of horrible thing happens all over the world. In fact, when you think like that, it's shocking to see how much at risk we might be. Since everything happened in the Manchester event, I am not surprised, but I think twice sometimes before going to events etc."*

As a result of her fear of terrorism, Sule's comment reflects the psychological impact on their risk assessment and decision-making processes. Fear of potential harm has caused people to deliberate more carefully about engaging in previously common activities. This reflects a feeling of vulnerability and heightened concerns for personal safety. According to Sule, when individuals are confronted with the reality of terrorist acts, they experience emotional and cognitive responses. This emphasises the psychological consequences of living in an uncertain world and the changes in behaviour and decision-making processes.

The fear of potential harm, particularly in the wake of terrorist acts, has led individuals like Sule to become more cautious and deliberate in their decision-making. They may think twice before attending events or participating in activities, considering the potential risks beyond their control. This reflects a heightened sense of vulnerability and a shift in behaviour driven by the psychological impact of living in an uncertain world. These emotional and cognitive responses can include heightened anxiety, fear, and a sense of powerlessness.

Individuals may also experience increased vigilance and hypervigilance, constantly scanning their surroundings for signs of potential danger. Additionally, there may be a tendency to generalise the fear and associate it with similar events or situations, leading to avoidance behaviours and narrowing one's activities and experiences.

"Uncertainty of the unknown" is a highly relevant theme when studying the fear of terrorism. In response to terrorist acts, people experience a sense of unpredictability and lack of control. According to Sule and Veron, uncertainty affects their thinking, behaviour, and emotions. Studying fear of terrorism requires understanding the theme of uncertainty since it helps clarify the psychological processes involved. Fear and anxiety are amplified by uncertainty, leading individuals to alter their daily routines, make cautious decisions, and seek ways to regain control. It is clear from Sule and Veron's comments that uncertainty, fear, and coping strategies are intertwined.

The theme of "uncertainty of the unknown" in the context of fear of terrorism can also be effectively linked to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and its emphasis on how individuals derive a sense of self from their group memberships. This theory helps explain how feelings of uncertainty and fear can amplify group dynamics and influence individual behaviour. For participants like Veron and Sule, their fears are not solely about personal safety; they are also deeply tied to their identities and perceptions of their social groups in the face of perceived external threats.

Veron's behaviours, such as profiling individuals based on appearance and monitoring social media, can be understood through her identification with a specific in-group that seeks to protect its members from perceived dangers. Her heightened vigilance towards those who look Middle Eastern reflects the way societal narratives shape her fears and, in turn, her social identity, reinforcing biases that further entrench divisions. This behaviour underscores how fear can create an "us vs. them" mentality, wherein the perceived threat is externalised and

linked to particular groups, thereby influencing group cohesion among those who share her identity.

Similarly, Sule's cautious approach to attending public events reflects an internalisation of uncertainty that influences her social interactions and decisions. Her sense of vulnerability after a terrorist event showcases how collective fear can alter individual behaviours, leading members of a group to seek safety within their in-group while viewing others with suspicion. This behaviour illustrates how social identity can be both a source of comfort and a basis for exclusion in uncertain times.

4.2.3 *Avoidance of fear*

Fear of terrorism can contribute to avoidant behaviour in individuals, particularly in relation to public places and events that are perceived to be high-risk targets for terrorist attacks. Due to a perceived risk of exposure to terrorism, individuals may avoid attending public gatherings, using public transportation, or visiting tourist destinations. Further, fear of terrorism can also contribute to avoidant behaviour toward people from different cultural or religious backgrounds. As a result, individuals may perceive members of certain groups as more likely to engage in terrorist activities, which can lead to an increase in prejudice and discrimination. Furthermore, fear of terrorism may also lead individuals to avoid political or social engagement as they perceive these activities as risky or potentially exposing them to terrorist attacks.

To mitigate the potential negative effects of avoidant behaviour on individuals and society, it is essential to address the root causes of fear and anxiety, including through effective policy responses and community-based initiatives that promote resilience and social cohesion.

It was interesting to note that all the participants demonstrated avoidant behaviour in relation to their fear in various ways. Their avoidant behaviours likely varied based on how they lived their lives, but common for them all was the tendency to avoid consuming news or

media related to terrorism. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that individuals tend to engage in information avoidance as a coping mechanism to reduce anxiety and maintain a sense of control. In response to terrorism alerts, Sule's social life has been affected and is shaped accordingly. When there is an alert, there are certain places she prefers to go to or places she avoids, as stated:

> *Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years)*: "*I am coping with small changes; I tend to not go to very crowded places, especially not when there are a lot of terrorist alerts in the news or radios. I have minimised my news watching just to protect my mental health and try to talk about positive stuff. Before, I noticed that I was getting angry, and now, since I have stopped watching the news, I feel better."*

To cope with the fear of terrorism, Sule's comment reflects an avoidance strategy. She mentioned avoiding crowded places, particularly during times of media-driven terror alerts. Moreover, Sule recommended limiting her news consumption and focusing on positive content. Additionally, Sule noted an improvement in her emotional well-being, suggesting that avoiding fear-inducing stimuli, such as watching the news, had improved her overall well-being. Among the key aspects of the study of fear of terrorism is "Avoidance of fear", which emphasises individuals' behavioural responses aimed at reducing exposure to fear-inducing stimuli. Using avoidance strategies to manage her fear and maintain control over their emotions is evident in Sule's comment.

Travel and holiday choices are also indicative of avoidance. Maria stated that she does not wish to spend time in places where she is the only white person and, therefore, avoids going to places such as this and would rather stay close to her homeland. It was interesting to observe the avoidance behaviour to better understand how this affects people's lives and choices.

Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Well, I have become more aware and have made some choices about where I would travel. I will not travel where I am 'the white person'; that's too scary, and therefore, I am not travelling outside the places that's not white. Also, I check with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before I buy tickets to see if they are dangerous or not. Overall, I am just a lot more cautious."

Maria's comment reflects a strategy of avoidance in response to fear of terrorism. She discussed becoming more aware and choosing her travel destinations based on her perception of security. Her preference is to stay in predominantly white areas rather than travel to areas where she might stand out as "the white person" according to her comment, she avoids destinations where she believes her safety may be compromised because of her perceived racial or ethnic differences. Additionally, she mentioned contacting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for safety information or keeping herself updated on their website and safety alerts. Due to her fear of terrorism, Maria described adopting a more cautious approach to travel.

In Jon's case, he was upset and avoided going out to isolate himself. It was his preference to spend time in familiar local areas. additionally, he was aware that this had reduced his range of activities, but he wanted to be safer even though this had restricted his social activities.

Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "*Well, last time something happened on the London bridge, I was upset and didn't want to go out. I was just spending time locally. I didn't want to fly anywhere or any country. I would rather drive mainly in the UK, not abroad. Things are not safe; therefore, it has affected my choices. Things like where I want to socialise and eat and spend my time."*

As a result of his fear of terrorism, Jon stated that he makes frequent avoidance decisions. After a previous incident, he mentioned feeling upset and reluctant to leave London

Bridge. Jon indicated that the perceived lack of safety has influenced his choices regarding socialising, dining, and leisure activities. He prefers to spend time locally and avoids flying. In his comment, Jon provided valuable insight into how fear of terrorism influences everyday life and decision-making. According to Jon's experience, individuals may avoid locations or activities they perceive as high risk out of fear of terrorism. In the face of potential threats, avoidance behaviour is a way of maintaining a sense of personal control and safety. Individuals' social interactions, travel choices, and overall quality of life can be profoundly affected by such avoidance strategies.

Both Maria and Jon exhibit avoidance behaviour due to their fear of safety risks. While Maria avoids destinations where she may stand out as "the white person" and takes precautions by contacting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jon's fear of terrorism leads him to avoid leaving his local area and opt for driving instead of flying. In both cases, the perceived lack of safety significantly impacts their choices and daily lives.

Furthermore, Maria's fear of standing out as "the white person" in certain destinations can be linked to the concept of Orientalism. Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said to describe the Western perception and representation of the East, which often involves stereotyping and exoticizing non-Western cultures. Maria's avoidance behaviour reflects her awareness of potential discrimination or harassment based on her racial identity, highlighting the impact of Orientalist biases on travel decisions.

Fear-based decision-making can have significant societal implications. When individuals avoid certain areas or activities due to perceived risks, it can lead to segregation and the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices. This limits personal experiences and interactions and hinders cultural exchange and understanding. Additionally, fear-driven decisions can impact local economies and tourism, creating a ripple effect on the livelihoods

of individuals and communities. Addressing these fears and promoting a more inclusive and informed approach to decision-making is crucial to fostering a society that embraces diversity and promotes unity.

The connection between fear of terrorism and avoidant behaviour can be effectively explored through the lens of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This theory helps to elucidate how fear can amplify group dynamics and influence personal choices in the face of perceived threats. For instance, Sule's decision to avoid crowded places during terror alerts and limit her media consumption reflects a desire to maintain emotional control within her in-group, fostering a protective environment for herself and her loved ones. This behaviour underscores a common reaction among individuals who identify strongly with a community that prioritises safety and well-being. Her coping strategy illustrates how social identities shape perceptions of risk and influence decisions to retreat from environments perceived as dangerous.

Similarly, Maria's avoidance of travel to non-white areas reveals an underlying social identity shaped by both racial dynamics and fear. Her concern about standing out as "the white person" reflects how societal narratives and stereotypes can lead individuals to associate certain cultural or ethnic groups with potential threats. This self-protective behaviour, rooted in her social identity, not only reinforces her own prejudices but also perpetuates societal divisions. By avoiding diverse environments, Maria limits her interactions and experiences, which could otherwise foster understanding and cultural exchange.

Jon’s retreat into familiar local areas further exemplifies how fear and the desire for safety impact social identity and behaviour. His preference for remaining close to home highlights a collective retreat to familiar in-groups, reducing exposure to perceived out-groups

that may evoke anxiety. This behaviour demonstrates how the fear of terrorism can erode social cohesion, as individuals opt for isolation rather than engaging with a broader, diverse society.

Overall, the participants' narratives illustrate how social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides insight into the complex interplay between fear, avoidance behaviour, and group dynamics. As individuals navigate their fears, they often resort to strategies that reflect their social identities, which can lead to increased segregation and perpetuation of stereotypes.

4.2.4 *Death anxiety*

Another apparent theme was the death anxiety that individuals may experience because of their fear of terrorism. Individuals may experience feelings of vulnerability and mortality because of terrorist acts due to the violent and sudden deaths that occur during terrorist attacks. There is also a possibility that terrorism may be perceived as an existential threat, which in turn exacerbates death anxiety by increasing people's awareness of their own mortality and the fragility of life, which also seems as if it has become a constant, everyday-like fear.

Moreover, the media's coverage of terrorist attacks can also contribute to death anxiety by emphasising the violence and destruction associated with terrorism and framing the threat in terms of death and destruction. Overall, it appears that the relationship between fear of terrorism and death anxiety is complex and can have significant negative consequences for both individuals and society at large. To reduce the negative effects of death anxiety on individuals and society, it is essential to address the root causes of fear and anxiety, including through effective policy responses and community-based initiatives that promote resilience and social cohesion.

Each participant was also anxious when prompted to do so by news or any other media or by friends and family. After witnessing the fear complications of her friends, Maria began

to focus on events like these or the likelihood of them as a result of experiencing severe death anxiety. Having described this situation so vividly, it was evident that she was affected by it and was anxious about a situation of this nature, and she was taking precautions to avoid it. She was surprised to see that she became someone who was watching the news because she had begun to fear for her life and wanted to take care of herself and her family and friends. As a result, she became hyper-sensitive to what was occurring around her, as well as around her friends and family:

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Yes, I felt it in my veins through my best friend; it made me paranoid and made me look more into the likelihood of these events happening again. I suddenly became a person who was watching the news which I wasn't before. I froze and simply felt trapped in my body because I was so scared for myself and my friend."*

Maria's comment emphasises the experience of death anxiety as a response to the fear of terrorism. As a result of her best friend experiencing the impact of terrorism, she became more paranoid and actively sought out information about the likelihood that similar events would occur. As a result of this fear, she began to watch the news regularly, which she had never done before. Her intense fear for herself and her friend caused Maria to feel frozen and trapped in her body.

As part of a study of fear of terrorism referred to as "Death anxiety", it is also possible to examine individuals' emotional and psychological responses to the threat of violence and the loss of life. According to Maria, fear of terrorism can profoundly affect an individual's sense of vulnerability and existential concerns. As Maria's experience illustrates, fear of terrorism can increase awareness of mortality and the fragility of life. To regain control and certainty in an uncertain world, individuals may seek information obsessively.

The participant Maria can also be mentioned here as she reported still being shocked and frightened about what others can do. She expressed clearly that she cannot control this and fears not being able to return to her home. It appears that Maria had reflected on and almost obsessed with the probability of experiencing such an incident and also displayed empathy for victims of previous terrorist attacks. She was angry and scared:

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years)*: *"Well, I can't control it, can I? It's actually frightening to think that it's a possibility that you leave your house one morning and don't return just because one freaking idiot decides to blow himself up."*

In her comment, Maria acknowledged the terrifying possibility that an act of terrorism could cause her or others to lose their lives. Death anxiety is related to fear of terrorism, as she acknowledges death anxiety. In addition to her anxiety and fear, Maria expressed a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over such events. There is a deep-rooted fear and apprehension associated with the reality that one's life could be abruptly ended by the actions of a single individual when it comes to the concept of "Death anxiety" in the study of fear of terrorism. As Maria pointed out, one's life can be abruptly ended by the actions of a single individual, which causes deep-seated fear and apprehension. According to Maria, the fear of terrorism disrupts one's sense of security and normalcy, which in turn has a psychological impact. The acknowledgement that leaving the house in the morning may result in never returning due to a terrorist attack illustrates the existential uncertainty and fear individuals experience when faced with the threat of terrorism.

These findings highlight the profound impact that fear of terrorism can have on individuals, such as Maria, who experience heightened awareness of their own mortality and the fragility of life. The fear of not being able to return home and the sense of powerlessness in the face of terrorism reflect the deep-rooted apprehension and existential uncertainty that

individuals may grapple with when confronted with the threat of terrorism. Furthermore, the fear of terrorism and death anxiety can be exacerbated by Eurocentrism, as media coverage and societal discourse often focus on attacks in Western countries. This narrow lens can perpetuate a sense of vulnerability and fear among individuals like Maria, who may feel that their lives are more at risk due to their proximity to potential targets or their cultural background. Furthermore, individuals from non-Western cultural backgrounds may also experience a unique impact of terrorism. The fear of terrorism can be compounded by feelings of cultural stigmatisation and discrimination, as they may face increased scrutiny and suspicion in the aftermath of attacks. This can further heighten their sense of vulnerability and fear, creating additional psychological and emotional challenges.

4.3 Anger dynamics

Participants' responses to significant events are emphasised in this section. Furthermore, it illustrates how they have experienced the world through these experiences and illustrates its interchangeability. Also included is how they use their anger to influence political decision-making. As a result of this theme, participants' political views have changed drastically towards security- and defence-based policies. Furthermore, it illustrates the relationship between fear of terrorism and trust in government. In addition, it shows participants' concerns for British national security. Some participants favoured stricter measures, while others trusted the government and propagated its strength. Some participants also expressed reasons why they thought it was an effective step for Brexit from a platform of preventing British soil of terrorism. Anger and fear can be powerful forces shaping political behaviour and a legitimate response to real threats that motivate positive action.

As elaborated in the earlier sections, it is common for individuals to feel anger and frustration as a result of fear of terrorism, which can lead to anxiety and stress. When

individuals perceive terrorism as a threat, they may feel as though their safety or security has been compromised, which can lead them to feel a sense of injustice or violation. As a result, people may feel angry and resentful towards those perceived to be responsible for terrorism, such as terrorist groups or governments perceived to be ineffective in preventing it. People who perceive the government's response to terrorism as inadequate or ineffective may also feel angry and frustrated due to their fear of terrorism. The result can be a sense of distrust and disillusionment with political leaders, further exacerbating anger and frustration. A person's fear of terrorism can also result in anger and aggression toward individuals perceived as belonging to a group or ideology that is responsible for it. Individuals belonging to religious or ethnic minorities may be subject to discrimination, harassment, or violence as a result of this. A participant's comments were as follows:

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years)*: *Hmm, this will be terrible if an attack happens; it's actually annoying that we are so vulnerable. Nowhere in the world is safe anymore, anyway. My thought is that we need to be protected, and this does not start here at home; we need to project ourselves outside the UK.*

Jon's comment reflects a common sentiment of fear and vulnerability in the face of terrorism, which can contribute to feelings of anger and frustration. It highlights the importance of not only implementing comprehensive security measures domestically but also projecting a strong stance internationally to address the root causes of anger and mitigate the negative effects of terrorism.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years)*: *Yes, I mean that the turf is not here at home; the UK needs to be protected overseas before it comes home and hits us. They need to beat the shit out of the bastards outside the UK.*

Jon's comment indicates a view that prioritises addressing terrorism through military

force and proactively protecting the UK from threats abroad. This perspective highlights the belief that proactive measures are necessary to prevent terrorism from reaching home soil and causing harm to the country and its citizens. However, it is important to consider that addressing the root causes of terrorism and promoting social cohesion is also crucial in mitigating the potential negative effects of anger and frustration.

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years)*: *well, of course, there were all sorts of random people coming and going, and we had to stop that. We didn't know who was doing what because of the EU we were totally vulnerable to all kinds of attacks.* Right now, we are stronger because we divorced ourselves and we protect ourselves. I couldn't rely on anything, to be honest. *I can also say that, therefore, I was pro-Brexit. I wanted us to protect our borders and the streets without the EU telling us what to do. So, to answer your questions, I think it's unlikely, and of course, there might be something that slips out which happens everywhere in the world anyway, but I must say we are more secure and safe compared to before!*

Veron's comment reflects a common sentiment of anger and frustration towards the perceived lack of security and vulnerability to terrorist attacks. This illustrates how fear of terrorism can contribute to feelings of anger and resentment towards certain groups or ideologies, as well as a desire for stronger border control and protection. Fear of terrorism has a complex relationship with anger and can have significant negative consequences for individuals as well as society. To mitigate the potential negative effects of anger and frustration, it is important to address the root causes of fear and anxiety, including through effective policy responses and community-based initiatives that promote resilience and social cohesion.

Both Jon and Veron share a concern for national security and the prevention of terrorism. While Jon emphasises the importance of proactive military action to protect the UK from external threats, Veron focuses on the need for stronger border control and protection because of leaving the EU. Both perspectives highlight the complex relationship between fear, anger, and security and underscore the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism and promoting social cohesion. These sentiments of anger and frustration towards perceived security vulnerabilities can also be linked to Eurocentrism and racism. Fear of terrorism often leads to stereotyping and discrimination against individuals from certain ethnic or religious backgrounds, exacerbating existing divisions and prejudices within society. It is crucial to address these underlying biases and promote inclusive and equitable approaches to security that prioritise cooperation and understanding among diverse communities. Veron's comment reflects a sense of superiority and condescension towards others who are different, perpetuating a divisive and exclusionary mindset. This kind of attitude only further deepens societal divisions and hinders efforts towards fostering inclusivity and understanding. Recognising and challenging such biases is important to create a more harmonious and equitable society for all. Veron's comment, with its sense of superiority and condescension towards others, undermines social cohesion by perpetuating division and exclusion. Such attitudes hinder efforts towards inclusivity and understanding, creating a more fragmented and unequal society. It is crucial to challenge and address these biases to promote social cohesion, fostering a sense of unity and respect for diversity.

4.3.1 *Political behavioural consequences*

Individuals who fear terrorism may support politicians or political parties that they see as tough on terrorism or prioritise national security. Fear of terrorism can affect political behaviour and voting choices. Furthermore, fear of terrorism can contribute to a sense of

distrust in government and political institutions, leading to individuals being critical of politicians who are perceived to be ineffective. Additionally, fear of terrorism can make people prioritise security and safety issues in their voting decisions, overshadowing other policy areas. In addition, fear of terrorism can also polarise political discourse, as individuals with different views may become more entrenched in their positions and less willing to compromise and engage in constructive dialogue as a result.

Despite its complexity, fear of terrorism has significant implications for society as a whole and political behaviour. The ramifications of terrorism extend beyond the societal level, impacting various aspects of political behaviour and decision-making. This includes policies, elections, and the overall functioning of governments, making it a critical issue to address and understand. To promote resilience and social cohesion, as well as mitigate the potential negative consequences of fear of terrorism on political behaviour and voting choices, political leaders need to address the root causes of fear and anxiety and engage in constructive dialogue with individuals who hold different views. Veron was very passionate about her choices, and she justified the fear of terrorism in the context of Brexit. She argued that terrorism was because of the free market and that this made the UK vulnerable and open to attacks of all kinds. In addition, she expressed concern about free movement since nobody knew who was coming into the country and why. As a result of her protection outside of the EU, she felt that she and the rest of the UK would be less vulnerable to dangers.

The theme of political behavioural consequences in relation to terrorism is reflected in Veron's comment. Specifically, she emphasised how political decisions like Brexit affect people's perceptions of safety and security. She said that leaving the European Union (EU) has made her country stronger and better able to protect itself from terrorist attacks. She associated EU membership with vulnerability and insecurity, seeing Brexit as a way to regain control over borders and domestic security. Politics plays an important role in the study of fear of terrorism,

as it sheds light on how political events and decisions influence perceptions and responses to terrorism. Veron's comment highlights the connection between political ideologies, national security, and fear of terrorism. It is clear from Veron's perception that post-Brexit, security and safety were perceived to have increased due to concerns about terrorism. Individuals may seek political solutions to alleviate their fears and address their concerns. To comprehensively examine the factors that influence individuals' responses and beliefs, researchers must understand the political behavioural consequences of fear of terrorism.

As an example, Jon justified the military presence of the UK overseas by claiming that the UK had to be protected overseas before the problems of security reached home. In his opinion, the presence of the UK and a militarised approach to terrorism was necessary to alleviate his and other people's fears.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "Yes, I mean that the turf is not here at home. The UK needs to be protected overseas before it comes home and hit us. They need to beat the shit out of the bastards outside the UK."*

Taking proactive measures to protect the UK from potential terrorist threats outside its borders is essential, according to Jon. It is clear from Jon's language that he was in a hurry and wanted to aggressively combat perceived enemies. It explores how political beliefs and attitudes influence individuals' responses to fear of terrorism by focusing on the theme of political behavioural consequences. According to Jon, military action is necessary to prevent terrorist attacks on UK soil through proactive measures. Jon's statement indicated that he believes a proactive and aggressive response is required to combat terrorism, regardless of where it occurs. Based on this perspective, a focus on security measures and a willingness to employ military force are responses to a threat of terrorism.

However, a militarised approach to terrorism may have unintended consequences for national security. While it may provide a sense of protection and reassurance to individuals like Jon, it can also contribute to a cycle of violence and retaliation, potentially exacerbating the threat of terrorism both at home and abroad. Additionally, a heavy reliance on military interventions may divert resources and attention away from other important aspects of national security, such as intelligence gathering and community engagement.

On the other hand, Maria was angry about the current state of affairs and believed that specific political groups had to take action. Furthermore, she was angry at the problems that other political groups had caused in the country by accusing political parties of not making the country safe. According to her, the government should be strict and not open and friendly anymore, and her anger was directed at liberals and the Labour Party for failing to provide adequate security.

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Well, we need to be more determined, and the right wing in this country needs to step up in their game. Otherwise, we are too vulnerable to any attack. It is the right wing that carries the nationalism or the greatness of this nation. The liberal or the labour has really damaged it all. Look at it: we are not safe in our own streets; what's that all about? We are all scared. Notice the trains and the buses – people are all anxious. We were more open and friendly before; now, we fear shadows. We need tight security rules."*

To address the perceived vulnerability and fear within the country, Maria emphasised the need for a stronger right-wing presence and stricter security measures. Maria's comment illustrates that the fear of terrorism influences political attitudes and the need for specific political actors and policies to address the perceived threat. To ensure security, Maria believed a strong right-wing presence was necessary to counter the political implications of terrorism.

To address the perceived vulnerability and fear within the country, Maria emphasised the need for a stronger right-wing presence and stricter security measures. Maria believed that a strong right-wing presence is necessary because it advocates for stricter borders and immigration policies, which she sees as crucial in preventing potential threats from entering the country.

Additionally, Maria believed that a right-wing approach would prioritise harsher punishment for terrorists, thereby deterring future acts of violence. As a result of her perception of ineffective governance by liberal or labour parties, she felt vulnerable and afraid. To address the fear and restore a sense of safety, Maria advocated for tighter security rules and stronger nationalist sentiments.

Maria's anger towards specific political groups reflects her belief that their actions have contributed to the country's lack of safety. She advocates for stricter security measures and sees the right wing as the key to protecting the nation and restoring its greatness while criticizing the liberal and labour parties for their perceived failures. Her anger highlights the link between political decisions and the emotions evoked by concerns about safety and security. Maria's anger towards specific political groups and her call for stricter security measures can be influenced by the media's psychological operations. Through sensationalised news coverage and fear-mongering tactics, the media can manipulate public perception and amplify feelings of fear and insecurity, shaping individuals' political beliefs and preferences. The media's manipulation of public perception can have far-reaching consequences.

The media can amplify feelings of fear and insecurity within society by sensationalising news coverage and employing fear-mongering tactics. This can shape individuals' political beliefs and preferences, as seen in Maria's anger towards specific political groups and her call for stricter security measures. The media's psychological operations can ultimately influence public opinion and contribute to a divisive political climate. Examples of fear-mongering tactics used by the media include sensationalising crime stories to create a sense of insecurity,

using dramatic language and imagery to exaggerate the threat posed by certain groups or issues, and selectively reporting on incidents that fit a particular narrative of fear and danger. These tactics can manipulate public perception, amplify feelings of fear and insecurity, and contribute to a divisive political climate.

4.3.2 *Blaming and scapegoating*

The fear of terrorism can contribute to a tendency to blame certain groups or individuals for the threat of terrorism. The perceived failure to address the threat of terrorism can take a variety of forms, including blaming specific religious or ethnic groups, immigrants, or political leaders. When individuals fear terrorism, they may seek simple and easy solutions to complex and multifaceted problems, which can lead them to blame particular groups and individuals. Individuals can also feel a sense of urgency about taking action, leading them to look for scapegoats or to make quick judgments about who is to blame when they perceive the threat to be urgent.

Furthermore, some individuals or groups can manipulate the fear of terrorism for political gain, contributing to the blaming of specific individuals or groups. By fuelling resentment and alienation, the tendency to blame can have negative consequences for social cohesion and exacerbate terrorism. Individuals and society can experience significant negative consequences as a result of the link between fear of terrorism and blaming. Individuals and political leaders should address the root causes of fear and anxiety, engage in constructive dialogue, and formulate policy responses that promote resilience, social cohesion, and a nuanced understanding of the problem of terrorism.

During his interview, Jon stated that before, the UK society was less vulnerable, and now it is more unsafe because some people are traitors. Jon's fear has turned into anger towards certain individuals or groups. It was mentioned that he had lost his trust and is now more likely

to trust the government to do the right thing because of its pro-security attitude, which may change depending on the circumstances.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "Well, before, we did not tolerate everything; we did not have many traitors. We live in times where things have changed so much that I can't trust anyone and fear that anything can happen at any time."*

Regarding the fear of terrorism, Jon's comment reflects the theme of blaming and scapegoating. As a result of societal changes, he expressed distrust and fear, implying that anyone could be considered a potential threat or traitor. As a study of fear of terrorism explores how individuals assign blame or target specific groups in response to their fears, blaming and scapegoating play a significant role. Jon's comment indicates a lack of trust and a high level of suspicion, indicating that he views others as potential threats. According to Jon, social changes have undermined trust and created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. He believed there used to be fewer "traitors" and individuals who posed a threat, but now there is a general mistrust towards others. Jon's comment reflects a tendency to generalise and associate fear with a lack of trust.

Jon's comment reflects the deep sense of fear and mistrust that can arise from the fear of terrorism. When individuals feel unsafe and vulnerable, they may become more susceptible to blaming specific individuals or groups, as Jon has done. Society must address these fears and anxieties to foster understanding, resilience, and social cohesion. Government actions contributing to a pro-security attitude include increased surveillance measures, stricter border controls, and enhanced counterterrorism efforts. These actions are often implemented in response to the fear of terrorism and are intended to protect the safety and security of citizens. However, they can also contribute to a culture of fear and mistrust, as individuals may feel that their privacy and civil liberties are being infringed upon.

Aris believed that the decision-makers were at fault. He felt unfairly positioned and treated. According to Aris, ordinary people will suffer and pay the price no matter what happens, whereas politicians will remain in gated environments and live normally. According to Aris, politicians were responsible for the chaos and negativity.

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years): "I didn't think about it in that way. It makes me more tense and upset because the return is that ordinary people pay the politicians to live in their gated houses."*

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years): "Well, yes, the big guys keep stirring stuff and they are the cause for things to come to our doorsteps."*

The consequences ordinary people face are attributed to politicians and influential individuals whom Aris perceived as responsible. It seemed that Aris attributes responsibility for the perceived threat of terrorism to politicians and influential figures. As Aris pointed out, the actions and decisions of the "big guys" worsen the situation, causing increased anxiety and tension among ordinary people. According to him, those in positions of power are stirring up conflicts or creating conditions that result in the fear of terrorism becoming a reality for everyday people.

In contrast to Jon's perspective of blaming and scapegoating, Aris places the responsibility for terrorism on politicians and influential individuals. He believes that their actions and decisions worsen the situation and contribute to the fear and anxiety among ordinary people. Aris sees the "big guys" as the cause of the conflicts and conditions that lead to the reality of terrorism in everyday life.

Aris and Jon's comments highlight the role of social identity in shaping their perspectives on trust and fear. While Jon generalises and associates fear with a lack of trust in

others, Aris attributes the responsibility for perceived threats to politicians and influential figures, emphasising their actions and decisions as contributors to the fear and anxiety experienced by ordinary people. Both perspectives demonstrate how social changes and the actions of certain groups can influence individuals' perceptions of trust and fear. Associating fear with a lack of trust in others can lead to heightened suspicion, isolation, and a breakdown in social cohesion. When individuals view others through a lens of fear and mistrust, it becomes difficult to build meaningful relationships and work collaboratively towards common goals. This can create a divided and fragmented society where cooperation and unity are undermined. Politicians and influential figures play a significant role in shaping public fear through their actions and decisions. Their policies, rhetoric, and public statements can amplify existing fears or create new ones, increasing anxiety and tension among ordinary people. How these individuals address and respond to perceived threats can directly impact the level of fear experienced by society.

The link between fear of terrorism and the tendency to blame certain groups or individuals can be effectively analysed through social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This framework helps explain how individuals categorise themselves and others into groups, shaping perceptions, behaviours, and responses to perceived threats.

When individuals experience fear of terrorism, they often seek to simplify complex issues by identifying clear “us versus them” distinctions. This tendency aligns with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from their group memberships. In times of heightened fear, such as after terrorist incidents, individuals may be more inclined to view those outside their social group—whether based on ethnicity, religion, or nationality—as potential threats. This scapegoating serves to

reinforce in-group solidarity while simultaneously fostering distrust and hostility toward out-groups.

Jon's comments illustrate how fear can morph into anger and suspicion, leading him to label others as potential "traitors." His sense of vulnerability has not only heightened his mistrust but also framed his worldview in a way that associates fear with certain social identities. This reaction exemplifies how the fear of terrorism can distort perceptions, leading individuals to generalise and categorise others based on superficial characteristics. In contrast, Aris's perspective shifts blame from marginalised groups to political leaders. He feels that the decisions of those in power exacerbate societal tensions and create fear among ordinary people. This reflects another dimension of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986): the alignment of individuals with broader social or political groups. Aris's anger is directed toward a perceived elite that is disconnected from the struggles of everyday citizens. His view indicates a collective identity formed around shared grievances, fostering a sense of in-group solidarity among those who feel similarly marginalised.

Both Jon and Aris highlight the societal implications of fear and scapegoating. Jon's generalisation leads to increased mistrust and potential social fragmentation, while Aris's focus on political accountability may foster a collective sense of injustice but still reflects a blame-oriented mindset. Both responses demonstrate how fear can erode social cohesion and understanding, driving wedges between groups rather than fostering dialogue and collaboration.

4.3.3 *Security that leads to anger.*

In several ways, anger and security can be linked. For example, anger can be triggered by perceived threats to one's sense of security. An angry person may assert themselves and protect their safety and well-being when they feel threatened or vulnerable. An angry individual

may, for instance, take action to defend themselves or their community if they think their job is at risk or outside forces are threatening their community. This could include advocating for policy changes, organising protests, or even engaging in more extreme actions such as violence.

However, anger can also threaten security if it leads to violent or aggressive behaviour. When people become angry, they may act impulsively or without regard for the consequences of their actions. Conflict, confrontation, and even violence can undermine individual and collective security. In international relations, anger can also play a role in security issues; for instance, when countries or groups feel threatened by one another, they may become angry and escalate tensions, leading to conflict and even war. There are both positive and negative effects of anger on security. Even though anger is a natural response to threats, it is crucial to channel it constructively to enhance security rather than undermine it.

Jon's statement indicates a concern about security and vulnerability to attacks. The speaker also mentioned that nowhere in the world is safe any longer, showing a sense of global insecurity. In addition to beginning at home, the speaker believed that protection should extend abroad. This implies a belief that international security measures should be implemented.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "Hmm, this will be terrible if an attack happens; it's annoying that we are so vulnerable. Nowhere in the world is safe anymore, anyway. I think we need to be protected, and this does not start here at home; we need to project ourselves outside the UK."*

Jon's comment about the study of fear of terrorism reflects the theme of security fuelled with anger. A call for increased protection and security accompanied his frustration and sense of vulnerability. Security fuelled by rage is an essential theme in the study of fear of terrorism, as it explores how individuals respond to their fears by demanding heightened security measures. He advocated for stronger domestic and international protection due to his anger and

annoyance at the perceived vulnerability of his surroundings. According to Jon, no place in the world is safe anymore, reflecting his disillusionment and anger at the perceived lack of security. In his statement, he emphasised the emotional impact of fear and how it can manifest as anger, leading individuals to demand increased security measures.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "Hmm, I don't know; I am just trying to live my life, but I pay attention to what the police advise, and I also pay attention to what the news says so that I can prepare myself just in case."*

Jon's comment does not directly address "Security fuelled with anger". Instead, he approaches the fear of terrorism pragmatically and focuses on personal preparation. There is no explicit expression of anger or frustration in Jon's mention of listening to police advice and reading the news. In response to the fear of terrorism, the comment emphasises the importance of personal vigilance and preparedness. Jon said he prefers staying informed and prepared for potential threats rather than expressing anger or demanding heightened security measures. As a result of this theme, individuals can manage their fear of terrorism with a sense of responsibility and agency. A practical mindset may enable some individuals to actively seek information and take measures to ensure their safety and security. An approach like this can be seen as a way of coping with uncertainty and regaining control.

Through her support and advocacy of measures that she believes will improve their sense of security, Maria indicated she is actively contributing. In addition to raising awareness and ensuring that the army and police are adequately funded, she also intended to vote for a political party with strong security policies. As a result of these actions, she seemed to feel a sense of responsibility for her safety and was taking an active role in ensuring that it was maintained.

Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "I do my bits in trying [to] raise awareness and more funds to the army and police so that they can keep us safe, and I vote for the political party focusing most on security policies."

According to Maria, she is determined to contribute to the policies and measures designed to keep the population safe. Her active engagement and support for the army and police are evident from her mention of raising awareness and funds.

Maria's comment highlights the link between fear of terrorism and proactive, anger-fuelled measures to enhance security. Action to strengthen security may result from channelling anger in response to fear. Anger plays a significant role in motivating individuals to participate in political processes, including voting for a party with security policies. Individuals may prioritise security as a crucial issue when making decisions. As Maria discussed her commitment to supporting security measures and voting for a party that promotes security policies, her comment exemplifies the theme of "Security fuelled with anger". According to this theme, individuals' engagement with security issues is motivated by anger. Anger-fuelled responses can impact broader societal attitudes and policies related to security, which can be explored by examining the relationship between fear, anger, and political behaviour. This theme of "Security fuelled with anger" also raises concerns about the potential for hyper-militarism and increased aggressivity within society.

When fear is met with anger, it can lead to a desire for more aggressive security measures, such as militarisation and surveillance, which may have unintended consequences for individual freedoms and civil liberties. Understanding the complex interplay between fear, anger, and the pursuit of security is crucial to strike a balance that maintains safety without sacrificing fundamental rights. However, this anger-fuelled approach to security can also have negative implications. It may lead to the unjust surveillance and targeting of minority

communities, wrongly assuming their responsibility for security threats. This highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between security measures and protecting the rights and freedoms of all individuals, regardless of their background.

4.3.4 *Choices fuelled with Anger.*

People's political choices can be influenced by anger and the relationship between anger and politics. In politics, anger can be a powerful motivator. People who are angry about a particular issue are more likely to act and become involved. You can attend protests, contact elected officials, or even run for office. In addition to influencing political choices, anger can shape people's attitudes and beliefs. If someone is angry about something, they may seek information and opinions reinforcing their anger. As a result, people will be more inclined to support extreme positions and reject compromise, leading to a polarised political environment. In addition, anger may influence people's political choices by influencing how they perceive political candidates and their policies. If a candidate can tap into people's anger and present themselves as a champion for their cause, they are more likely to gain votes.

Political choices and anger, however, are not always directly related. Anger can lead to irrational or impulsive decision-making, which may not align with people's long-term interests and values. A political leader or group can also manipulate and exploit anger by using fear-mongering or other tactics to stoke anger and gain support for their agendas. The relationship between anger and political choices is complicated and can be positive and negative. It is important to channel anger in productive ways that promote constructive dialogue and collaboration. However, anger can motivate people to participate in political politics and fight for what they believe.

As a result of their personal choice, Sule talked about disregarding the news and discussing potential dangers and threats. It is suggested that the speaker's decision to ignore such news and discussions is motivated by a desire to avoid thinking about things that might cause anxiety or fear. Even so, the speaker acknowledged that this approach may only be somewhat effective, as they may still end up in a dangerous situation despite it. In the end, Sule's decision reflects a desire not to live in constant fear and anxiety but rather maintain some level of control over her life and activities. A desire for agency and control can influence personal choices and avoid negative emotions or experiences. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the speaker's decision to ignore potential threats may have consequences, as staying informed and taking the necessary precautions may be important to ensure personal safety.

> *Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years): "I think this is going in line with what we hear in the media and from friends and family. The thing is that it is close when thinking; therefore, I don't want to think about it. You can't live like that. I choose to ignore it mostly because, you know what, if I get caught in it, what can I do? I won't just sit at home; I don't like that."*

In her comment, Sule discusses his decision to ignore the fear of terrorism and not dwell on its potential risks, reflecting the theme of "Choice out of frustrations". As he explained, thinking about terrorism is mentally taxing and limits one's ability to live a fulfilling life, which makes him frustrated and helpless. As a result of frustrations and perceived limitations, Sule's comment highlights the individual's disengagement from the fear of terrorism. Some people deliberately ignore or minimise their fears to maintain control and normalcy. When faced with fear and frustration, individuals employ psychological coping mechanisms. Individuals' mental well-being and their ability to navigate daily life in the context of terrorism-related concerns may be adversely affected by such choices. As Sule described how he chose not to let his fear

of terrorism dictate his thoughts and actions, his comment perfectly illustrates the theme of "Choice out of frustrations". A key feature of this theme is the individual's ability to make choices because of frustration and fear. It is possible to explore why individuals make their choices and how their decisions might impact their well-being and societal attitudes toward security measures.

As a personal choice, Veron prioritises safety over convenience when travelling. By implying that he is willing to endure the inconvenience of waiting in long passport lines and obtaining visas, the speaker implied that he is prepared to endure the threat of experiencing a terrorist attack, which they believed could have a profound impact on their lives and those of their families. Veron also criticised the lax border policies he perceived as threatening their safety. This represents the individual's belief that it is necessary to prioritise safety over convenience and that the measures taken to ensure security are worth the effort. Furthermore, it suggests that personal choices can be influenced by safety and security concerns, especially when a perceived risk or threat is present.

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "Yes, I travel at least once every two weeks to Europe. And it's all worth the hassle, to be honest. I would rather wait longer in passport lines and wait for visas than witness an attack that will change my and my loved one's lives forever. The above-mentioned is not a hassle. It's out of necessity, and we took them. Our borders became a joke, and we stopped it."*

Veron discussed his decision to prioritise safety and security while travelling in his account. He stated that borders appear vulnerable to attack and was concerned about the potential consequences. Veron's comment illustrates how individuals make decisions due to perceived inadequacies relating to border security measures. To mitigate the risk associated with potential terrorist attacks, it is essential to take measures that not only ensure the safety of

the people but also minimise the underlying fear of terrorism. As Veron suggests, one such measure is the implementation of visa requirements and long passport lines. Visa requirements ensure that only individuals deemed safe and with legitimate travel reasons can enter a country. This helps to prevent the entry of individuals who may pose a threat to national security. Long passport lines, on the other hand, are a deterrent for those who may be considering carrying out a terrorist attack. The longer lines provide ample time for the authorities to screen individuals and identify potential threats before they can enter the country.

Additionally, the long lines create uncertainty for potential attackers, making it more difficult for them to plan and execute their attacks. While these measures may seem inconvenient to travellers, they are necessary to ensure everyone's safety. Veron favours these measures to feel safer and secure. Considering how individuals react to perceived threats and make decisions in response to them is relevant to the study of fear of terrorism. Frustrations and concerns about security impact individual choices, behaviours, and perceptions. As Veron described his decision to prioritise safety and security in his travel choices, he illustrates the theme of "Choice out of frustrations". Individuals are empowered to respond to perceived vulnerabilities and fear of terrorism by exercising agency. The factors influencing these choices can be explored, and their implications for individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and societal attitudes related to security measures can be examined.

Furthermore, Veron's comments also reflect a deeper issue of Eurocentrism and a sense of entitlement. By favouring visa requirements and long passport lines, Veron is indirectly suggesting that individuals from certain regions or backgrounds are more likely to pose a threat, perpetuating an orientalist view. This perspective reinforces stereotypes and undermines the principles of equality and inclusivity that should be fundamental in any security measures. It is important to recognise and address these underlying biases to create security measures that are fair, effective, and respectful of all individuals. Perpetuating orientalist views on security

measures can have serious consequences. It not only reinforces stereotypes and discrimination, but it also alienates and marginalises specific groups of people. This can lead to social unrest, resentment, and a breakdown of trust between communities, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of security measures and posing a threat to social cohesion. Alienation and marginalisation have a profound impact on social cohesion. When specific groups of people feel excluded or discriminated against by security measures, it creates a sense of injustice and resentment within society. This can lead to social unrest, division, and a breakdown of trust between communities, ultimately weakening the overall effectiveness of security measures. To promote social cohesion and maintain a safe environment, addressing these issues and creating security measures that are fair, inclusive, and respectful to all individuals is crucial.

4.4 Defensiveness

Understanding the link between fear and defensiveness is important, as fear can make people defensive to protect themselves. Fear makes people feel vulnerable or under attack, leading them to become defensive. This can take various forms, such as physically protecting themselves or their possessions, avoiding certain situations or people, or verbally defending themselves or their beliefs. Fear can lead people to take defensive measures to protect themselves at the individual level. A person may become defensive by carrying a weapon, avoiding certain areas, or taking self-defence classes if they feel threatened by someone while walking alone at night. Fear can lead to defensive actions on a larger scale at the social level. For instance, if a country feels threatened by another country or group, it may respond by increasing its military expenditure, border controls, or surveillance measures to deal with the threat. A defensive approach can lead to isolation and mistrust as people become more concerned with protecting themselves than helping others. People may also become defensive towards certain groups because they perceive them as threats, reinforcing stereotypes and biases.

Additionally, defensive approaches are often reactive rather than proactive, meaning they are geared toward responding to perceived threats rather than addressing their causes. Defensive actions can provoke further fear and retaliation, perpetuating a cycle of fear and defensiveness. Despite defensiveness being a natural response to fear, it is important to consider its potential negative consequences and seek more proactive and collaborative solutions. Maria, for example, stated on two occasions that, though she did not agree with the parties she voted for, she had no choice but to vote for them. She was primarily concerned with protecting herself and her family. It was clear that Maria was responding to a perceived threat. As a result of criticism or perceived threats to their safety or security, a speaker may feel defensive about their political choices.

Despite Marias acknowledgement that she may not agree with the policies of the political parties she had supported, she asserted that their decision was based on an interest in integration and security measures. According to this statement, the speaker may have felt defensive about her political choices, as she believed these choices were necessary for her safety and social integration.

In situations where individuals feel challenged or threatened by their choices or actions, defensiveness may result. In this case, the speaker may need to justify or explain their choice to support certain political parties, which may be perceived as controversial or unpopular. Various factors, including personal experiences, values, and perceptions of threat, likely influence an individual's desire for safety and integration.

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Yes, I mean, it affects our choices. I have voted for UKIP and the Conservatives. So have my family and friends. Although I don't agree with these parties in many areas, I simply went for it for the sake of the security measures and the integration politics."*

In her comment, Maria describes her political choices based on security measures and integration politics, specifically voting for UKIP and the Conservatives. Due to the fear of terrorism, individuals prioritise safety and protective measures. As it focuses on individuals' defensive behaviours and attitudes, defensiveness is closely related to the study of fear of terrorism. Individuals who fear terrorism can adopt a defensive mindset, seeking out political parties or policies that prioritise security and protection. Maria's comments suggest that fear of terrorism and a desire for increased security influenced her voting decisions. To minimise the perceived risks associated with terrorism, this defensive response can be viewed as a way to protect oneself and one's community from perceived threats. A psychological and behavioural perspective can be gained by exploring the theme of defensiveness from a research perspective. Political choices and support for specific policies can illuminate how individuals navigate their fears. The theme of defensiveness throughout Maria's comment is evident in her explanation of why she voted based on security measures and integration policies. Studying fear of terrorism involves illuminating individuals' defensive behaviours and attitudes in response to perceived threats. A more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and social implications of defensiveness would be helpful for policymakers and counterterrorism efforts in the future.

As Maria stated, she was trying to raise awareness through activism and to achieve collaboration with others to be safe; she has been seeking the healthy side of defensiveness that can be utilised to raise awareness.

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "I do my bits in trying to raise awareness and more funds for the army and police so that they can keep us safe, and I vote for the political party that is focusing most on security policies."*

By raising awareness and supporting political parties that prioritise security policies, Maria suggests that her fear of terrorism is motivating her to contribute to security efforts actively. To reduce fears of terrorist attacks, this defensive response reinforces Marias protective measures. As Maria described her proactive efforts to raise awareness and support the army and police, she illustrates the theme of defensiveness. In response to perceived threats, individuals may engage in defensive behaviour and actions closely related to the study of fear of terrorism. In addition to further exploring the implications and effectiveness of defensiveness as a coping mechanism, further research can be conducted to inform strategies for addressing fear of terrorism.

On the other hand, Sule decided to take a defensive approach to going outside in the city. Her decisions and choices came about because of a combination of various events and reflections. As a result of perceived threats, Sule seemed to be reacting defensively, which intensified when other factors were occurring simultaneously. Also evident was Sule's defensive approach to these situations. Sule may feel defensive about avoiding certain activities or events because she perceives threats to her safety and security.

Sule acknowledged that Brexit, the Ukraine crisis, and the Manchester attack had all adversely affected her life. She suggested that these events had intensified risks, such as the threat of terrorist attacks, COVID-19, and economic instability. Sule's decision to avoid attending events, such as concerts, reflects a personal choice influenced by a desire to avoid potential threats. The individual may feel defensive about their options due to their perception that these choices are necessary for their safety and well-being. The desire to avoid potential threats and risks can often lead to defensive behaviours, as individuals seek to justify or explain their decisions to others to avoid potential threats and risks. In this case, Sule may need to defend their choices against criticism or judgment if their decision to avoid events is considered controversial or unpopular.

Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years): "Well, it has affected my life and has affected many people; we are now out of Europe and we are involved in Ukraine. Things are not easy anymore. I guess we are out of the EU because of the influx of foreigners, and we are in Ukraine and sending lots of money to defend our soil from there. Personally, for me, things have changed since the Manchester attack and have disheartened me from attending concerts. To be honest, the risk of terrorist attacks and COVID, as well as the economic crisis, gives me more reasons not to go. So, there are more reasons. The COVID and money side of things has intensified the situation."

These events and reflections also shed light on the connection between Sule's defensive approach and the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism. Sule's perception of potential threats, such as the influx of foreigners and economic instability, may be influenced by a Eurocentric worldview that views the "East" as inferior or dangerous. This orientalist lens can further reinforce defensive behaviours and reinforce the perception of potential threats in Sule's decision-making process.

Individuals' defensive behaviour and attitudes, which target minimising perceived risks and enhancing personal security, are closely related to the theme of defensiveness in the study of fear of terrorism. To protect themselves and their communities from terrorism, individuals may take defensive measures. It is apparent from Sule's comment that her fear of terrorism has been a factor in his decision-making process. He explained that he prioritises personal safety over leisure activities after the Manchester attack and the subsequent disinclination to attend concerts. Further factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, have intensified his concerns, giving him more reasons to be defensive. In understanding how terrorism fears affect psychological and behavioural responses, it can be helpful to explore the theme of defensiveness. Individuals' perceptions of risk, decision-making processes, and the effects of fear can be revealed through such studies. The development of effective

counterterrorism strategies and support systems can be informed by understanding how fear shapes individuals' behaviours and attitudes. It is Sule's comment about how the fear of terrorism influences his life decisions that highlight the theme of defensiveness. Individuals' defensive behaviours and attitudes aimed at minimising perceived risks are closely related to the study of fear of terrorism. The implications for individual and societal well-being of defensiveness as a response to terrorism can be further explored through additional research.

4.4.1 *Control and obsession*

People can maintain a sense of control over their environment and interactions with others by using defensiveness to maintain control over their environment. When people feel defensive, they may feel like they are under attack or being judged and may respond by trying to control the situation or the people around them. In addition to becoming more assertive, trying to dominate the conversation, or insisting on their perspective, this can take many forms. Individuals can use defensiveness to manage their boundaries and interactions with others individually. For example, if a person feels discriminated against or judged, they may become defensive to protect their self-esteem or assert their perspective. Control over their environment and interactions with others can also be accomplished by defensiveness at the societal level. If a political party believes its ideology or policies are being attacked, it may become defensive, emphasising its perspective or attacking its opponents. It is also possible to become rigid and inflexible if a defensive approach is taken. When people become too focused on maintaining control, they may become less open to new ideas, perspectives, or feedback, limiting their ability to grow and learn. Additionally, defensive approaches are often interpreted as hostile or aggressive, which can escalate conflict and cause others to become more defensive and hostile. It is important to consider the potential negative consequences of defensiveness when feeling threatened or vulnerable and seek more collaborative and open-minded solutions that foster mutual respect and understanding.

As a response to her anxiety and fear, Veron attempts to exert control over her environment. By avoiding certain places and activities, such as dining out or clubbing, and instead choosing areas she perceived as safer, Veron demonstrated a desire to control her environment to minimise the risk of harm or danger. Similarly, Veron's reluctance to fly and subsequent panic attacks indicate a lack of control over his environment, which he is attempting to overcome through therapy.

Veron can overcome and adapt to these fears and anxieties to some extent, as evidenced by Veron's ability to travel for a new job. It is, however, evident that Verons continued alertness at airports and other potentially risky situations suggests that she continues to attempt to exert control over their surroundings. Generally, this statement illustrates how individuals may attempt to exert control over their environments in response to perceived threats.

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "When the London attack happened, I didn't go out for dinners or clubbing for a while. I chose places that were safe for me, and it was places that I knew. I chose places where they were mainly natives, etc. Of course, they were also one point when I was reluctant to fly and had panic attacks before flying, but thanks to my old therapist, I overcame that. I had the fear of death and tried to prevent shit from happening. Yes, I was in therapy, and the irony is that a couple of years later, I got a well-paid job that required me to travel a lot. I must admit I am still alert when in airports, etc."*

This comment from Veron reflects the theme of "Control and obsession" related to the fear of terrorism. A need for control and a preoccupation with safety is evident in his description of how the London attack affected his behaviour and choices. This reflection on Veron's personal experiences highlights the lengths individuals may go to exert control over their environments in response to perceived threats. Despite overcoming some fears and

anxieties through therapy, Veron's continued alertness in potentially risky situations suggests a persistent desire to maintain a sense of control and prevent undesirable outcomes. The need for control in response to perceived threats is a common human instinct. It gives individuals a sense of security and enables them to minimise potential harm or danger. In Veron's case, her efforts to control her environment through avoidance and therapy reflect their determination to prevent undesirable outcomes and maintain a sense of safety. Veron's desire to control her environment and minimise perceived risks can be seen in his avoidance of certain social activities, his choice of familiar and perceived safe places, and her panic attacks before flying. In response to perceived threats, individuals attempt to control their lives through the theme of control and obsession. An obsession with minimising risks and maintaining security can result from a fear of terrorism, a sense of vulnerability, and a need for control. It is clear from Veron's comment how her daily routines and choices were influenced by fear of terrorism. Her actions were limited to places she considered safe after the London attack, resulting in a period of avoidance and vigilance. This control-oriented behaviour can be seen as a coping mechanism to manage fear and gain security. It is evident from Veron's mention of therapy that she was impacted by the fear of death and the threat of terrorist attacks. A proactive approach to addressing her anxiety and regaining control over her life suggests overcoming her fear of flying with therapy.

In the context of fear of terrorism, further research can be conducted to explore the long-term effects of control and obsession. Individuals' well-being can be investigated by investigating the psychological mechanisms underlying these behaviours. To develop effective interventions and support strategies for people experiencing fear of terrorism, we must understand the factors that contribute to control-oriented responses. As a result of the fear of terrorism, Veron's comment illustrates the theme of control and obsession. By focusing on how she controls her environment, minimises her risks, and how fear affects his mental health, the

essay illustrates how he tries to maintain control over her surroundings. By exploring this topic further, we can better understand how individuals respond to fears of terrorism and develop strategies to address their concerns.

Maria is attempting to minimise potential dangers and risks by controlling the environment. The speaker's decision not to travel to places where she might stand out as "the white person" reflects a desire to exert control over their environment to avoid possible danger or harassment. The speaker attempts to minimise potential risks and exert some control over their surroundings by choosing to travel only to places where they feel more comfortable and less conspicuous. Additionally, the speaker's decision to check the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before purchasing tickets reflects a desire to control their environment to avoid potential danger or conflict. Speakers attempt to minimise potential risks by researching their destination's safety in advance.

Overall, this statement reflects how individuals can seek to exert control over their environment in response to perceived threats and fears. Throughout the presentation, the speaker attempts to minimise potential dangers and feel more secure in their surroundings by making conscious choices about where they travel and how to prepare for potential risks.

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Well, I have become more aware and have made some choices about where I would travel. I will not travel where I am 'the white person'; that's too scary, and therefore, I am not travelling outside the places that are not white. Also, I am checking the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before I buy tickets if it's dangerous or not. Overall, I am just a lot more cautious."*

The risk awareness Maria described has influenced her decision-making process and travel choices. Maria's preference for destinations where she will not stand out as "the white person" reflects a desire to feel more secure by selecting places that make her feel less

vulnerable. To minimise potential risks, she checks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before buying tickets to obtain safety information. Attempting to minimise potential risk and exert control over one's life and surroundings in response to perceived threats is closely related to the theme of control and obsession in studies of fear of terrorism. Individuals who fear terrorism may become increasingly vigilant and preoccupied with safety, leading them to take action to maintain control and minimise perceived risks. It is evident from Maria's comment that she is becoming more cautious and selective in her travel choices. By avoiding places where she may feel vulnerable, she reduces the chances of being targeted or involved in dangerous situations. Maria's heightened risk awareness has influenced her decision-making process and travel choices. To prioritise her safety, she now avoids destinations where she may stand out as "the white person" and instead opts for places where she feels more secure.

Additionally, she takes the precaution of checking with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for safety information before purchasing tickets. She needs information and control over the travel planning process and to check the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for safety information. Regarding the fear of terrorism, Maria's comment exemplifies the theme of control and obsession. It reflects her desire to be in control of her safety and occupation while minimising perceived risks in her travel choices. A deeper understanding of this theme could help inform strategies that address individuals' concerns about terrorism and enhance their well-being.

Veron’s statement discusses her personal experiences and actions in response to a specific event, the London attack. Despite this, she later obtained a job requiring frequent travel, though she remains cautious in airports. She discusses how she limited her social activities, chose safe places, and received therapy to overcome death and flying fears.

In contrast, Marias' statement focuses on broader prejudices and a fear of being a minority in certain locations. Maria stated that she would not travel to places where she would be seen as "the white person" and would only travel to places that are predominantly white as

a control approach. Overcoming fears is emphasised in the first statement, while external factors and prejudices are emphasised in the second statement. Martin, however, takes a different approach and is actively choosing not to let fear control his life. To avoid a constant state of fear, he had made a conscious decision to limit his exposure to information about terrorist attacks. By doing so, he demonstrated a sense of power over the situation as he took control of his reactions rather than letting fear control them.

> *Martin (White British, male, 52 years): "To be honest, I don't fear it when it comes to everyday life; it's only when we are reminded from the news where I think, 'shit' other than I don't want to waste time in fearing this. I have made my mind up these are angry boys and girls who have not been loved and I don't care about their attention-seeking actions. So, this is how I cope with it. I don't give it more than 10 minutes. Life is too short to be watching and listening to all that nonsense. I think my stance is very powerful because I am not giving them the power over me and the time they want."*

Marti emphasises that he does not fear terrorism in his daily life, as he is in control of his thoughts and emotions. Rather than giving terrorists the power or attention they seek, Martin shows a mindset that does not waste time on fear. He demonstrates a strong sense of self-determination by prioritising his well-being and not letting fear dictate his actions or consume his time.

As individuals attempt to maintain a sense of control over their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in the face of potential threats, the theme of control and obsession is extremely relevant to the study of fear of terrorism. Martin's comment indicates that he was consciously determined not to let fear of terrorism control his life. His personal control over the situation is asserted by his refusal to invest excessive time and attention in fear-inducing media or giving power to terrorists. From Martin's perspective, coping involves acknowledging that terrorism

exists but consciously choosing not to dwell on it or let it disrupt his life. To depersonalise and minimise the threat he perceives, his emphasis on understanding the motivations behind terrorist actions may reflect a cognitive strategy. Martin strives to maintain a sense of empowerment and control over his life by consciously limiting the amount of time and mental energy devoted to fear. About the fear of terrorism, Martin's comment illustrates the theme of control and obsession. By refusing to give power to terrorists, he employs a mindset that emphasises personal control and refuses to allow fear to rule his life. By exploring this theme in greater depth, it should be possible to develop strategies that promote resilience and well-being in the face of terrorism.

4.4.2 *Media restriction*

The practice of restricting access to certain types of media, such as books, movies, music, or online content, is known as people's restriction of media. Many factors motivate individuals, organisations, or governments to restrict access to information, including moral or religious beliefs, political ideology, or concerns about harmful content. As a result of perceived harm or negative influences, people may restrict media for various reasons. For example, parents may limit their children's access to certain movies or video games that they believe are too violent or inappropriate. Access to certain books or music that contradict people's beliefs or values may be restricted in religious groups. In addition to maintaining social order, promoting national security, or suppressing dissent, governments may restrict the media. There are many ways to do this, including censorship of news or online content or restrictions on certain forms of art or music that are considered inflammatory or offensive. However, restricting media can also have negative consequences, such as limiting freedom of expression,

limiting access to information, and stifling creativity and innovation. In addition, it can lead to people feeling isolated and censored as they become less open to new perspectives and ideas.

Media restrictions are often questioned concerning their effectiveness since they may not necessarily prevent people from accessing harmful or offensive content. Instead, they may drive it underground or increase demand for it. The need for protection and freedom of expression must be balanced when restricting media. People may have valid reasons for doing so, but it is also important to consider the potential negative effects of those restrictions.

According to Martin's statement, he is limiting his exposure to media relating to terrorist attacks and violence. It was a conscious decision on his part not to allow such news to control their lives and emotions, and he believed that constant exposure to such news could be detrimental to his mental health. Consequently, the relationship between media restriction and the statement is that individuals actively restrict their media consumption to maintain control and peace.

> *Martin (White British, male, 52 years): "To be honest, I don't fear it when it comes to everyday life; it's only when we are reminded from the news where I think, 'shit' other than I don't want to waste time in fearing this. I have made my mind up these are angry boys and girls who have not been loved and I don't care about their attention-seeking actions. So, this [is] how I cope with it. I don't give it more than 10 minutes. Life is too short to be watching and listening to all that nonsense. I think my stance is very powerful because I am not giving them the power over me and the time they want. I don't want to be watching the news and be miserable. I want to be living my life out there; seriously, they can go to hell. The news also gives them too much power, so I am not watching it as often, and I am peaceful. I don't want to be informed constantly. It's sickening and not good for the mental health."*

Regarding the fear of terrorism, Martin's comment reflects the "Media restriction" theme. Through his comment, Martin deliberately decided to limit his exposure to terrorism-related news. As a result of news coverage, Martin's fear of terrorism is primarily triggered. His mental health and overall well-being are not improved by constantly consuming news about terrorism. As it pertains to individuals' deliberate efforts to limit their exposure to news and media content that focuses on terrorism, media restriction is highly relevant to the study of fear of terrorism. Martin recognised that excessive news consumption could negatively impact his mental health. To protect his mental health and maintain a sense of peace, he intentionally reduces his exposure to news about terrorism.

According to Martin, media restrictions can be used as a coping strategy to manage fear of terrorism. Individuals like Martin can reduce the intensity and frequency of fear-inducing thoughts and emotions by limiting the amount of time they spend watching or reading news related to terrorism. Additionally, this restriction may help prevent the amplification of fear through media sensationalism or overexposure to graphic terrorist imagery. Martin's comment illustrates the theme of media restrictions and the fear of terrorism. Media consumption can be controlled to manage and mitigate fear responses by further exploring this theme.

Veron talked about limiting her exposure to news media, particularly visual news media such as television news, and is instead receiving their news from written sources such as newspapers and Twitter. Additionally, she indicates that she used to obsess over the news but has now decided against making herself miserable by constantly reading it. Veron appears to be attempting to take control of her media consumption habits to prevent her emotions or daily routines from being dictated by the news media. Overall, Veron appears to be more deliberate and mindful in her media consumption. By checking Twitter for the most discussed subjects, she could remain informed without being overwhelmed by constant news updates.

Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "I tend to read newspapers. I don't want to watch the news. Reading them helps me to rationalise more. I don't want to watch the news whilst relaxing, cooking or in the toilet. Also, I check Twitter regularly to see the most spoken subject, so if there is a danger or if the world is going down, people will tweet it. There was a point where I obsessed with the news, but no more; life is too good to make myself miserable. We have government people who are trained and paid to take care of that side of the business."

According to Veron, reading newspapers allows her to rationalise and process information more effectively than watching the news. To maintain a sense of peace and separate his leisure time from news-related anxiety, he avoids news consumption during certain activities, such as relaxing, cooking, and going to the bathroom. Additionally, Veron mentioned using Twitter to stay informed about the most discussed topics, including potential dangers and significant events. Using this selective approach to news consumption allows him to stay current without being overwhelmed by a constant stream of news that could potentially heighten his fear. By demonstrating how individuals actively limit their exposure to news media, Veron's perspective on media restriction aligns with the study of fear of terrorism. Veron aims to mitigate the negative effects of fear-inducing content on his well-being by choosing specific sources of information and controlling the timing and context of her news consumption. According to Veron, media can influence fear perception and emotional well-being. Keeping up with news selectively allows her to manage his anxiety levels and prevent unnecessary distress caused by constant exposure to terrorism news.

Veron's comment also reflects a conscious effort to manage her fear of terrorism by controlling her media consumption. By reading newspapers instead of watching the news on TV and checking Twitter for the most discussed subjects, she can stay informed without becoming overwhelmed or consumed by fear. Veron's shift in mindset highlights the

importance of prioritising personal well-being and not allowing oneself to be constantly bombarded by negative news. Excessive media consumption, particularly of graphic or sensationalised content, can have a detrimental impact on mental health. It can lead to increased anxiety, fear, and even trauma, as individuals are constantly exposed to distressing images and narratives. Taking control of media consumption and limiting exposure to negative content, as Veron has done, can help protect one's mental well-being and promote a more positive outlook on life.

Veron's comment raises questions for further investigation, such as whether different media restriction strategies reduce fear of terrorism. The psychological mechanisms underpinning selective news consumption may be explored alongside how individuals such as Veron maintain control and well-being while staying informed in an alternative way. As a result of the fear of terrorism, Veron's comment illustrates the theme of media restriction. To manage his fear levels, he stated that he intentionally reads newspapers, avoids certain news consumption contexts, and uses social media platforms like Twitter to consume news. Bemphasisingng individual agency in controlling exposure to news media and finding a balance between staying informed and maintaining psychological well-being, this perspective contributes to the study of fear of terrorism.

In Alis' case, for example, he suggests that media coverage of attacks can temporarily increase fear and anxiety; however, humans generally tend to forget about these incidents and move on until they are reminded again. As stated in this link, limiting media exposure to news about attacks may help reduce the fear and anxiety associated with them.

> *Ali (Turkish/Kurdish, male, 42 years): "Ehhh, sometimes when we read about attacks in the newspapers and when we watch footage on TV, of course, you fear a bit of fear like it's very close to us. But as humans, we tend to forget very quickly. We only think*

about it and fear it in the week or weeks when it publishes or happens on the TV, and then we move on quickly to forget until we get reminded again."

Watching television footage or reading newspapers about attacks can evoke a temporary sense of fear as they bring the threat closer to home. Ali pointed out, however, that it is human nature to quickly forget these fears and move on until one is reminded again by the media. According to Ali, media coverage of terrorism has a limited and short-lived impact on fear. Fear may be triggered by news about attacks initially, but the subsequent fading of fear indicates that anxiety is not prolonged. Over time, fear-inducing stimuli diminish their emotional impact per the concept of "fear forgetting". The perception of terrorism, which is triggered by media exposure, is transient. Ali's perspective emphasises this. The immediacy and vividness of media coverage may influence the initial fear response, but over time, its intensity decreases as attention shifts to other concerns.

Further research is needed to determine what factors contribute to fear's temporal nature and how it is forgotten. It may be possible to gain insight into resilience and adaptive coping strategies by understanding how individuals like Ali move on quickly from fear-related stimuli. In addition, Ali's comment implies that media restrictions could play a role in reducing fears of terrorism. People can reduce their exposure to news about attacks by acknowledging that media coverage is transient, allowing them to focus on other aspects of their lives. Future research could explore the effectiveness of media restriction strategies in attenuating fear responses. Ali's comment demonstrates the theme of media restrictions in light of the fear of terrorism. Media coverage appears to have a limited and temporary impact on fear perception since initial fears fade. Therefore, further investigation is warranted into the mechanisms of fear forgetting and the possible role of media restrictions in reducing terrorism fear.

Ali's perspective also highlights the transient nature of fear induced by media coverage of terrorist attacks. This suggests that the impact of such fear may not be as long-lasting as initially believed and that individuals can move on from these fears relatively quickly. This insight could inform further research on the temporal dynamics of fear of terrorism and how individuals adapt and cope with the constant reminders of such events.

One potential psychological mechanism that allows individuals to move on from fear is the process of cognitive adaptation. Over time, individuals may habituate to the fear-inducing stimuli, leading to a reduced emotional response. This adaptation can be influenced by various factors, such as the individual's coping strategies, social support, and the frequency of exposure to fear-inducing stimuli. Habituation is a psychological process in which an individual becomes sensitive to a specific stimulus over time. In the context of fear, habituation occurs when repeated exposure to fear-inducing stimuli leads to a decreased emotional response. This means that individuals may gradually experience less fear and anxiety when exposed to news or media coverage of terrorist attacks as they become accustomed to the stimuli. Habituation can play a significant role in reducing the impact of fear on individuals' psychological well-being. It may contribute to their ability to quickly move on from these fears. To enhance the cognitive adaptation process, individuals can engage in activities that promote emotional regulation and resilience, such as mindfulness meditation or therapy. Building a strong support network and seeking social connections with similar experiences can also be beneficial. Additionally, practising self-care, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation can help individuals foster a sense of well-being and aid in moving on from fear.

Aris referred to the belief that media restriction would facilitate a more peaceful life. Individuals wish to protect themselves from negative news and societal events, especially when starting a family. By avoiding television and newspapers, they hope to reduce their exposure

to negativity and create a more positive and stress-free environment for themselves and their future family.

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 yars): "I don't want it to be bitter because I am going to have a family. I stop watching TV and stop reading the papers. Sometimes, it's the best way for a peaceful life."*

In the context of starting a family, Aris said he has chosen to stop watching TV and reading newspapers to maintain a peaceful life. It appears that Aris has made a deliberate decision to limit his exposure to media coverage of terrorism. To avoid potentially fear-inducing content, Aris avoids watching TV and reading newspapers. In managing fear and reducing anxiety, this approach aligns with the notion of media restriction. As Aris observed, consciously restricting media intake can promote calm and tranquillity by reducing the fear of terrorism. Aris aims to prevent his family and himself from feeling fear or distress by avoiding news about terrorism.

Considering this observation, further research may be necessary, such as investigating how media restriction affects individuals' psychological well-being and whether it reduces fear of terrorism. To gain a deeper understanding of how people handle their anxieties and fears, it is helpful to understand the motivations behind media restriction as a coping strategy. According to Aris, balancing the desire for peace with the need for information is crucial. Aris' decision to limit his media consumption indicates prioritising his family's well-being and a desire to create a positive and fear-free environment. Essentially, Aris' comment describes how media restrictions relate to fears of terrorism. He stopped watching TV and reading newspapers to protect himself and his family from potential fear-inducing content. In the context of fear of terrorism, media restriction may be an efficient coping strategy, but its impact on well-being needs to be explored further. While media restriction can be an effective coping strategy for

managing fears of terrorism, its impact on well-being may vary from person to person. Some individuals may find that limiting their exposure to media helps reduce anxiety and promotes a sense of peace, as in Aris' case. However, others may argue that staying informed and engaged with the news is essential for understanding and addressing societal issues. Ultimately, the effectiveness of media restriction as a coping strategy depends on individual preferences and needs. Aris' comment highlights the connection between media restrictions and fears of terrorism. By consciously limiting his media intake, Aris aims to create a fear-free environment for himself and his family. While media restriction may be an effective coping strategy for managing fears, further research is needed to understand its impact on individual well-being and its effectiveness in addressing societal issues related to terrorism.

4.4.3 *Family as the sore point*

There is a possibility that concerns about terrorism and the overall state of the world can affect people's decision to start or expand a family. Some people may delay starting a family because they feel that it is not a safe or stable time to have children because of their fear and anxiety related to terrorism. Meanwhile, some people may start a family due to concerns about terrorism to create a sense of continuity and stability in an uncertain and rapidly changing world. They may see starting a family as ensuring that their values and beliefs are passed on to future generations and as a form of hope and optimism. As a result, the link between terrorism and family desire is complex and can vary widely depending on individual circumstances and beliefs. Some people may consider terrorism as a factor in their decision to start or expand a family. Still, other factors, such as economic stability, career goals, and personal relationships, may have a more significant impact. Family safety came across as a clear concern for Aris. He was concerned about the possibility of terrorist attacks and their impact on his family. As a

result, he began to follow world politics more closely and changed his transportation and choices around socialising to reduce the risk of being affected. Additionally, this concern had led him to wonder whether the world was safe enough for him to have children and begin a family.

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years)*: *"Well, of course, knowing this is a probability makes me follow world politics more because I am scared. Can you imagine going out with your girlfriend and being affected by a terrorist attack or even being a witness to it?"*

> *Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years): "Well, as I mentioned earlier, it affected my choices around trains and where I want to socialise and go on holidays. I couldn't relax properly just in case something would happen again. I actually do think if this is a safe world to create a family and have a baby, I can't help it, but I do reflect on it."*

Aris' comment emphasises the theme of "Family as the sore point" in relation to a fear of terrorism. In light of the possibility of a terrorist attack, Aris expressed his concerns and anxieties regarding the safety of his family. The emotional impact of terrorism on individuals and their desire to protect their loved ones is explored in this theme. Aris' comments reveal that his fear of terrorism influences his behaviour and decision-making process. To stay informed and potentially mitigate the risk, he pays more attention to world politics due to the probability of terrorist attacks. He is taking proactive measures to ensure his safety and that of his family based on a heightened sense of fear.

Additionally, Aris discussed how the fear of terrorism had affected his transportation choices, socialising, and holiday destinations. The constant fear of an attack makes it difficult for him to fully relax. The emotional weight and impact of terrorism on Aris's decision to start a family are evident in his reflections on the safety of the world and the perceived implications

of starting a family. By showing how individuals' concerns about their families' safety can influence their behaviours, thoughts, and choices, Aris' comments align with the study of fear of terrorism. As a result of terrorism fears, vigilance increases, and information is needed to protect loved ones.

In addition to the impact of terrorism on his transportation and leisure activities, it is evident that terrorism has taken a toll on his mental health and that it causes him constant anxiety. As individuals prioritise the safety and well-being of their families above all else, this theme highlights the importance of family as a sore point. Individuals and families may benefit from further investigation into the psychological and emotional effects of terrorism fear. To develop effective coping strategies and support systems, one must understand how fear of terrorism influences decision-making processes and personal relationships. According to Aris, the theme of "Family as a sore point" is reflected in his comments regarding a fear of terrorism. His concerns about his family's safety prompt him to stay informed and make informed decisions. Individuals' personal lives, decisions, and future reflections can be profoundly affected by terrorism and its emotional impact.

Amy stated that she has chosen to avoid crowded places and not to travel to faraway countries due to her concern for her family. Due to the significant emotional distress and stress caused by the Manchester attack, her behaviour changed to prioritise being close to her loved ones. As a result of the individual's fear of potential danger and desire to protect her family, she avoided certain situations and locations.

> *Amy(White British, female, 36 years): "It affected me a lot because I got stressed, and after the Manchester attack, I couldn't stop crying. I have stopped going to concerts and places where lots of people are hanging around. I have also stopped going to countries that are far away from London. I want to be close to my family and friends."*

As Amy described, terrorism has affected her emotionally and influenced her behaviour and choices. People's sense of security and their desire to prioritise the safety of their families and people with whom they have close relationships are examined in this theme. According to Amy's statement, terrorism fears have had a significant impact on her mental health. She mentioned being stressed and unable to stop crying after the Manchester attack. As a result, it can be seen that terrorist acts have an emotional and traumatising effect on individuals, causing fear.

Additionally, Amy discussed how her fear of terrorism has affected her choices and activities. Her advice included staying away from concerts and places with large crowds and avoiding travel to countries far from London. As a result of her decisions, she prioritises the safety of her family and friends and the emotional comfort of being near them.

According to Amy, her comments illustrate the impact of terrorism on an individual's emotional well-being and behaviour. As Amy's reaction to the Manchester attack indicates, fear of terrorism can cause significant stress, anxiety, and emotional distress. Her avoidance of certain events and locations illustrates her heightened sense of caution and desire to minimise the perceived risk of terrorist attacks. A fear-based perspective is reflected in individuals' behaviour and routine changes due to modifying their fear-based choices. As Amy emphasised the safety and proximity of her family and friends in her comments, the theme of "Family as the sore point" becomes apparent. In uncertain times, loved ones provide security and emotional support. Amy's comments highlight the emotional impact of terrorism on individuals, the choices they make, and the behaviours they adopt as a result. In the face of fear and insecurity caused by terrorism, "Family as the sore point emphasises the importance of personal relationships and the desire to ensure the stability and well-being of loved ones.

Jon's statement indicates his concern for the safety of his family and loved ones and influences behaviour and decision-making. He stated that he would be cautious, avoid high-

risk areas such as central London, and prioritise spending time with family and friends in the local area. Jon's desire to protect their family influences their daily choices and activities.

> *Jon (White British, male, 48 years): "It has not changed because we have many enemies, and we need to be ready. Of course, when things happen in central London, then I do not go over there. I would rather hang out in our local pub and spend time with my mates and family. To be honest, now that I think about it, I don't know what I would do if something happened to my family, so I better stay local."*

Regarding the safety of his family and the companionship of his loved ones, he discussed how terrorism has influenced his decisions. Jon stated that he hasn't changed his perspective despite the numerous enemies around him and the feeling that he needs to be prepared. He prefers to stay away from central London when incidents occur there. His cautious approach indicates he is trying to minimise the risk to himself and his family. Moreover, Jon's comments reflect his uncertainty and concern for the well-being of his family. It suggests that he has a deep emotional attachment to his family and a sense of vulnerability if something happens to them. He illustrates the impact of fear on individuals' decision-making and their prioritisation of the safety of their families in the study of the fear of terrorism. When people are afraid of terrorism, they evaluate their surroundings and make choices that they perceive to minimise risk to their loved ones.

Keeping his family away from potentially dangerous areas after incidents demonstrates Jon's sense of caution. Fear shapes individuals' behaviour and their choice of safe places, as shown in this decision. Additionally, Jon's admission that he doesn't know how he would cope if something happened to his family illustrates the emotional weight and concern associated with terrorist attacks. It highlights how deeply individuals are attached to their families and the potential consequences of terrorist acts on them, as it comes close to home and a phenomenon

that has an existential threat to their lives. Considering the fear of terrorism in the context of the theme "Family as the sore point", Jon's comments are relevant to this theme. As a result of the emotional impact of terrorism and the instinctive desire to protect loved ones, individuals make choices that prioritise their well-being.

A key objective of Maria's statement is to protect family members from harm. She expressed concern about how events in other parts of the world might affect her safety and those around her. She felt that they and other peaceful individuals should not have to live with the fear of being caught up in political conflicts or acts of violence. The individual may feel that it is unfair that they have to bear the burden of these risks and may question why innocent people suffer due to other people's actions. Ultimately, the statement reflects a desire to shield one's family from the negative effects of world events to ensure their safety.

> *Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "I see and watch the news and wonder how can something that happens in Syria or Iraq or Africa influence us here at home. My family and I are peaceful people and don't deserve to live with this fear; actually, the thinking 'what if' is sickening, and I don't even want to think it's that close. We ordinary people have nothing to do with all this political nonsense, and why do we have to carry this and be at risk of experiencing this kind of situation? It's very unfair."*

As a result of events happening in distant regions like Syria, Iraq, and Africa, Maria felt frustrated and disbelieving in relation to her family's safety. According to Maria, she and her family did not deserve to live in fear because they were peaceful individuals. The idea of "what if" and the proximity of terrorism sickens her, and she wants to avoid even contemplating them. The risks and consequences of such situations feel unfair for Maria and ordinary people, as they are not related to the political aspects that fuel terrorism. She highlighted the frustration and injustice associated with the fear of terrorism in her comments, which are aligned with the

study of the fear of terrorism. Events in distant regions affect ordinary people like herself and her family. Fear-inducing acts of terrorism are causing a sense of confusion and a desire for clarity. The statement that ordinary people have nothing to do with politics and shouldn't have to deal with the consequences of terrorism demonstrates the perceived unfairness of fear and its emotional burden. Acts of terrorism cause fear and potential harm to innocent individuals and families, according to her. Maria's comments provide insight into the theme of "Family as the sore point" in relation to terrorism fears. Individuals may feel frustrated, confused, and upset when trying to reconcile the impact of terrorism on their families' safety and well-being. It generates a deep sense of concern and a desire for a more peaceful and secure environment when Maria and others experience a fear of terrorism, disrupting their sense of security and peace.

Maria's comments reflect the frustration and disheartenment she feels towards the fear of terrorism. She believes that ordinary people, like herself and her family, should not bear the burden of this fear as they are not involved in politics. Maria highlights the unfairness of the situation and expresses a desire for a peaceful and secure environment. The fear of terrorism amplifies the vulnerability and emotional strain experienced by families like Maria's. The potential harm and disruption caused by acts of terrorism directly impact the sense of security and well-being within the family unit, intensifying the need for a peaceful and secure environment.

The government and society must address the concerns raised by Maria and others regarding the fear of terrorism. By implementing effective security measures, promoting peace-building initiatives, and ensuring transparency in addressing political issues, the government can help alleviate the burden of fear and create a safer environment for ordinary people and their families. Additionally, fostering a sense of community, empathy, and support within

society can significantly mitigate the impact of terrorism-related fears and foster a greater sense of security and well-being.

Maria's statement also reflects her frustration with the Eurocentric perspective often seen in discussions of global events. She laments that people in Western countries often fail to acknowledge the impact conflicts in other regions have on innocent civilians. Maria believes it is unfair for ordinary people to bear the burden of these risks and questions why innocent individuals have to suffer due to the actions of others. Geopolitically, Maria's concerns reflect the world's interconnectedness and how events in one region can have ripple effects across the globe. While it may seem unfair that innocent individuals like Maria and her family have to bear the burden of these risks, the reality is that political conflicts and acts of violence can have far-reaching consequences that extend beyond national borders. The fear and desire to protect loved ones in the face of these risks are natural responses to the complexities of our interconnected world.

4.5 Helplessness

It is possible for people to feel helpless when they fear terrorism because they perceive it as an uncontrollable and pervasive threat that can strike anywhere and anytime. As a result, people may feel they have little or no control over their safety or that of their loved ones. As a result of feeling helpless in the face of a perceived threat, people often experience anxiety, depression, and a sense of powerlessness. They may also engage in avoidance behaviours, such as avoiding public spaces or large gatherings, to minimise their perceived risk of exposure to a terrorist attack. Moreover, fear of terrorism can lead to a sense of mistrust and suspicion of others, particularly people of different cultural and religious backgrounds, who may be viewed as potential threats. As a result, individuals may feel that they have no way to protect themselves or their communities, leading to feelings of helplessness and isolation.

People's sense of agency and control over their own lives can be significantly affected by their fear of terrorism. By providing individuals with information and resources that will enable them to feel more prepared and confident in the face of perceived threats, we can address these feelings of helplessness and empower them to feel more resilient and empowered in the face of perceived threats. Community-based initiatives that promote social cohesion and mutual support may be worthwhile, as well as training in emergency response and first aid.

A sense of helplessness appears to be expressed by Aris in his statement, leading him to seek refuge in a place perceived to be safe, such as his home, in response to the perceived threat of terrorism. A perception of helplessness may result from the perception that the government is not doing enough to protect its citizens from the threat of terrorism. This also suggests that feelings of helplessness in the face of perceived threats of terrorism can contribute to a sense of fear and anxiety, which may lead individuals to seek safety in familiar places. The perception of the government not doing enough to address the threat and the media coverage of terrorist attacks may exacerbate this feeling of helplessness.

Aris: "*Well, it wasn't only because of that it was partly as a result of it. I would rather just be close to my safe space which is my home and hear if something happens in distance. I decided to look after myself because the government doesn't!*"

In the face of possible terrorist attacks, Aris expresses a sense of helplessness and vulnerability. The phrase "it wasn't just because of that" implies that he is feeling helpless for multiple reasons. Since he perceives the government as inadequate in fulfilling its role, he feels partly responsible for his own safety and security. A desire for familiarity and security explains Ari's preference for staying close to his own environment. He believes that by staying close to his safe space, he will be able to detect and respond to any potential threats more effectively. As a result of a lack of trust in the government's ability to ensure his safety, Aris made the

comment, "I decided to take care of myself because the government doesn't!" As Aris perceives it, the government fails to protect citizens, leading them to act independently. Considering the lack of support, they perceive from external sources; Aris feels compelled to take proactive measures to protect himself. As expressed by Aris, the theme of helplessness relates to the study of fear of terrorism in terms of individuals' perceptions of their vulnerability and their actions to reduce that fear. In addition to a lack of trust in institutions, such as the government, there is a belief that one's safety depends on personal agency. As a result of understanding these experiences, people can better understand how fear of terrorism impacts their psychological well-being and how they cope with their perceived helplessness. Aris takes several proactive measures to protect himself in response to his perception of government inadequacy. These measures may include enhancing the security of his home, investing in personal safety devices, and staying informed about potential threats through various news sources and community networks. By taking these actions, Aris seeks to regain a sense of control and security in the face of his perceived helplessness. The belief in personal agency plays a significant role in how individuals respond to the fear of terrorism. By taking proactive measures to protect themselves, like enhancing home security and staying informed about potential threats, individuals like Aris regain a sense of control and security, counteracting their perceived helplessness. However, relying solely on personal agency for security can have its drawbacks. While taking proactive measures is important, it can create a false sense of invulnerability and neglect the larger systemic issues that contribute to insecurity. Additionally, individuals may become overwhelmed by the constant need to be vigilant and may experience increased stress and anxiety. It is crucial to find a balance between personal agency and collective efforts to ensure comprehensive security for all.

4.5.1 *Global risk*

Global risk can cause people to feel helpless and vulnerable due to a fear of terrorism. When people feel that the threat of terrorism is pervasive and uncontrollable, it can lead to a broader sense of anxiety and uncertainty about the future and a feeling that events beyond their control are shaping the world. People may feel disempowered and perceive global risks as too big and complex for them to have any meaningful influence over them, such as climate change, economic instability, and geopolitical conflict. As a result, individuals may feel that their actions are unlikely to be useful in the face of these global threats, resulting in a lack of engagement with broader social and political issues. Furthermore, the global nature of terrorism can also contribute to a sense of shared risk and a recognition of global interconnectedness. As a result, we are more aware of the need for collective action and responsibility in order to address global risks, such as terrorism and climate change.

The relationship between terrorism, helplessness, and global risk is ultimately complex and multifaceted. The fear of terrorism can make people feel helpless and disempowered. Still, it can also make them realise the importance of global cooperation and collective action in addressing everyday challenges and risks. Ali's statement indicates that he is aware of the possibility of global risks and the impact that such risks can have on anyone in the world, not just himself and his family and friends. It appears that Ali has learned to live with this fear because he recognises that it is a reality. Despite this fear, he chooses to continue with his daily activities and socialising in the face of the feeling that there is little he can do to prevent such incidents. Ali acknowledged that when he sees news related to such incidents, he is reminded of this fear, which causes him to think about the potential risks.

> Ali (*Turkish/Kurdish, male, 42 years*): *"Ehhh, by looking at it in a multi-national as well as multi-humanitarian way because it will not only happen to me or my friends*

and family. It can happen to anyone in this planet, so I am not the only one who could be the victim potentially. If it happens, it happens; we can't do much about it! So compared to other fears, we people are learning to live with this reality and this fear. Otherwise, life can get unbearable. I still need to go to work and socialise; however, sometimes we get reminded by the news and I do think what if etc."

It is clear to Ali that terrorism is not limited to him or his immediate circle. He sees it as a global threat that could affect anyone on the planet. This awareness highlights a broader perspective on the impact of terrorism beyond personal concerns. He suggests a level of resignation and acceptance of the possibility of being a victim of terrorism in his comment, "If it happens, it happens!" Recognising the uncontrollable nature of such events, he emphasises the importance of adapting and learning to deal with them, maintaining a sense of normalcy and not allowing fear to overwhelm his life as he acknowledges the presence of fear. Ali mentioned that news reports trigger thoughts about terrorism and the potential risks and consequences. This suggests that external cues, such as media coverage, can trigger thoughts and reflections about terrorism. Based on Ali's statement, the term "Global risk" pertains to studying the fear of terrorism from the perspective of individuals' shared vulnerability and broader impact. Despite the reality of terrorism, it reflects the need to function daily. The understanding of these experiences can provide insight into how individuals cope with terrorism and navigate their fears.

According to Maria, even if an individual is aware that they are at risk of terrorist attacks, they can still choose to continue living their life freely and not let fear control them. Despite the unpredictable nature of life, she was aware that anything could happen to anyone, not just in terms of terrorism but also during everyday life. Her perspective on life has been shaped by their father's imprisonment, which makes her appreciate the importance of freedom even more. She values freedom and the ability to live life on her terms.

Maria (White British, female, 39 years): "Well, look anything can happen to anyone; I can walk out, and a car can hit me, and God knows something else can happen. Of course, as I said earlier, when we hear these things in the news we stop for a day or two then later continue because life is busy, and we don't have time for that. Living in London makes you rebellious like that because its expensive and I work many hours and I am not going lay low in my free time because of a random maniac who have not been loved or only been loved and pampered with gloves. So, to be honest yes probably I am at the risk but what's the likelihood? Not much isn't so therefore I am being me and living my life. Freedom is not cheap and living life whilst there are so many horrible things happening around the world is a choice. My father was imprisoned for 15 years so I know what it means to not have freedom and not live your life as you want it. When he got out, I was a teenager and promised myself that I would live my life freely no matter what, of course, within the laws (laughing)."

Even though she recognised that risks exist in everyday life, unrelated to terrorism, she also recognised that unexpected events, such as accidents, can occur. She believed that life is so hectic that there is little time to dwell on potential dangers. The high cost of living and the demands of her work contribute to Maria's rebellious attitude as she lives in a busy city like London. Drawing on her father's imprisonment experience, Maria described how she values her personal freedom and sees living life fully as a choice. As a result of Maria's experience with her father's imprisonment, she appreciates the value of personal freedom. She acknowledges that terrorism is a threat but weighs it against a variety of other potential risks in life. Based on this evaluation, she chooses to live her life freely without excessive concern about terrorism. To honour her father's sacrifice and cherish her freedom, she consciously decided to live her life to its fullest while abiding by the law. As Maria explains, "Global risk" reflects a perspective that acknowledges that risks exist but emphasises the choice to live a free

and resilient life. In this case, the example is of someone prioritising personal agency and making a conscious decision not to let fear of terrorism dominate their life. As people navigate their fears and make choices based on their values and aspirations, understanding these experiences can provide insight into how they manage global risks like terrorism.

Sule made a statement that indicates that the various global events and risks, such as terrorist attacks, political conflicts, economic crises, and pandemics, have significantly impacted the individual's life and decisions. She perceives the world as a more dangerous and uncertain place, so her behaviour has been influenced by these risks, for example through avoiding crowded places. Furthermore, these events have disheartened her and made her more cautious about her decisions. She also believed that some of these risks are interconnected, such as the economic crisis and the pandemic, which have made matters worse.

> Sule (*White British/Dutch, female, 43 years*): *"Well, it has affected my life and has affected many people; we are now out of Europe and, we are involved in Ukraine. Things are not easy anymore. I guess we are out of EU because of the influx of foreigners and, we are in Ukraine and sending lots of money to defend out soil from there. Personally, for me things have changed since the Manchester attack and have disheartened me from attending concerts. To be honest the risk of terrorist attack and COVID as well as the economic crisis gives me more reasons not to go. So, there are more reasons. The COVID and money side of things has intensified the situation."*

Specifically, she mentioned the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (Brexit) and involvement in the Ukrainian conflict as global risks with socio-political impact, including in terms of terrorism. The perceived influx of foreigners and the allocation of financial resources for defence efforts are associated with these events, according to Sule. Considering these global risks, Sule acknowledged that her life had been directly affected as

well as those of many others. After the Manchester attack, Sule felt disinclined to attend concerts and has become increasingly vulnerable. In addition to the threat of terrorist attacks, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic crisis, Sule has additional reasons to be cautious due to the combination of these factors. The interconnectedness of terrorism, the pandemic, and economic challenges have increased her apprehensions about her own safety and well-being due to Sule's experiences and prevailing global risks. Specifically, Sule emphasised the impact of global risks, including terrorism, on society and individuals. As a result, it demonstrates how individuals' perceptions of these risks influence their actions, behaviours, and decisions. Sule's experiences provide valuable insights into how global risks and personal fears interact, thereby illustrating how terrorism impacts individuals and society in a variety of ways.

Jon on the other hand shows here that he believes the increase in global risks has led to a change in societal values and ways of thinking as a result of the fear engendered by them. Prior to the interconnectedness of the world and the threat of terrorism becoming a constant concern, he wished for simpler times. Additionally, he felt that the need to be politically correct has limited our ability to effectively address the issue of terrorism.

> *Jon* (*White British, male, 48 years old*)*: "You know I miss the times when things were simpler. I am from the older generation and our ways to see things has changed a lot. Before we had lots of problems; however, now we are living with fear because of the global world. I feel we are too politically correct and think this has minimised our free thinking and our ways to tackle the terrorism.*

Jon expressed nostalgia for simplicity, a longing for simpler times when things were considered simpler. In contrast to the past, he described the current globalised world as more complex and fear-inducing. The rise in global risks, including terrorism, had made his life more

complex and frightening. He had been affected by the current climate of political correctness, particularly in relation to terrorism, in his perceptions and responses to global risks. According to him, the emphasis on being politically correct has limited free thinking and hindered effective counterterrorism strategies. As Jon pointed out, perspectives and ways of thinking have evolved over time, so older generations may have dealt with problems differently than they are dealt with in the present. Based on his comments, society has had to adjust its response to and management of the fear of terrorism as a result of the changing global landscape and its associated risks. As Jon explained, the theme of "Global risk" highlights his sense of nostalgia, concerns around political correctness, and the evolving nature of societal responses to global threats. Global events have a profound effect on individual perspectives, and the complexities of modern life require adaptation and challenges. Considering Jon's experiences sheds light on the interplay between generational differences, societal changes, and perceptions of global risks, providing a broader perspective on the fear of terrorism. Jon's nostalgia for simpler times reflects a generational difference in how global risks, such as terrorism, are perceived.

While he feels that the emphasis on political correctness has hindered effective strategies, it is important to consider how societal responses to global threats have evolved over time, considering the complexities of modern life. On the other hand, younger generations may have a different perspective on global risks, such as terrorism. They may see the emphasis on political correctness as a necessary step towards inclusivity and understanding and believe that it is important to address the root causes of terrorism rather than resorting to simplistic solutions. Their approach to tackling global risks may involve more nuanced strategies that consider the complexities of the modern world. Jon's comments on the limitations of political correctness in relation to terrorism also touch on the issue of superiority and eurocentrism. He argues that the emphasis on being politically correct can sometimes hinder an honest examination of the root causes of terrorism, as it may prevent critical discussions about the

historical and geopolitical factors that contribute to global conflicts. By acknowledging these complexities, society can strive for a more comprehensive understanding of global risks and work towards effective solutions. Eurocentrism can limit the understanding of global risks by focusing primarily on Western perspectives and experiences, neglecting the diverse cultural, historical, and geopolitical factors that contribute to terrorism. By recognizing the influence of eurocentrism and embracing a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach, society can develop a more comprehensive understanding of global risks and promote effective solutions that address the root causes of terrorism.

4.5.2 *Change and call for action*

As individuals may feel that current policies and approaches to security are inadequate in addressing the threat of terrorism, fear of terrorism can lead to a desire for change. To prevent terrorist attacks and keep people safe, security measures can be increased, though, for example, increased surveillance, border controls, and restrictions on civil liberties.

In addition, fear of terrorism can also cause people to resist change because they feel nostalgia for a safer or more stable past and may be averse to change that they perceive as threatening to their way of life or culture. This can lead to a desire to preserve traditional values and resist perceived threats from outside groups or influences.

The fear of terrorism can also cause society to become polarised and divided, as individuals may become more entrenched in their political beliefs and less willing to compromise or cooperate. Individuals may also be more inclined to support policies and approaches that align with their pre-existing beliefs and values rather than those that may be more effective in addressing terrorism threats. As a result, resistance to change may increase. According to individual circumstances and beliefs, there is a complex relationship between fear of terrorism and change. A fear of terrorism can lead to increased security measures and other

forms of change, but it can also lead to resistance to change and a desire to preserve old ways of doing things.

In Ali's statement, he contrasted change with the expectation that politicians will act. The speaker acknowledged that global risk affects everyone, including himself, but did not consider it a personal issue. He was, however, concerned about the fact that people are being injured and attacked, and believes that politicians must address the root cause of terrorism as soon as possible. It indicates that there is a desire for change and that political leaders need to take action to address the issue.

> *Ali* (*Turkish/Kurdish, male, 42 years*)*: "Well, me personally I am part of the world, so I don't see it as personal problem; it's a problem for the whole humanity. It can happen anywhere at any time to anyone; it doesn't affect my daily life that much. But of course, when we see people getting wounded and attacked is worrying. We are waiting for the politician to take it seriously and go to the core sources of terrorism so that we don't live with this fear."*

Rather than considering terrorism as a personal problem, Ali emphasised that he is part of a global community. He viewed the issue as a problem affecting humanity as a whole and recognised that it can occur anywhere, at any time, to anyone. This global perspective shapes his understanding of the fear of terrorism. The fear of terrorism does not significantly affect Ali's daily life, but he expressed that he feels concern when he sees people attacked and wounded. This concern reflects a recognition of the impact of terrorism on individuals and communities, evoking empathy, and a desire for the problem to be taken seriously. To alleviate the fear associated with terrorism, Ali suggested that politicians should address its root causes. He stated that decisive action must be taken against the underlying causes of terrorism, indicating a desire for change and a proactive approach to tackling the underlying causes.

"Change and call for action" highlights Ali's global perspective, concern for others, and call for action to combat terrorism. To mitigate fear and promote a sense of security, this theme emphasises the interconnection between individuals and societies facing this issue, as well as the importance of addressing its root causes. By understanding Ali's experiences, we better understand the broader context of terrorism and the desire for positive change that results.

As Martin described, when a significant event occurs, such as a terrorist attack, people's lives may be disrupted, and they may feel more vulnerable or fearful. Over time, however, they can adapt to the new reality and find ways to maintain their lives while acknowledging the potential dangers. As a result of this statement, the speaker demonstrated that he is willing to adjust to the situation while not allowing fear to dictate his behaviour. As a result, resilience is also highlighted as an important characteristic in the face of adversity.

> *Martin (White British, male, 52 years): "Of course, what happens is that when a bad events like that happens you live low profile where you don't go out to high profile places or to the famous places and when a few days has passed I just continue my life. I work in the city, and I must find a way to go into work. We had the option to not go in in the last attack in the London bridge. But I don't like that; if I stay indoors that means they are winning against me, and I am not letting that happen!"*

In the face of any bad event, like a terrorist attack, Martin acknowledged that he adapts his behaviour to reflect the impact of that event on his perception of safety and the need to protect himself. By avoiding high-profile or famous places, he adopts a low-profile approach. In spite of his initial change in behaviour, Martin emphasised his determination to continue living his life after a few days. As a result of refusing to remain indoors, he demonstrates his resilience and resistance in the face of the terrorists' goal of instilling fear in people and changing their behaviour. As Martin demonstrates in his refusal to let terrorists dictate his

actions, he stated, "If I remain indoors, they are winning against me." In order to express his agency and determination not to be dominated by fear, he views remaining active and doing what he does every day as a form of resistance. The theme of "Change and call for action", as expressed by Martin, reflects the impact terrorist events have on individuals' behaviour and responses. In addition to highlighting the importance of resilience and defiance in the face of fear, it also emphasises how behaviours can be utilised to protect individuals. By showing their empowerment and refusal to allow fear to rule their lives, his comments inspire others to assert their agency and refuse to allow terrorists to disrupt their daily routines. In this theme, we examine the complex relationship between fear, adaptation, and resilience in the context of terrorism.

Jon's' statement suggests that a sense of mistrust and fear is connected to the concept of change. According to the speaker, the world has undergone changes in ways that have led to an increase in traitors and a decrease in tolerance, which has caused people to become more wary and anxious about unexpected events that may arise. Jon's use of the word "before" indicates a belief that there was a time in the past when things were different, which implies that he views change as having had negative consequences. In general, the statement indicates that change can be destabilising and create new risks and challenges that people may find difficult to manage.

> Jon (*White British, male, 48 years*): *"Well, before we did not tolerate just everything; we did not have many traitors. We live in times where things have changed so much that I can't trust anyone and fear that anything can happen at any time."*

According to Jon, there was a time when people were more trustworthy, and traitors were fewer in number. He expressed disillusionment and loss of trust in others. According to him, society has changed in terms of its values and norms, which has led to a decrease in trust

and an increase in fear and uncertainty. Jon's statement that "anything can happen at any time" indicates a heightened sense of vulnerability to potential terrorist attacks. Currently, he considers the era to be one of insecurity and unpredictability, with no one immune from the threat of terrorism. As a result, his fear and anxiety have been heightened because of this perception. According to Jon, the current situation necessitates increased vigilance and caution as a result of perceived changes in the world. It was Jon's intention to make others aware of the potential risks and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety by expressing his concerns. The theme of "Change and call for action", as expressed by Jon, emphasises the impact of societal changes on individuals' perceptions of trust, vulnerability, and fear. As Jon explained, the world is becoming increasingly unpredictable and dangerous, which has led to a loss of trust and an increased sense of vulnerability. He called for vigilance and action in an effort to address perceived threats proactively. In the face of terrorism, this theme emphasises the dynamic relationship between societal changes and fear. There are several factors that have contributed to the perceived changes in the world, such as advancements in technology, globalization, and shifting societal values.

These factors have led to increased interconnectedness, exposure to different cultures and ideologies, and a faster pace of life, all of which can create a sense of uncertainty and instability for individuals like Jon. One way that shifting societal values have influenced individuals' sense of vulnerability is through the erosion of traditional social structures and norms. As societal values change and become more individualistic, there is a breakdown in the sense of collective responsibility and support. This can leave individuals feeling more isolated and exposed, as they no longer have a strong network of community and societal bonds to rely on for protection and security. Furthermore, the theme of "Change and call for action" also highlights the role of social identity and eurocentrism in shaping individuals' perceptions of vulnerability. As societal values shift and traditional structures erode, individuals may cling to

their social identities as a source of stability and security. This can lead to the reinforcement of Eurocentric perspectives, where certain groups perceive themselves as more vulnerable or targeted. Therefore, addressing these underlying social dynamics becomes crucial in fostering a sense of collective responsibility and ensuring the safety of all individuals.

4.5.3 *Vulnerability of being*

As terrorism is portrayed as a constant and unpredictable threat that can strike at any time and in any place, fear of terrorism can contribute to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability among individuals. The result of this can be a sense of powerlessness and the perception that events are beyond one's control, which can in turn trigger negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, and depression. People belonging to marginalised or targeted groups, such as religious or ethnic minorities, can also feel vulnerable because of their fear of terrorism. As a result of their perceived association with terrorism, these individuals may be more likely to experience discrimination, harassment, or violence, which can exacerbate their feelings of vulnerability and helplessness. Moreover, fear of terrorism can lead individuals to engage in avoidance behaviours, such as avoiding public spaces or large gatherings, to minimise their perceived risk of exposure to terrorism. Even though these behaviours provide temporary relief or safety, they can also lead to feelings of isolation and reinforce feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. Individuals' emotional well-being and sense of agency can be significantly affected by fear of terrorism, helplessness, and feelings of vulnerability. For individuals to feel more prepared and confident in the face of perceived threats, it is important to provide information and resources that will help them feel resilient and empowered, as well as promote social inclusion and community-based initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and mutual support.

A possible correlation between vulnerability and fear is suggested by Sule, who argued that the Sule believes that he or she is not in control of the situation and that terrible things may occur anywhere in the world. This realisation of vulnerability can increase her levels of caution when attending public events and going out in public. Her awareness of the risks has affected her behaviour, illustrating how vulnerability can affect our daily decisions and lives.

> *Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years): "It's not in our control anymore; this kind of horrible things happens all over the world. In fact, when you think like that, it's shocking to see how much at risk we might be. Since everything happened in the Manchester event, I am not surprised but I think twice sometimes before going to events etc."*

It is clear to Sule that horrific events, such as terrorist attacks, cannot be controlled by anyone, which leaves her feeling powerless. In today's world, one cannot be guaranteed one's safety due to this perception of vulnerability. According to Sule, the Manchester event has had a lasting impact on her perception of safety and the potential risks associated with attending public events as a result. As a result of such events, people are reminded of their vulnerability and are influenced in their decision-making. This change in behaviour reflects an increased sense of caution and wariness as people realise that participating in certain activities may expose them to potential risks. Throughout Sule's comments, the theme of "Vulnerability of being" emphasises the psychological impact of the fear of terrorism on individuals. As a result of Sule's recognition of losing control, the impact of previous events, and the subsequent adoption of a more cautious mindset, she is aware of her vulnerability to a greater degree. In an increasingly uncertain world, fear plays a profound role in how individuals navigate their lives and how they make decisions every day.

As Ali described, vulnerability affects one's daily life. The speaker acknowledged that the UK is not as susceptible to attacks as some other countries, but also acknowledged that attacks can occur in the UK as well. In addition, he pointed out that human nature cannot constantly live in fear and that in most parts of the world, fear and its effects on daily life are not as high as they may be in other parts of the world. This illustrates how our perception of vulnerability can have a significant impact on our behaviour and choices.

> *Ali* (*Turkish/Kurdish, male, 42 years*)*:"Ehhh, compared to some other countries UK is not very close to attacks like that. However, of course it can happen in the UK as well. But it doesn't affect our daily life as much as I said previously. Human nature cannot live with that fear all the time; therefore, we are quite lucky over here compared to other countries and poor part of the world."*

A comparative perspective is taken by Ali, who acknowledged that while the UK is not as likely to be attacked as other countries, an attack is still possible. This point highlights the variability of vulnerability across different regions and contextualises the fear of terrorism within a broader global context. According to Ali, terrorism does not have a significant impact on daily life in the UK. In contrast, those living in regions where terrorism poses an immediate and constant threat are relatively far less fortunate. The perception that daily life remains relatively unaffected indicates a sense of resilience or adaptability to the existing threat. According to Ali, living human nature can't tolerate the effects of living with constant fear. This implies that individuals find ways to cope and maintain a sense of normalcy despite the potential risks. In the face of fear and adversity, individuals are resilient and adaptable. According to Ali's comments, terrorism is a potential threat in the UK. However, in comparison to other regions, the UK has a relatively high sense of security and normality. Based on Ali's comparative perspective, awareness of the limited impact of terrorism on everyday life and

understanding of the limitations of human nature when dealing with constant fear, he offered insight into how individuals cope with terrorism and maintain a sense of normalcy.

According to Maria's statement, although she is aware of the vulnerability associated with living in a large city with a diverse population and views, she chooses not to dwell on it too much, as it can lead to a miserable life. As a result of acknowledging and dwelling on vulnerability, one is likely to experience fear and anxiety, which can negatively impact one's daily life. By not considering the potential risks and vulnerabilities of living in a large city, the individual is protecting their mental well-being.

> *Maria (White British, male, 52 years): "I try not to think about it otherwise it's not liveable isn't? I don't know what to say, it's a big city full of different people with all kind of views."*

It appears that Maria uses a coping mechanism to protect her well-being and maintain a sense of normalcy in her daily life by actively avoiding thinking about her fear of terrorism. Considering this, she may feel overwhelmed or unable to get on with day-to-day life if she acknowledges and dwells on her fear of terrorism. She emphasised the diversity of her city by implying that it is a place where people hold different viewpoints and beliefs, which can exacerbate a sense of uncertainty and perhaps make people feel vulnerable. As a result of diverse perspectives and backgrounds, potential risks can be hard to predict or understand, perhaps increasing feelings of vulnerability. The theme of "Vulnerability of being" in Maria's comments emphasise her inclination to avoid thinking about the fear of terrorism and her inclination to recognise the complexity of living in a multicultural city. Maria seems to be trying to maintain a sense of normalcy and avoid dwelling on terrorism risks. A city's perceived vulnerability may be influenced by its diversity of population and diverse viewpoints. Maria's

comments reveal a desire to navigate her daily life without letting fear consume her, while acknowledging the complexities of living in a diverse city.

A key point here is that Maria feels vulnerable and concerned about security in her daily life, which prompted her to vote in elections based on security concerns. However, even if she previously did not prioritise political issues, she may feel that she must act in order to protect herself and her loved ones. Consequently, her political views and actions have been significantly influenced by their sense of vulnerability.

> *"Yes, it is overwhelming and funnily enough myself and my family were people who couldn't give a fuck about politics but have been forced to vote for parties that put importance on security." Maria* (*White British, female, 39 years*)

It is evident from Maria's description that the fear of terrorism could disrupt her sense of security and well-being as she feels overwhelmed by the issue of terrorism and its impact on her life. She may feel vulnerable as a result of the magnitude and implications of the threat, which affects her perspective on life in various ways. According to Maria, her family's political behaviour has changed, as they have been forced to vote for security-oriented parties. As a result, her family's political choices have been influenced by the fear of terrorism, which emphasises the direct impact security concerns have on their decisions. Political engagement implies a heightened awareness of vulnerability and a desire for more protection. As Maria's comments emphasise, "Vulnerability of being" reflects the overwhelming nature of her family's fear of terrorism. She has felt the need to change the way her family votes as a result of the fear, which disrupts her sense of security. As a result, terrorism has a significant impact on individuals, influencing their political choices and reinforcing the sense of vulnerability they feel.

As Jon points out, the individual recognises the vulnerability of being at risk of an attack or danger but wishes not to allow it to control their lives or interfere with their daily lives. Despite the potential danger, they are still willing to live their lives even though they have become used to living with it.

> *Jon* (*White British, male, 48 years*):*"Well, it has not affected me more than anyone else. However, I have noticed that this is just something that we have been used to living with. There are lots of sick people among us and it can happen at any time but I still want to live my life and don't want that to get in the way."*

Everyone is concerned about terrorism to some degree, according to Jon. In referring to this, he emphasised the shared vulnerability within society, highlighting how universal the fear is and how it impacts individuals' lives. Jon implies, by acknowledging the collective experience, that the fear of terrorism is something society is used to living with, rather than something that is unique to him. As Jon stated, he does not want terrorism to hinder his daily activities as he wishes to live his life. Despite acknowledging the threat, he keeps a sense of normalcy and does not allow his fear to dictate his actions. Despite the inherent vulnerability associated with fear of terrorism, Jon's statement demonstrates resilience and determination to carry on with life. Throughout Jon's comments, the theme of "Vulnerability of being" is highlighted by the recognition of the collective experience of fear and the desire to maintain a sense of normalcy. Despite the threat, Jon emphasised the importance of living life without being influenced by fear. The relationship between vulnerability and individual agency in the face of such fears is complex, and this suggests a resilience and a refusal to let the fear of terrorism define his life.

Equally, Aris argued that terrorist attacks can create a feeling of vulnerability in individuals as they are emotionally overwhelming. The statement also emphasises that

terrorism has become a global risk, meaning anyone, anywhere, can be affected. In addition to creating fear and anxiety, this realisation of vulnerability can lead to a greater appreciation of life and a greater desire to protect oneself and one's family. Additionally, the statement suggests that having a family can enhance the importance of being aware of risks and taking precautions to ensure one's safety.

> Aris (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years): *"The experience has been up and down. It's upsetting but I now think that wherever I go it can be a risk. Terrorism has now become a global risk and we hear it all the time. In other countries it's a daily life places like in the Middle East, but people live their life's. My experience has been bittersweet but now I don't want it to be bitter because I am going to have a family."*

The threat of terrorism is prevalent in many parts of the world, according to Aris, and it has become a global risk. As a result of this recognition, we have a better understanding that terrorist attacks are not limited to a specific location or community, but rather affect people worldwide. Considering the broader context of terrorism and its potential effects on personal safety, Aris' statement speaks to this awareness. As Aris describes it, his fear of terrorism has affected him in both a bittersweet and upsetting way, suggesting that it has had a significant emotional impact on him. As a result of being vulnerable to terrorism, individuals can experience negative emotions and shape their perceptions and behaviours based on fear and uncertainty. It appears that Aris' vulnerability to terrorism has influenced his priorities and decision-making, specifically with regard to starting a family. He expresses a desire to protect his family from the dangers of terrorism. In Aris' statement, he demonstrates his protective instincts as well as his sense of responsibility for his family's well-being and safety. Aris emphasised that terrorism is a global threat, that it can affect individuals emotionally, and also influence personal priorities and decisions. The theme "Vulnerability of being" in Aris'

comments underscores this. In the face of the vulnerability posed by terrorism, Aris' comments illustrate the complicated interaction between personal experiences, emotions, and the desire to protect oneself and one's family.

According to Amy's statement here, she has been severely traumatised by terrorism, resulting in therapy. Additionally, this experience has triggered a sense of vulnerability and fear that has also resulted in intolerance to uncertainty. Amy's statement highlights the emotional toll terrorism can take on individuals and the long-term effects it can have on their mental health.

> *Amy* (White British, female, 36 years): *"It has affected me a lot. I had therapy for it and it has triggered intolerance for uncertainty for me. Having to listen to my friend was traumatic and I got even more traumatised when I was researching about it."*

The fear of terrorist attacks has had a significant impact on Amy, causing her emotional distress and trauma. She mentioned having therapy as a means of coping, indicating how serious the fear was. Individuals can experience profound psychological distress and require professional support because of fear of terrorism, resulting in psychological distress. Fear of terrorism has triggered Amy's intolerance of uncertainty. This suggests that her discomfort with ambiguous situations has been heightened by the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of a terrorist attack and its potential consequences. An individual's heightened sensitivity to uncertainty can be exacerbated by the fear of terrorism, which can exacerbate their need for certainty and control in life. Amy expressed how she felt traumatised when she researched terrorism. This suggests that exposure to terrorism-related information, such as news articles and reports, can re-traumatise individuals and increase their anxiety and fear levels. In relation to the vulnerability posed by terrorism, it emphasises how media consumption and information seeking may impact individuals' psychological well-being. Throughout her comments, Amy

highlights the emotional impact, intolerance for uncertainty, and secondary trauma associated with fear of terrorism. As Amy noted, fear of terrorism can have profound psychological and emotional effects on individuals, affecting their mental health, coping strategies, and even their ability to interact with terrorism-related information.

4.5.4 *Media and power*

People's perceptions of terrorism and their sense of helplessness and vulnerability can be significantly influenced by the media. It is common for terrorist attacks and related events to be sensationalised and emphasised in the media, leading to a perception that the threat is ubiquitous and uncontrollable. People may feel helpless and vulnerable as a result of this feeling of powerlessness and a perception that events are beyond their control.

In addition, media coverage of terrorist attacks and related events can contribute to the stigmatisation and demonisation of certain groups, particularly religious or ethnic minorities, which can further exacerbate feelings of helplessness and vulnerability among these individuals. It may also create fear and anxiety among the broader population, especially if events are sensationalised.

Additionally, the media can also contribute to a sense of avoidance or disengagement among individuals who feel overwhelmed or powerless when confronted with the perceived threat of terrorism. To minimise the perceived risk of a terrorist attack, individuals may disengage from news coverage or avoid public spaces and large gatherings. Even though these behaviours provide a sense of temporary relief or safety, they can also reinforce feelings of helplessness and vulnerability and contribute to feelings of isolation.

Generally, there is an association between fear of terrorism, helplessness, and the media. While the media can contribute to a sense of powerlessness and vulnerability among

individuals, it can also play a positive role in providing accurate and balanced coverage of events and promoting resilience and empowerment by providing individuals with information and resources that can help them feel more confident in the face of perceived threats.

One statement from Aris indicates that media coverage influences a person's level of fear. When the media report on potential threats or terrorist incidents, the individual's fear increases, and when the media minimises such news, their fear decreases. Further, Aris noted that the media also influences their conversations with others on the street, indicating that the media influence public discourse as well as perceptions of risk in society. Also, Aris mentioned how his behaviour has been affected by media coverage of terrorism, for example, since he now avoids public transportation.

> *Aris* (British/Cypriot, male, 38 years)*: "Yes, it has, and it coincide with the news. When the news about a potential attack or terrorist stuff gets minimised, my fear lessens. This is what I have noticed. It's in line with what we hear and listen to. People on the street talk about what the media gives us. For example, there were times where I feared taking public transport, especially underground train. I would feel trapped and the thought about terrorism was overwhelming, so I stopped that for a while and found a job somewhere local."*

The fear of terrorist attacks has had a significant impact on Amy, causing her emotional distress and trauma. She mentioned having therapy as a means of coping, indicating how serious the fear was. Individuals can experience profound psychological distress and require professional support as a result of fear of terrorism, resulting in psychological distress. Fear of terrorism triggered an intolerance of uncertainty in Amy. This suggests that her discomfort with ambiguous situations has been heightened by the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of a terrorist attack and its potential consequences. An individual's heightened sensitivity to

uncertainty can be exacerbated by the fear of terrorism, which can exacerbate their need for certainty and control in life. Amy expressed feeling uneasy while researching terrorism. This suggests that exposure to terrorism-related information, such as news articles and reports, can re-traumatise individuals and increase their anxiety and fear levels. In relation to the vulnerability provoked by terrorism, it emphasises how media consumption and information seeking may impact individuals' psychological well-being. Throughout her comments, Amy highlighted the emotional impact, intolerance of uncertainty, and secondary trauma associated with fear of terrorism. As Amy noted, fear of terrorism can have profound psychological and emotional effects on individuals, affecting their mental health, coping strategies, and even their ability to interact with terrorism-related information.

According to Veron, the media contributes to shaping people's perceptions of security and risk. According to one statement, Veron feels more confident and secure in public spaces now than after the 2005 London bombings. This may be due to increased security measures and the media's reporting of such measures. In addition, Veron mentioned that she has learned to recognise patterns in media coverage, suggesting that media coverage can have a significant influence on people's perception of risk and their measures for mitigating it.

> *Veron (White British, female, 37 years): "We are comfortable because we can respond to all kind of threats independently. But I also think we are in a transition period with government and COVID and all that. I saw in the news about the various attacks that happened in the UK. The historic of it and I hope it doesn't happen and of course another reason why we have to be defending our home in Ukraine and in the rest of the world. I am more confident being in the streets compared to when the attacks on London 2004 happened. I had old colleagues being in the buses. Now we are more secured I think as much as we can be. It's safer to be out there. I have not done much personally other than vote for the right people to make this country safer. Our news are warnings*

us anyway. Since COVID I have understood the media's pattern; if something is spoken almost every day then its real."

In response to various threats, Veron expressed a sense of security and comfort. As Veron pointed out, this sense of security is a result of both the government's action to safeguard the country and the ability to respond to threats independently. Both personal agency and government measures can influence perceptions of security, according to this study. There is a sense that society is undergoing a societal transition, as evidenced by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and government changes, which may influence people's perception of security and fears of terrorism. According to Veron, individuals' perceptions of the current threat level and confidence in the measures being taken to address terrorism are affected by their knowledge of past terror attacks in the UK, such as the 2004 attacks in London. Media coverage plays a key role in educating the public about potential threats, according to Veron. The fact that Veron observed that media coverage can indicate the reality of a situation suggests that consistent and frequent coverage of a particular issue can influence perceptions of its significance and impact. To improve security within a country, Veron suggested having personal involvement in the political process, indicating a belief that political decisions and actions can have a significant impact. Throughout her comments, Veron emphasised the interaction between media influence and security perceptions among individuals. she acknowledged that media play a crucial role in informing and warning the public, while also expressing confidence in government security measures. Veron's perspective on the fear of terrorism and the media's role in shaping public perceptions is further shaped by the historical context of past attacks and her involvement in political processes.

According to a statement made by Sule, media coverage as well as information from family and friends may influence an individual's perception of risk. The individual acknowledges that media coverage and information from friends and family may influence

their perception of risk. In addition, they choose to disregard it and continue with their daily activities, suggesting a potential conflict between media messaging and individual agency.

> *Sule (White British/Dutch, female, 43 years): "I think this is going in line with what we hear in the media and what we hear from friends and family. The thing is that it is close when thinking; therefore, I don't want to think about it. You can't live like that. I choose to ignore mostly because you know what, if I get caught in it, what can I do? I won't just sit at home. I don't like that."*

A perception of fear of terrorism is influenced by the media, according to Sule. A person's understanding of the potential risks and threats associated with terrorism is shaped by his or her interactions with friends and family, as well as the information received from the media. As a result, individual fears are shaped by media messages and personal interactions. As a coping mechanism for avoiding excessive fear or anxiety, Sule chooses to ignore the topic of terrorism deliberately. Sule argues that people do not live a fulfilling life if they dwell on the potential risks and dangers of terrorism. This indicates an avoidance strategy and a desire to maintain a sense of freedom and normalcy. They express a sense of helplessness and belief that they have little control in the face of terrorism. Sule acknowledged that individuals may have limited control in the face of terrorism. This is based on a realistic assessment of personal agency, as well as an appreciation for the unpredictable nature of such events. It appears that Sule is concerned about maintaining a sense of agency, independence, and normalcy despite potential risks associated with terrorism. The theme of "Media and power" in Sule's comments highlights the influence of media and social interactions on perceptions of fear of terrorism. While she acknowledged that the media influences their understanding of the risks, he also expressed an intention to ignore the topic as a means of maintaining normalcy.

Rather than succumbing to fear and avoidance, Sule prefers active participation in daily life instead of succumbing to limited personal control. Sule's comments suggest that their perception of fear of terrorism is influenced by media messages and personal interactions. They choose to ignore the topic as a coping mechanism to maintain a sense of agency and normalcy. Sule believes that dwelling on the potential risks and dangers of terrorism hinders a fulfilling life, emphasizing the importance of active participation instead of succumbing to limited personal control. Sule's comments shed light on the power of media in shaping people's perception of fear and terrorism. By acknowledging the influence of media messages and personal interactions, Sule emphasizes the importance of actively participating in daily life rather than succumbing to limited personal control. This highlights the need to critically evaluate and navigate the information received from the media for a balanced understanding of the risks associated with terrorism. One strategy for critically evaluating media messages about terrorism is to seek information from multiple sources and compare different perspectives. By exposing oneself to a variety of viewpoints, it becomes easier to identify biases and potential misinformation. Additionally, fact-checking and verifying information through reputable sources can help separate fact from fiction in media coverage of terrorism.

4.6 Synopsis

Throughout the analysis it is evident that the participants experience all the themes, some more than others as seen in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Themes according to the Research Sample

Master themes	*Sub themes*	*Evident*
Experience of Fear	Sense of being trapped	5 out of 8 participants
	Uncertainty of the unknown	7 out of 8 participants

	Avoidance of fear	6 out 8 Participants
	Death anxiety	8 out 8 Participants
Anger Dynamics	Political behavioural consequences	5 out 8 Participants
	Blaming and scapegoating	6 out 8 Participants
	Security that leads to anger	5 out 8 Participants
	Choices fuelled with anger.	5 out 8 Participants
Defensiveness	Control and obsession	7 out 8 Participants
	Family and the sore point	6 out 8 Participants
	Restriction of media	8 out 8 Participants
Helplessness	Global risk	8 out 8 Participants
	Change and call for action	6 out 8
	Vulnerability of being	8 out 8
	Media and power	7 out 8

Overall, the main themes and sub-themes of the statements are related to the experiences and responses of individuals who feel vulnerable and scared. They discuss how

the threat of terrorism affects people's daily lives, political behaviour, and media consumption. Uncertainty is a crucial sub-theme as people struggle to cope with the unpredictable nature of potential attacks. As individuals try to protect themselves from potential threats, they often become defensive and angry. Another sub-theme that emerges is helplessness, as people feel powerless to prevent or control these attacks. They also feel that they have limited options when faced with such threats, which reflects a sense of oppression.

Furthermore, the statements also touch on death anxiety and the choices people make in response to it, including their political behaviour and media consumption. As individuals attempt to assign blame for the prevention of these attacks, security and blame are also discussed. As individuals try to exert control over their own lives in response to this threat, including restricting media consumption, the sub-theme of control is evident. Since individuals reflect on how these attacks affect their loved ones, family is another sub-theme.

Lastly, the statements highlight the global threat of terrorism and how it results in vulnerability for both individuals and society. Individuals also discussed how the threat of terrorism has affected their lives and outlook on the world, as well as how it has led to change. In general, the master themes and sub-themes apparent in t the statements illustrate complex emotions and responses associated with fear and vulnerability.

Although there is no direct connection between *The Meursault Investigation* and terrorism, we can still examine broader themes of violence, dehumanisation, and colonialism through the lens of Camus' *The Stranger* (Camus, 1942). This comparative analysis that explores common themes and motifs found in both The Meursault Investigation and Camus' The Stranger. By examining the broader themes of violence, dehumanization, and colonialism, we can gain a deeper understanding of the social and historical context in which these works were written. Since the marginalisation, namelessness, and voicelessness which Camus (1942) depicts perpetuates the narrative of the "other" and perpetuates fear and dehumanisation of

Arabs, the Arab characters reinforce this narrative. Consequently, colonised people are reduced to mere objects of curiosity or threats to the colonisers' existence, reflecting the power dynamics between colonisers and colonised people. As a result of such representations, dread and stereotypes can be perpetuated, creating a climate of fear and prejudice. Daoud (2015) challenges Camus' (1942) dehumanisation of Arab characters by giving them agency and voice. In addition to serving as a critique and a response, this novel also confronts the consequences of colonialism and asks how fear and violence persist as it reclaims the narrative and provides an alternative perspective.

It is important to note that the criticism of Camus' (1942) novel raises broader questions regarding how certain communities are perceived and represented in the context of a fear of terrorism. As a result, we are challenged to critically examine how fear and stereotypes can marginalise and dehumanise individuals and groups. As part of its effort to better understand the dynamics of violence and terrorism, *The Meursault Investigation* challenges dominant narratives and gives voice to those who have been silenced. Furthermore, the novel explores the search for meaning within a chaotic and absurd world, in addition to existentialist themes. Harun's introspective reflections and his quest for justice and recognition resonate with existentialist notions of individual agency, authenticity, and the pursuit of personal truth. The author explores the meaning of personal and collective identity, asking readers to reflect on their own existence and the significance of their actions in the face of adversity. In addition to exploring power, dehumanisation, and the consequences of portraying certain groups as threats, *The Meursault Investigation* is linked to the fear of terrorism. This book encourages readers to challenge stereotypes and prevailing narratives and create a more empathetic society (Daoud, 2015).

5 Discussion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The research aim of this thesis was to explore the experiences and perceptions of individuals in relation to the fear of terrorism and its impact on their lives. Additionally, the aim was to explore fear, terrorism, existentialism, fear of terrorism, the broader impact of fearing terrorism, mechanisms influencing fear of terrorism, and to conclude with previous research and rationales. In the present study, participants reported feeling vulnerable, anxious, and in need of security. The study highlighted the role of media in shaping fear perceptions. Participants reported using various coping mechanisms, including avoidance behaviours, and seeking support from family and community. It provided new insights by illustrating that fear has multiple dimensions, is influenced by personal experiences and media representations, and leads people to adopt coping mechanisms. Fear is a complex emotion that can manifest in various ways. It can stem from personal experiences, such as a sense of being trapped or the uncertainty of the unknown. Fear can also lead individuals to adopt coping mechanisms, such as avoidance or anger. In the political sphere, fear can have behavioural consequences, including blaming and scapegoating. Additionally, fear can influence individuals to seek security, often resulting in choices fuelled by anger. This dynamic can lead to defensiveness, control, and obsession. Within the familial context, fear can become a sore point, impacting relationships and communication. Furthermore, fear can also lead to a restriction of media, as individuals may seek to avoid triggering stimuli.

Previous research has consistently shown that fear is a pervasive and complex phenomenon in the context of terrorism, and these experiences align with the findings of this study (Horgan, 2003; Bonanno et al., 2012; Lancaster, 2015; Braun-Lewensohn & Rubin, 2014; Thorup, 2019). Nevertheless, this study made a significant original contribution to the

literature by elucidating the relationship between Eurocentric and hyper-militaristic comments and broader societal ideologies. The study provided a detailed analysis that demonstrated the correlation between hyper-militaristic comments and heightened levels of fear regarding terrorism among the research participants. This finding made apparent, the profound impact that dominant narratives about terrorism have on individual perceptions and emotional responses. The study demonstrated that societal attitudes not only influenced personal experiences of fear but also were reflective of entrenched ideological viewpoints within dominant cultures. Since this study contextualised hyper-militaristic comments within prevailing societal beliefs, it illustrated how fear can be exacerbated by both political discourse and media narratives.

Importantly, this research critically discussed the potential consequences of these dynamics, deliberating upon how such ideologies might influence and perpetuate a cycle of fear and hyper-vigilance, thereby undermining the cohesion of communities and the mental health of their constituents. By positing a comprehensive understanding of how societal ideologies impinge on personal experiences, this research offered a nuanced understanding of security and terrorism-related discourses. Dominant narratives surrounding terrorism often portray it as a threat that primarily originates from certain regions or religious ideologies. These narratives can create stereotypes, biases, and stigmatisation, leading to increased fear among individuals. The influence of these dominant narratives underscores the importance of challenging and diversifying the discourse around terrorism to foster a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The findings contribute to current knowledge about how fear of terrorism affects individuals and communities in a variety of ways and how targeted interventions are needed to address it.

5.2 The implications of the study for counselling psychology and psychotherapy

The findings of the present study have important implications for counselling psychology therapy in several ways outlined below:

1. *Addressing trauma:* As discussed in Chapter 2, terrorism can result in traumatic experiences that lead to anxiety, depression, and PTSD (Danieli, 2005; Yehuda et al., 2005). The study of the fear of terrorism can help counsellors understand the psychological impact of terrorism and develop effective strategies for addressing trauma and its associated symptoms.
2. *Coping mechanisms*: Individuals who experience fear due to terrorism may adopt unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse or avoidance (Van Der Does et al., 2019). Counselling can help individuals develop healthy coping mechanisms that allow them to manage their fears in a constructive way.
3. *Resilience building:* Counselling can help individuals build resilience in the face of terrorism. By focusing on developing coping skills, building a support network, and cultivating a sense of purpose, individuals can become more resilient and better able to cope with the fear of terrorism.
4. *Cultivating awareness:* Counselling can also help individuals become more aware of their thoughts and feelings related to terrorism. By identifying and challenging negative beliefs, individuals can develop a more balanced perspective and reduce the impact of fear on their lives.

Ultimately, the present study can have important implications for counselling psychology therapy. By understanding the psychological impact of terrorism, developing healthy coping mechanisms, building resilience, and cultivating awareness, counsellors can help individuals manage their fears and lead fulfilling lives. In addition to providing significant

value in various domains, the present study has far-reaching implications. By analysing the complex interactions between fear and terrorism, its findings provide insights into human behaviour, societal dynamics, and security measures. These implications can be summarised in the following ways.

1. An in-depth analysis of the fear of terrorism can facilitate the formulation of more effective counterterrorism strategies by policymakers and security agencies. To address public concerns while ensuring public safety, it is necessary to understand the psychological factors that influence fear to implement targeted security measures. Developing appropriate interventions for individuals experiencing fear and trauma related to terrorism can be guided by the study's exploration of the impact of fear on mental health. Anxiety induced by terrorism can be reduced through these interventions by enhancing resilience and improving coping mechanisms.
2. To develop programmes designed to foster social cohesion and resilience, it is necessary to examine the effects of fear on communities. Community engagement can be enhanced by addressing collective fears, leading to improved coping mechanisms and enhanced support systems as a result.
3. This research also underscores the role of the media in shaping perceptions and fear related to terrorism. Media organisations can utilise this knowledge to promote responsible reporting and avoid sensationalism, thereby minimising the spread of fear-inducing content. The study explores how cultural differences can affect fear responses, thus encouraging cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity towards diverse groups. As a result of this understanding, intercultural dialogue can be enhanced, tensions can be reduced, and social harmony can be fostered.

4. An effective public awareness campaign can be designed using the insights of the study. In addition to promoting empathy, dispelling stereotypes, and creating a more informed and resilient society, these campaigns can also promote awareness of the psychological impacts of terrorism. As a result of the examination of fear dynamics in this thesis, authorities can anticipate fear-triggering events and respond proactively to prevent panic and maintain public order during times of crisis. It has contributed to theoretical advances in psychology and terrorism studies by exploring fear in the context of terrorism. This opens the possibility of further research and the development of more nuanced theories regarding fear and its consequences. In addition to influencing policy formulation, security strategies, mental health interventions, and community engagement, this study has significant implications beyond the academic realm. To improve citizen resilience and security, societies must address these implications to better comprehend and manage fear associated with terrorism. Besides the implications, the study of the fear of terrorism can have broader societal and global implications as discussed below.

5. To inform diplomatic efforts and international relations, it is important to understand the influence of fear on perceptions of terrorism. By understanding how fear shapes attitudes toward other nations and cultures, constructive dialogue and conflict resolution can be facilitated. In this research, ethical considerations are raised regarding the portrayal of terrorism in the media, surveillance measures, and public policy responses. To ensure that fear-driven policies do not violate individual rights, it is important to strike a balance between security measures and the safeguarding of civil liberties. Law enforcement, security personnel, and mental health practitioners can integrate the findings into their educational curricula and professional training programmes. This will allow them to gain a better understanding of fear dynamics and be better equipped to address terrorism-related concerns in an effective manner.

6. Involvement of communities in counterterrorism efforts is highlighted in this study. As a result of involving community members in decision-making processes, prevention and mitigation strategies can be more effective. Researchers have demonstrated the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration in understanding the complex phenomenon of the fear of terrorism. To address fear-related challenges comprehensively and holistically, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, and other experts should be encouraged to collaborate. A key component of the study is a focus on resilience-building initiatives that can mitigate the impact of fear at the individual, community, and national levels. Communities and individuals can benefit from resilience-building programmes at the individual, community, and national levels to increase adaptability and strength in the face of adversity.

7. There is a need for long-term trauma support for individuals and communities affected by terrorism-related fear. Long-term trauma support and mental health services can assist survivors in dealing with the aftermath of traumatic events. In analysing fear as a global phenomenon, the study highlights the importance of international cooperation and solidarity in the fight against terrorism. Collaborative efforts can strengthen collective resilience and foster a unified response to common threats. A comprehensive and coordinated effort from policymakers, academics, practitioners, and the broader community is needed to address the implications of fear of terrorism. They touch upon a wide range of human behaviours, society dynamics, and international relations. Creating safer, more inclusive, and more resilient societies for future generations requires a thorough understanding and effective management of fear related to terrorism.

8. Policy and strategy development: Based on the findings of this study, evidence-based policies and strategies can be developed to address fear-driven terrorism responses. By

using this knowledge, policymakers can devise interventions to address the root causes of fear and promote a more nuanced understanding of terrorism and its impact.

9. Media responsibility: This study highlights the role of media in shaping perceptions of terrorism. Media organisations are responsible for reporting on terrorism in a balanced and responsible manner, avoiding sensationalism and fear mongering in their reporting. It has been shown that accurate and objective reporting contributes to reducing public anxiety and fear.
10. Conflict resolution: To address grievances and promote dialogue and reconciliation, it is important to recognise the role of fear in perpetuating conflicts. Recognising the role of fear can guide efforts to address grievances and promote dialogue.
11. Countering extremism: Using this study's findings as a guide, prevention efforts can target underlying emotional drivers and provide alternative narratives to counteract extremism and radicalisation.
12. Human rights advocacy: This study illustrated that it is vital that human rights principles are upheld in counterterrorism efforts. Trust between communities and security forces can be fostered by protecting individuals' rights, and ensuring fair treatment.
13. Public health preparedness: The fear of terrorism may have adverse health effects, including increased stress levels and anxiety levels among populations. To address the psychological consequences of terrorism, public health authorities may implement fear management strategies as part of their emergency preparedness plans.
14. International collaboration: Considering this study's global perspective, international collaboration is necessary to address both terrorism and its psychological consequences. By strengthening the cooperation between countries, information sharing, intelligence gathering, and response coordination can be improved.

15. Identity and belonging: To counter the social exclusion and alienation that may contribute to radicalisation, this research sheds light on how the fear of terrorism can affect individuals' sense of belonging and identity.
16. Peacebuilding efforts: Peacebuilding initiatives can contribute to sustainable peace by addressing fear and insecurity, relating to the role of fear in perpetuating conflict as identified in the study.
17. Public awareness and education: Educating the public about the fear of terrorism can enhance the understanding of these findings. Public awareness can empower individuals to challenge fear-driven narratives and stereotypes.
18. Long-term impact assessment: By offering valuable insights into the long-term effects of the fear of terrorism, longitudinal research can elucidate our understanding of the lasting effects of fear and inform long-term support measures.
19. A comprehensive and informed approach to fear-related challenges can help societies develop effective strategies for reducing the impact of terrorism and promoting peace, solidarity, and resilience. The pursuit of a safer and more secure world requires further interdisciplinary research and collaborative efforts.

5.3 Contribution to the literature and comparative analysis to existing studies

Despite aligning with existing theories discussed in Chapter 2 such as the Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) (Heine et al., 2006), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), as well as Terror management theory (TMT) (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986), the findings of this study also offer new insights into the fear of terrorism. The results support the existing literature discussed in Chapter 2 highlighting the multifaceted nature of fear, emphasising the role of personal experiences, media influences, and coping mechanisms

(Elmas, 2021; Bakker, 2012; Cacioppo et al., 2011 . It is consistent with previous studies such as Oksanen et al. (2020) and Cottee and Hayward (2011) indicating that fear has a prevalent impact on individuals and communities, as confirmed by the experiences shared by participants. It also sheds light on the influence of social and ideological factors on fear perceptions with the identification and emergence of Eurocentric and hyper-militaristic attitudes in the data. Considering these findings, it may no longer be assumed that fear of terrorism is solely a result of direct exposure to attacks or threats, but rather a result of the socio-cultural context in which fear is constructed and how it is embedded in every corner of the daily lives of the participants.

A practical application of these findings lies in addressing and mitigating fear of terrorism through interventions and policies. To counter fear-inducing narratives and promote accurate and balanced information, policymakers must recognise the impact of media representations and societal ideologies. The development of tailored support systems for individuals and communities affected by terrorism-related concerns can also be informed by an understanding of the complexities of fear. To respond to fear in this context, in a more nuanced and diverse way, interventions must incorporate the voices and experiences of individuals into policy and practice.

By acknowledging Edward Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism, policymakers can better understand how media constructs depictions of "the other" and perpetuates stereotypes. This is especially evident in participant Maria's comment about feeling unsafe with non-whites, highlighting the need for interventions that challenge these biases and incorporate diverse perspectives into policy and practice. For example, Edward Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism highlights how the media constructs depictions of "the other" and perpetuates stereotypes and biases. It is evident in the experiences shared by one of the participants, who

expressed feeling unsafe around non-whites due to media narratives. Recognising these dynamics can inform policymakers in developing interventions that challenge these harmful representations and promote inclusivity and understanding. Edward Said's concept of Orientalism sheds light on the power dynamics in media representations, particularly in the context of fear-inducing narratives. By recognising and challenging the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases, policymakers can work towards creating interventions that foster inclusivity, understanding, and ultimately a more accurate and balanced portrayal of diverse communities. Examples of interventions that challenge harmful media representations include promoting diverse and inclusive storytelling in media content, supporting media literacy programs that teach critical thinking skills to consumers, and encouraging independent media outlets that prioritise accurate and unbiased reporting. Additionally, fostering dialogue and collaboration between media professionals, policymakers, and community organisations can help create platforms for marginalised voices to be heard and challenge dominant narratives.

Essentially, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that current theories about the fear of terrorism are supported and extended by empirical evidence. The study highlights the importance of understanding the socio-cultural dynamics in shaping fear perceptions and offers new insights into the role of Eurocentric and hyper-militaristic perspectives. The need to consider media influences and the diverse needs of individuals and communities who fear terrorism are two of the practical implications of the findings for policymakers and practitioners. The understanding of fear in the context of terrorism has been improved by this research and will help develop future theories and interventions. It is important to understand the broader socio-political and philosophical context surrounding the fear of terrorism, which was touched on but not directly examined; this includes the influential theories and perspectives of writers discussed in Chapter 2 such as Said (1978), Sartre (1943), Camus (1955), Foucault (1978), and if we consider this context then further conclusions can

be drawn regarding the interdisciplinary nature of these individuals' contributions. For example, their work highlights the interconnectedness between critical theory and postcolonial studies, as both fields seek to challenge dominant power structures.

Additionally, their engagement with existentialism underscores the philosophical underpinnings of their research, while their use of discourse analysis and terrorism research demonstrates a commitment to understanding the socio-political dynamics of violence and power. It is possible to analyse how fear of terrorism is often framed within a Eurocentric perspective and contributes to the construction of cultural stereotypes and biases by applying Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism and critique of Western representations of the "Other." Sartre's (1943) existentialist perspectives on freedom, choice, and responsibility, and individuals' responses to perceived threats can be better understood. In the sense that Sartre's existentialist perspectives provide a framework for examining how individuals navigate the complex interplay between their own agency and external circumstances, shedding light on the motivations and actions that arise in response to perceived threats. In a world marked by terrorism and fear, Camus' (1955) exploration of life's absurdity may provide insights into the existential challenges we face. Their theories can enhance our interpretations, contextualise our findings within broader intellectual discussions, and contribute to interdisciplinary dialogues about terrorism, power, and social dynamics.

5.3.1 *Anger and Frustration*

In the present study, it was common for participants to express anger and frustration as a result of their fear of terrorism, which could be attributed to a sense of vulnerability, perceived injustice, or frustration with the inability to control the threat. As discussed in Chapter 2, occasionally, anger leads to acts of violence or verbal aggression against the government and other institutions that appear incapable of stopping these attacks (Wright-Neville & Smith,

2009; Fisk et al., 2019; Kim, 2016). It is common for anger at perpetrators of the attacks as well as towards the government and other institutions to be misdirected (Skitka et al., 2006). It is often the result of a lack of understanding of the complexity of the situation or a lack of trust in the ability of the government to protect its citizens that causes this anger (Lerner et al., 2003). Anger can lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, which can further fuel this feeling (Huddy et al., 2021). As a result of this anger, those who have been affected may also feel that they have no choice but to resort to violence.

As discussed in the previous Chapter, Veron and Maria expressed their dissatisfaction with the EU and mentioned their desire for a more aggressive response, similar to what happened in Ukraine and protecting the soil outside of the UK. This finding aligns with the research that illustrates that anger can drive individuals to resort to violent actions as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction (Kim, 2016). The mention of Veron and Maria's desire for a more aggressive response suggests that they believe violence is necessary to protect their interests, similar to the situation in Ukraine. This highlights how anger can drive individuals to seek violent solutions when they feel that their voices are not being heard or their grievances are not being addressed. By evaluating these examples, this study provides a deeper understanding of the potential consequences of unchecked anger. Unresolved anger can have long-lasting effects on mental health. It can lead to chronic stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as contribute to the development of other mental health disorders (Kopper & Epperson, 1996). Moreover, the constant suppression of anger can negatively impact relationships and hinder personal growth and self-expression (Williams, 2017). It is thus crucial to address and manage anger in healthy ways to prevent these detrimental consequences.

On the one hand, anger can be a productive force since it can be devastating both in the short term and in the long term. As a result of anger, people are more motivated to act against injustice (Skitka et al., 2006). Anger can also be a catalyst for a greater sense of social and

political awareness, as people become more aware of the issues affecting their communities. Anger can also help bring people together to fight for change in addition to creating a sense of solidarity and unity. It is also possible for people to gain a deeper understanding of different cultures and backgrounds as they learn from the experiences and stories of others. In addition, and in contrast, this can also lead to the rise of right-wing ideologies, as individuals begin to blame certain groups for their problems rather than taking responsibility themselves (Salmela & Von Scheve, 2017). This can lead to increased hate and prejudice, resulting in social and political instability. Many countries have experienced an increase in populism and xenophobia, as immigrants are blamed for social and economic problems.

5.3.2 *Trust and the Fear of Terrorism*

In Chapter 2, it was illustrated that a result of a fear of terrorism, individuals may mistrust certain institutions or groups, believing that they are connected to the perceived threat (Bonanno et al., 2012; Esses, 2021; Obrist et al., 2010). As a result of this mistrust, individuals may experience social isolation, increased anxiety, and a sense of insecurity (Cohen-Louck & Ben-David, 2017; McCormack & McKellar, 2015). As previously discussed, this mistrust can lead to a feeling of mistrust in government agencies, law enforcement agencies, or specific communities associated with terrorism (Obrist et al., 2010; Van Der Does et al., 2019; Houston & Harding, 2013; Huddy et al., 2012). Different groups or individuals may cause individuals to feel threatened, leading to an increase in discrimination. It can result in them feeling isolated, which can worsen their mental health problems. In addition to reducing morale and productivity at work, individuals may be more concerned with their own personal safety than with their work due to this concern (Mushtaq, 2014). This fear of terrorism can also lead to racial profiling and discrimination. For instance, Veron's comment about scanning Middle Eastern-looking people in airports highlights the negative impact of this mistrust on certain

communities as also documented by Edkins (2003), perpetuating stereotypes and further marginalizing individuals based on their appearance. This not only fuels a sense of insecurity and anxiety among targeted individuals but also undermines social cohesion and trust within society.

Racist profiling and prejudice can also increase because of distrust and fear of terrorism, resulting in hate speech and hate crimes against some groups of people. In the long run, this can lead to a breakdown of social cohesion and a decrease in trust between various groups. However, increasing police presence and surveillance, as well as implementing additional security measures, can enhance a feeling of safety and security. Thus, social cohesion can be enhanced, and mistrust and fear can be reduced. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States, hate crimes against Middle Easterners increased dramatically, including verbal assaults, physical assaults, and sexual assaults (Asad Ali Shah et al., 2018). Furthermore, people may avoid public spaces, which may reduce economic growth and productivity. A sense of fear and uncertainty can also negatively impact overall quality of life (Asad Ali Shah et al., 2018).

5.3.3 *Psychological responses linked with the fear of terrorism*

As a result of the fear of terrorism, participants described exhibiting avoidance behaviours, such as avoiding crowded places or events perceived as potential targets, aligning with the literature discussed in Chapter 2, which shows that the fear of terrorism often results in behavioural changes such as avoidance behaviours, as individuals attempt to manage perceived threats (Huddy et al., 2004; McBride, 2011; Silver, 2002; Ganor, 2017). Additionally, they described an increase in vigilance, wariness, or hypervigilance in public spaces. Changes in travel patterns or a reluctance to participate in specific activities was also a feature of their responses**.** As a result of developing an increased sense of mistrust and suspicion toward others, people can also experience a breakdown of social cohesion. As a

consequence of anxiety and vigilantism, stress levels can also increase, resulting in depression, a reduction in productivity, and a resulting decrease in quality of life. As a result, people described feeling isolated and lonely as well. Because of terrorism, people felt they may become more fearful of each other, and this fear can cause prejudice and discrimination to increase. This can manifest in a variety of forms, including racism, xenophobia, and intolerance of diverse cultures. As a result of feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in certain places, individuals may try to avoid them. This may lead to increased anxiety and avoidance behaviours because of becoming overly cautious and concerned about their own safety as also documented in other studies (see for example, Ganor, 2017). Despite this, terrorism can also result in positive outcomes. For example, people may become more aware of security issues and take steps to protect themselves. The population may also become more supportive of their government and security measures, resulting in increased stability and security. These findings are based on the analysis of interviews conducted with individuals who have experienced the fear of terrorism.

When terrorist attacks occur, people with high levels of trust tend to feel less fearful. Cognitive reappraisal may be helpful in regulating anxiety during terrorist attacks. As part of cognitive reappraisal, a person changes his or her attitude and perception of a situation to reduce the fear associated with it. In addition, it is helpful for individuals who wish to control their emotions and behaviours. Also, it may contribute to the development of a sense of community and a sense of solidarity (Ochsner & Gross, 2005).

A growing body of social science research has examined the influence of emotions on a variety of political processes and outcomes, including information processing, trust, and attitudes (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). An individual's emotional response to political information may profoundly influence how he or she perceives and thinks about political issues. Emotional responses may also influence their willingness to participate in political

activities such as voting and donating (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). This correlates with some of the participants' perceptions regarding how they became more politically involved and how terrorism influenced their voting patterns as well as their right-wing views. People are more likely to become politically active if they feel that they have a strong connection to a particular issue, in addition to their emotional connection to that issue (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). Additionally, people may become more vigilant regarding their voting choices due to terrorism (Albertson & Gadarian, 2015). This can have a ripple effect on public opinion and political outcomes. People are more likely to act when they feel strongly connected to an issue, whether through voting or other forms of activism. The fear of terrorist attacks can also motivate people to become more vigilant about their voting choices, since they may feel their votes are more important to keep themselves and their communities safe. Thus, terrorism can have a significant effect on public opinion and political outcomes. This can have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, it can lead to an increase in voter participation. On the other hand, it can also lead to people voting for candidates or policies that are more focused on security, even if those policies are not in the community's best interest.

Individuals' trustworthiness influences how they reappraise threatening events since they have more positive expectations of other social actors. The objective of cognitive reappraisal is to reduce the emotional intensity of a person's feelings by reinterpreting them. It is a method used by trustworthy individuals to maintain emotional stability despite negative events by utilising reappraisal. As a result, they remain optimistic about their society's future and maintain their trust in others. Using cognitive strategies, individuals create meaning from their experiences and make sense of their emotions (Ochsner & Gross, 2005) through cognitive reappraisal. To reduce emotional intensity, people need to understand their feelings, understand the context in which they occur, and use reappraisal strategies (Barber, 2000).

Besides the psychological dimension of trust, there is also a social dimension. Trust is composed of two types of beliefs: evaluations and expectations. Castelfranchi and Falcones (2010) can also be considered alongside Barber, (2000) in terms of the perspective on trust as a social structure. Three kinds of expectations influence trust as a social structure (Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2010). Through cognitive reappraisal, a strong sense of belonging within a moral social order reduces fear through the reflection of society's normativity and morality. Moreover, Barber (2000) argued that trust is related to society's need for predictability and solidarity. In addition to supporting a sense of belonging and creating a collective identity and responsibility, trust can also be viewed as an indicator of the quality of social relationships (Barber, 2000).

The data supports the arguments of Huddy et al. (2003) and Silver (2002) documented in Chapter 2. According to Huddy et al. (2003), a primary exposure victim may experience feelings of fear, anxiety, or depression, whereas a secondary exposure victim may experience feelings of guilt, anger, or sadness. In addition, individuals living with a constant fear of terrorism may develop anxiety, depression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as feeling isolated and disconnected from others (Huddy et al., 2003). This is consistent with the comments of participant Maria: "I had therapy for it and it has triggered intolerance for uncertainty in me. Having to listen to my friend was traumatic, and I got even more traumatised when I researched about it".

As discussed in the literature review, as a result of 9/11, approximately 12 per cent of the American population reported extraordinary levels of depression, 30 per cent expressed signs of fear, and 27 per cent avoided situations that reminded them of the attack (Silver, 2002). As a result of the shock of the attack and the emotional toll of witnessing the horrific events, depression, fear, and avoidance are likely to increase. People in the vicinity of the attack were

more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and avoidance than those who witnessed it remotely. In those affected by the attack, anxiety and avoidance were the most prominent psychological symptoms. In response to fear, many people avoided public areas or stayed indoors. Some even experienced physical symptoms such as nausea, headaches, and an increased heart rate. Additionally, Silver (2002) reported an increase in anger and distrust, a decrease in self-esteem, and a decrease in trust in others.

Nevertheless, some researchers have found that a traumatic event can boost someone's resilience. Nugent et al. (2014) found, for example, that over time, people who had experienced a traumatic event reported a decrease in anxiety and depression. Over time, people can develop better coping strategies and learn to cope with their trauma. In addition, research indicates that people who receive social support after a traumatic event are more likely to have positive outcomes. According to Nugent et al. (2014), resilience after trauma is one of the most compelling phenomena in contemporary traumatic stress research. The 29th annual meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies focused on how to foster resilience after trauma. A second perspective not presented by the panellists is that resilience and psychological symptoms are not always a continuum. As Amanda Lindhout a survivor discusses with Dr Porterfield, extreme trauma can be devastating to survivors while they remain resilient (Nugent et al., 2014). This study found that survivors of extreme trauma often display remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Despite experiencing devastating effects, such as PTSD and other psychological challenges, survivors like Amanda Lindhout demonstrate incredible strength and determination to overcome their traumatic experiences.

This resilience can manifest in various ways, such as the ability to find meaning and purpose in life after trauma, the development of coping strategies to manage distressing emotions, and the establishment of a support network. Maria, one of the participants of a similar

traumatic event, exemplifies this resilience by actively engaging in therapy, participating in support groups, and pursuing her passions to rebuild her life and create a positive impact in her community. It is crucial to acknowledge that each trauma survivor has a unique experience and coping mechanisms, which may result in varying levels of resilience and psychological symptoms. By recognising these individual differences, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of trauma's effects and develop tailored interventions to support survivors in their healing journey. In our research, we found that some trauma survivors may exhibit high levels of resilience despite experiencing extreme trauma, while others may display more psychological symptoms without necessarily being less resilient. This highlights the importance of considering individual differences when studying the effects of trauma and designing interventions for survivors.

As a result of trauma after being held captive by terrorists in Somalia, Ms Lindhout describes using mindfulness, relaxation techniques, exercise, and cognitive strategies such as distraction, reframing, cognitive flexibility, and social support to cope. During and after her traumatic experiences, Ms Lindhout cites forgiveness as a crucial component of her coping and resilience. The growing body of scientific literature suggests that forgiveness can have a positive impact on survivors of traumatic experiences (Hamama-Raz, Solomon, Cohen, & Laufer, 2008). A recent intervention study framed forgiveness as a key element of "affective resolution" (Ford, Chang, Levine, & Zhang, 2013) and supports an intervention focused on forgiveness (Reed & Enright, 2006). The fact that Ms Lindhout was forced to spend 10 days detailing her trauma experiences to a psychologist in a "debriefing" is also important information for trauma survivors. After her release, Ms Lindhout described feeling vulnerable and unable to refuse the interview, which, both during and after the interview, was distressing for her. It is important to note that the research or practice parameters of relevant professional organisations do not support imposed acute post-trauma "debriefing" (Bisson et al., 2010;

Forneris et al., 2013). The experience of Ms Lindhout with PTSD symptoms and her therapy experiences is especially relevant to clinicians and researchers alike. In addition, Dr Porterfield provides a brief overview of the current science on resilience and treatment of PTSD to frame Ms Lindhout's responses.

According to Southwick et al. (2014), resilience is a complex concept that has been studied for many decades. They discuss their work on resilience and its evolution over the years. In their view, resilience is a continuum, not a monolithic phenomenon (Southwick et al. 2014). To foster it effectively, we need to take a multi-level and multidisciplinary approach. According to Iacoviello and Charney (2014), resilience can be viewed from a nuanced perspective, identifying six psychosocial factors that promote resilience, and offering recommendations on how individuals can improve these cognitive, behavioural, and existential components. Iacoviello and Charney (2014) describe how two empirically supported treatments for PTSD cultivate some of these characteristics in trauma-exposed patients. However, they recommend augmenting current treatment protocols by focusing on other factors known to foster resilience, such as interpersonal effectiveness. Moreover, they make connections between research on resilient individuals and research on resilient communities, describing four qualities that distinguish resilient communities. In their view, resilience operates on multiple levels and is relevant both before and after trauma.

It is imperative to increase scientific and clinical focus on resilience as a result of these articles, which highlight challenges in defining and measuring resilience. In the field of traumatic stress studies, researchers and clinicians may benefit from focusing on this. For instance, studies evaluating the efficacy of resilience-focused interventions, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, may be beneficial in understanding the effectiveness of resilience-focused interventions. Additionally, studies exploring the relationship between individual resilience

and protective factors, such as social support and self-efficacy, may further our understanding of the mechanisms by which resilience is maintained over time. For example, research has found that individuals with higher levels of social support report higher levels of resilience and greater self-efficacy (Southwick et al., 2016). This suggests that increasing social support may be an effective way to increase resilience. Thus, interventions designed to increase social support for individuals who are fearful of terrorism may be an effective way to increase resilience and reduce fear. Such an intervention could include providing resources for individuals to find and connect with other people who are also fearful of terrorism or providing opportunities for individuals to connect with peers who can provide emotional and moral support. For instance, a mental health organisation could organise a virtual meetup for people to discuss their fears and coping strategies.

This type of intervention is important because it allows people to form meaningful and supportive relationships, which can help to reduce their feelings of fear and anxiety. Furthermore, it can provide people with a safe and supportive environment to share their thoughts and feelings, which can help them gain a better understanding of their fear and develop healthier coping strategies. Furthermore, research has found that resilience can be developed through interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices (Southwick et al., 2016). These interventions may be effective in helping individuals to build resilience in the face of adversity. Social support can help individuals to feel connected and supported, while CBT and mindfulness practices can help individuals to develop problem-solving skills, self-awareness, and coping strategies. All these skills can help individuals to better manage stress and difficult situations, making them more resilient. Additionally, engaging in these activities can also help individuals build self-confidence and self-esteem, making them more resilient to future challenges. Regular practice can also help to improve overall well-being, providing individuals with a sense of purpose and direction. Additionally,

engaging in these activities can help individuals feel connected to their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. This can help to reduce the risk of loneliness and isolation, which can have a negative impact on physical and mental health. Engaging in regular practice can also help to create social support networks, which can be beneficial in times of adversity, such as economic hardship, natural disasters, or terrorism. Additionally, it can help to foster resilience, providing individuals with a sense of hope, self-efficacy, and control.

In terms of the psychological, emotional, and behavioural responses of individuals to terrorism, fear of terrorism is an important area of research. Interventions and strategies aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of fear on individuals and society can be informed by understanding how people perceive and cope with it. It provides valuable insight into the fear of terrorism through the research findings discussed in this study. Theoretical concepts such as blaming and scapegoating, security leading to anger, choices fuelled by anger, control and obsession, restriction of the media, family dynamics, global risk perception, change and call for action, vulnerability of being, and the influence of media and power have been examined. Feelings of frustration and anger can also accompany the importance of security measures. Even though participants in the study expressed a desire for effective security measures, they also recognised the potential for these measures to restrict daily activities and personal freedoms.

5.3.4 *Decision-Making and Risk-Management*

According to the findings of this study, fear of terrorism influences decision-making processes. Making choices based on fear or anger may not always be rational or objective, but rather driven by emotional responses. Psychologists define resilience as a personality trait, whereas management theorists describe it as the result of organisational and management strategies. In the absence of consensus, resilience is perceived differently by public and private

organisations. It promotes resilience, not a normal state (Furedi, 2008). The statement suggests that resilience is not considered the norm or default state. Instead, it is seen as something that needs to be promoted and cultivated within individuals and organizations. Official discourse claims resilience cannot thrive on its own. As a result of attacks on social norms, it becomes a cultural metaphor. According to emergency planners, politicians, and security experts, the public is underprepared in terms of handling violent terrorism, due to its natural tendency to panic. For example, the British government's vulnerability policy is counter-balanced by resilience infused with outside bodies' politics (Furedi, 2008).

Emergency planners will make policy recommendations based on vulnerability. A sense of pessimism, fatalism, and fear of terrorism has developed in American society as a result of freedom, openness, great cities, and modern transportation systems (Furedi, 2008). According to Bush, freedom and prosperity are linked to vulnerability, suggesting a fundamental change in how industrial societies view themselves (Furedi, 2008). In addition to the lack of trust between politicians and officials, terrorists can utilise any technology as a weapon. It is common for contemporary vulnerability analyses to emphasise vulnerability (Furedi, 2008). Western economies have rendered mature, sophisticated, technologically advanced societies powerless against a few determined individuals. If terrorism is treated as a vulnerability-based issue, leading to a climate of fear and insecurity that increases the probability terrorists will persist. Because of misinterpretation of terrorist intentions, politicians are reorienting towards risks in response to vulnerability, thereby inflating the sense of threat resulting from misinterpretation of terrorist intentions. A person who claims society is incapable of calculating risk opposes probabilistic thinking. As opinion-formers speculate, it diverts attention from more productive questions such as "What's likely to happen?" and "What's possible?" Despite cultural pessimism, potentialists believe society is capable of handling high-impact risks (Furedi, 2008).

Considering the prevalent culture of fear, risk management often competes with and often yields to possibilistic worst-case policies. We normalise worst-case scenarios as society shifts from probabilistic thinking to probabilistic thinking, cultivating a fatalistic outlook. Western individuals can no longer contain terror due to their probabilistic risk orientation (Furedi, 2008). Government officials have devised policies that have been designed to "support" vulnerable groups, the vulnerable, and vulnerable adults since the mid-sixties because uncertainty makes it difficult for vulnerable people to manage. The term "vulnerable" or "vulnerable adult" is always used in government publications to refer to children, the elderly, ethnic minorities, single parents, mentally ill individuals, caregivers, and the unemployed. The discussion on vulnerability and the policies designed to support vulnerable groups is relevant because it highlights how the prevalent culture of fear and risk management can impact society. By examining how uncertainty affects vulnerable individuals, we can better understand the broader implications of probabilistic thinking and its influence on policymaking. Interventionist behaviour management prevents poor behaviour from spiralling into criminal behaviour by policing vulnerabilities (Furedi, 2008).

People have "natural coping mechanisms", and resilience can thrive even after a terrorist attack as documented in Chapter 2 (Besser & Neria, 2009; Kimhi & Eshel, 2009; Bonanno, 2005). Although policymakers underestimate the resilience of citizens, societies can recover well from Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) terrorist attacks. After a disaster, communities identify their strengths and weaknesses, and survivors confirm that no selfish behaviour or panic occurred. This process is realised by informal organisations in the post-environment. The aim of resilience is to achieve resilience through the adoption of a resilience-led approach by politicians and experts. Communities do not offer unique experiences of resilience, but rather a legacy of universal vulnerability. Despite relying on community creativity and problem-solving skills, technocratic resilience approaches

institutionalise top-down professional approaches that leave little room for local innovation. It is important for people to have a shared meaning system to ensure that they know what is expected of them. Shared values and experiences can influence morale and reaction to threats (Furedi, 2008).

Considering this context has an effect on policymaking, as well as the need for balanced approaches to addressing terrorism-related fears. In analysing the fear of terrorism, the study of fear of terrorism highlighted the importance of control and obsession. It is possible for individuals to become preoccupied with security-related concerns and develop a heightened sense of vigilance, affecting their quality of life and well-being.

For example, there is a strong correlation between the findings of this study and the feelings experienced by the participants in the study of fear of terrorism following a terrorist attack or in evaluating a possible terrorist attack, which resulted in them making changes to their lives or evaluating situations differently as a safety precaution. The study by Boccarino et al. (2006) supports this study. This indicates that the response to terrorism is an emotional one, with individuals feeling fear and anxiety, which can lead to changes in behaviour. The study also demonstrates that the emotional response is individual and subjective, with individuals responding differently to different scenarios.

As indicated by Boccarino et al. (2006), many New Yorkers evaluated available information before evacuating on 9/11, although many did not. In addition to residents of New York City and Long Island, residents in Downstate, women, African Americans, Hispanics, and those with a lower level of education attempted to evacuate as soon as possible. This suggests that these groups may have been less aware of the severity of the situation may not have had the same level of access to information about the evacuation or may not have been as prepared to evacuate due to their socioeconomic status.

According to Boscarino et al., (2006), during recent years, the fear of future attacks has increased because of the terrorist attacks in New York. Although African Americans, Hispanics, and those with less education had higher levels of fear, those who evaluated public information were less likely to flee (Boscarino et al., 2006). This could be because those who evaluate public information are more likely to have a better understanding of the situation and be better prepared to handle any potential attacks. Furthermore, they may be more likely to have faith in the government's ability to handle the situation, and thus less likely to flee. However, there are also potential drawbacks to this approach. For example, if the evaluation is overly optimistic, people may become complacent and less likely to take the necessary precautions. Additionally, if the evaluation is overly negative, people may become overly anxious and fear for their own safety, which could lead to more panic and chaos.

As shown in Chapter 2, following the 9/11 attacks, psychological distress as well as sociogenic illnesses were reported (Gigerenzer, 2006). Our findings align with this literature as the participant Maria reported being overly anxious and sad. These illnesses included PTSD, anxiety, and depression. The fear and anxiety caused by these attacks had a lasting impression on many people, leading to long-term psychological and physical consequences. These illnesses were thought to be caused by a combination of the fear of future attacks, the loss of loved ones, and the shock of witnessing such a devastating event. The trauma of that day is still felt by many, leading to long-term effects on their physical and mental health. A variety of psychiatric outcomes and disabilities may result from the deployment of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists (Boscarino et al., 2006). As a result of this emerging knowledge, population-level interventions should be encouraged, including education in the workplace and family, as well as public service announcements. Post-attack mental health surveillance interventions are also necessary. This is because these interventions can help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, make it easier for people to seek mental health services, and

create a better understanding of mental health problems. Additionally, these interventions can help to identify people who are at higher risk of mental health problems due to a traumatic event, so that appropriate interventions can be implemented.

In the present study, the fear of terrorism was also shown to have a substantial impact on family dynamics and relationships, as also documented by other scholars (Orfali, 2005; Updegraff, Silver, & Holman, 2008). Concerns about the safety and well-being of loved ones were expressed, making the topic a sensitive and undesirable subject for family discussions. The study highlighted that individuals are affected by the fear of terrorism regardless of their location across the globe. Global events are interconnected, which highlights the need for collaborative efforts to tackle the underlying causes of terrorism. A study of fear of terrorism provides valuable insight into individuals' psychological, emotional, and behavioural responses to terrorist threats.

5.3.5 *Theoretical concepts related to terrorism*

As a result of the research findings presented in this study, we are better able to understand theoretical concepts related to terrorism. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the existential perspective of living with the fear of terrorism and how it aligns with TMT. It deepens our understanding of how individuals navigate their existence in a world plagued by the constant threat of terrorism, and the psychological mechanisms they employ to cope with this fear.

Individuals and communities affected by terrorism can benefit from these findings by developing interventions, policies, and strategies aimed at mitigating fear and fostering resilience. The study of fear of terrorism encompasses a range of perspectives and experiences, including the displacement of violence. Semantic pointer theory can provide a valuable framework for understanding the neural basis of fear and resilience in the context of terrorism

(Thagard, 2019). By examining the underlying cognitive processes and neural mechanisms involved, researchers can gain insight into how individuals and communities respond to and cope with the threat of terrorism, ultimately informing the development of effective interventions and strategies. The observation that fear causes anger raises a neglected issue concerning emotions. The anger that results from fear is often a reaction to the perceived threat and is often an attempt to cope with the situation. Fear is a reaction to perceived threats and often results from them. Fear is often ignored and unnoticed, resulting in further aggression and anger as a result.

According to Nussbaum (2018), fear is the most fundamental political emotion that influences anger, disgust, and envy, among others. Fear can also serve as a powerful motivator and may help create social change, as well as feelings of powerlessness that can lead to anger and aggression. Because of fear, prejudice may also result (Nussbaum, 2018). As a result of fear, some individuals may experience feelings of insecurity and uncertainty that can lead to stereotyping and prejudice against certain groups. As a result, oppressive systems can be formed, perpetuating the cycle of fear, prejudice, and powerlessness further (Nussbaum, 2018). Therefore, emotions are causally intertwined, with one emotion often leading to another. For example, you may become angry if you fear someone (Nussbaum, 2018) because they have made you feel fearful. Those who are confused may feel anxious about what they need to do, those who are disgusted may feel contempt for them, and those who are envious may be angry due to their advantage (Nussbaum, 2018).

When acts of terrorism or violent extremism occur in one region or context, displacement of violence affects people's perceptions of security and instils fear in distant or unrelated locations. Fear of terrorism and its implications can only be fully understood if comments relating to displacement of violence are understood and addressed. Semantic pointer

theory explains the fear and frustrations of most participants and is transferable to most adopted themes. According to semantic pointer theory, emotions are neural firing patterns called semantic pointers that bind together multiple representations that are also neural firing patterns (Thagard, 2019). Among these patterns are representations of the situation, assessments of its goal relevance, physiological responses, and the self-experiencing of the emotion. To understand how semantic pointers are incorporated into neural patterns, it is necessary to break them down into neural patterns that affect one emotion to affect another emotion (Thagard, 2019).

Thus, when people realise someone has caused them to be afraid of them, and therefore is responsible for their negative feelings, they may become angry at them for depriving them of the opportunity to feel optimistic about themselves. Similar appraisals can be made when people are angry at groups that cause fear (Thagard, 2019). Political manipulations are similar to appraisals when people are angry at groups that cause fear. When describing situations, language is an important part of the appraisal process. Language appropriate for the situation may overlap with emotions during the appraisal process. Whenever negative words, such as "illegal", are used to describe immigrants in a way that makes people fear them, people may also be angry that immigrants have arrived in their country (Thagard, 2019).

In addition to cognitive judgments, emotions can also be influenced by physiology. The physiological effects of fear and anger on the autonomic nervous system (Kreibig, 2010) are very similar from a cardiovascular, respiratory, and electro-dermal perspective. A similar physiological state that is involved in the development of one emotion can naturally lead to the development of another emotion when it is accompanied by an appropriate appraisal. Fear and anger are widespread emotions that are caused by neural interactions based on appraisals, language, and physiology. These interactions can lead to a range of behaviours, from

aggression to avoidance that can have a significant impact on people's lives. For instance, a person may experience fear in response to a threat, and then feel anger when they feel powerless or frustrated.

It is the perception, and fear around the global context that acts of terrorism occurring in one part of the world could be replicated or spread to other parts of the world as a result of displacement of violence. This has led to heightened security measures and increased international cooperation to prevent the spread of terrorism. This fear is compounded by the realisation that the consequences of terrorism can be far-reaching, potentially impacting not only the lives of individuals but also societies and entire nations.

Researchers should consider the following factors when studying displacement of violence to understand fear: it is important to recognise that media narratives and perceptions of violence from distant regions can influence it. It is also important for researchers to examine how displacement of violence affects fears and behavioural responses. Research into the displacement effect can help researchers gain a better understanding of how perceptions of risk are shaped, and how individuals understand distant acts of terrorism. This was clearly seen in the participant interviews where they were seen to be angry, which in turn led to some of them channelling this via voting for far-right political parties and some also adopted the belief that the UK must protect its soil in foreign soil. This continued with the statements that clearly showed anger towards the governments around the insecurities in the streets the immigration policies and Brexit. Some of the participants believed that being in the European Union would be safer.

As discussed previously, this ties into Erhardt et al.'s (2021) observation that fear and anger are divergent factors affecting trust in governments during crisis periods. Fear increases trust, while anger is directed at the government, blaming them for adverse circumstances. This

might be because crises pose a serious threat to the basic structures of a system, which leads to heightened scrutiny of governments, resulting in an increase in the trust of individuals in governments as a result. The COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed as a dramatic international natural disaster, which may have increased people's support for and trust in their government. It is possible, however, that this effect may be reversed if crisis management is ineffective (Erhardt et al., 2021). When it comes to terrorism, the response of governments and crisis management can have complex effects on public trust. For instance, if a government is perceived as mishandling a terrorist attack or failing to provide adequate security measures, it can erode public trust and confidence in that government. This highlights the delicate balance between effective crisis management and maintaining public trust in times of crisis.

Although negative emotions play an important role in people's reactions to crises, they have been neglected in the literature on how crises affect trust in government. According to Erhardt et al. (2021), anger decreases trust in government, while fear increases it. This might be because anger encourages people to question the competence and intentions of the government, while fear makes them more dependent on it. Therefore, if the government is unable to effectively manage a crisis, it could lead to an increase in anger and a decrease in trust in the government.

The literature is dominated by two theories that explain why emotions emerge and affect political attitudes, namely cognitive appraisal theory and affective intelligence theory. In cognitive appraisal theory, individuals evaluate a particular event or situation and then a variety of emotions result from such evaluations (Erhardt et al., 2021). Different emotions are triggered by different neural systems, resulting in different information processing. Furthermore, the disposition system monitors threats to known norms and practices, as well as subconscious behaviour, learned routines, and habits. The surveillance system monitors the

environment for new, unknown, or possible dangerous events. According to Erhardt et al. (2021), fear and anger have divergent effects on political participation, anticrime policy preferences, and people's willingness to compromise or deviate from party identification. In other words, it can also be explained that the disposition system processes potential threats to the environment and regulates behaviour accordingly, while the surveillance system searches for potential threats that have not yet arisen and prepares the body for a fight-or-flight response. Fear and anger are both results of the disposition system, but they serve different purposes. Fear motivates people to take action to protect themselves, while anger motivates people to take action to protect their group. This is consistent with my research as well. For example, in the interview conducted with Maria, it was found that her decision to vote for UKIP was driven by her fear of terrorism and immigrants. She saw this as a way of defending herself and her country from potential threats. Moreover, in the interview with Veron, she stated, "One thing that we did well was to get the hell out of EU that was making us vulnerable to all sorts!" Veron's statement aligns with the affective intelligence theory, which suggests that emotions such as anger can shape political attitudes and decisions, as they motivate individuals to protect their group or national interests.

According to Erhardt et al., (2021), fear and anger affect trust in government in opposite directions in times of a Coronavirus outbreak. Those who are fearful are more likely to approve and support precautionary measures as well as actions to prevent and protect themselves. This is when confronted with a pandemic threat. Also, they are more likely to compromise and focus on policy issues rather than their party affiliation (Erhardt et al., 2021). The feeling of anger can decrease optimism and increase risk-seeking behaviours, ultimately leading to a decrease in trust in the government and a tendency to blame the government for adverse circumstances during a pandemic or a terrorist attack. This aligns with Sule's experience during the interview. She mentioned that the constant exposure to negative news during terrorism or the COVID-19

pandemic led to depression in her and her family. They decided to take control of their media consumption by watching YouTube and Netflix. This allowed them to choose what they wanted to watch and discuss at home. She continued by explaining that she now actively moderates her media consumption to avoid being overwhelmed by fear-inducing content. She chooses to focus on more positive and informative sources, recognizing that the media has the power to manipulate emotions and shape public perception. Jon's statement reflects the anger and lack of trust in the government due to being vulnerable to terrorism. This can lead to a desire for increased protection and security measures. Jon stated, "My thought is that we need to be protected and this does not start here at home, we need to project ourselves outside the UK". However, Erhardt et al., (2021)'s research suggests that this anger may also lead to risk-taking behaviours and a decrease in trust in government. It's important to recognize the influence of emotions and media consumption on public perception and to actively moderate exposure to fear-inducing content.

Consequently, Crawford (2007) argues that right-wing individuals respond more strongly to threats in their environment, especially physical ones, and are more likely to have a stronger connection between their amygdala and bed nucleus of the stria terminalis (BNST), which is essential for eliciting a response when threats persist. As a result of their strong reaction to negative stimuli, right-wing individuals allocate more psychological resources to negative stimuli. Accordingly, trust in the government is greater among right-wing individuals (Crawford 2017). Consequently, Crawford's argument aligns with participant Maria's views on the importance of a strong right-wing presence in addressing threats and ensuring national security. The emphasis on nationalism and protection resonates with the belief that the liberal or labour parties have failed to safeguard the streets and the overall safety of the country. Right-wing individuals place a strong emphasis on nationalism and protection due to their perception of a higher level of threats in their environment. They believe that a strong national identity

and strict measures against potential threats are essential for ensuring the safety and security of their country.

In addition to influencing public opinion and support for counterterrorism measures, displacement of violence comments has policy implications, which is one of my findings in the current study. It is possible to develop effective and targeted counterterrorism strategies by understanding how displacement perceptions influence policy-making and public attitudes. Fear of terrorism can be better understood by analysing comments relating to displacement of violence. Policymakers and practitioners can design interventions that promote resilience and security in affected communities by addressing the psychological, social, and political dimensions of fear. By examining the interconnectedness of violence and its impact on perceptions of safety, researchers can contribute to efforts aimed at preventing terrorism and promoting global peace and stability. In order to determine individuals' experiences, emotions, and behavioural responses to the threat of terrorist attacks, there is a significant research challenge. In addition, it can seek to gain insight into how individuals perceive and cope with this fear, as well as the impact it has on their daily lives and decision-making.

By evaluating the effectiveness of existing counter-terrorism measures, community engagement initiatives, and support systems, evidence-based policymaking and targeted interventions can be developed. A deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional aspects of the fear of terrorism can enhance our understanding of its underlying mechanisms. It is possible to gain insights into the cognitive and affective processes related to fear by examining factors such as perceived threat, trust, control, and emotional responses. By considering the fear and anger of the public, governments can make more informed policy decisions that address these emotions. Failure to do so may result in an increase in right-wing

sympathies driven by fear and a lack of trust in the government due to anger, which can have significant consequences for social cohesion and political stability.

5.3.6 *Social identity*

Differentiation can be an important factor in news reporting about terrorism (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2014). The concept of undifferentiated reporting, also known as generalisation, refers to extending the characteristics or activities of a specific and specifiable group to a much broader group. Differentiated reporting, however, distinguishes between more general and open-ended groups (e.g., Muslims in general) and specific characteristics and activities (Islamist terrorists). As a result, it distinguishes between Islamist terrorism and the Muslim population in Western countries. In response to news coverage of terrorism that doesn't distinguish Muslims from Muslim terrorists, non-Muslim news recipients may believe that all Muslims, including Muslim terrorists, are alike. Tajfel and Turner (1986) and Park and Rothbart (1982; Rothgerber, 1997) both support this assertion. This suggests that media narratives play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards different groups, highlighting the importance of differentiated reporting in promoting understanding and reducing stereotypes. For example, Veron and Jon shared their experience of scanning and checking out individuals who appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent or feeling hesitant to travel to places where they would be the only white people. This kind of behaviour stems from undifferentiated reporting in the media, which fails to distinguish between Islamist terrorists and the broader Muslim population, perpetuating stereotypes and prejudices. Differentiated reporting can help counteract these biases and promote a more nuanced understanding of diverse groups.

SIT suggests that in-group members regularly compare themselves with relevant out-groups to maintain a positive sense of self (Tajfel & Turner 1986). SIT suggests that social behaviour can range from individual to intergroup behaviour although extreme forms of each behaviour are rarely observed. Tajfel and Turner (1986, p. 277) define interpersonal behaviour as the interaction between two or more individuals that is fully determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics. This is regardless of their group or category affiliations. Alternatively, intergroup behaviour is defined as interactions between individuals (or groups of individuals) whose interactions are primarily determined by their group membership rather than their individual relationships (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Intergroup behaviour explains why in-group individuals perceive out-group members as homogeneous and similar (Park & Rothbart, 1982; Rothgerber, 1997). Consequently, members of an in-group (such as non-Muslims) perceive out-groups to be less variable and out-group members to be more similar than their own in-group members, i.e., "they" are all the same, but we're different. Thus, undifferentiated (compared to differentiated) terrorism news may create a feeling of outgroup homogeneity among non-Muslims.

Muslim terrorists and Muslims may be perceived by non-Muslims as belonging to an extremely large outgroup (Muslim population in Western societies) (Ommundsen, Van der Meer, Yakushko, & Ulleberg, 2013). Moreover, Ommundsen, Van der Meer, Yakushko, and Ulleberg (2013) support the assumption that a larger outgroup will hurt one more. Their research found that individuals tend to perceive a larger outgroup as more threatening and harbour negative attitudes towards its members. This perception of a larger outgroup can contribute to feelings of fear, discrimination, and prejudice among non-Muslims towards Muslim individuals in Western societies (Shughart, 2006). This perception of a larger outgroup and the resulting fear, discrimination, and prejudice towards Muslim individuals in Western societies can be linked to the concept of Orientalism. Orientalism refers to the Western

portrayal and perception of the East as exotic, backward, and dangerous. It perpetuates stereotypes and biases, further fuelling negative attitudes and actions towards Muslims. These Orientalist perspectives contribute to the construction of the "otherness" of Muslims, reinforcing the perceived differences between non-Muslims and Muslims.

The threat of terrorism will feel much greater if all Muslims are perceived as terrorists than if Muslim terrorists are perceived as individuals not associated with the Muslim majority. According to Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison (2009), the intergroup perception of threat is influenced by the perceived size of the out-group. Therefore, terrorism news that does not differentiate between Muslims in general (for example, Muslims living in Western cities), and individual Islamist terrorists can increase the perception of the size of the out-group, thereby increasing fear among non-Muslims. A recipient exposed to differentiated terrorism news will perceive a smaller out-group size, resulting in a lower level of fear. Therefore, both undifferentiated and differentiated news about IS terrorism will prime individuals' fears (Hegghammer, 2010). In our study, we found that when terrorism news fails to differentiate between Muslims in general and individual Islamist terrorists, it tends to perpetuate the perception of a larger out-group, leading to increased fear among non-Muslims. This highlights the importance of accurately and responsibly reporting on terrorism to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and fostering fear. For example, participants expressed frustrations about how the portrayal of terrorism in the Middle East and Africa can lead to negative stereotypes and fear among non-Muslims in the UK. This highlights the need for accurate and nuanced reporting that distinguishes between Muslims in general and individual Islamist terrorists, in order to prevent the perpetuation of fear and prejudice.

Individuals perceive symbolic and realistic threats differently according to the intergroup threat theory (Stephan et al., 2009). In addition to threats to a group's values, beliefs,

and worldviews, symbolic threats also include threats to individuals' self-identity or self-esteem (Stephan et al., 2009). In addition, researchers have found that fear of terrorism affects non-Muslim recipients' attitudes toward Muslims and hostile perceptions of them in general and that negative out-group perceptions are particularly strong when out-groups pose both realistic as well as symbolic threats (Sikorski et al., 2020). Intergroup contact may improve the attitudes of individuals in in-groups toward outgroups. In contrast to superficial and simple forms of contact, more intense positive experiences may improve attitudes toward out-group members in general. In accordance with two prevalent models in the literature, contact with individuals from an out-group does not result in positive generalisation to the entire out-group. However, even low levels of out-group salience can lead to positive effects on the out-group. Positive prior contact with out-group individuals can counter negative generalisations of out-groups by avoiding fear-inducing media coverage and promoting empathy and understanding. (Stephan et al., 2009). There is uncertainty as to whether a positive prior encounter with out-group members can alleviate potential hostile perceptions of the out-group in general when negative media information is available (von Sikorski et al., 2020).

5.4 Islamophobia

Throughout the thesis, different perspectives are considered to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. By examining the views of Westerners, particularly Americans and the British, towards Arabs and Muslims, it becomes evident how these stereotypes have been reinforced and utilised for political purposes. These shifts in perspective are necessary to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and to avoid generalisations. By examining the views of different Western countries, such as the US, UK, and others, towards Arabs and Muslims, a more nuanced understanding of the stereotypes and biases can be achieved.

According to McQueeney, (2014), at the time of their first encounters with Arabs and Muslims, Westerners viewed them as violent and uncivilised. These stereotypical images have become even more embedded in the American imagination since 9/11, and they are used to justify war and restrictions on civil liberties. Images depicting Arab and Muslim people in mainstream Western media do not motivate people to commit hate crimes or to call on governments to declare war on Arab nations (McQueeney, 2014). The images, however, reinforce stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims and reinforce negative attitudes toward Islam (McQueeney, 2014).

In addition to reducing marginalised groups to negative caricatures as the result of controlling images such as these, they also serve to stigmatise and expel anything that is regarded as unclean, which is strangely appealing precisely because it is forbidden, taboo, and threatening to cultural order (Hall, 1997, p. 237). As a result, this is a form of Orientalism, a form of racism and sexism which has been used to justify colonisation and oppression of Middle Eastern peoples. During the interviews, one participant stated that while travelling between Istanbul and London, he would profile and monitor Asian and Middle Eastern-looking individuals closely. This supports the above statement. As a result, he associates that period with the highest levels of ISIS terrorist activity in Syria and Iraq. He even reported a person he travelled with as a suspect on the grounds that he believed the person was frequenting the bathroom numerous times. This participant also believed that he may have been a terrorist. This participant's statement illustrates the dangers of racial profiling. Even though there is no evidence to support this claim, he believes that people of certain ethnicities are more likely to commit terrorist acts. In addition, the fact that he reported a person he travelled with as a

suspect without any supporting evidence is indicative of racial profiling and unfounded suspicion.

The actions taken by the British and French in the Middle East were part of their colonial practices, where they imposed their influence and boundaries on the region, ultimately shaping its political and cultural landscape. British and French actions contributed to the "invention" of the Middle East by foreign influences. According to Lockman, (2004, p. 88), Orientalism discourse is closely related to contemporary European colonialism and was used as a means of justifying European power within the region. A variety of overlapping ways in which Edward Said defines Orientalism provide insight into the imperial exercise of European power in the region. In addition to being a "mode of discourse", Orientalism has also been described as "a way of thinking based on the distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'" (Said, 1978, p. 2).

To exert control over and a strong voice in the Middle East, the West was able to present themselves as superior to those in the Middle East by distinguishing between the Orient and the Occident. According to Said (1978, p. 3), an Orientalist corporation is a corporation that deals with the Orient, makes statements about the Orient, authorises views regarding it, describes it, teaches it, settles it, and governs it. This is relevant because it highlights the power dynamics and the construction of knowledge in the relationship between the West and the Middle East. By defining and categorizing the Orient, the West was able to maintain a position of superiority and control over the region. This thinking, whether consciously or unconsciously, has influenced the perspectives and actions of participants involved in the study. As participants engage with the subject matter, their comments may reflect the underlying power dynamics and biases ingrained in the Orientalist framework, perpetuating the cycle of superiority and control.

Orientalism, according to Said (1978) is essentially a Western method of establishing authority over the Orient, dominating, and restructuring it. By making statements or expressing preconceptions about the Orient, the West asserted its superiority over it. Orientalists considered the Middle East backwards and in desperate need of civilisation. Consequently, the British and French colonial powers implemented Orientalist policies that reinforced European superiority over oriental "backwardness" as a result of this prejudice (Owen, 2004). One participant in this study stated that their soil needs to be protected from foreign conflicts to protect it. He also referred to the old expansionist ways of Britain as superior to those of today. This view was reinforced by the concept that the Orientals were inferior to the Europeans and that the Europeans were obligated to civilise them. To protect their own interests and prevent external threats from reaching their own people, Europeans justified their intervention in the Middle East by claiming it was necessary. Further strengthening this imperialistic attitude was the belief that European culture and values were superior. As a result, the Europeans invaded and controlled the Middle East to spread these values throughout the world.

After 9/11, images of Arabs and Muslims have become increasingly embedded in the American imagination (Earp, Jhally, Shaheen, 2006). By portraying the Middle East as a land of barbarism and tyranny, as well as by routinely portraying Arabs and Muslims as terrorists, the mass media enhances racial tensions and fosters fear of the Arab Other (Hirchi, 2007). The media misrepresentations (Hall, 1980) are never simple or direct. A misrepresentation by the media can be used to advance political agendas, such as wars and restrictions on civil liberties. To gain financial resources, recognition, and safety, as well as to resist inequality, Arabs and Muslims themselves may utilise controlling images (Collins, 2004). Although controlling images of Arabs and Muslims do not directly cause individual attitudes or behaviours, Jackson (2010) argues that they reinforce mainstream assumptions that Arabs and Muslims are terrorists. In this context, human rights violations may be considered acceptable by ordinary

Arabs and Muslims (Jackson, 2010). However, the widespread association of Arabs and Muslims with terrorists in mainstream Western media contributes to negative and stereotypical attitudes toward Islam even if journalists, politicians, or film producers are not attempting to promote Islamophobia. Foreign policy decisions such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq have undoubtedly been made easier (Shaheen, 2001) because of a century of images of the Arab and Muslim Other. In the process of masking global inequalities that lead to terrorism (Smelser & Mitchell, 2002), controlling images shifts the blame onto supposedly innately violent Arabs and Muslims. It can be suggested, based on my own research about fear of terrorism, that Arab and Muslim media portrayals perpetuate negative stereotypes and reinforce mainstream assumptions about terrorism through controlling images.

Furthermore, these images also divert attention from the underlying global inequalities that contribute to terrorist acts, contributing to Islamophobia and negative attitudes. In addition to masking the root causes of the complex issues at hand, controlling images hinders efforts to address these complex issues by shifting blame onto Arabs and Muslims. In Veron's view, most of the IRA's membership is white, and the emphasis has shifted to Muslims and Middle Easterners, demonstrating the selective nature of image control. Veron's comment illustrates the dangerous consequences of controlling images because they contribute to widespread profiling and negative perceptions of non-white people. In addition to perpetuating stereotypes, this association of terrorism with Arabs and Muslims also diverts attention from other forms of terrorism, such as the actions of the Independent Working Group. It is essential to challenge and dismantle these controlling images in order to facilitate understanding and address the underlying causes of terrorist acts.

Several participants including Veron, Jon, Amy, and Maria expressed direct and indirect racism, such as Maria's dislike of travelling to non-white countries where she would be the only white person. This indicates that the participants had negative feelings towards travelling to non-white countries, likely as a result of racism, as evidenced by comments such as "I do not wish to travel to a country where I will be the only white person" or "I do not feel comfortable visiting a country where I am not the majority." It appears that racism and fear are the main factors influencing such negative attitudes toward non-white countries, as indicated by these comments. In order to foster a more accepting and understanding society, this type of racism is rooted in the belief that whites are superior to non-whites. This attitude needs to be changed. For example, Sule blamed the influx of foreigners for making things difficult, arguing that Brexit was necessary in order to protect against foreign invasion. According to this philosophy, people from different cultures and backgrounds should be treated differently, and white individuals should be given greater privileges. Various groups of people may be discriminated against and denied opportunities as a result of this type of racism, which perpetuates the belief that the speaker is superior. These instances of direct and indirect racism among the participants reflect a Eurocentric worldview, where white individuals are believed to be superior and deserving of greater privileges. This Eurocentrism not only perpetuates negative attitudes towards non-white countries but also leads to discrimination and the denial of opportunities for various groups of people. To foster a more accepting and understanding society, it is crucial to challenge and dismantle these Eurocentric beliefs and promote equality for all individuals, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Kundnani's (2014) analysis of Islamophobia sheds light on the social and political climate surrounding the fear of terrorism. Kundnani's (2014) argument that counter-terrorism policies often stigmatise and target Muslim communities aligns with the study's findings regarding the perpetuation of fear and marginalisation. According to this, discriminatory

practices and policies can be reinforced by the fear of terrorism. Kundnani's (2014) analysis of Islamophobia suggests that discriminatory practices such as racial profiling, surveillance, and detention of Muslim communities are often reinforced by the fear of terrorism. A link between Kundnani's (2014) exploration of the "suspect community" and the normalisation of Islamophobia and the study's findings on violence displacement can also be drawn. According to the study, people may blame and scapegoat specific groups or communities as a target for their fear and anger. Kundnani's (2014) analysis of fear's power to create divisions and justify discriminatory actions resonates with this. Our study found that violent displacement is often based on fear and anger and that people may target specific communities as a result. This is consistent with Kundnani's (2014) exploration of how fear can be used to create divisions and justify discriminatory actions.

This process of fear-based violence displacement can be perpetuated by governments, politicians, and other institutions, leading to a cycle of violence and inequality. It is essential to recognise and address the role of fear in creating and perpetuating such divisions and discriminatory actions. For instance, Kundnani (2014) cites the cases of minority communities in the UK who were targeted with excessive policing and counter-terrorism measures in response to terrorist attacks, leading to an increase in fear and hostility towards these communities. Furthermore, fear has also been seen to play an important role in the rise of populism in Europe, with the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK being a prime example. The campaign focused heavily on issues related to immigration, and fear of the "other" was a major factor in the Leave campaign's success. The Leave campaign used fear tactics to scare voters into believing they had to act to protect themselves and their families. As a result, the UK voted to leave the European Union, a decision that has had a significant impact on the EU and the UK. This supports one participant's belief in the need to preserve borders by leaving the EU and blaming everything on immigrants. This can be explained by relative deprivation theory

and fear that immigrants are taking away opportunities from the native-born population. The Brexit vote was a way of expressing this fear and the belief that the UK was better off without the EU.

To understand the ideological underpinnings of fear-based movements, Roger Griffin's (1995) work provides a theoretical framework for understanding the "nature of fascism". According to Griffin's (1995) analysis of authoritarian ideologies, hyper-militaristic attitudes and control-oriented behaviour were identified in the study. In light of this, it can be understood that fear of terrorism may contribute to the rise of extremist ideologies that take advantage of public anxieties and advocate militaristic solutions. As one participant pointed out, outgroups, or "bastards", should be beaten outside British soil. He also stated that in the past, things were simpler, and today, people are more politically correct. In addition, he mentioned that there were numerous traitors and that many of them were sick and could not be trusted. His sentiment was that in the past, people could be trusted to do the right and wrong thing, but today, people are more lenient when it comes to punishing those who act against the interests of the British. He said that it was important to send a message to these individuals that their actions would not be tolerated and that they should face consequences for their actions. This indicates an extreme reaction and view, in line with an "us versus them" approach, in which people were seen as either being for or against the interests of the British.

According to this study, displacement of violence and scapegoating are manifestations of Orientalist discourses that perpetuate fear and reinforce power dynamics between cultures and regions. Orientalism serves to legitimise and perpetuate power inequalities between the East and West, creating and reinforcing a dichotomy between the two. This dichotomisation is then used to justify the displacement of violence onto non-Europeans and to scapegoat them for political issues. According to Sartre's (1943) existentialist philosophy, everyone has a

responsibility and freedom to choose their responses to fear and violence. As individuals may feel compelled to act or adopt aggressive approaches in the face of perceived threats, Sartre's (1943) ideas can provide insight into the study's findings regarding choices fuelled by anger and hyper-militaristic attitudes as well as the appeal of right-wing sentiments. Sartre (1946) argued that people are responsible for their own choices and that each individual has the power to make their own decisions. This means that people can choose how to respond to fear and violence and that they are not slaves to their environments. Therefore, Sartre's ideas can provide insight into the study's findings about the choices people make in the face of perceived threats. The study's findings on the vulnerability of being and the uncertainty of the unknown can be viewed through the lens of Camus' (1943) concept of the absurd and the human struggle for meaning.

In the face of terrorism, individuals may experience existential concerns and become more aware of their mortality. Sartre's ideas suggest that this awareness can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety, which can in turn lead to a sense of powerlessness and a need for control. As individuals seek to make sense of the absurdity of the situation, they may make choices that are not necessarily in their best interest, such as making decisions based on fear or anxiety rather than logic or rationality (Sartre, 1943). The study's findings about security measures and media restrictions are illuminated by Foucault's (1978) analysis of power and control. In response to the threat of terrorism, surveillance and control mechanisms are often expanded, reflecting Foucault's (1978), concept of a disciplinary society and normalising surveillance for the maintenance of social order. Foucault (1978) demonstrates that power and control are not simply exerted through physical force but through more subtle means such as surveillance and control mechanisms. He argues that these mechanisms are used to create and maintain social norms and can also be used to monitor potential threats.

Sageman's (2017) research on terror networks provides insight into the study's findings regarding global risks and the call to action. Rather than relying solely on security measures, Sageman's (2017) work emphasises the complexity of terrorism and the need to address its root causes. Considering Sageman's (2017) argument that terrorism requires a multifaceted approach, including social, political, and economic factors, the study's findings support that argument. The delicate nature of the topic, which has the potential to divide society into in-groups and outgroups, suggests that government and the media should work together harmoniously and responsibly rather than scapegoating a particular community. It was found that anger and fear were the most predominant emotions in the study interviews, which can split a society if not handled properly.

In the interview data, there was a dichotomy and consistency around the "other" which in this case was a term applied to Middle Easterners or foreigners or immigrants. This divide was both perpetuated and reinforced by the media and popular culture. It was seen as a threat to traditional values and beliefs and was seen as a source of danger and uncertainty. This further divided communities and created fear and anger. According to the interviews with the participants, this fear was perpetuated by the media and popular culture. This used stereotypes and negative portrayals of people from the Middle East and foreign countries. This created a sense of mistrust towards people from these regions and led to further divisions within communities. It also caused people to become more protective of their values and beliefs, and this led to an increase in anger and resentment. Amy's statement in her interview reflects the impact of the perpetuated fear and mistrust towards people from the Middle East and foreign countries. This sense of danger and uncertainty led her to limit her activities and avoid certain places and travel destinations, prioritising her safety and proximity to loved ones. Maria's statement highlights the impact of perpetuated fear and mistrust towards people from different ethnic backgrounds. As a result of this heightened sense of danger, she restricts her travel

destinations to places where she feels more comfortable and safer. She does not travel to non-white countries, prioritising her own safety and well-being. For example, Veron, who frequently travels and often encounters people from the Middle East, also experiences uneasiness and discomfort when travelling with individuals from that region. This reflects the deep-seated fear and mistrust that has been perpetuated by media and popular culture, leading to divisions and a sense of danger towards others.

By analysing power dynamics, marginalisation, and fear, Fanon's (1961) writings on colonialism and decolonisation can inform my own study's analysis. As a result of the oppression and dehumanisation of colonised peoples, Fanon (1961) offers fascinating insights into colonised psychological effects. In his writings, Fanon argues that colonialism creates a power dynamic between colonisers and colonised peoples, which is maintained by colonisers marginalising colonised people to maintain this power structure. The marginalisation of colonised people causes them to feel powerless and fearful. Among the participants, orientalist and expansionist attitudes were deeply rooted, as they stated that the British should be involved geopolitically and protect its borders in Ukraine and the Middle East. Additionally, one participant recalled how Great Britain was in the past and said that they would most likely return to that level in the future. It should be noted, however, that some of the participants also attributed the danger of terrorism at home to British involvement in world politics.

The geopolitical factors contributing to the fear of terrorism can be analysed structurally using Amin's (2010) works on imperialism and global capitalism. In addition to highlighting the importance of addressing systemic inequalities, Amin's critique of capitalism places the study's findings within a broader socio-economic context. Furthermore, Kundnani's (2014) analysis of Islamophobia and fascism provides a critical framework for understanding the social and political dynamics of terrorism. Kundnani (2014) argues that counter-terrorism

measures can contribute to the erosion of civil liberties and perpetuate Islamophobia, based on the study's findings regarding scapegoating, marginalisation, and discriminatory practices. Kundnani (2014) argues that terrorism is a political phenomenon that is linked to a right-wing ideology that seeks to reinforce certain power structures and discriminate against certain groups. He argues that counter-terrorism measures, such as increased surveillance and restrictions on civil liberties, can be used to reinforce the right-wing narrative and perpetuate Islamophobia. This supports the result of the study, given that several participants indicated that they preferred a state of surveillance and restrictions rather than an erosion of democracy with constant danger and uncertainty. They had started getting involved with politics and activism. For example, Maria's involvement in politics and activism stems from her recognition of the vulnerability and need for change in the face of geopolitical factors contributing to the fear of terrorism. The increasing threats and uncertainties faced by society have motivated her to actively participate in discussions and events focused on shaping the future of the country. Maria's decision to vote for UKIP and the Conservatives, despite her disagreements with these parties, reflects the influence of geopolitical factors and the fear of terrorism on her political choices. The emphasis on security measures and integration politics, even at the expense of other policy areas, underscores the prioritisation of safety and stability in the face of perceived threats.

There are many factors that influence individuals' responses and attitudes towards terrorism, making the study of the fear of terrorism a complex and multifaceted one. The research findings revealed the presence of racism within the context of a fear of terrorism as one of the most significant findings. Because of fear of terrorism, race and prejudice manifest themselves in response to blaming and scapegoating, as well as the sub-theme of political behavioural consequences. In the study, participants tended to attribute blame to groups or individuals based on their racial or ethnic background, linking them to the perceived threat of

terrorism. This may suggest that racism and prejudice are a product of fear rather than a pre-existing condition. As people become more fearful, they become more suspicious of those who are different and are more likely to view them as potential threats (Utych et al., 2022). This can lead to increased racism, prejudice, and discrimination. In addition to being unjust, this type of scapegoating perpetuates harmful stereotypes and fuels discrimination. Fear and discrimination can lead to the further marginalisation of certain groups, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and loneliness, poorer health outcomes, and decreased economic potential. Furthermore, this type of fear-based behaviour can be passed down from generation to generation, making it difficult to break the cycle of racism and prejudice.

According to some of the comments made by participants, they hold the Orientalist view in which they believe they are superior and that they can go into sovereign nations to protect their homes, which led to some derogatory remarks such as "bastards." There is a need to critically examine and address the racist remarks and attitudes expressed by participants in the study. The comments reflect deep-rooted prejudices and biases that can impact social harmony and cohesion, as well as the targeted groups. These comments are often based on preconceived notions and stereotypes about the targeted groups, which can lead to a lack of understanding, respect, and acceptance. In some cases, these comments can even be used to justify discrimination and marginalisation. As racism can aggravate existing tensions and create divisions in society, it should not be tolerated or ignored when studying the fear of terrorism. To promote inclusivity, understanding and respect, researchers and policymakers need to be aware of racist comments and attitudes. Through educational initiatives, promoting intercultural dialogue, and challenging stereotypes and prejudices, we can accomplish this. Creating spaces for open and respectful discussions where individuals can express their fears and concerns without resorting to racism or discrimination should also be a priority.

Researchers can contribute to the broader goal of fighting racism and promoting social justice by addressing racist comments and attitudes in their research findings. In the context of a fear of terrorism, racist comments and attitudes may not represent the views of the entire population. It is possible that individual biases and misunderstandings are behind these comments rather than reflecting collective sentiment. Given their significant implications for social cohesion and targeted communities, these comments need to be highlighted and considered. Thus, researchers can contribute to fostering a more inclusive and tolerant society by confronting and addressing racism within the study of the fear of terrorism. This can be achieved by challenging and counteracting racism and promoting empathy, understanding, and unity in the face of fear and insecurity. To achieve a future where fear is not used to justify discrimination but rather serves as a catalyst for empathy, cooperation, and mutual aid, we must educate, encourage dialogue, and raise awareness.

5.4.1 *Media and the social construction of terrorism*

There is evidence that the term terrorist originated during the Jacobin Reign of Terror of the French Revolution when Robespierre and other Jacobin heads of state imprisoned and executed thousands of suspected enemies of the French government without any trial (Žižek, 2007).

Mignolo (2011) argues that coloniality and modernity are intertwined and that coloniality is the dark side of modernity. Coloniality refers to the continuation of colonial forms of domination and marginalisation based on race. Coloniality exists in all aspects of life, including the different elements of modern academia, such as knowledge production, publishing, knowledge exchange, and policymaking. In Mignolo (2011), coloniality is divided into three components: the coloniality of power, the coloniality of knowledge, and the coloniality of being. Collectively, they capture the essence of coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

2013). A colonial power structure is the continuation of colonial dominance systems based on race and it intersects with other identity registers as the organising principle for capitalist hierarchies (Grosfoguel, 2011). As a result of their claim to universality, neutrality, and objectivity, the global north episteme and attached modes of knowledge, learning, thinking, living, imagining, and knowing the world dominate. Due to this situation, epistemes, and belief systems of the global south, as well as the associated modes of thinking, learning, living, imagining, and knowing the world, have been epistemicided (Grosfoguel 2007). Consequently, intellectual imperialism has resulted in intellectual dependency, extroversion, and the captive mind among global south scholars (Alatas 2000; Hountondji 1996).

McQueeney (2014) posits that the definition of terrorism is largely determined by media outlets. People need to critically assess who makes these claims and the broader political contexts and ideological struggles surrounding them. This is as they are presented in the news and entertainment media. For example, there is a major influence on what is defined and labelled terrorism in the United States by politicians and the media (McQueeney, 2014). Identifying a social problem requires subjective perceptions as well as objective facts. Because terrorists are defined and labelled differently across different countries and contexts, the focus on the United States is relevant. It is important to understand how politicians and the media in a specific country shape the narrative around terrorism, as this ultimately influences public perception and policy decisions within that country.

In the case of this article, intellectual imperialism and intellectual dependency mean that terrorism scholars from global south countries adopt the same paradigms, theories and concepts, modes of thinking, imagining, learning, and knowing the world as those from the global north. The third part of coloniality is the coloniality of being/non-being that structures how people are defined and treated along racial lines intersecting with other identity registers

(Maldonado-Torres, 2007). People in the zone of being are afforded human rights, material resources and social and political recognition. Those in the zone of non-being are viewed as sub-humans or even non-humans and do not have any rights. Islamophobia is an example of how people are regarded as belonging to the zone of non-being.

According to Kumar (2021), Islamophobia constructs Muslims as barbarians, backwards, uncivilised and terrorists. Islamophobia frames Muslims as either subhuman or nonhuman, thereby putting them at risk of state-sanctioned harm or violence, or harm or violence perpetrated by individuals who hold Islamophobic views. The Uighur Muslim experience in China is a good example of this (Finley, 2020).

A study of Foucault's (1978) power relations and discourses can help us understand how the media, government, and societal institutions shape and perpetuate the fear of terrorism. It is possible to apply his concepts of surveillance, disciplinary mechanisms, and bio-politics to understanding the dynamics of control and securitisation that arise from terrorism fears.

Using such perspectives to examine colonial legacies and cultural biases, scholars need to critically examine the fear of terrorism. As well as challenging Eurocentric definitions of terrorism, adopting a postcolonial lens acknowledges the agency and experiences of non-Western societies in shaping their own narratives. In Amin's (2010) book *Eurocentrism*, he emphasises the influence of Eurocentric biases, colonial legacies, and global power dynamics on the study of terrorism. By critically examining Amin's (2010) insights, counter-terrorism strategies can be developed that are more nuanced and inclusive. Furthermore, by incorporating postcolonial perspectives, we ensure that the study of fear of terrorism is sensitive to contemporary global realities and historical injustices. Amin (2010) argues that the traditional approach to understanding terrorism is Eurocentric and fails to account for the unique dynamics of different societies. He suggests that postcolonial perspectives can help us to better

understand the underlying causes of terrorism, such as economic, political, and social inequality, and can support the creation of counter-terrorism strategies that are more effective and lasting.

In this study, participants reported managing their anxiety and fear by limiting their exposure to media coverage, which sheds light on the psychological consequences of living in fear. The media plays a powerful role in shaping individuals' fears of terrorism. To prevent the amplification of fear and promote an accurate understanding of the threat, responsible and balanced reporting is essential. Media coverage can create a sense of panic and fear, which, in turn, can lead to increased anxiety and stress. Furthermore, media coverage can also lead to a false sense of security, as people may believe that if they know the risks, they are better equipped to handle them. Therefore, it is important for the media to present the facts in a balanced and responsible way so that people can make informed decisions about how to handle their fears (Grillon et al., 2008). For instance, the media should not sensationalise stories but rather provide an accurate and balanced perspective, and focus on the positive steps that people can take to protect themselves.

This perception is fuelled by the media's emphasis on the global reach of terrorist acts, even if the individuals' immediate surroundings are not directly affected. As part of the theoretical concept of global risk, displacement of violence comments emphasises that terrorism is a global phenomenon that can have far-reaching consequences. Several participants in this study expressed the idea that violence transcends geographical boundaries and that people perceive the world as interconnected. As a result of desensitisation, terrorism is widespread throughout the world in this current era, as they have seen in the news and newspapers. This idea of displacement highlights the idea of terrorism as a global issue and the fact that all countries can be affected by it. It suggests that terrorism is no longer just a local

problem, but rather a global issue that requires global solutions. Furthermore, it suggests that countries must be prepared for the possibility that violence can cross borders and affect them regardless of their location.

Several participants demonstrated how influenced they were by the media, which disseminates information about acts of terrorism. Media representations should be examined for their impact on fear levels and policy responses, as well as how they may contribute to violence displacement. One participant stated that they intentionally didn't read or watch the news. Another participant stated that if the media continued to discuss a subject, then it meant the danger was real. The portrayal of certain topics in the media, such as violence, can create a sense of fear in people, which can lead to increased anxiety and paranoia. This can also lead to policies that are overly restrictive or harsh, or that are not tailored to the situation. Additionally, the media can influence people's decisions about where to move or relocate to avoid potential dangers, which can lead to violent displacement (Monahan & Valeri, 2018). The arguments presented in this paper support the statements made by the participants; for instance, Maria stated that she had stopped travelling to places due to fear as a result of what she had read or heard in the media. Other participants such as Aris, Martin, and Jon also stopped traveling due to fear.

By understanding the underlying factors contributing to fear, policymakers can design measures that promote security, social cohesion, and community resilience to avoid counterproductive approaches. Their contributions to public discourse and their awareness of its complexities and nuances can help shape public discourse by providing insight into public attitudes and perceptions regarding terrorism. Informed discussion, empathy, and dialogue could help promote constructive and inclusive social responses. The study identified hyper-militaristic remarks, so counter-terrorism strategies relying solely on military force should be

critically analysed. Using these results, we can re-evaluate approaches and identify alternatives that emphasise prevention, diplomacy, engagement with communities, and addressing root causes. The importance of these results is that they can improve our understanding of the fear of terrorism, which will lead us to develop comprehensive and effective approaches to resolving the issue. Ultimately, the findings are crucial because they have the potential to contribute to safer, more inclusive societies and promote a nuanced and balanced response to the challenges posed by terrorism.

The perception of fear of terrorism can be shaped by the media and communication. By examining how different media representations affect fear levels and how different communication strategies are effective in mitigating fear, responsible and constructive media practices can be developed. It is possible to gain valuable insights into the impact and areas for improvement in terms of policies and interventions aimed at addressing fear of terrorism by assessing their effectiveness.

5.4.2 *Eurocentrism*

In line with Eurocentric comments, other cultures and regions are often neglected, as European and Western perspectives and experiences are often prioritised. The Eurocentric comments may include the belief that terrorism is largely the result of Western countries, or that certain cultures or religions are more likely to commit terrorist acts. In such comments, one implies that other cultures and regions are not as important as Europe and the West and that the experiences of other cultures and regions are invalid. It is damaging because it ignores the fact that terrorism and violence are global phenomena that affect all cultures and regions. According to the terrorism index (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023), most research is concerned with terrorism in the West even though it is declining, which makes it Eurocentric, despite most global terrorist attacks

occurring in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, and Somalia (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2023).

As a result, most research on fear of terrorism has been conducted in Western countries, rather than in countries that are more vulnerable to terrorist acts. It may also result in less effective policy responses due to a Eurocentric perspective, which overlooks important nuances in fighting terrorism. One limitation of the study of terrorism could be as Mohammed (2022) suggests that while academic decolonisation has gained traction, the study of terrorism has not yet been decolonised. However, some institutions and governments may oppose the decolonisation of terrorism. By way of example, to study political violence and Soviet threats, a few countries in the global north, including the US, developed the terrorism industry during the Cold War. In practice, the development of the terrorism industry during the Cold War meant that these countries invested heavily in research, intelligence gathering, and counterterrorism measures. This created a complex network of institutions and policies that may resist decolonisation efforts, as they have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo of their influence and power in the field of counterterrorism.

Consequently, there is a global north bias in this industry, which is dominated by terrorism scholars and institutions from countries in the global north. In the context of this discussion, the term "terrorism industry" refers to the network of institutions, policies, and actors involved in the study, research, and counterterrorism efforts related to acts of political violence. This industry emerged during the Cold War, primarily driven by countries in the global north, such as the US, who heavily invested in research, intelligence gathering, and counterterrorism measures. Over time, it has grown into a billion-dollar industry, with a significant bias towards scholars and institutions from the global north.

As a result, terrorism studies suffer from problems related to the global north episteme, colonialism in social sciences, and the dominance of global north scholars and institutions (Mohammed, 2021). In Mignolo (2011), colonialism represents the dark side of modernity as it perpetuates colonial forms of dominance and marginalisation centred on race. It consists of three components: colonial power, colonial knowledge, and colonial existence/nonexistence. Because of its claims of universality, neutrality, and objectivity, the global northern episteme has dominated the world of knowledge, resulting in intellectual dependence, extroversion, and captive minds among scholars from the global south. In relation to racial and non-racial identities intersecting with other identity registers, coloniality of being/non-being structures how people are defined and treated. According to Mignolo (2011), fear of terrorism can be analysed critically if Islamophobia leads to Muslims being treated as sub-humans or non-humans.

A sub-theme of global risk can be understood through the theoretical concepts of blaming and scapegoating. Eurocentric attitudes tend to blame non-Western cultures and religions for acts of terrorism without considering the complex socio-political factors that contribute to these occurrences. It is essential to examine and challenge Eurocentric assumptions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the fear of terrorism. This will allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, acknowledging that terrorism affects people and regions beyond the Western world. This recognition is also recommended by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2023).

It is essential to combat bias and promote a comprehensive counter-terrorism approach (Amin, 2010) to combat terrorist activity. As part of his work, Amin (2010) critiques the Eurocentric worldview, which emphasises Western intellectual and cultural superiority at the

expense of non-European societies and cultures. As a means of understanding how certain narratives, biases, and historical power dynamics influence perceptions of terrorism, we must consider the impact of Eurocentrism on perceptions of terrorism.

The Eurocentrism phenomenon perpetuates the idea of the "Other" by portraying non-European societies as inferior or exotic. Muslims and immigrants from these regions may be unjustly associated with terrorism due to their ethnic or religious backgrounds, contributing to fear and suspicion of these individuals. Due to the "Othering" phenomenon, stereotypes and prejudices can be engendered, resulting in stigmatisation of some groups, and increasing the fear of terrorism. As a result of Eurocentrism, all societies are judged according to the values and principles of European culture, and deviation from these values or principles is considered abnormal or dangerous. This Eurocentric perspective often overlooks the rich diversity and unique contributions of other cultures around the world. It can cause some people to associate certain groups or individuals with terrorism, resulting in an irrational fear of the "Other" and increased hate crimes and Islamophobia (Deloughery et al., 2012).

As Amin (2010) points out in his analysis of Eurocentrism, European colonialism had a long-lasting impact on societies in the Global South. Historically, colonialism has left former colonies with economic disparities, political instability, and social unrest, which can provide fertile ground for extremist ideologies and terrorist activities. It is imperative that we understand the historical context of terrorism, which is a combination of political, economic, and social factors.

As a means of addressing Eurocentric comments, the promotion of a global and intersectional perspective is imperative. Furthermore, researchers should examine the factors contributing to terrorism in various regions in addition to historical, socioeconomic, and geopolitical contexts. To dispel stereotypes and challenge the notion that terrorism is confined

to certain cultures or religions, this broader understanding would be useful. Research on fear of terrorism should also seek to include a variety of voices and perspectives. It is possible to obtain an accurate and nuanced portrayal of the impact of terrorism by including individuals from diverse backgrounds and regions. Thus, Eurocentric biases can be challenged, and a more equitable and inclusive research environment can be created as a result. It is critical for Eurocentric comments and attitudes to be critically analysed and addressed in research on fears of terrorism. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of terrorism and its impact on society, researchers can challenge these biases. Promoting inclusivity, diversity of perspectives, and acknowledging the complex factors that contribute to terrorism can facilitate a more equitable and informed approach to addressing fear and promoting peace and security.

An evaluation of the study on fear of terrorism, which included an analysis of various comments related to various themes, provides useful information regarding people's perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward this complex issue. In addition to shedding light on the underlying factors that influence individuals' perspectives, these results provide insight into the diverse ways in which individuals perceive and respond to fear of terrorism. The analysis of different themes such as racism, white supremacy, Eurocentrism, displacement violence, and hyper-militarism illustrates the range of perspectives and attitudes held by individuals. Several respondents acknowledged the systemic and structural aspects of terrorist threats, while others focused on external threats posed by terrorist organisations. This highlights the complexity of the issue and the importance of considering multiple perspectives to gain a better understanding of it. Furthermore, it indicates that different individuals may interpret the same event or issue in different ways, resulting in different conclusions.

Several racist remarks are highlighted in the study, emphasising how extremist ideologies influence perceptions of terrorism. It is imperative to understand the dynamics of

white supremacy to address the underlying causes of terrorism and promote social cohesion and equality. Moreover, the study reveals Eurocentric comments that indicate that Western countries pay disproportionate attention to terrorism incidents, often ignoring similar incidents in other countries. Considering terrorism from a global perspective and understanding its impacts across a variety of contexts is crucial to overcoming Eurocentric bias. Furthermore, Eurocentric bias implies the notion that terrorism is a problem that can only be resolved by military force, rather than through other meaningful and proactive measures like investing in communities, addressing inequality, and strengthening democratic institutions. It also demonstrates the unwillingness of Western countries to recognise the systemic racism and inequality (Amin, 2010) which are the root causes of terrorism.

According to one participant, being involved in the world is a necessity, and it is safer now to be outside the European Union because Britain can control who enters and leaves the country. Also, this participant did not agree with being managed by Europe and wanted to return to an imperialist system. This participant's views reflect a sentiment of self-determination and autonomy that is shared by many people in countries that have been colonised or have been subject to other international interventions. The belief that countries should be able to control their own affairs and make their own decisions is often motivated by a desire to protect sovereignty and prevent outside interests from exploiting their resources. However, this participant wished to regain the Eurocentric coloniser image.

We will be better able to understand the fear of terrorism, its consequences, and strategies to address and mitigate its effects as researchers pursue these avenues for further studies and analyses. In the context of terrorism, people who are members of the dominant social class may fear losing their privileges and status because of perceived threats from immigrants or minorities. As a result of their fear of losing social standing, individuals may be

hyper-vigilant and seek out strong leadership to protect their perceived interests. In the meantime, racism and the class system perpetuate negative stereotypes and create an environment of fear and suspicion towards marginalised groups. This ties in with Social Dominance Theory, which suggests that a fear of losing social standing and power can lead to the formation of oppressive systems and oppressive attitudes (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). The fear of rejection causes people to form in-groups and out-groups, with in-groups having greater power and out-groups having less power. As a result of this power imbalance, oppressive systems such as racism and the class system can be established, which perpetuate negative stereotypes and create a climate of fear and suspicion against marginalised groups. The media's portrayal of these groups can further reinforce these biases, resulting in a sense of "us versus them" and an increase in defensiveness due to fear. To create an equitable and inclusive society, it is necessary to address the root causes of relative deprivation and discrimination. It is essential to promote empathy, understanding, and dialogue between social groups as a means of bridging gaps created by fear and defensiveness. Media representation and education can contribute to the reduction of fear and suspicion in a society.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Studies of fear of terrorism provide valuable insight into individuals' perceptions and experiences, but these insights are limited by the following limitations. Because study findings are specific to the participants involved, they may not be representative of the larger population. Considering factors such as sample size, demographics, and study context, it is important to exercise caution when attempting to apply study findings to broader contexts. However, the results can only be used to establish correlations and associations between variables rather than causality. The study may identify factors related to the fear of terrorism, but it cannot determine

whether those factors directly cause the fear or are simply associated with it. Further research and experimental designs are required to establish causal relationships. These results may not reflect all the contextual influences on the fear of terrorism. As a result of socio-political climate, historical events, and cultural differences, individuals' perceptions of and responses to terrorism may be significantly influenced. These contextual nuances may not be fully accounted for in the study's findings, limiting its generalizability to other settings or time periods. Despite providing insight into participants' immediate reactions and experiences, the findings of this study may not adequately reflect long-term effects of terrorism fear. The study's snapshot of participants' perspectives may not fully reflect how fear affects participants in the long run or how effective coping mechanisms can be since fear reactions can change over time.

Since participants' experiences and perspectives are self-reported, the interpretation of results is subjective. As individuals interpret and express their fears and attitudes differently, a study may not capture all subjective experiences associated with fear of terrorism. The study's results may not fully reflect participants' unconscious biases or subtle influences that shape their responses. Most individuals possess implicit biases or are influenced by societal narratives or stereotypes that they are unaware of. These unconscious biases may not be fully reflected in self-reported data, which may affect how individuals perceive terrorism and fear. It is possible that the external validity of the results may be limited by the controlled environment and the research methodology used. Since the study design does not fully replicate the complexity of real-life interactions and situations, participants' responses during the study may differ from their reactions in the real world.

The results of research on fear of terrorism should be interpreted and applied with caution because of these limitations. Through further research, including diverse populations, longitudinal studies, and mixed-method approaches, these limitations can be addressed, and a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter can be gained. Upon completing the

study, further research and analyses may be conducted on fear of terrorism. Other potential research directions are listed below. By conducting longitudinal studies, researchers can gain insight into the long-term consequences of terrorism fear for individuals and communities. To gain a deeper understanding of fear dynamics, one must examine how fear develops over time, the factors that contribute to its persistence or reduction, as well as its impact on various aspects of a person's life. A comparative study could shed light on the cultural, social, and political factors that influence the fear of terrorism in different populations and countries. Developing targeted interventions based on how fear varies across diverse contexts can be achieved by identifying commonalities and differences in people's responses to terrorism. Through the exploration of the intersectionality between fear of terrorism and other social identities, a deeper understanding of how multiple factors intersect to shape people's experiences of fear can be gained. It is important to understand how discrimination and marginalization interact with the fear of terrorism to address this issue in a more inclusive and nuanced way. These include gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Insights into how individuals and communities cope with the fear of terrorism can be gained from research on coping strategies and resilience. Understanding the factors that promote resilience in the face of fear is important to assist individuals and communities in navigating and overcoming the impact of fear.

Also, several limitations exist when examining the fear of terrorism from a philosophical perspective. Existentialism has the disadvantage of being a broad and complex philosophical framework which can be difficult to apply to specific social and political circumstances. Several factors, including political beliefs, social background, and personal experiences, may influence people's responses to the fear of terrorism, as terrorism is a highly emotional and charged issue. Due to these factors, it can be difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the nature and causes of the fear of terrorism.

Furthermore, the existential perspective may not fully consider the complex social, political, and economic factors contributing to the fear of terrorism. Existentialism emphasises the importance of personal experience and responsibility; however, it may overlook the broader systemic issues influencing perceptions of risk and vulnerability.

Lastly, the study of the fear of terrorism is often subject to bias and misinformation, both in terms of media coverage of terrorist incidents as well as public perception. As a result of this, it can be difficult to obtain reliable data and to draw accurate conclusions concerning the nature and causes of the fear of terrorism. It is important to recognise, however, that the existential perspective can provide valuable insights into the experience of fear and its relationship to personal agency and responsibility, as well as other factors contributing to the fear of terrorism. In terms of the methodology, the limitation of IPA for studying fear of terrorism is that the results may be limited to a particular sample and context and may not be generalisable to other populations or contexts. Due to IPA's qualitative nature, it emphasises in-depth exploration of individual lived experiences within a particular context, rather than statistical generalisability (Smith et al., 2009).

Furthermore, a potential limitation of using IPA to study fear of terrorism is that it may be influenced by the bias and interpretation of the researcher. The analysis of participants' experiences may be subject to subjectivity and bias when researchers are actively interpreting and making meaning from participants' experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2006). To mitigate this limitation, it is important for researchers to engage in reflexivity and acknowledge their own biases and assumptions throughout the analysis process However, IPA can still provide valuable insights into individual lived experiences of fear and the meanings they attach to those experiences. Researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the psychological effects of terrorism and how individuals cope by using IPA to explore these experiences deeply.

In addition, IPA studies typically use a small sample size. Often, it is not possible to include many participants due to the intensive nature of the analysis. There is a possibility that the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population due to this factor. IPA is also time-consuming and resource-intensive, so conducting large-scale studies can be challenging. As a result, it may be impossible to collect diverse data from a wide variety of participants who have experienced terrorism fear differently.

Further limitations to the study of fear of terrorism are discussed below. Self-selection bias: there is a possibility that participants in the study self-selected based on their interest in or concern about the topic, thus creating a bias in the results. Social desirability bias: there may have been a bias in the data due to participants' reluctance to disclose their true feelings or experiences for fear of being judged or stigmatised. IPA limitations: while IPA is useful for exploring individual experiences, it is subjective and interpretive, leading to various interpretations. Cross-cultural limitations: different groups may experience and perceive terrorism differently depending on their cultural or socio-economic circumstances, which may affect the study's findings. Time limitations: due to changing political and social circumstances, the study may not reflect people’s current experiences of a fear of terrorism. Considering these limitations and acknowledging them when interpreting the results of the study is essential. Future research should seek to address these limitations to increase the validity and generalisability of the results. The IPA can, however, provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of those who are afraid of terrorism. By exploring participants' accounts, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the psychological, emotional, and social effects of terrorism.

5.6 Future research

As part of this thesis, we examined the psychological, social, and political aspects of fear of terrorism. The conclusion of this study suggests several potential avenues for further research in this area. This section presents a comprehensive overview of potential research directions that can expand our understanding of fear of terrorism and its implications. In addition to longitudinal studies, cross-cultural analyses, intersectionality analyses, media framing and fear, coping mechanisms, collective responses, and policy implications, various research areas have been identified. Researchers can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the fear of terrorism and its effects on individuals and society by following these research paths.

Longitudinal studies: This approach can provide valuable insight into the long-term impact of fear on mental health and well-being and may allow future researchers to engage in longitudinal studies to observe the evolution of fear of terrorism over time. Furthermore, tracking fear levels as they change in response to geopolitical events and media coverage can facilitate a better understanding of the dynamic nature of fear and provide policymakers with valuable information.

Comparative analysis: The identification of contextual factors influencing fear experiences can be enhanced by comparing fear experiences across different regions, cultures, and political contexts. Scholars can gain a deeper understanding of fear's socio-cultural dimensions by comparing fear of terrorism in diverse settings.

Cross-cultural examinations: Identifying the cultural values, beliefs, and norms that shape fear responses among diverse cultural groups can provide insight into the fear of terrorism. To address fear-related concerns and enhance resilience in affected communities, it is important to understand cultural variations in fear.

Intersectionality investigations: The intersection of identity, including race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status, with fear of terrorism must be explored in future research. In addition to highlighting the unique challenges faced by marginalised groups, intersectional lenses can reveal how multiple forms of oppression and discrimination contribute to fear experiences.

Media framing and fear: Identifying potential biases and developing strategies for responsible and ethical journalism, as well as promoting a balanced and informed public discourse, can be accomplished through the analysis of media representations.

Coping mechanisms: Providing evidence-based interventions can be informed by further investigation of coping strategies individuals use to manage their fear of terrorism. When mental health practitioners understand which coping mechanisms are most effective at reducing fear and promoting resilience, they can provide appropriate support to patients.

Collective responses: Communities and societies can gain insights into solidarity, social cohesion, and public mobilisation by studying how they respond to the fear of terrorism collectively. By examining collective responses, we can gain valuable insight into the role of social support networks and community resilience in coping with fear.

Hyper-militaristic comments: Considering novel findings regarding hyper-militaristic comments in this study, it is imperative to examine further the underlying factors that contribute to such perspectives. It is important to note that these findings provide a contribution to the literature on fear of terrorism, as well as implications for interventions and policies aimed at addressing and mitigating the effects of fear. Understanding the factors influencing fear perceptions can help us develop more targeted and effective strategies for addressing terrorism-related concerns and promoting safety, well-being, and resilience.

Impact on policy and public discourse: It is possible to promote evidence-based policymaking by analysing the influence of fear of terrorism on policy decisions and public discourse. The use of fear-driven narratives can contribute to constructive policy interventions by examining of how they perpetuate racism and discrimination. Scholars can expand on these research directions and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of fear of terrorism and its broader implications for individuals and society by following the research directions laid out in this thesis. To address this complex issue more effectively, these proposed research areas could pave the way for more informed and impactful interventions. The study of the fear of terrorism is constantly evolving.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, the study of the fear of terrorism offers valuable insight into a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. Media influence, political behaviour, family dynamics, perceptions of global risk, and displacement of violence are some of the factors contributing to the fear of terrorism, according to the research findings. IPA facilitated a deeper understanding of how individuals experience fear and its effects. Concerning the fear of terrorism, the results highlighted defensiveness, control, obsession, helplessness, media restrictions, family as a sore point, and vulnerability as resulting from the fear of terrorism. Fear influences individuals' behaviours, choices, and perceptions of safety and security in a variety of ways. As well as racist and white supremacist comments, the study revealed Eurocentric and hyper-militaristic comments, underscoring the need to challenge these ideologies to foster a more inclusive community. This contextualises the study within existing theoretical frameworks and highlights its contributions to the field by relating the research findings to academic references, including Edward Said, Sartre, Camus, Foucault, Arun Kundnani, Franz Fanon, and Samir Amin. The study’s limitations included the potential for bias in data collection, an issue around the representativeness of the sample, and the challenge of capturing the full complexity of the fear of terrorism.

It is, however, a significant study that contributes to the understanding of terrorism's impact on individuals and society despite these limitations. To address and mitigate fear-related concerns, policymakers, mental health practitioners, and the public can use the results of the study to develop evidence-based strategies. Using these findings as a foundation, future research on the fear of terrorism can explore the long-term effects of fear, the role of social and cultural factors, and interventions that reduce fear and its negative consequences. To ensure that the study's impact extends outside academia and contributes to meaningful change in society, the research findings can be disseminated through academic publications, conferences,

media engagement, workshops, and community partnerships. To promote resilience, security, and well-being in the face of global challenges, it is essential to understand and address the fear of terrorism.

The experience of fear is a central theme in existential philosophy, as it is intimately tied to the experience of freedom and choice. Fear is a natural response to the uncertainty and unpredictability of life, but it can also be a powerful motivator for action. According to existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, fear is an essential aspect of our freedom, as it reminds us that we are always at risk of making the wrong choices and facing the consequences of our actions. This sense of responsibility can be overwhelming, but it is also the foundation of our ability to act authentically and shape our own lives.

Anger dynamics are another important theme in existential philosophy, as they reflect how individuals respond to the challenges and injustices of life. Anger can be a powerful motivator for action, but it can also be destructive if not properly channelled. According to philosopher Scheler (2017), anger is a natural response to injustice and serves as a call to action to correct social wrongs. However, Scheler (2017), also notes that anger can become pathological if it is not directed towards constructive ends. To avoid this, individuals must learn to channel their anger in productive ways that seek to address the root causes of social injustice.

Defensiveness is a common response to the challenges and uncertainties of life, as individuals seek to protect themselves from harm and maintain their sense of self. However, according to existentialist Rollo May (2010), defensiveness can also be a source of psychological distress, as it prevents individuals from engaging authentically with the world around them. May argues that individuals must learn to be open and vulnerable to fully engage with the challenges of life and create meaningful connections with others (May 2010).

Helplessness is another theme that is closely tied to the existential perspective, as it reflects how individuals confront the limitations of their own agency and control. According to Heidegger (1962), humans are fundamentally "thrown" into the world, and must confront the uncertainties and limitations of their own existence. This sense of helplessness can be overwhelming, but it is also the foundation of our ability to create meaning in our lives and engage authentically with the world around us.

In conclusion, the themes of "Experience of fear", "Anger dynamics", "Defensiveness", and "Helplessness" are all closely tied to the existential perspective. These themes reflect how individuals confront the uncertainties and challenges of life and the ways in which they respond to these challenges. Through a deeper understanding of these themes, individuals can develop the skills and insights necessary to navigate the complexities of existence with authenticity and resilience.

Moreover, the fear of terrorism is a complex phenomenon that has significant implications for individuals, society, and global security. From an existential perspective, the experience of fear, anger dynamics, defensiveness, and helplessness are key themes that shape the way individuals cope with the fear of terrorism. This study has highlighted the importance of understanding the psychological impact of terrorism and the need for effective coping strategies and interventions for those experiencing fear. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the role of Eurocentrism in shaping understandings of existentialism and the anxiety of terrorism. Eurocentrism has often influenced the way these themes are perceived and interpreted, leading to a limited perspective that fails to account for the diverse experiences and cultural contexts in which fear and helplessness manifest. By challenging Eurocentric narratives and embracing a more inclusive approach, this study has provided a deeper understanding of how different individuals and communities navigate the existential challenges posed by the fear of terrorism. Furthermore, by acknowledging the influence of Eurocentrism

and challenging Orientalist and Occidentalist narratives, the study has delineated a more comprehensive and culturally sensitive understanding of the existential themes related to the fear of terrorism. This inclusive approach will not only allow for a deeper analysis of individual and collective responses to fear but also pave the way for effective interventions and strategies that address the diverse needs and experiences of people from various cultural backgrounds.

The study's contributions to counter-terrorism strategies, improving public awareness and education, and global security underscore the need for continued research in this field. Future research can focus on the effectiveness of different coping strategies for individuals experiencing fear of terrorism, the impact of culture and socio-economic status on the experience of fear, and the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of the fear of terrorism. The dissemination of findings is critical to promoting a better understanding of the fear of terrorism and its impact on individuals and society. This study can be used as a foundation for further research and can inform the development of interventions and policies aimed at addressing the psychological impact of terrorism.

The notion that the human brain is predisposed to the idea of God, as proposed by Immanuel Kant, suggests that faith and belief are deeply ingrained in our psyche from birth. This inherent inclination towards spirituality can be exploited by various actors, including extremist groups and authoritarian regimes, to manipulate and control populations. When individuals are bombarded with messages of fear and insecurity, whether through terrorism or other means, they may seek solace and reassurance in religious beliefs or other ideologies. This natural inclination towards faith makes people more susceptible to the influence of religious sects and extremist ideologies that promise protection and salvation in the face of adversity. This notion is further supported by Terror Management Theory as mentioned previously.

In summary, the fear of terrorism is a significant challenge that requires a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. By understanding the existential themes that shape the experience of fear and developing effective coping strategies, individuals and society can better navigate this complex phenomenon and promote greater resilience in the face of terrorism.

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Appendix A Interview Questions

Questions asked in the interviews:

1.	**What are your thoughts regarding the likelihood of a terrorist attack taking place in London?**
2.	**Have your experiences of living with fear of terrorism changed over time? If so, what examples can you provide?**
3.	**How has living with the fear of terrorism affected your life?**
4.	**How have you experienced living in a country where you may be at risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack?**
5.	**How does the fear of terrorist attacks affect your daily life? Please provide examples.**
6.	**In what ways do you cope with the fear of terrorism?**

Appendix B Transcript and Themes

R: How do you see the likelihood of a terrorist attack in London? **P:** Ehhh, I don't see it quite far away because the last 10 years the Islamic extremism and fundamentalist religious groups are growing so fast that it becomes very popular around UK. So, I think the government need to take some precautions around it. **R:** Has your experience living with fear of terrorism changed over time, if so, could you give examples? **P:** Hmmm ehhh, no I think the fear against terrorism is the same since it was started to be used as a tool to get what you want for the group. There are always fears there and it's been the same for centuries I think it hasn't changed that much. **R:** What is your experience of living with the fear of terrorism? **P:** Well, me personally I am part of the world, so I don't see it as personal problem, it's a problem for the whole humanity it can happen anywhere at any time to anyone, it doesn't affect my daily life that much. But of course, when we see people getting wounded and attacked is worrying. We are waiting for the politician to take it seriously and go to the core sources of terrorism so that we don't live with this fear. **R:** What's your experience of living in a country where you are maybe the potential victim of terrorist attack? **P:** Ehhh compared to some other countries UK is not very close to attacks like that.		Helplessness Helplessness/Acceptance/Comparison

However, of course it can happen in the UK as well. But it doesn't affect our daily life as much as I said previously. Human nature cannot live with that fear all the time therefore we are quite lucky over here compared to other countries and poor part of the world.		Fear/Anger/Frustration
R: To what extend does the fear of terrorist attack affect your daily life and how, could you give some examples.		
P: Ehhh sometimes when we read about attacks in the newspapers and when we watch footages on TV of course you fear a bit of fear like it's very close to us. But as human we tend to forget very quickly. We only think about it and fear it in the week or weeks when it publishes or happens in the TV then we move on quickly to forget until we get reminded again.		Comparison/Fear/Confusion
R: How do you cope with fear of terrorism?		
P: Ehhh, by looking at it in a multi-national as well as multi-humanitarian way because it will not only happen to me or my friends and family. It can happen to anyone in this planet, so I am not the only one who could be the victim potentially. If it happens it happens, we can't do much about it! So compared to other fears we people are learning to live with this reality and this fear. Otherwise, life can get unbearable. I still need to go to work and socialize however sometimes we get reminded by the news and I do think what if etc.		Acceptance/Helplessness

Appendix C Support Services

Psychotherapists and Psychotherapy organisations registered with UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) - www.psychotherapy.org.uk/find-a-therapist

Psychotherapists/Counsellors and Psychotherapy/Counselling organisations registered with British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) - www.bacp.co.uk/search/Therapists

Organisations offering free counselling sessions

Mind: supports people with mental health distress

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans: supports people experiencing feelings of distress or despair

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

Phone: 0808 800 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm)

NHS free talking therapies or counselling

www.nhs.uk/cond/free-therapy-or-counselling/

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

Appendix D Debrief Sheet

Date:

Debrief Sheet

The Department of Health and Social Sciences

Middlesex University

Hendon

London NW4 4BT

10/8/2022

Title: ***The fear of Terrorism***

Researcher: Seyfullah Karacan (Sk@live.mdx.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Dr Tarek Younes (office@nspc.org.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of the above research. Research into the experience of fear of Terrorism. Your contribution to this research and the wider field of knowledge is extremely valuable and appreciated. The research may help individuals with understanding fear terrorism from an existential perspective.

This might also benefits mental health practitioners, and researchers understand more about the impact of fear terrorism.

What happens next?

I invite you to reflect upon what we have discussed today, you may consider if you would like to share any further thoughts or reflections on our interview today and ask any further questions needed to compete your understanding of the aims of the research and your participation in it.

Samaritans - 116 123

Shout text line – text 85258

The researcher can possibility signpost you to other avenues of support should you require them.

What will happen to the data?

At the outset, it's the assurance that at no point in the research will you be identifiable. A pseudonym will be provided, and any identifying features will be deleted or coded. Your anonymity is a priority.

All data, including the original recording will be stored on an encrypted devise that is password protected. The devise will be further secured in a locked filer. Access to the original data will be limited to the researcher. In accordance with GDPR you have the right to request access to your data at any point for as long as it is held.

Anonymised data will be held securely for a period of 10 years in accordance with GDPR guidelines. Any identifying data will be kept securely and separately to identifying data. The data you provide will be used for analysis and potentially for subsequent publication, for example in a doctoral thesis, peer reviewed journal article, or books.

What if I want to withdraw from the study?

You may withdraw from the study at any time up until the point that the data analysis begins in April 2023, without giving a reason. If you wish to withdraw, please contact me and I will arrange this immediately.

What if I have any further questions or wish to make a complaint?

You are free to contact the researcher at any time if you wish to ask further questions. If you wish to complain about the conduct of the study they should get in touch with my supervisor (details above) or The Principal, New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, London, NW6 1DR, Email: admin@nspc.org.uk.

Thank you again for your contribution.

Seyfullah Karacan

Appendix E Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

The Department of Health and Social Sciences

Middlesex University

Hendon

London NW4 4BT

Date: 10/8/2022

Title: ***The fear of Terrorism***

Researcher: Seyfullah Karacan (Sk@live.mdx.ac.uk)

Supervisors: Dr Tarek Younes (office@nspc.org.uk)

Invitation paragraph

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. Below is some information about the project that will help clarify the purpose and the nature of the research. If there is anything that you are unclear about, or would like further information on, please do not hesitate to contact myself on the email address provided.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research is intended for submission as part of a doctoral thesis in counselling psychology. In this study, we aim to explore the question of what existential factors are present in the experience of living with the fear of terrorism. This research will complement existing research on terrorism in the following ways: Through qualitative methodological exploration, it will complement existing studies in the field of terrorism research. Furthermore, it intends to convey and incorporate theories related to terrorism into existential theory and philosophy. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate a unique result.

The study is focused on collaborating with current ideas to enrich knowledge that is already applicable. It is anticipated that the study result will theoretically be helpful in the clinical and therapeutic context in terms of offering more, although sample-specific, insight into how anxiety, angst, and dread unfold within the context of terrorism.

Why have I been chosen?

You are receiving this document because you have responded to a recruitment advertisement asking for ten participants who self-identify and report of being afraid of terrorism and residing in London in the United Kingdom.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. If you agree to take part, you will be able to withdraw from the study at any point, without needing to provide an explanation, up until April

2023 when the results will begin to be processed. It is the reassurances that at no point in the research will you be identifiable.

What is involved?

Firstly, we will go through the inclusion criteria for the research.

The inclusion criteria for the research:

- Men and women who currently live in London.
- Due to cultural variations, staying centred on one geographical area would help to make the study more illustrative of a homogenous population.
- People who self-identify and report of being afraid of terrorism

Once eligibility has been confirmed and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins. I will go through the consent form with you to ensure you have fully understood what you are consenting to. The researcher will invite you to attend an online interview on a secure platform such as Zoom for semi-structured interview. The interview will last for approximately 50 minute. You will not be asked further questions or details other than the questions in the study.

1) What are your thoughts regarding the likelihood of a terrorist attack taking place in London?

2) Have your experiences of living with fear of terrorism changed over time? If so, what examples can you provide?

3. How has living with the fear of terrorism affected your life?

2) How have you experienced living in a country where you may be at risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack?

How does the fear of terrorist attacks affect your daily life, and how? Please provide examples.

6) In what ways do you cope with the fear of terrorism?

Straight after the interview the researcher will take time to debrief you and ask how you experienced taking part in the research.

What are the possible disadvantages to taking part?

It is unlikely that your participation in this research will result in harm to you. It is possible that discussing your personal experiences and opinions on global as well as individual subjects like this may be distressing. There will be no requirement that you discuss your experiences directly, rather you will be asked to discuss the effects of your experiences on your life. In the event that you wish to pause or terminate the interview at any time, you will be able to do so without hesitation. Following our interview, you will receive a debrief. You may express your experience with me at any point during the process, and my supervisor's contact information has been provided for your convenience. In the event that you require further assistance, you will be provided with information regarding support communities and organizations.

What are the possible advantages of taking part?

It is not uncommon for people who experience fear of threat to be forgotten. You have the opportunity to shed light on a subject that has not been adequately explored. In light of the apparent gaps in literature and research regarding living with terror threats in the UK from an existential perspective, the study is designed to examine the phenomenon of living with a

constant threat of terrorism in greater depth through the lens of your personal lived experiences, using established theories regarding terrorism and existentialism to take an existential approach.

What will happen to the data?

Firstly, it is the reassurances that at no point in the research will you be identifiable. A pseudonym will be provided and identifying features will either be coded or not used. Your anonymity is a priority. The researcher will transcribe the interview and only the researcher and research supervisor will be permitted to access the data,

All data will be stored on an encrypted devise that is password protected. The devise will be further secured in a locked filer. Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and the two research supervisors. In accordance with GDPR you have the right to request access to your data at any point for as long as it is held. All data will be retained by the researcher for a required period of ten years. The anonymised data will be kept separately from personal details such as your name and contact details, to ensure not links can be made between them. Data will be deleted in accordance with data protection procedures by the researcher after the 10-year period.

The research will be written up into a Doctoral thesis which will be held in Middlesex University and the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling research repository. The repositories have limited access to students and academic staff only. The possibility of the thesis being adapted for publication exists. Confidentiality and anonymity will further be assured in this event.

Who has organised or funded this research?

This research is self-funded and organised by me with the support of supervisors from NSPC.

Consent

I will give thorough information and will also go through the consent form prior to asking for you to sign.

Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. The NSPC ethics Sub-Committees have reviewed and approved this research.

Concluding section

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, it is greatly appreciated. If you would like to take part in the research, please sign and return the attached consent form and the researcher will be in contact to make further arrangements. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher on the above email.

Appendix F Consent Form

Middlesex University London

Middlesex University School of Science and Technology

Psychology Department

Written Informed Consent

Title of study and academic year: **The fear of terrorism** (2022 & 2023)

Researcher's name: **Seyfullah Karacan** (Sk@live.mdx.ac.uk)

Supervisor's name and email: Dr Tarek Younes (office@nspc.org.uk)

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.
- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary.
- I understand that data will be collected in the form of recorded interviews, as well as any supplementary materials that I choose to provide to the researcher, and that all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that my data will not be identifiable, including the use of pseudonyms and removal of any place names or details which may identify me.
- I understand that I can ask for my data to be withdrawn from the project without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so until data analysis begins in August 2022.
- I give consent for my anonymised data to be held securely in the researcher's own home for a period of 10 years in accordance with GDPR guidelines and understand this will not be shared with any 3rd parties.
- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication for example in academic publication and conferences, and I provide my consent that this may occur.
  I consent to completing two questionnaires to confirm I meet the research criteria and taking part in a recorded interview thereafter.
- I agree to providing details of my address, and contact details for myself, my next of kin and GP.

_____ _____

Print name Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Science and Technology Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

Please provide the following details: These details are in case of an emergency during the research

Your Address and contact number:

Next of kin name and contact number:

GP name, address, and contact number:

Appendix G Participants Advertisement

The purpose of the research?

This research is intended for submission as part of a doctoral thesis in counselling psychology. In this study, we aim to explore the question of what existential factors are present in the experience of living with the fear of terrorism? This research will complement existing research on terrorism in the following ways: Through qualitative methodological exploration, it will complement existing studies in the field of terrorism research. Furthermore, it intends to convey and incorporate theories related to terrorism into existential theory and philosophy. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate a unique result.

What are the possible advantages of taking part?

It is not uncommon for people who experience fear of threat to be forgotten. You have the opportunity to shed light on a subject that has not been adequately explored. In light of the apparent gaps in literature and research regarding living with terror threats in the UK from an existential perspective, the study is designed to examine the phenomenon of living with a constant threat of terrorism in greater depth through the lens of your personal lived experiences, using established theories regarding terrorism and existentialism to take an existential approach.

The criteria for participation:

You have been invited as a potential participant because you have self-identified as meeting the following criteria:

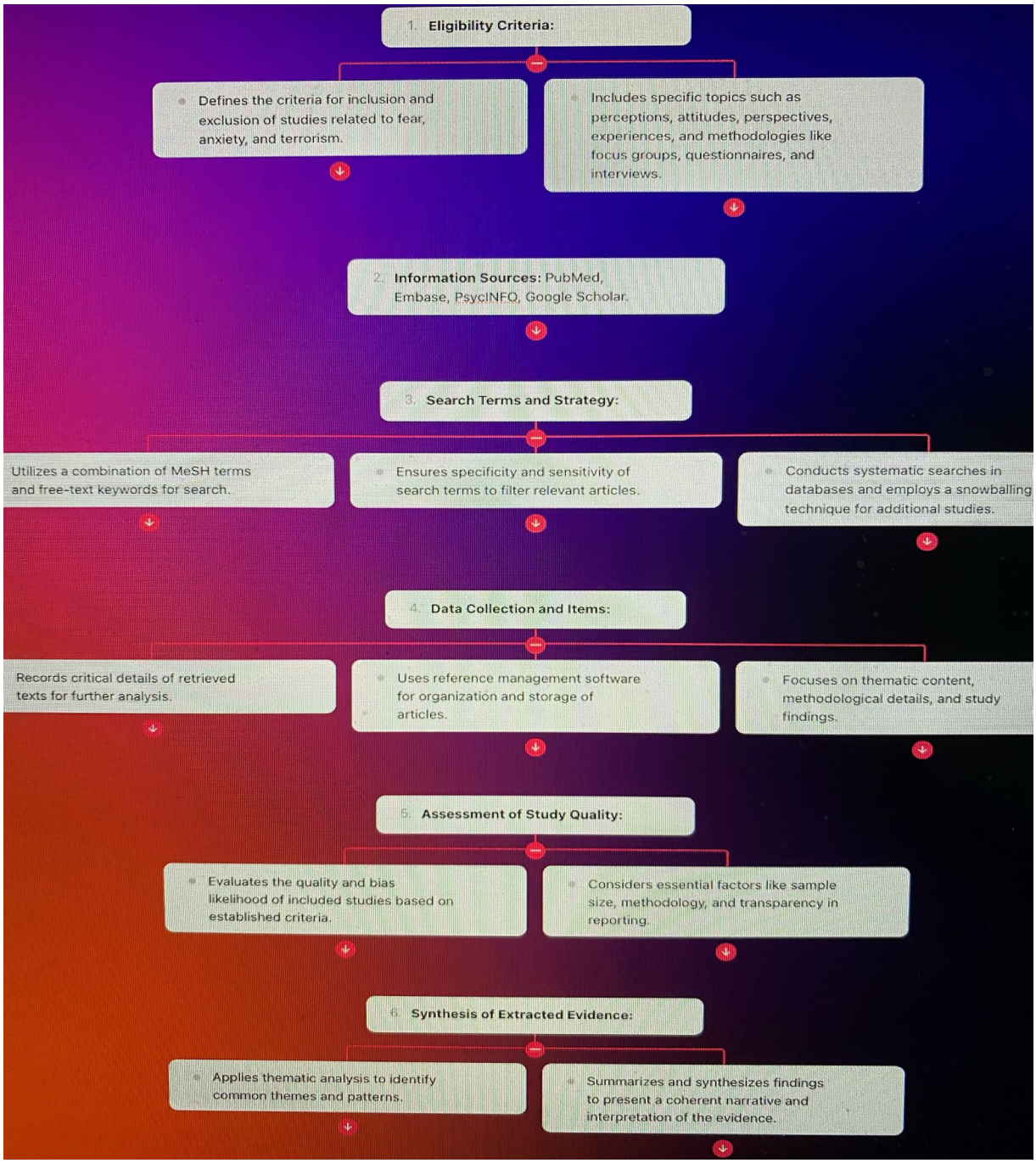
- Men and women who currently live in London.
- Due to cultural variations, staying centred on one geographical area would help to make the study more illustrative of a homogenous population.
- People who self-identify and report of being afraid of terrorism.

Participating in this research exploration is entirely voluntary.

Thank you for your interest in the above research. I warmly invite you to get in touch if you would like to take part or have any further questions. My name is Seyfullah Karacan and I am currently a student on a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology & Psychotherapy with the New School of Psychotherapy & Counselling, in partnership with Middlesex University. You can contact me at: NSPC address or my email: Sk@live.mdx.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the study, you may contact my supervisor, Dr Vaughan Dutton, contactable via NSPS on telephone: 0044 (0) 20 7435 8067

Appendix H Prisma Flow Chart



Appendix I Summary of Search Strategy

Search terms used in databases.
exp Perceptions/ OR exp attitudes/ OR exp perspectives/ OR exp feedback/ OR exp experiences/ OR exp Ethnology/ OR exp Ethnography/ OR exp Focus Group/ OR exp questionnaires/ OR exp Surveys/ OR exp interviews/ OR (terror* attitude* OR terror* perspective* OR terror* experience* OR terror* feedback* OR terror* experience* OR ethno* OR ethnograph OR focus group* OR narrative analys?s OR thematic analys?s OR discourse analys?s OR content analys?s OR health?care survey* OR questionnaire* OR interview*)
AND
exp Fear/ OR exp Frightened/ OR exp Frightening/OR exp Afraid/ OR exp Anxiety/ OR exp Anxious/ OR exp Death Anxiety/ OR exp Alarm/ OR exp Panic/ OR exp Worry/ OR exp Angst/OR exp Distress/ OR exp Existential/ OR exp Existential Dread/ OR Existentialism/ OR Existential Fear/ OR Existential Crisis/ OR Existential/ OR Scared/ OR (Fear* OR Frighten* OR Anxi* OR Death*?Anx* OR Alarm* OR Panic* OR Worry* OR Angst* OR Distress* OR Existential*?Dread* OR Existential* OR Existential*?Fear* OR Existential*?Crisis* OR Scar*)
AND
exp Terorism/ OR exp Terrorist/ OR exp Terror/ OR exp Global Terror/ OR exp Terrorist Incident/ OR exp Terrorism Trauma/ OR exp Terrorist Attack/ OR exp Terrorist Bomb/ Or exp Terrorist Hijack/ OR exp Cyber Terrorism/ OR Terrorist Kidnapping/ OR exp Domestic Terrorism/ OR exp International Terrorism/ OR exp Terror Threat/ OR Terror Security OR Domestic Security/ OR (Terror* OR global*?terror* OR terror*?trauma* OR terror*?incident OR terror*?attack* OR terror*?bomb* OR terror*?hijak* OR cyber*?terror* OR terror*?kidnap* OR domestic*?terror* OR international*?terror* OR terror*?threat* OR terror*?securit* OR domestic*?security*)
PubMed, Embase, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Social Care Online, ProQuest, AMED, ASSIA
667 found
120 duplicates
119 Google Scholar