Durham E-Theses

Engaging Representations The interpretation of Islam and Muslims in the News by a non-Muslim audience

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Abstract

Inspired by the apparent overtly negative coverage of Islam and Muslims by the mainstream press, this thesis asks the research question: *In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?* As the media plays an important role in society, the analysis of the influences of the media on a person's ideas and conceptualisations of people of another religious persuasion is an important social issue. News reports about Islam and Muslims commonly relate stories that discuss terrorism, violence or other unwelcome or irrational behaviour, or the lack of integration and compatibility of Muslims and Islam with western values and society. Yet there is little research on how non-Muslims in England engage with and are affected by media reports about Islam and Muslims. To address this gap of knowledge, a content and discourse analysis of news stories was undertaken and then verbal narratives or thoughts and actions of participants were elicited through fieldwork using focus groups.

The data reveals personal stories that point towards the normativity of news stories and their negotiated reception patterns. Individual orientations towards the media as a primary information source proved to be a significant factor behind the importance of news reports, with individually negotiated personal encounters with Muslims or Islam further affecting the meaning-making process. Participants negotiated media reports to fit their existing outlook on Islam and Muslims. This existing outlook was constructed through, and simultaneously supported by, news reports about Muslims and Islam. The findings suggest a co-dependency and co-productivity between news reports about Islam and Muslims, and participant responses.

This research clearly shows: The utility of focus groups in religious studies, the usefulness of a hermeneutical framework in the field of media studies, and demonstrates that participant responses are (re) productions of local and personal contextuality. These conclusions point to a need for further research into the consequences of socially constructed depictions of Islam and Muslims and their influence on human thoughts and actions.

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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

Engaging Representations

The interpretation of Islam and Muslims in the News by a non-Muslim audience

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Statement of Copyright

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The news does not tell you how the seed is germinating in the ground, but it may tell you when the first sprout breaks the surface. It may even tell you what somebody says is happening to the seed underground. It may tell you that the sprout did not come up at the time it was expected. The more points, then, at which any happening can be fixed, objectified, measured, named, the more points there are at which news can occur.

Walter Lippmann

__Introduction__

Over the past few decades, an increasing number of predominantly white people are uncertain as to what the makeup of Britain really is. Initially the presence of 'others' was used as a marker to gauge to what extent one is or is not British. Despite ethnic and religious differences and varieties in social status, the presence of others has raised doubts about Britain's value system and aroused the suspicion that what is truly British is also somehow contained in these 'others'. One avenue for exploring and discussing this is in the media.

Edward Said has suggested that in order to understand the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain, the discourse of Orientalism needs to be accounted for. [1]

Michel Foucault described discourse as several statements formed into a system, consisting of objects, types of statements, concepts, themes. A structure is brought to this system through the ordering of the statements according to the correlations and functionings of these statements.[2] In turn, these statements constitute an object, and can transform it, based on the corpus of knowledge that underpins the way of looking at this object in accordance with the presupposed system of knowledge.[3] Edward Said implements this as follows:

> I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of discourse … to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.[4]

Muslims in Britain can be analysed in the same manner. The media is one method for managing and producing the image of Muslims, in a political, sociological, ideological, and imaginative manner. Because of the heterogeneity of discourse, *"what may appear to be the unifying categories of a discursive field - categories such as 'madness' or 'biology'[5], or, in this study 'religion'- in fact receive divergent interpretations and thus determine 'spaces of dissension'[6]. From this perspective there is no unifying schema or field that synoptically captures divergent discourses".*[7] Therefore, using this conception of discourse, the way that Muslims and Islam are discussed in the news is through a collection of statements formed by a system, through the ordering of those statements, per the rules that categorise those statements. The discourse of

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[1] Said, E. W., *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 3.
[2] Foucault, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Smith, A. M. S. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 41-43.
[3] Ibid., 35-36.
[4] Said, E. W., *Orientalism*, 3.
[5] Foucault, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 40-49.
[6] Ibid., 152.
[7] Bowen, J. R., *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 10-11.

Muslims in the British Press is the result of political, sociological, military, ideological, scientific, and imaginative orientations. In turn, these are produced by the dominant group(s) in British society. As a consequence, these statements constitute how Muslims and Islam are perceived and can transform their understanding based upon the way of looking at Muslims and Islam in accordance with the presupposed system of knowledge. L.R. Tucker defines and notes the importance of the analysis of media frames because, "through the analysis of media frames, researchers can gain a better understanding of how media discourse, as a set of organizational voices, works to promote specific interests that support the dominance of particular groups and ideas in society".[8] However, one has to bear in mind that there exists a plurality of voices and groups that are dominant, each with their own agenda and strategic interests, and therefore a plurality of dominant discourses.

Public discussions of Muslims in Britain are often superficial at best because many are unable to grasp the complexity of the issue in an open and critical manner. The predictable narrative of moderates versus conservatives reinforces a narrow (Orientalist) framework for discussing Islam and Muslims in Britain. The notion that more government intervention can solve the 'problem' is deficient because it reduces Muslims to subjects of government suspicion, control, and in need of management.

The demand that what is needed is a change in the 'moral behaviour' of Muslims, especially poor disenfranchised men, who, the government says, are either radicalised or in danger of being radicalised, highlights the actions of a few while ignoring the possible government responsibility for the circumstances that created the conditions for radicalisation in the first place. This closely resembles what William Cavanaugh describes in *The Myth of Religious Violence*:

> The myth of religious violence serves on the domestic scene to marginalize discourses and practices labelled religious. The myth helps to reinforce adherence to a secular social order and the nation state that guarantees it. In foreign affairs, the myth of religious violence contributes to the presentation of non-western and non-secular social orders as inherently irrational and prone to violence. In doing so, it helps to create a blind spot in Western thinking about Westerners' own complicity with violence. The myth of religious violence is also useful, therefore, for justifying secular violence against religious actors; their irrational violence must be met with rational violence.[9]

By and large, the presentation of Muslims and the Islamic faith in the news adheres to Cavanaugh's description. But the foreign origins of Islam, has meant that his comment about foreign affairs describes

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[8] Tucker, L. R., "The Framing of Calvin Klein: A Frame Analysis of Media Discourse About the August 1995 Calvin Klein Jeans Advertising Campaign," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 (1998): 144.

[9] Cavanaugh, W. T., *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 225-26.

actions that are implemented domestically against Muslims in Britain. For example, in 2001 there were violent riots in Oldham, Bradford, Leeds, and Burnley. The riots were short but intense and were the worst ethnically motivated riots in Britain since 1985. They were apparently a culmination of ethnic tensions between South Asian-Muslim communities and a variety of other local community groups. According to one author the consequences of the riots were that:

> ...[there] was a declaration of the end of multiculturalism and an assertion that Asians, Muslims in particular, would have to develop 'a greater acceptance of the principal national institutions' and assimilate to 'core British values' ... [Government had also] mistakenly presented this fragmentation as the result of an over-tolerance of diversity which allowed non-white communities to 'self-segregate'.[10]

Public discussions of Muslims in Britain are often engaging with if not asserting the notion that Asians, Muslims in particular, need to develop 'a greater acceptance of the principal national institutions' and assimilate to 'core British values'. The above quote also highlights the demand for further regulation and surveillance of Muslims in order to manage non-white communities.

Within this paradigm, Muslims are seen as a 'problem', rather than as fellow inhabitants of Britain with problems. Discussions about Muslim minorities or Islam in Britain is relegated to the 'problems' posed for the majority of people rather than what the treatment of Muslims says about Britain as a whole and how Muslims are affected by these dynamics. This framework encourages support to government initiatives directed at dealing with 'problems'. This paradigm simultaneously denies Muslims the freedom to fail and blames the 'problems' on Islam or Muslims themselves. In this way, public discussion of the social injustices Muslims may be subject to, is avoided. Muslims are to be 'integrated' into 'our' society and culture; they are to behave like us. This fails to recognise, however, that the presence, trials and tribulations of Muslims are constitutive elements of British society.

Talal Asad argues that *"Muslims are included within and excluded from Europe at one and the same time in a special way, and that this has less to do with the "absolutist Faith" of Muslims living in a secular environment and more with European notions of "culture" and "civilization" and "the secular state", "majority", and "minority"."*[11] In order to engage in a serious discussion of Muslims in Britain, we must begin not with the problems of Muslims, but with the problems of Muslims and the problems of British society. What is considered problematic is a direct result of these particular notions and definitions. These problems are also located in flaws which are rooted in historic inequalities such as imperialism, and have produced longstanding

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[10] Kundnani, A., *Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism* (London, UK: Institute of Race Relations, 2009), 23.
[11] Asad, T., *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 159.
Douglas Davies, in personal correspondence, has mentioned that this is not necessarily unlike non-Muslims living under certain interpretations of Sharia law. For a work on that issue one could look at: Al-Aayed, S. H., *The Rights of Non-Muslims in the Islamic World* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar Eshbelia, 2002).

stereotypes. Media discourse sets up the parameters and terms for discussing Muslims and Islam. It shapes the perceptions and the responses to the issues presented as associated with Islam and Muslims. Within this framework, the burden falls on the 'other' to do all the work necessary for integration.

The emergence of Islamist sentiments among young Muslims can be seen as a resistance against complying with this vision of what British society should be. An example of such sentiments can be found in what Innes Bowen describes as follows: *"British-trained [Deobandi[12]] seminary graduates returning to their community were at least as conservative and anti-integration as their foreign educated predecessors: 'Many of them advocate a 100 per cent Deobandi lifestyle'."*[13] Resistance identities emerge on the basis of values and ideas that are different or even opposed to the dominant discourse(s).[14] Other examples of subversions of compliance with dominant discourses by Muslims in Britain are highlighted by a variety of research works. Some examples of such research looked at Muslim identity formation in children[15], young adults[16] and adults[17].

In the British context, media should be considered a disseminator and facilitator of public discussion. Yet the images and narratives they broadcast "incarnate the ideal of a large part of society".[18] Yet until public and media discourse fully accept the equality of Muslims, Islamist movements will probably continue to exist. Islamism, understood as a contemporary incarnation of Muslim nationalism or solidarity, is perhaps an attempt to define a Muslim identity in a society perceived to be hostile. The presence of Muslims in Britain challenges the existing paradigm of what British society is, and their demands for recognition and equality challenges the hegemony of the dominant group(s). However, as long as the perception that Islam is embattled by outside forces is prevalent among Islamic communities, it provides credibility to radical movements and organisations[19], further entrenching paradigms of cultural conflict and incompatible values.

In this context, what is the role of the media? How do non-Muslims understand and interpret news reports about Muslims and Islam and how does that underpin their actions and conceptualisations?

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[12] The Deobandi movement is a revivalist movement within Hanafi Islam. It originated in 1867 in Deoband, India, where the Deobandi Dar Al-Uloom is situated. The movement was started by Shah Waliullah Dehlawi amjd was a reaction to British colonialism in India. For more information please see: Reetz, D., "The Deoband Universe: What Makes a Transcultural and Transnational Educational Movement of Islam?," *Comparative Studies of South asia, africa and the Middle East* 27/1 (2007).

[13] Bowen, I., *Medina in Birmingham, Najaf in Brent: Inside British Islam* (London, UK: Hurst, 2014), 28.

[14] Castells, M., *The Power of Identity*, The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture (Cambridge, MA - Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997), 8.

[15] Scourfield, J. et al., *Muslim Childhood: Religious Nurture in a European Context* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[16] Nilsson Dehanas, D., "Elastic Orthodoxy: The Tactics of Young Muslim Identity in the East End of London," in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Dessing, N. M., et al. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013); Otterbeck, J., "Experiencing Islam: Narratives About Faith by Young Adult Muslims in Malmö and Copenhagen," ibid. (

[17] Yasmeen, S. and Markovic, N., *Muslim Citizens in the West: Spaces and Agents of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

[18] Eliade, M., *Myth and Reality* (Waveland Press, 1998), 185.

[19] Dehanas, D. N., *London Youth, Religion, and Politics: Engagement and Activism from Brixton to Brick Lane* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 193.

This project addresses two themes: Firstly, Islam and its representation in the media, in particular the under-researched empirical study of media representations of Islam and Muslims. Secondly, it examines how media constructions and their reception continue to shape assumptions about the nature of Islam and perhaps guide public attitudes towards (British) Muslims. The project will draw on empirical methodologies in the study of media reception and theoretical approaches of cultural studies to highlight how meaning and social practices come together in this particular area of investigation. In turn, this research will make a significant contribution to the field of media, religion, and culture, and like John R. Bowen, *"my focus is on the field of debate and discussion in which participants construct discursive linkages to texts, phrases, and ideas held to be part of the universal tradition of Islam."*[20]

As a signifier and source of information for an increasing percentage of the population, the manner by which Muslims and Islam are portrayed in the media, affects the way they are perceived and understood by those receiving the media. This is because the media creates, reflects and enforces social representations. David Voas and Rodney Ling describe the feelings towards Muslims in Britain as follows:

> Firstly, some of the antipathy towards Muslims comes from people with a generalised dislike of anyone different. Secondly, a larger subset of the population – about a fifth – responds negatively only to Muslims. Finally, relatively few people feel unfavourable towards any other religious or ethnic group on its own … conceivably there is a spill-over effect, so that people who are worried about Muslims come to feel negatively about 'others' in general. In any case, the adverse reaction to religion in Britain and the United States towards Muslims deserves to be the focus of policy on social cohesion, because no other group elicits so much disquiet.[21]

English newspapers and television news networks address Islam and Muslims in several ways. It is important to understand how they are described and the effect that is brought about among the English public. The interpretation of reality in news stories is done in light of the outlook held by people, whose views and behaviour toward others are to a large extent informed by their perception and interpretation of reality. This is informed by media discourse. Therefore, by looking at the way people understand and construct meaning from media (reception study) we can begin to understand how people's conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims is being shaped by the media.

My aim is to analyse the reception of the English news media's representations of Islam and the effect that media has on the conceptualisation of Islam among English people as a result. With that in mind my primary objectives are: (1) To analyse media representations of Islam; (2) to analyse how media portrayals are received and used in the construction of meaning(s) and understanding(s) for the viewer/consumer; (3) To

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[20] Bowen, J. R., *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society*, 8.

[21] Voas, D. and Ling, R., "Religion in Britain and the United States," in *British Social Attitudes: The 26th Report*, ed. Park, A., et al. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), 80-81.

consider the relationship between Islam and English society through the lenses of how people respond to media reporting on Islam and Muslims; (4) to gauge the extent that media reports inform the views and acts of individuals, based on the attitudes expressed toward Islam and Muslims by people from different walks of life as included in the research project.

To gain insight into these issues this thesis asks the general research question: *In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?*

I am going to answer this question through addressing the following related questions: (1) What is the role of the (news) media as an information source for participants? (2) What images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam do participants find memorable and authoritative? (3) Why are these images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam memorable and authoritative? (4) How are these images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam utilised by the participants?

I aim to meet these objectives by utilizing the following methods: (1) I undertake a content analysis of current portrayals of Islam and Muslims, through a selection of English newspapers and television news, to establish what images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam are present in the News. (2) I then undertake a reception study to examine the effect of the media portrayals of Islam on the interpretation and understanding by its audience and answer the four questions above. (3) The data from the content and discourse analysis and the focus groups will then be used to explore the hermeneutical aspects produced by culture and affecting media representations of Islam. (4) This data will then be used to analyse the findings in relation to media authority and authenticity, and audience understandings of the media reports.

The aim is to discern how (news) media information is utilised in the interpretation and conceptualisation of Islam by the audience. Interpretation is not neutral. An agent is constantly re-appropriating certain pieces of information he or she receives. The information is interpreted according to the structures of (religious) values and thoughts held by him or her. It is here that the difference between my proposed research and possible alternatives is clearest. I am not cataloguing what people think of Islam and Muslims, but trying to ascertain how the beliefs of an agent (non-Muslim in England), coupled with their media consumption affect what they might think of Islam and Muslims. The study is not concerned with measuring people's opinion, except insofar as it concerns the way in which people's opinions, biases, and interpretations are formed and shaped by their own beliefs and media practices.

First, the essential step is to research the content and discourse in media reports before exploring their influences on an audience. The major challenge in the present research study is to clarify the role that news reports have for individuals and how they generate meaning among their audience(s). By examining the responses to media reports we can analyse the responses to narratives defined by media elites and voiced by spokespersons that fit within the dominant framework(s). By exploring these effects, we can develop

suggestions for improving media coverage of Islam and Muslims based on material that is situated within the larger historical narrative of Britain. In order to gain insight into these issues this thesis asks the general research question: *In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?* I am going to answer this question through addressing the following related issues: What is the role of the (news) media as an information source for participants? What images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam do participants find memorable and authoritative? Why are these images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam memorable and authoritative? How are these images, narratives and representations of Muslims and Islam utilised by the participants? The method for this research will be discussed in chapter 1 and the results will be analysed in chapter 4. The method chapter will explain the philosophical and practical underpinnings of the research methods used, the procedures of the techniques employed.

Second, we must focus our attention on the media and how it functions in the public square, by examining the way in which news media disseminates national and global interests. This media discourse serves as a backdrop for the acts of local agents. The vitality of any public discourse ultimately depends on the quality of the debate. The absence of debate with regards to British social structures, for example, is a result at least in part of the media's focus on policy announcement and sensationalism. This further highlights the low priority on substantial improvements in society as extensions of the demands placed by society on the accountability of government. This will be discussed in chapter 2.

Third, in the current study, we must contextualise the position of Muslims and Islam in Britain. The most valuable sources for the current paradigm reside in history, dominant frameworks and public discourse. The analysis of this material offers a way to understand our multi-layered question and situate the research, and this will be discussed in chapter 3.

Scholars have been studying the effects of media. Some researchers suggest that media can be considered agents of socialization. Media has the ability to elicit a response and to shape and influence people's identities and identity formations. Because media is often the "gateway" to first witness what happens outside of our direct daily experience, it becomes the lens through which we view the world. Following this, scholars have studied the effects of media as well as the impact of the media framing on stories, news, and events.[24] Framing is "the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributions for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed".[25] Most importantly for the case presented in this thesis is the news coverage of Islam in Britain. News media corporations rely on an increase in ratings and

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[24] Entman, R., "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43 (1993).

[25] Mccombs, M. E., "New Frontiers in Agenda Setting: Agendas of Attributes and Frames," *Mass Communication Review* 24 (1997): 9.

larger viewership following the airing and covering of what are considered shocking stories.[26] News media corporations play a key role in the production of ideological frames. The foci of stories have the potential to scare people into acting and believing a crisis exists. The viewers in turn demand action to end the crisis in turn restore calm among the public. The interlocking scripts of violence and irrational or abnormal behaviour perpetuated by the media, coupled with fallacies about Islam and Muslims, further marginalizes Muslim individuals in England.[27]

To complete this thesis, I will use news excerpts described in chapter 4, in focus groups[28] for an exploration of media consumption by non-Muslims with regards to stories and reports about Islam and Muslims. This study is grounded in an approach to social theory that situates the results in their immediate historical and (economic) production contexts.[29] Disproportionate amounts of television and newspaper news coverage is devoted to the Muslim community at large[30], but the coverage also focusses on issues of clothing[31], terrorism[32], and immigration[33]. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the reception of the English news media's representations of Islam and the effect that media has on the conceptualisation of Islam among English people as a result. The findings will be discussed in chapter 5.

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[26] Elmelund-Præstekjær, C. and Wien, C., "Mediestormens Politiske Indflydelse Og Anatomi' [the Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm]," [The Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm.] *Nordicom Information* (2008).

[27] Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P. S., "The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Causes and Solutions," in *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union.*, ed. Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P. S. (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2002); Cinnirella, M., "Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice," in *Islamophobia in the West: Measuring and Explaining Individual Attitudes*, ed. Helbling, M. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2012); Dixon, T. L., Azocar, C. L., and Casas, M., "The Portrayal of Race and Crime on Network News," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 47 (2003); Dixon, T. L. and Linz, D., "Television News, Prejudicial Pretrial Publicity and the Depiction of Race," ibid.46 (2002); Mandaville, P., "Reimagining Islam in Diaspora : The Politics of Mediated Community," *International Communication Gazette* 63/2-3 (2001).

[28] Kitzinger, J., "Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Groups," *BMJ* 311 (1995).

[29] "The Frankfurt school thinkers, neglected, or excluded, history, so also they largely ignored economic analysis " Bottomore, T. B., *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 72-73.

[30] Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P. S., "The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Causes and Solutions."; Mandaville, P., "Reimagining Islam in Diaspora : The Politics of Mediated Community."; Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Abbas, T., "Media Capital and the Representation of South Asian Muslims in the British Press: An Ideological Analysis," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 21/2 (2001).

[31] Bullock, K. H. and Jafri, G. J., "Media (Mis) Representations: Muslim Women in the Canadian Nation," *Canadian Woman Studies* 20/2 (2000); Tarlo, E., *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).

[32] Cinnirella, M., "Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice."

[33] Koenig, M., "Incorporating Muslim Migrants in Western Nation States–a Comparison of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany," *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale* 6/2 (2005); Rehman, J., "Islam," War on Terror" and the Future of Muslim Minorities in the United Kingdom: Dilemmas of Multiculturalism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29/4 (2007).

Chapter 1. <u>Research Production</u>

Section I. <u>Method</u>

Within the field of Media, Religion, and Culture I saw an unprecedented opportunity to undertake interdisciplinary work on how Muslims and Islam, media, and English society continue to shape each other. Research in this field has traditionally been centred on text-based analyses of media content and discourses on Muslims and Islam. By offering insight into how the media content and discourses are used by its recipients, the current study will not only add to the understanding of media consumption in general, but will also explore how specific cultural nodes and hot-button topics are negotiated and interpreted. A methodology developed in the social sciences seemed ideally suited for this purpose.

Before proceeding further, it is important to note that people's thinking about religion(s) is formed against the backdrop of a plurality of sources of information, as well as cultural and ideological framing contexts. These include education, traditions, social conventions, media input, and family upbringing, to name a few. But within these information settings there are inherent assumptions, pre-judgements, and misconceptions which play an authoritative role in shaping people's thinking and behaviour. The conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims, in turn, is built upon the kinds, and quality, of information a person holds. This suggests that people with little or no direct contact with Islam or Muslims have an understanding of Islam and Muslims that will rely largely on education, media reports, and social conventions. It could be argued that without direct contact with Muslims, assumptions will remain uncontested, and serve to ground uncritical beliefs about them.

This research looks at the socio-cultural interactions with Islam and Muslims by non-Muslims, by using a critical sociological and political perspective to examine social engagement with Islam and Muslims in media landscapes. A specific focus is on the impact of such transformations on long-term understandings and practices. My own methodological approach—content and discourse analysis of media portrayals of Muslims, and the reception of such portrayals— is especially well-suited to integrate a wide variety of data and information. I will analyse media reports on Muslims and Islam, and compare my findings with focus group material to help understand how mediated images of Muslims and Islam are received by non-Muslim audiences. The socio-cultural-agent interactions are resourced by news media, and provide structure and constraints over time. This chapter will describe why the accounts were gathered from everyday consumers of news media, and why those accounts were utilised to understand the negotiations made by non-Muslims in England with regards to news media portrayals of Muslims and Islam. These negotiations are understood as processes that flow within a cultural and historical context, this study will explore those contexts as they relate to the overarching question: How do non-Muslims use news media to determine and inform their opinion of Muslims and Islam?

This study will also look at the various forms of media coverage on Islam and Muslims that are utilised by the respondents in order to develop an opinion of Muslims and Islam. This approach offers a greater understanding of the effect of media portrayals on society, and the construction of meaning and understanding of Islam in British society based on those portrayals. Yet it is not racism in the press I am researching.[34] I am far more concerned with how these portrayals of Muslims are received, and how the creative energies of individuals are reacting to the seemingly endless stream of media information. In this regard, Islam is seemingly only engaged when it concerns incendiary topics, in mostly defensive positions, against a pre-scripted narrative of Islamic terrorism, veiling and women's rights, sharia law versus democracy, and other binaries that highlight and enforce perceived differences and incongruences. An example of such constructions can also be found in Francis Fukuyama's book 'The End of History and The Last Man'.

> At the end of history, there are no serious ideological competitors left to liberal democracy. In the past, people rejected liberal democracy because they believed that it was inferior to monarchy, aristocracy, theocracy, fascism, communist totalitarianism, or whatever ideology they happened to believe in. But now, outside the Islamic world, there appears to be a general consensus that accepts liberal democracy's claims to be the most rational form of government, that is, the state that realises most fully either rational desire or rational recognition.[35]

In this quote, Islam and democracy, Islam and rationality, and Islam and liberalism, are put as opposites in binary constructions. This overlooks the power dynamics involved not only in making this claim, but also in the governance of what can be described as Islamic countries. The hegemony of Islamic countries is pressed upon nations as diverse as Indonesia, Iran, and Morocco. As a consequence, such a quote reflects what Said suggested in 'Orientalism', namely that Western political discourse: 'defines and locates' the political, sociological, ideological, scientific achievements, and development of oriental nations.[36]

How the issues and news are presented is as important as what is presented when considering their effect on and interpretation by the audience.[37] It is therefore necessary that a content analysis of printed news and television news is performed in the data gathering phase. This will support the analysis of how the discussion takes place (content leads to discourse analysis). The methodology used in the research into media narratives is comparable in methodology to the research conducted by Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery[38], and Knott,

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[34] For more details see: Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*; Said, E. W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997); Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press* (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press, 2008); Lean, N., *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2012); Petley, J. and Richardson, R., *Pointing the Finger: Islam and Muslims in the British Media* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2013).

[35] Fukuyama, F., *The End of History and the Last Man* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2006), 211-12.

[36] Said, E. W., *Orientalism*, 3.

[37] Stokes, J., *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 56-66.

[38] Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., and Mcenery, T., *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20-31.

Poole, and Taira[39]. This is to be seen as part of the analytical phase of research even though it will precede the focus group research. The focus group data that is gathered will in turn complement the data collected and analysed from the television and printed news, and give insight into what people do with the media items they have been prompted with. This builds upon the initial findings reported by Knott, Poole and Taira.[40] In the final phase of the current study, the dataset (the content and discourse analysis data and the data from the focus groups), will be analysed, with particular reference to the theoretical background of hermeneutics as the study of interpretation and of how social practices inextricably involve acts of signification that require production, discussion, and a negotiation of meaning. This will allow for the portrayal of Islam to be examined in the context of more general media representations of Islam and Muslims.

What I seek to offer, is a greater awareness of the implications of news media consumption and how the media interacts with its audience; namely, how its discussions of Islam and Muslims affects understanding and opinion in a (British) social context. The effect of the media on its audience is important as media inevitably contains commercial, ideological, and political implications. The aim of commercial institutions is to make money; this will not be jeopardised because it would go against the logic of the institution. Additionally, political implications are both direct and indirect. The staff working for media corporations have a personal political outlook, but there will be institutional guidelines, too. This may be the editorial lines of a newspaper, or the public political position of a television network. Not only is the position attributed by the public to the institution of importance, but also the position the institution itself takes is of relevance. With the analysis considering the effects of discourses received, special attention will be paid to the way the audience understands the codes and conventions it receives whilst negotiating the meaning disclosed in the media.

Conclusions drawn from studies based on media content and discourse imply that there is a connection, if not a causation, between audience viewership and acts and opinions expressed in the public domain.[41] Traditional studies examining what is done with mainstream media information by its recipients are problematic due to the difficulty of proving causation.[42] In this study, I attempt to bridge that weakness by observing reception and therefore analysing what goes on before, during, and after reception. The media selected will be a combination of print and audio-visual media, restricted to that which is published and broadcast by media institutions. I will not be analysing the content put forth by individuals or groups on social networking sites, websites such as YouTube, blogs, and other ways the individual can produce and

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[39] Knott, K., Poole, E., and Taira, T., *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 8-12.

[40] Ibid., 96-99.

[41] For example see: Shadid, W., "Berichtgeving over Moslims En De Islam in De Westerse Media: Beeldvorming, Oorzaken En Alternatieve Strategieën," *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap* 33/4 (2005): 330.

[42] For a discussion of causation in media research see: Gunter, B., "Measuring Behavioural Impact of Media: From Association to Causation," in *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1999).

disseminate information. Yet, this research does examine the link between a receiving subject's response to a media report and the passing on of that information to others. In this regard, new forms of social media can play a role but will not be viewed as part of the primary research focus. Since communication is a social activity, and a form of action, then the analysis of communication must be based, at least in part, on an analysis of that action and because its socially contextualised character.[43]

Scholarship that examines the reception and consumption practices surrounding news stories about Muslims and Islam has been limited. For example, according to W. Shadid, *"The media adds both in a direct and indirect manner to the dissemination of negative imagery concerning allochthonous people and might even play a role in their discrimination by society."*[44] In scholarly works, Islam has been examined in terms of integration[45], multiculturalism[46], and violence[47], to name but a few angles, but not so much in terms of how its media construction or portrayal shapes the way people think about it. The significance of the present study is that it will offer an analysis of how the media affects the understanding and interpretation of Islam and Muslims by non-Muslim people of Britain. Within studies looking at content and media discourse about Muslims and Islam, there are very few studies that examine audience reception of religion or religious concepts. Similar studies are largely limited to a Christian audience of Christian topics.[48] Definitions, accounts, and analysis have lacked substantial depth, and the complexity necessary, to provide a clear picture of the effect of media representations of Islam on a non-Muslim audience. This has two causes: First, because media affects studies and causation studies are widely contested, not only with regards to religion, but also as to whether violence in media will make you violent, for example. Second, because to my knowledge, there has not been a study that has looked specifically at the reception of media reports about Muslims by a non-Muslim audience, other than part of the study conducted by Elizabeth Poole in 2002[49].

In Poole's work, the aim was to see how far the focus groups shared the newspapers' discourse, and to gather an understanding of how audiences construct meaning from them. Two of her focus groups were set up with non-Muslims, one with frequent contact with Muslims, and the other with little or no contact. Focus groups were selected by purposive sampling and comprised people with similar social characteristics and from the same or similar social networks so that participants would feel comfortable disclosing opinions. The groups consisted of 16 to 18 year olds from in and around Leicester in the East Midlands, an area which has a history of good relations between ethnic communities. There were also two other focus groups with Muslims. The

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[43] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 12.
[44] Shadid, W., "Berichtgeving over Moslims En De Islam in De Westerse Media: Beeldvorming, Oorzaken En Alternatieve Strategieën," 330.
[45] Maxwell, R., *Ethnic Minority Migrants in Britain and France: Integration Trade-Offs* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[46] Modood, T., *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).
[47] Karim, K. H., *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence* (Montreal, Canada - New York, NY - London, UK: Black Rose Books, 2003).
[48] An example of this can be seen in: Hoover, S. M., Coats, C. D., and Hoover, S., *Does God Make the Man?: Media, Religion, and the Crisis of Masculinity* (NYU Press, 2015).
[49] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*.

articles used in the focus groups clearly carried a dominant or preferred reading which readers were intended to take from them. Poole found that Muslim participants offered alternative readings, often oppositional, while the non-contact group accepted the preferred reading. The contact group tended to be more negative about Islam than the non-contact group. They had greater knowledge, being aware of some of the stories and issues, but interpreted these using liberal ideas of fairness and equality, which led to concerns about restrictions in Islam on individual freedoms and negative perceptions of 'backward' customs. Some participants who had greater knowledge were able to reject the negative representations.[50]

My study builds on this work, by: 1) looking at areas which do not have a history of good ethnic community relations; 2) using participants belonging to different age groups in order to gauge the opinions from a larger range of people; 3) researching television media as well as print media; and 4) using a random sample of participants in order to explore the interaction of people with different social characteristics and who inhabit different social contexts. Hermeneutics can be a useful way to study how media is received, and how certain views, or 'media frames', are transferred to the receiver. As Taylor, has pointed out, there is a plurality of hermeneutical circles.[51] There are even hermeneutical circles developing between two subjects although this will still form a subject-object relationship or dialectic as such as discussed by Sartre in *L'étre et le néant*.[52]

I do not think it is sufficient to simply look at a media report and what it represents (content and discourse analysis) without taking into account why it represents what it represents. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2 and chapter 3. When doing so one must also consider the possibility that a news report may represent many different things to many different people. Focus groups provide the possibility to analyse how people interact with media stories and outlets, and how some of the descriptions of their personal approaches, illustrate the passage from opinion or perception into action. In the analysis put forth by both Gadamer[53] and Taylor[54], the interaction of both inter-subjective and subject-object natures is pre-conditioned by and in the agents taking part. Their historicity, language, religion, upbringing, race, sex, etc., all affect the interaction in a way personally constituted to the individuals in question. People are subject to a commonality of experiences, yet agents are able to offer a multitude of varying responses. That is not inconceivable considering the individuation of experiences as they are constituted in the receiving agent; even if the spectrum of possible responses itself might be considered infinite. We therefore need to be aware of how media influences people and the way they interact, this will be the subject covered in chapter 2. In doing so, there is a need for analysing media as one of the structures that affect our understanding and shapes our identity, both as individuals and in groups. This influences the way in which an individual or group

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[50] Ibid., 236-39.

[51] Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," *The review of metaphysics* 25/1 (1971): 9.

[52] Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness* (New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 2012).

[53] Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*, trans. Weinsheimer, J. and Marshall, D. G., Second ed. (London, UK - New York, NY: Continuum, 1975).

[54] Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man."

experiences reality.[55] In turn these structures enable us to encounter and make judgements about the reality we experience.

This project is driven by Foucault's notion that discourses are productive and normalizing[56], critical discourse analysis was chosen as the appropriate tool for a deconstructive analysis of the construction and articulation of meanings. Further, because critical discourse analysis is interested in uncovering the "*connections between the use of language and the exercise of power*", it supports the overall project that works to analyse and raise awareness regarding ideology and asymmetrical power relations in the discourse about Muslims in Britain.[57] Further, as a helpful framework for critical research within Media studies, critical discourse analysis can assist in uncovering hegemonic readings within mediated discourses. According to Karen Tracy et al:

> Media discourses continue to saturate everyday life in late-modern society; it is more important than ever to examine the ideological meanings of the texts that surround us. In essence, critical discourse analysis brings to the study of mass communication a method for understanding the connection between how media communicate on the micro-level and what media communicate on the macro-level, an important connection to which more media scholars should attend.[58]

In light of this, each focus group was analysed to reveal discourses surrounding reception, security, Islam, multiculturalism and the effects of globalisation, and ideology. Where discourses were overlapping, they became the sources for subsequent data analysis and conclusions. Because this thesis had the intent to give participants a place to speak about and reveal their own experiences; the discursive functions, patterns, and contradictions within these accounts formed the foci of the data analysis. This study maintains that cultural production is a process[59], and that news media should be seen as an extension and essential component of that cultural production process. Chomsky argues that in order to study media *"a macro [discourse], [and] a micro (story-by-story [content]), view of media operations"* is required in order to evaluate if there is *"a pattern of manipulation or systematic bias"*.[60] By comparing the narratives drawn from the content and discourse analyses, with those following the reception practices of audiences, this study will give a more dynamic and grounded understanding of what non-Muslim understandings of Muslims are based on, through their interaction with news media.

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[55] Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*, 397-98.
[56] Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1990).
[57] Fairclough, N., *Media Discourse* (London, UK: Arnold, 1995), 54. & Benwell, B. and Stokoe, E., *Discourse and Identity* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).
[58] Tracy, K. et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis and (U.S.) Communication Scholarship," *Communication Yearbook* 35 (2011): 268.
[59] Williams, R., *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977).
[60] Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N., *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2010), 2.

Section II.   <u>**Media Analysis**</u>

Content analysis seeks to analyse data, within a specific context, in light of the meanings attributed to that data. "Content analysis goes outside the immediately observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates, or consequences of communication, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of data analysable. The methodologically critical requirement of any content analysis is to justify the inferential step this involves."[61] Bernard Berelson equates content analysis with the scientific "description of the content of communication."[62] This definition encompasses primarily the "what" aspect of communication and in some cases also the "how" (channel or medium of communication). The type of content analysis used in this study will focus on the literal description of news communication. Other studies have used this technique as well, mainly looking at campaign speeches or whether the content of a broadcast is violent or obscene. One of the benefits of content analysis of this type is that it analyses the data equally. Through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into fewer content-related categories. It is assumed that when classified into the same categories, words, phrases, and the like share the same meaning.[63] Therefore it is not affected by whether the data appears at the start or end of a text or broadcast, who is speaking or quoted, or who performs the analysis. The method has been called a simplistic technique by some in the quantitative field because of the difficulties in using it for statistical analysis. While others consider that content analysis is not sufficiently qualitative in nature, it is possible to attain a variety of results depending on the goals, objectives, skills, and abilities of the researcher.[64]

Language is not taken as a mere indicator of shared norms and rules, but also a practice constituting and delimiting both objects and subjects.[65] Fierke argues that, "language use is part of acting in the world".[66] The methodological basis for this analysis is the study of analogies; in this regard the similes and metaphors surrounding Muslims and Islam in news discourse. Lakoff and Johnson describe metaphors as discursive devices allowing for understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.[67] They order and make understandable complex phenomena by relating them to other more common phenomena. In turn it makes them comprehensible by arranging certain facts, objects, and ideas in a specific way.[68] Therefore the

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[61] Krippendorff, K., *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2012), 403.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Cavanagh, S., "Content Analysis: Concepts, Methods and Applications," *Nurse Researcher* 4 (1997).

[64] Neundorf, K., *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

[65] Diez, T., "Speaking Europe, Drawing Boundaries: Reflections on the Role of Discourse in Eu Foreign Policy and Identity," in *Eu Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Morin, J.-F. and Carta, C. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

[66] Fierke, K., "Constructivism," in *International Relations Theories*, ed. Dunne, T., Kurki, M., and Smith, S. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 188.

[67] Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M., *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1980), 5.

[68] Ghafele, R., "The Metaphors of Globalization and Trade: An Analysis of the Language Used in the Wto," *Journal of Language and Politics* 3/3 (2004): 442-43.

study of metaphors as a tool for understanding the descriptions prevalent in the media with regards to Islam and Muslims uses this understanding.

As Drulak states, 'the identification of the metaphors contributing to common sense helps us identify the patterns which guide the practice of the members of the speech community'.[69] In other words, the representation of Islam or Muslims in the media can bring with it certain conceptualisations and structures that define what Islam or Muslims are to an audience.

> We can distinguish between conceptual metaphors (abstract general notions structuring discourse) and metaphorical expressions (defined as specific statements exemplifying a conceptual metaphor). The selection or identification of the conceptual metaphors to be examined can be made in a variety of ways.[70]

"Discourses constitute symbolic systems and social orders, and the task of discourse analysis is to examine their historical and political construction and functioning."[71] The discursive analysis allows for interpreting how Islam or Muslims are represented and the analysis focuses on representation and implied descriptions.

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[69] Drulak, P., "Motion, Container and Equilibrium: Metaphors in the Discourse About European Integration," *European Journal of International Relations* 12/4 (2006): 508.

[70] Barbé, E., Herranz-Surrallés, A., and Natorski, M., "Model, Player or Instrument for Global Governance: Metaphors in the Discourse and Practice of Eu Foreign Policy," in *Eu Foreign Policy through the Lens of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Morin, J.-F. and Carta, C. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

[71] Howarth, D., *Discourse: Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Buckingham, UK - Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 2010), 5.

II.I   Design

To develop the socio-cultural aspect of the project, it is important to implement a methodology that accounts for the media and their reception. A qualitative content analysis will be conducted of three newspapers over a two-month period (*The Guardian, The Independent* and *the Daily Mail*, as well as their sister publications on Sunday, *The Mail on Sunday, The Observer* and *The Sunday Independent* will be used).[72] I will be using the internet editions in order to utilise a data analysis of freely available information and to maximise comparability with free to air television. At the same time, terrestrial television news broadcast over the identical three periods of seven days (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, channel 4 and channel 5) will be analysed. The research will focus on news items. These will be pieces that are not necessarily signed by a specific author, in turn suggesting that the contents of these stories should be informative rather than argumentative. The contents will still be subjected to editorial and ideological guidelines of the newspaper but belong to a different genre than editorials or opinion pieces, for example. This will also allow for maximum comparability with television news as the objective of television news stories is to be informative rather than argumentative. Additionally, as it is "news", it should aim to provide factual information in a balanced manner, with limited speculation, conjecture and bias. The content and discourse analysis will offer an account of how Islam is discussed and what aspects of Islam are discussed.

The qualitative content analysis will include the collection and logging of data, followed by analysis by media source, category and theme. Once references to Islam have been collected the research will explore media rhetoric and style (discourse). Data on audience and reader reception will be collected using focus groups: seven groups will be held with both religious and non-religious participants, selectively transcribed and analysed regarding media treatment of Islam.
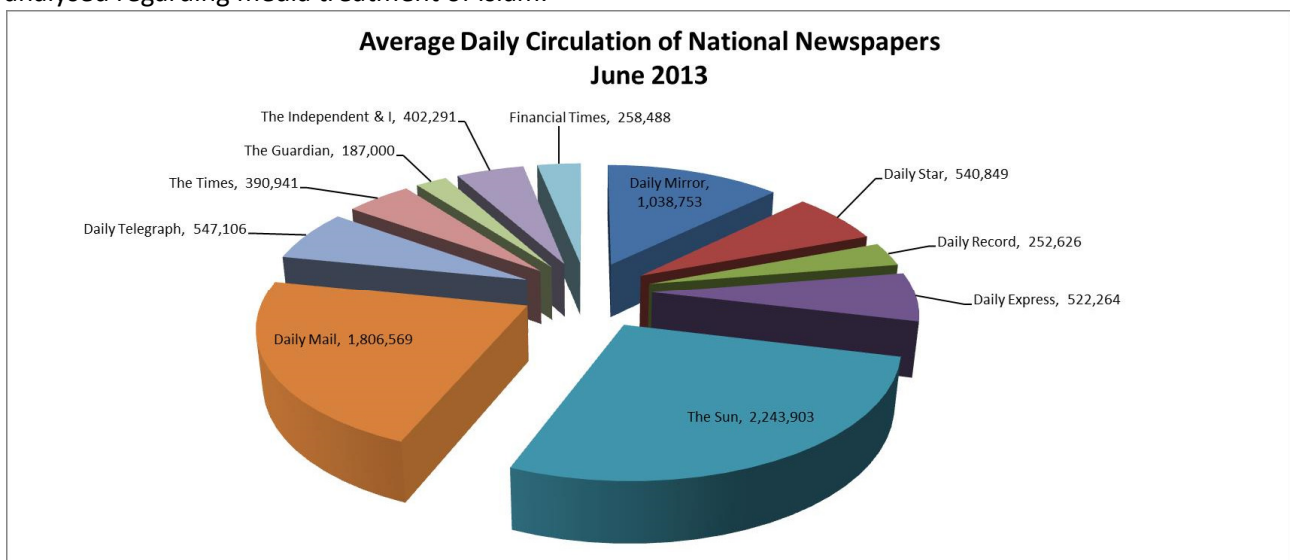
Figure 1: Reproduced from Data in: 'ABC's: National Daily Newspaper Circulation June 2014', The Guardian, (2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/media/table/2014/jul/11/abcs-national-newspapers> [24-04-2015].

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[72] This is similar in methodology to Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*. and are chosen for their ideological perspectives. Other examples of studies of newspapers include Said, E. W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*; Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press*.

Content analysis is a widely used method for studying the news.[73] James Curran used the method of content analysis to distinguish a difference between the praxis of column publications and the editorial lines determined by editors.[74] The method that will be applied most closely resembles a combination of the aforementioned study by Curran[75], that of a study conducted by the Glasgow University Media Group when they analysed television news coverage of industrial action in the 1970's[76], and the method used in a recent study by Semetko and Valkenburg looking at the framing of European politics.[77]

Britain has a national press which does not need to demonstrate neutrality. Following the dominance of the market model, the national press tends to lean towards a conservative perspective. This study proceeded from a qualitative content analysis of the frames used in articles discussing Islam or Muslims appearing in three newspapers over a selected period (The Guardian, The Independent and the Daily Mail, as well as their sister publications on Sunday, The Mail on Sunday, The Observer and The Sunday Independent were used).[78] At the same time terrestrial television news (BBC1, BBC2, ITV, channel 4 and channel 5), broadcast over seven days, were analysed. The research focused on news items stories. The sampling frame selected for the newspaper content analysis was for four, 1-week periods from 22nd April 2013 through 7th July 2013 (75 days). The 22nd-28th April, 20th - 26th May, 3rd - 9th June, 1st – 7th July. The Television News samples were taken coinciding with the newspaper samples, as well as after (16th -23rd September) to see if there was a change in reporting or issues and to minimise the effect of the Woolwich attacks. This was because national television news often only devotes time for one story related to Islam, if it gives any time at all. Therefore, to increase the television data sample and compare it further with the newspaper data an additional week in September was selected that was excluded from the newspaper news. The most efficient sampling method for this was a stratified sampling method which enabled me to infer the content for the newspapers and television by sampling one week of news every two weeks during the constructed period. Through the sampling of newspapers and days of television a selection of data was produced as the sample for the focus groups from each of the daily newspapers and television news. The study involved a descriptive analysis of every news article or television news story (no commentaries or debate programme, etc.) that made an explicit mention

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[73] Stokes, J., *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies*, 57.

[74] Curran, J., "Literary Editors, Social Networks and Cultural Tradition," in *Media Organisations in Society*, ed. Curran, J. (London, UK: Arnold, 2000).

[75] Ibid.

[76] The Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1976).

[77] Semetko, H. A. and Valkenburg, P. M., "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of communication* 50/2 (2000).

[78] This will mirror the study of newspapers in a study by Poole, E., "The Effects of September 11 and the War in Iraq on British Newspaper Coverage," in *Muslims and the News Media*, ed. Poole, E. and Richardson, J. E. (London, UK - New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 89. And they will be chosen for their ideological perspectives. Other examples of studies include Said, E. W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. And Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press*.

of Islam or Muslim(s). That was the primary rule for sorting through all the stories.[79] The stories were coded by the researcher following the established coding outline for selected sample.

To clarify the outlets, a brief description is given in terms of audience size and style of reporting, at the time of data collection. The Audit Bureau of Circulations measures newspaper circulation and its data shown in figure one shows the size of circulation at the time of the data collection. In this report The Guardian and The Observer (The Guardian's sister publication on Sunday) have a combined daily circulation of 187,000 in June 2013. The Independent (and its sister publication the 'I') have a combined daily circulation of 402,291. The Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday have a combined daily circulation of 1,806,569 in the same timeframe second only to Sun Newspaper.

The leading newspapers are often purchased in bulk by newsagents to sell to customers, they get a discount on the purchase price and on occasion the paper will buy back unused copies for shipment to overseas markets. Businesses such as Pubs or hairdressers sometimes take in one or two papers for their customers to read, and through this method increase circulation, but this is not necessarily linked to readership. Sunday newspapers are generally more popular, and reading the paper on Sunday is still a traditional if not ritual
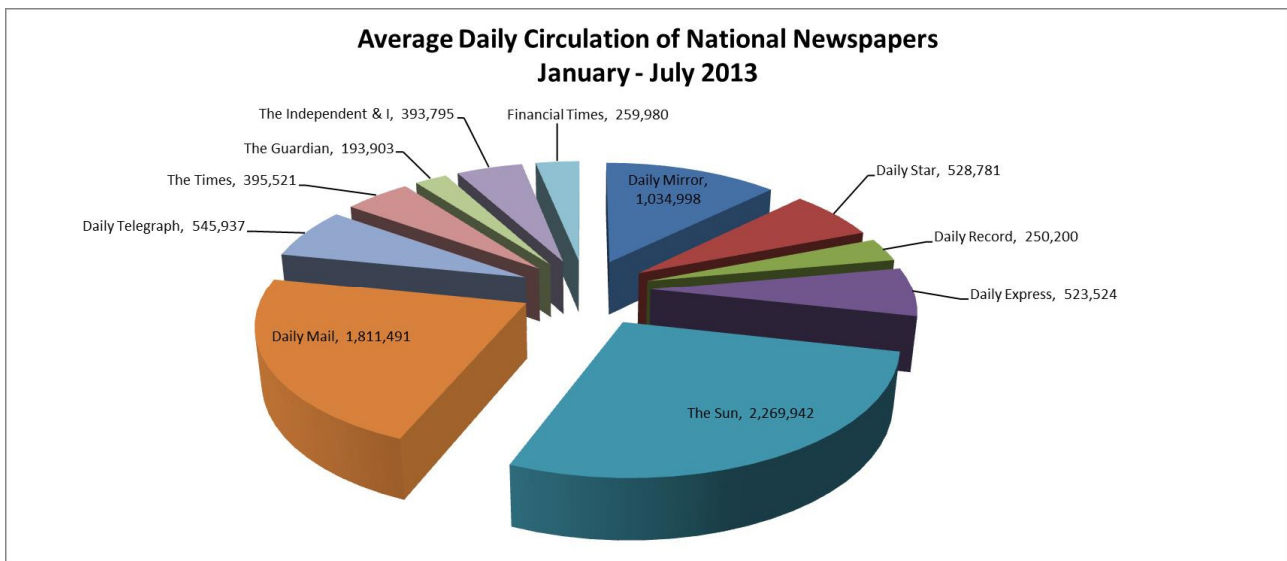
Figure 2: Reproduced from Data in: 'ABC's: National Daily Newspaper Circulation June 2014', The Guardian, (2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/media/table/2014/jul/11/abcs-national-newspapers> [24-04-2015].

behaviour among the British public. Since the 1950s, newspaper sales have been in decline, as access to multimedia news platforms, particularly television news increased, newspaper sales declined. As Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate, the average consumption of broadsheet newspapers is slightly lower in June 2013 than the average from January to July 2013 but tabloid readership is at a higher level on average over that same period.

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[79] This is similar in the methodology used and described by Elizabeth Poole in Poole, E., "The Effects of September 11 and the War in Iraq on British Newspaper Coverage," 89.

As percentages of the English population go, newspaper readership is a minor form of news consumption. In June 2014, almost 7.5 million newspapers were sold daily.[80] In June 2013 this total was almost 8.2 million. On a continuum ranging from sensationalist, on the one hand, to sober and serious, on the other, the Tabloids such as the Daily Mail and The Sun are at the sensationalist end, the Independent, the Guardian, the Times, Telegraph, and the Financial Times at the serious end. The U.K. tabloid, The Daily Mail contains a great deal of celebrity gossip, sensationalist news and is the most consumed product in this study. The broadsheets The Guardian and The Independent are widely read by professionals and their ideological lines suggest they spend very little attention to the sensationalist kinds of stories found on the front pages of the tabloids.

Channel	Average weekly viewing per person (hours: minutes)[81]				
	Mar-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13
ALL or ANY TV	28:38:00	27:29:00	25:46:00	24:53:00	23:59
BBC 1	06:10	05:42	05:15	05:04	05:12
BBC 2	01:30	01:29	01:28	01:39	01:23
ITV	04:04	03:57	03:46	03:17	03:07
ITV +1	00:14	00:16	00:13	00:13	00:13
ITV HD	00:21	00:21	00:20	00:14	00:12
Channel 4	01:28	01:19	01:12	01:08	01:03
Channel 4+1	00:15	00:14	00:14	00:11	00:11
Channel 5	01:09	01:04	01:01	01:03	01:04
Channel 5+1	00:06	00:06	00:06	00:06	00:05

Table 1: Average Weekly Viewing Time For British Television Channels

The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) measures television statistics in Britain. Table 1 above shows the amount of time an individual spends watching the channels that were part of this study during the time of this study. The +1-option available for some channels shows the same programming as the standard channel just one hour later and the HD channel shows the same programming in High Definition as the standard channel. Table 2 below shows the percentage of total viewers that each channel managed to secure during the period of data gathering for this study. This shows that BBC 1, followed by ITV, are the most popular channels, securing 20% and 15% respectively.

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[80] Audit Bureau of Circulations, "Abcs: National Daily Newspaper Circulation June 2014", (*The Guardian*, 11 July), http://www.theguardian.com/media/table/2014/jul/11/abcs-national-newspapers, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[81] Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, "Viewing Summary," http://www.barb.co.uk/whats-new/monthly-viewing-summary?period[]=20130701&period[]=20130601&period[]=20130501&period[]=20130401&period[]=20130301&button_submit= View+figures, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

Channel	Share of viewing percentage[82]				
	March 2013	April 2013	May 2013	June 2013	July 2013
ALL or ANY TV	100	100	100	100	100
BBC 1	21.6	20.7	20.3	20.4	21.7
BBC 2	5.2	5.4	5.7	6.7	5.8
ITV	14.3	14.4	14.6	13.2	13
ITV +1	0.8	1	0.9	0.9	0.9
ITV HD	1.2	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.8
Channel 4	5.1	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.3
Channel 4+1	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8
Channel 5	4	3.9	4	4.2	4.4
Channel 5+1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

Table 2: Percentage of Total Viewers for British Television Channels

For decades, the BBC was the dominant player in British television news. Many still feel it is the authoritative voice and the best reflection of the elites of the nation. Politicians, the monarchy and established journalists feel the respectability of the BBC within the country, and abroad, affords it a place above all other networks. Despite different incarnations of the news being broadcast on the BBC, its funding through the television licencing gives it a layer of independence that state-run media do not have; it also enables it to live without some of the constraints of the bottom line and advertising money that privately-owned channels are subjected to. Privately owned channels are funded by advertising and ITV was the first private channel to be introduced to a British audience. These news programs on ITV and BBC rival each other and are both attempts at serious news broadcasting. Channel 4 engages with the major stories of the day but differs from the two larger network news programs in that, although it is also a national news program, it reports stories in a simpler fashion and can contain stories that are rarely found on the other two more serious news programs. Channel 5 has a news programme which is much more sensationalist in nature (even more so than channel 4) and this is largely compiled of stories that resemble the tabloid news found in the Daily Mail for example as opposed to the news discussed on the BBC or in the broadsheets. Channel 5 also tends to pay little attention to foreign news or political news, as does Channel 4 with the exception that Channel 4 will engage foreign events if they are deemed significant enough or if they relate to issues faced in Britain. Ultimately Channel 4, Channel 5 and ITV have carved out an audience and their programming caters to their needs and desires.

Frames and framing effects have a focus on the relationship between Islam and Muslims in the news and the public perceptions of Islam and Muslims.[83] However, the content and discourse analysis for this study looks

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[82] Ibid.

[83] For further reading on frames and framing effects see: Edelman, M., "Contestable Categories and Public Opinion," *Political Communication* 10 (1993)., Gamson, W., *Talking Politics* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992)., Iyengar, S., *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991)., Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D. R., *News That Matters* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987)., Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., and Crigler, A. N., *Common Knowledge* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992)., Price, V., Tewksbury, D., and Powers, E., "Switching Trains of Thought: The Impact of News Frames on Readers' Cognitive Responses," *Communication Research* 24 (1997)., Tuchman, G., *Making News* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1978). & Zaller, J., *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

at the frames used to examine what "people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk about issues in the news".[84] The purpose here is to establish what stories can be considered representative and then take those stories as prompts into focus groups and interviews. The reason for this is that "some aspects of a perceived reality" are used "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation".[85] In turn they "locate, perceive, identify, and label" phenomena [86] and "narrow the available political alternatives" for the audience.[87] This is important to consider because audience studies have shown, for example, that the opinions about the European Union and various EU-related issues can be affected depending on how the issue is framed in the survey question.[88] This thesis research complements other studies that have examined the consequences of the public's interpretation of events and issues.[89]

The sample was retrieved from the LexisNexis online archives using the search terms: "Islam" & "Muslims". One of these terms was required to appear in either the title or the body of the text at least once. In total 1179 newspaper items mentioned Islam or Muslims in this timeframe. However, as only news stories were analysed the revised total came to 332 [The Guardian & the Observer (n=178), The Independent & Independent on Sunday (n=80) and Daily Mail & Mail on Sunday (n=74)] during the aforementioned period. When it came to television news stories [BBC News (n =39), ITV News (n =31), and Channel 4 (n = 26)] there were 96 broadcasts of evening news that made a reference to Muslims or Islam. In a comparable study conducted by Knott, Poole and Taira, in one month in 2008 there were 306 mentioning's of Islam as compared to 33 in 1982.[90] 3.1% of references on television and 9.5% of newspaper references related to Islam in this period.[91]

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[84] Pan, Z. and Kosicki, G. M., "Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse," *Political Communication* 10/1 (1993): 70.

[85] Entman, R., "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 53.

[86] Goffman, E., *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1974), 21.

[87] Tuchman, G., *Making News*, 156.

[88] Saris, W. E., "The Public Opinion About the Eu Can Easily Be Swayed in Different Directions," *Acta Politica* 32 (1997).

[89] For example: Graber, D., *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide* (New York, NY: Longman, 1988)., Iyengar, S., "Television News and Citizens' Explanations of National Affairs," *American Political Science Review* 81 (1987)., Iyengar, S. and Simon, A., "News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing," *Communication Research* 20 (1993).& Norris, P., "The Restless Searchlight: Network News Framing of the Post-Cold War World," *Political Communication* 12 (1995).

[90] Knott, K., Poole, E., and Taira, T., *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change*, 80.

[91] Ibid.

Source	Total Number of Stories	Number of Stories Coded	Percentage of Stories Mentioning Muslims or Islam being News
The Guardian & The Observer	698	178	25.5%
The Independent & Independent on Sunday	284	80	28.2%
Daily Mail & Mail on Sunday	197	74	37.6%
Newspaper Total	**1179**	**332**	**28.2%**

Table 3: Overview of Newspaper Sources and Number of Stories Mentioning Islam or Muslims

Source	Number of Broadcasts
BBC News	39
ITV News	31
Channel 4 News	26
Television Total	**96**

Table 4: Overview of Television Channels and Number of Broadcasts Mentioning Islam or Muslims

The large number of newspaper articles that met my selection criteria indicates that on a given day one could find at least 15 articles in the newspaper that mentioned Islam or Muslims, half of which would appear in The Guardian. This is partly a reflection of the greater volume of coverage of all news in the broadsheet press. The consistency of the topics associated with Islam, both British and global, is illustrative of a "framework of interpretation" which has dominated news reporting for over a decade.[92] For television this has meant that a minimum of 4 broadcasts a week mentioned Islam or Muslims during the sample period.

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[92] Poole, E., "Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims before and after 9/11: The Uk Context," *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* 4/2 (2011): 54.

II.II   Analysis

The analysis included all stories that explicitly mentioned Islam or Muslims. This was identified to the participants in advance as a basis for selecting stories because it was the only way to make sure that the audience knew the stories were about Muslims or Islam, rather than making their own inferences based on their own interpretation.

Semetko and Valkenburg suggest there are two possible approaches to content analysing frames in the news. There is an inductive and a deductive method.

> The inductive approach involves analysing a news story with an open view to attempt to reveal the array of possible frames, beginning with very loosely defined preconceptions of these frames. This approach can detect the many possible ways in which an issue can be framed, but this method is labour intensive, often based on small samples, and can be difficult to replicate. A deductive approach involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news. This approach makes it necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of frames likely to be in the news, because the frames that are not defined a priori may be overlooked. This approach can be replicated easily, can cope with large samples, and can easily detect differences in framing between media (e.g., television vs. press) and within media (e.g., highbrow news programs or newspapers vs. tabloid-style media).[93]

The current study used the approach as described above and analysed all news related to Islam or Muslims, clarifying which stories were prominent and how such news related to other news on similar topics. The press clippings were coded. First, all stories mentioning Islam and Muslims were recorded. Second, the press stories themselves were then coded according to topics drawn from the issues mentioned within. Third, the television news items appearing each day in the main evening news programs were coded according to the topics drawn from the newspaper clippings.

To measure the extent to which certain frames appear in the news, a series of 27 questions to which the I as the coder had to answer yes (1) or no (0) were developed. This limited researcher bias as the topic was either deemed present or it was not. Each question was meant to measure one of five news frames: conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality and responsibility.[94] The investigation proceeded to determine whether these questions would cluster in such a way as to reveal underlying correlations. Whilst one positive response (1) would indicate the presence of the frame, a high score on the scale indicates that the frame is

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[93] Semetko, H. A. and Valkenburg, P. M., "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," 94-95.
[94] This is similar to the methodology used in: ibid.

heavily present in a story and that suggests that those frames would set the parameters "in which citizens discuss public events"[95] as definers of "emphasis and exclusion"[96].

The treatment of Islam and Muslims by the mass media can be analysed using hegemonic theory.[97] Hegemonic understandings of media, culture, and religion, means that Muslims are unable to act as equal partners in their media representation. The structures of mass media have created a situation where their biased coverage of Muslims and Islam, through under-representative and stereotyped coverage, collectively, uphold hegemonic understandings of religion and culture. This is because, out of all the influences that may shape people, the mass media are one of the most prevalent and powerful.[98] The media are in a position to create and maintain societal perspectives.[99] They give access to reality through the coverage they give, and influence people by their choices in coverage.[100] The way stories are presented, stereotyped, trivialized, and under-represented, through the mass media, is one way that the dominant ideology is articulated, constituted, and reproduced.[101]

Paul Pedersen states in his discussion of sportswomen, that *"the mass media is a hegemonic social institution and through much of their representations hegemonically sanction the power and privilege that is found in society. The media thus help to integrate and homogenize society"[102]* As Pedersen goes on to describe:

> Masculine hegemonic theory as it relates to the mass media's treatment of sportswomen has found females to be under-represented, stereotyped, trivialized, and marginalized. All of these aspects of mass media coverage work to deny power to sportswomen through the maintenance of masculine hegemony and to construct women's position in sport as one of otherness.[103]

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[95] Tuchman, G., *Making News*, IV.

[96] Gitlin, T., *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 7.

[97] Gramsci, A., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1971). & Gramsci, A., "(I) History of the Subaltern Classes; (Ii) the Concept of "Ideology"; (Iii) Cultural Themes: Ideological Material," in *Media and Cultural Studies Keyworks*, ed. Durham, M. G. and Kellner, D. M. (Malden, MA - Oxford, UK - Carlton, Australia: Blackwell, 2001).

[98] Lumpkin, A. and Williams, L. D., "An Analysis of Sports Illustrated Feature Articles, 1954-1987," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 8 (1991); Pedersen, P. M., "Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs a Content Analysis of the Print Media Photographic Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37/3-4 (2002).

[99] Fink, J. S., "Female Athletes and the Media: Strides and Stalemates," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 69/6 (1998); Pedersen, P. M., "Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs a Content Analysis of the Print Media Photographic Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics."

[100] Creedon, P. J., "Women, Media, and Sport: Creating and Reflecting Gender Values," in *Women, Media, and Sport: Challenging Gender Values*, ed. Creedon, P. J. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 1994); Kane, M. J. and Greendorfer, S. L., "The Media's Role in Accommodating and Resisting Stereotyped Images of Women in Sport," ibid. (; Pedersen, P. M., "Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs a Content Analysis of the Print Media Photographic Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics."

[101] Hargreaves, J., *Sport, Power and Culture. A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Polity Press, 1986); Mcgregor, E., "Mass Media and Sport: Influences on the Public," *Physical Educator* 46/1 (1989); Pedersen, P. M., "Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs a Content Analysis of the Print Media Photographic Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics."

[102] Pedersen, P. M., "Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs a Content Analysis of the Print Media Photographic Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics," 304.

[103] Ibid., 305.

As the data from this study will show the mass media coverage of Muslims and Islam promotes mainstream societal interests over Muslim interests.[104] Consequently, the representations of Muslims and Islam are the result of the power and privilege that is found in British society. British media also act as a force that seeks to integrate and homogenize society, as is seen in the under-represented and stereotyped media coverage of Muslims and Islam that construct their position in British society as one of otherness. This serves to reinforce certain beliefs about Islam and Muslims. What this study shows (as will be discussed in more detail later) is that the dominant paradigm covering Muslims in the news is conflict. Islam as a term or concept is much less present as a term than Muslim(s) in the news.

How often does the word Muslim appear?	Percent of Stories
0	28.3
1	28.9
2	13.9
3	8.4
4	6.6
5	2.4
6	1.2
7	3.0
8	.6
9	1.2
10	1.8
11	.6
14	1.2
17	.6
21	.6
33	.6
Total	100.0

Table 5: The percentage of stories that mention Muslim(s) and how often that word is mentioned

In the stories that were analysed from the British press the word Muslim appears 72% of the time, but 29% of the time it appears only once which is about the same amount as the times it does not appear at all (see Table 5).

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[104] This is also comparable to results found in other similar studies. Such as: Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., and Mcenery, T., *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press*; Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press*; Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*.

Name of Newspaper	How often does the word Muslim appear?	Percent of Stories
Daily Mail	None	16.1
	Once	25.8
	Multiple Times	58.1
The Guardian	None	31.6
	Once	25.9
	Multiple Times	42.5
The Independent	None	39.5
	Once	34.2
	Multiple Times	26.3

Table 6: How often does the word Muslim appear in the Newspapers?

This compares starkly with the word Islam used in the British press, because as Table 8 below shows, almost half the stories do not even mention Islam.[105]

Name of Television Channel	How often does the word Muslim appear?	Percent of Stories
BBC	None	5.1
	Once	7.6
	Multiple Times	87.1
ITV	None	3.1
	Once	12.4
	Multiple Times	84.3
Channel 4	None	7.4
	Once	18.5
	Multiple Times	74.0

Table 7: How often does the word Muslim appear on the Television News?

How often does the word Islam appear?	Percent of Stories
0	46.4
1	28.9
2	10.2
3	5.4
4	4.8
5	1.8
6	.6
8	.6
9	.6
10	.6

Table 8: The percentage of stories that mention Islam and how often that word is mentioned

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[105] There were 29 stories that made no mention of either Islam or Muslims but did include another identifying term, most common was Islamist (occurring 25 times) and then 2 times it was Shia and once the identifying term was Jihadist. Jihadist was considered here because in the discourse it refers to Islamic terrorism.

Name of Newspaper	How Often Does the Word Islam Appear?	Percent of Stories
Daily Mail	None	35.5
	Once	34.3
	Multiple Times	30.2
The Guardian	None	48.2
	Once	27.1
	Multiple Times	24.7
The Independent	None	55.3
	Once	26.3
	Multiple Times	18.4

Table 9: How often does the word Islam appear in the Newspapers?

This is also supported by the fact that 96% of the stories did not mention conflicts between Islam and something or someone and 97% of the stories did not mention conflicts between something or someone and Islam. Yet before proceeding one should consider that a disadvantage present in binary data is that they are measured with more measurement error, with the inevitable risk that correlations between variables are lower than correlations between ordinal or interval variables. Since the aim of the study was to establish what topics are most expressed and representative rather than the interrelation of the stories in the news themselves, this was accepted as it did not form the primary focus of this study.

Name of Television Channel	How Often Does the Word Islam Appear?	Percent of Stories
BBC	None	7.6
	Once	30.8
	Multiple Times	61.5
ITV	None	6.2
	Once	31.2
	Multiple Times	62.5
Channel 4	None	11.1
	Once	11.1
	Multiple Times	77.7

Table 10: How often does the word Islam appear on the Television News?

As mentioned earlier, I coded all stories that mentioned Islam or Muslims, to assess differences in the use of news frames among different types of outlets. To do this, I used 27 framing questions to empirically assess the news frames discussed in the various outlets. The values of each framing scale ranged from 0% (frame never present) to 100% (frame ever present). The prevalence of these frames in the three national newspapers and three national television outlets could lead to the normalisation and acceptability of these frames in public and private discourse.

The coding of these variables was done in such a way that a high score meant that these frames dominated these national media outlets. It also could suggest the importance and potential influence of news culture and the news outlet's context on the framing of problems and topics in the news. Television news is influenced by the political culture and social context in which the news is produced and received. News (on

television or in newspapers) is predominantly "episodic," as alluded to earlier. This occurs even though the nature and structure of newspapers could allow for newspaper news to be less "episodic" because it can add more content if necessary, but the medium of television news does not have that flexibility. In other words, both newspaper news and television news focused on the events and happenings occurring in the past 24 hours. This can have a variety of reasons but I would suggest that the primary reasons are time and consumer demands. A television news broadcast is 30 minutes in length and to meet the demands of the British audience, most stories tend to be short and attempt to translate complex concepts and relationships into bite size chunks for everyday consumers. This is fuelled by the bottom line of a company whereby viewer numbers translate to advertising income. Newspapers have similar financial constraints and more pages mean higher printing costs and not necessarily enough advertisers to cover the extra space. In addition, the news is supposed to be short and to the point. This means that even though it could go into further detail and contextualise every aspect of a story, it often does not, because historical context is deemed superfluous. For further information, debate and discussion the reader should read other sections of the newspaper.

Conflict frame

This frame reflects the stories that discuss conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions, and Islam and Muslims, as a means of capturing audience interest. Some suggest that the media draw on conflict as one of a few central frames for reporting a range of issues, and it is a common frame in reporting.[106] Some research has observed that the news reports concerning political elites are oversimplifying complex political debates into overly simplistic conflict without going into the ideological substance. Patterson shows that presidential election campaign news is often framed in terms of conflict.[107] The emphasis on conflict may mean that the news media promotes the conflict frame as a legitimate frame of reference for the public when viewing or conceiving Muslims and Islam. The way the coding questions were devised to examine who is the agent in the conflict narrative. Question one examines the story from a perspective whereby Muslims are in conflict with parties, individuals, etc., and implies that they are responsible or to blame. This differs from Question three, where instead it is an individual or group, etc. that is in conflict with Muslims. An example of the difference could be: Muslim lobby groups challenge same sex Marriage bill for question one[108], verses HSBC closes accounts belonging to Muslims because of their risk profile for question 3[109], This will allow for an analysis that looks at who is perceived as the antagonist and who is the victim within the conflict narrative.

The coding questions brought out the following results:

1. Does the story reflect conflict between Muslims and parties, individuals, groups and countries? Yes, 81% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 90%, The Guardian 85%, the Independent 71%, BBC 82%, ITV 81%, and Channel 4 81%.

2. Does the story reflect conflict between Islam and parties, individuals, groups and countries? No, 96% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 98%, The Guardian 95%, the Independent 95%, BBC 95%, ITV 97%, and Channel 4 96%.

3. Does the story reflect conflict between parties, individuals, groups and countries and Muslims? No, 66% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 83%, The Guardian 64%, the Independent 61%, BBC 62%, ITV 72%, and Channel 4 63%.

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[106] Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., and Crigler, A. N., *Common Knowledge*, 61-62.

[107] Patterson, T., *Out of Order* (New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1993).

[108] "Muslims Demand Gay Marriage Exemption ", (*The Guardian*, 18 December), http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/dec/18/muslims-demand-gay-marriage-exemption, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[109] Tadeo, M., "Hsbc Closes Bank Accounts Belonging to Muslim Clients in the Uk", (*The Independent*, 30 July), http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/hsbc-closes-bank-accounts-belonging-to-muslim-clients-in-the-uk-9636939.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

4. Does the story reflect conflict between parties, individuals, groups and countries and Islam? No, 98% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 99%, The Guardian 99%, the Independent 94%., BBC 97%, ITV 97%, and Channel 4 96%.

5. Does the story reflect disagreement between Muslims and or within Islam? No, 75% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 88%, The Guardian 74%, the Independent 68%, BBC 79%, ITV 75%, and Channel 4 81%.

6. Do Muslims or Islam criticise parties, individuals, groups and countries? No, 75% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 75%, The Guardian 73%, the Independent 76%., BBC 74%, ITV 75%, and Channel 4 70%.

7. Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?

   No, 82% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 93%, The Guardian 78%, the Independent 79%., BBC 82%, ITV 81%, and Channel 4 81%.

8. Does the story refer to violence committed by the parties, individuals, groups and countries involved? Yes, 81% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 88%, The Guardian 80%, the Independent 81%, BBC 82%, ITV 81%, and Channel 4 81%.

9. Does the story refer to winners and losers? No, 76% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 51%, The Guardian 80%, the Independent 79%, BBC 77%, ITV 78%, and Channel 4 74%.

In this regard, we can speak of a one-sided and very dominant narrative. The ever-present stories are those of conflict between Muslims and other parties or the state. In 81% of the cases these conflicts are violent. The lack of criticism and disagreement among Muslims in the press further highlights the perception that Muslims are a homogenous monolithic entity that act entirely based on their faith and are only able to show and express their disagreement and discontent in violent action. The acts are mostly un-contextualised and not discussed as options but usually from the one perspective, that violent action is the only recourse Muslims seek. This is further supported by the fact that only 18% of the stories show more than one side of the issue and that Muslims are rarely at conflict with each other or Islam as an ideology[110] and that on very few occasions are Muslims mentioned as agents of criticism (either of other Muslims or policy etc.). Twenty-six per cent of the stories have Muslims (or their representative groups) quoted as agents of their own views and actions. What is striking is that the five most commonly mentioned "authorities" in news stories in order

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[110] 25% of the stories mention conflict between Muslims themselves or Muslims and Islam. Again in this regard most of these stories refer to sectarian violence abroad, for example Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria which received relatively high percentages of mentioning in the content analysis appearing in 2.1%, 2.7% & 1.6% of the total stories respectively.

of percentage of stories that make a mention of them are Anjem Choudary (10.8%), Al-Muhajiroun (10.8%), Omar Bakri Mohammed (10%), Abu Qatada (8.3%) and the Taliban, Al-Shabaab and the MCB, all with 7.6%.

To put this in context, the most common term is terrorist or terrorism appearing as a word in 30.6% of the stories. The EDL are mentioned 15% of the time and the most common Muslim representative body in Britain that is mentioned is the Muslim Council of Britain (which is problematic because of the situation mentioned in chapter 1), and they only are mentioned 7.6% of the time. This is additionally problematic because it suggests that either Muslims or Muslim organisations are unable or unwilling or ignored in press stories, or because the avenues of communication for Muslims or Muslims organisations and the press are not accessible as those with other communities. I suggest it is a combination of both factors which needs to be solved, because as the data shows, the only voices that are currently being heard are people and organisations that fit into the conflict frame. That paradigm needs to be broken and for that there needs to be other voices heard that offer an alternative narrative. This is an issue that has been established in detail by Elizabeth Poole[111] with regards to the media coverage between 1994 - 2003 and over a decade later it is still the case. Terrorism, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other news abroad is what dominates the discussion of Muslims and Islam. The attacks of 7/7 were only mentioned 9% of the time and 9/11, 6%. This suggests that even within the conflict paradigm there is little reference to previous events, further highlighting the episodic nature of news reporting.

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[111] Poole, E., "The Effects of September 11 and the War in Iraq on British Newspaper Coverage," 93-100.

Human interest frame

The human interest angle offers a face to an event, issue, or problem. The saturated and competitive market for news places journalists and editors in a position where they need to produce a product that captures and retains the audience's interest.[112] The framing of news in this way refers to an attempt to reach the audience on a personal or emotional level. This is achieved by personalizing the news; in turn this may dramatize, sensationalise or emotionalise the news, in order to captivate the audience.

The coding questions brought out the following results:

1.   Does the story provide a human reference to the issue? Yes, 60% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 90%, The Guardian 55%, the Independent 50%, BBC 59%, ITV 59%, and Channel 4 63%.

2.   Does the story employ adjectives that generate an emotional response? No, 55% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 77% (Yes), The Guardian 60% (No), the Independent 65% (No), BBC 54% (No), ITV 56% (No), and Channel 4 59% (Yes).

3.   Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue or problem? Yes, 54% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 77%, The Guardian 51%, the Independent 57% (No), BBC 54% (No), ITV 50%, and Channel 4 59% (Yes).

4.   Does the story go into the private or personal lives of those involved? No, 57% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 74% (Yes), The Guardian 64% (No), the Independent 63% (No), BBC 54% (No), ITV 56% (No), and Channel 4 52% (Yes).

5.   Does the story contain visual information that might generate an emotional response? No, 54% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 66% (Yes), The Guardian 67% (No), the Independent 71% (No), BBC 62% (No), ITV 53% (Yes), and Channel 4 70% (Yes).

The human interest frame is one that is often used (60% of the time) but it generally has a person speak on the issue or name the responsible party. It generally does not go into the personal lives of those involved but it does highlight the effect of the issue at hand for people and groups. When it mentions how people are affected it describes mostly how the non-Muslim population is affected. As the conflict frame shows it is mostly Muslims who are the protagonists of that (usually violent) conflict, it follows that when the effects are discussed it is usually how the situation of "terrorism" affects the "terrorised". When it comes to Muslim religious life, the term mosque was mentioned in 15% of the stories, Allah in 7% and Qur'an 3%. This suggests

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[112] Bennett, W. L., *News: The Politics of Illusion* (New York, NY: Longman, 1995).

that media present a deficient view of Muslim religious life. Mosques were mentioned mostly in conjunction to terror and hate preachers, the so-called radical mosques where radicalisation takes place).

Economic consequences frame

This frame is utilised when an event, problem, or issue that is reported is discussed in terms of the consequences it will have financially or economically on an individual, group, institution, region, or country.

The coding questions brought out the following results:

1. Does the story mention financial or economic effects? No, 88% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 87%, The Guardian 85%, the Independent 94%., BBC 87%, ITV 88%, and Channel 4 89%.

2. Does the story mention the costs involved? No, 93% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 87%, The Guardian 96%, the Independent 92%, BBC 88%, ITV 94%, and Channel 4 93%.

3. Does the story mention the economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a specific course of action? No, 94% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 93%, The Guardian 94%, the Independent 94%., BBC 95%, ITV 94%, and Channel 4 96%.

4. Does the story mention effects or consequences for immigration or migrants? No, 98% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 100%, The Guardian 96%, the Independent 100%, BBC 97%, ITV 97%, and Channel 4 100%.

I had anticipated this frame to be the least common but I was surprised that the discussion of immigration or migrants in the news was as low as it was. I imagine that it would be higher in the comment pages but when it comes to news these are almost non-existent issues. This is partly to do with the prominence of the conflict frame and also the lack of contextualisation. Even if one was discussing terrorism or radicalisation, the economic exclusion or disenfranchisement of young people that makes them susceptible to radicalisation could be discussed. However, even these issues, which might be discussed in the news in general, do not make an explicit mention of Islam or Muslims in conjunction to that. The discussion of Halal mortgages, Muslims students struggling with student loans, etc. is totally overlooked and ignored. As with the other frames, Muslims are not present as agents of anything except agents of conflict (and usually violence). However, in an analysis of Sydney and New York newspapers and the broader political context they were set. Possamai et al. found that while sharia was mainly associated with corporeal punishments, such as stoning or amputation, sharia was represented in positive terms in the case of Islamic finance.[113] However, in this sample the discussion of Islamic finance was mostly absent, while that may be the result of the small sample

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[113] Possamai, A. et al., "Perception of Shari'a in Australian Newspapers," *Current Sociology* 61/5-6 (2013).

size, it does raise an interesting point of comparison. This is because not the opinion on Islamic finance is different (positive or negative), but rather the discussion is absent.

Morality frame

Within this frame the religious traditions or moral convictions of an individual, group, institution, region, or country are linked to the event, problem, or issue in question. Often journalists will reference morality or religion by using the views of a group to raise questions about an issue or story. In turn a report may offer a moral message or engage specific social prescriptions about how to behave.[114] Some suggest that this frame is more common in the minds of audiences than in the actual content of the news.[115]

The coding questions brought out the following results:

1. Does the story contain a particular moral message? No, 97% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 95%, The Guardian 98%, the Independent 89%, BBC 95%, ITV 97%, and Channel 4 100%.

2. Does the story make reference to morality, God, and other religious traditions? No, 80% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 51%, The Guardian 85%, the Independent 89%., BBC 79%, ITV 81%, and Channel 4 81%.

3. Does the story mention any social prescriptions about acceptable behaviour? No, 80% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 77%, The Guardian 75%, the Independent 89%., BBC 82%, ITV 81%, and Channel 4 81%.

4. Does the story mention encounters with the judicial system? No, 69% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 50%, The Guardian 72%, the Independent 76%., BBC 69%, ITV 72%, and Channel 4 67%.

Often journalists will reference morality or religion by using the views of a group to raise questions about an issue or story. Fortunately, most news stories do not include a moral message. This is to be expected because news is supposed to be factual, neutral and remain objective. The last thing that you would have in that regard would be explicit descriptions of morality. However, there are implicit descriptions present that bear out with the prominence of the conflict paradigm. In this regard, we can see prescriptions being made about violent action and about Muslim behaviour that is deemed incompatible, even though it is not explicitly stated. There are a few stories that go into the specific practices of Muslims or Islam. However, this is very limited, not only in scope (what practices it describes, etc.) but also in depth (the type of analysis of those practices itself). In turn a report may offer a moral message or engage specific social prescriptions about how

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[114] De Rooij, L., "Believing and Belonging. The Aesthetics of Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and Its Relationship to British Civil Religion," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 10/1/2 (2017).
[115] Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., and Crigler, A. N., *Common Knowledge*, 75.

to behave, but in most cases this is an implicit message of 'do not be a terrorist'[116]. Some suggest that the moral frame is more common in the minds of audiences than in the actual content of the news.[117] This is certainly upheld by this aspect of the analysis and although I will be revisiting some of this in the discourse and focus group sections of this thesis to complicate this slightly, as a guideline I would concur with this analysis. It simply is not in the purview of news to discuss and debate these issues, which is why it is not covered.

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[116] This may or may not bear out to be regarded by the public as a synonym for Muslim, but this will be discussed under the focus group section.
[117] Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., and Crigler, A. N., *Common Knowledge*, 75.

Responsibility frame

The responsibility frame discusses an issue or problem in order to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group, in this case Islam or Muslims. The existence of the responsibility frame may again shape the public understanding of who is responsible for causing (or solving) social issues, such as poverty.[118] Iyengar argues further that television news encourages people to explain social problems simplistically, because an issue or problem is covered in terms of an event, instance, or individual (episodically) rather than in terms of the larger historical social context (thematically).[119] For example, immigration reform is often discussed on its own rather than in the broader context of post-colonialism and EU membership.

The coding questions brought out the following results:

1. Does the story make a mention of how government can address the problem? Yes, 51% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 71% (Yes), The Guardian 55% (No), the Independent 55% (No), BBC 56% (Yes), ITV 50%, and Channel 4 52% (No).

2. Does the story suggest that the government is responsible for the issue or problem? No, 58% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 71%, The Guardian 57%, the Independent 50%., BBC 56%, ITV 56%, and Channel 4 56%.

3. Does the story suggest potential solution(s) to the problem or issue? No, 92% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 95%, The Guardian 95%, the Independent 90%., BBC 92%, ITV 91%, and Channel 4 93%.

4. Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue-problem? Yes, 68% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 83%, The Guardian 64%, the Independent 55%., BBC 67%, ITV 69%, and Channel 4 70%.

5. Does the story suggest the problem requires (immediate) action? No, 57% overall. This can be split up by source as follows: Daily Mail 71%, The Guardian 56%, the Independent 52%, BBC 54%, ITV 59%, and Channel 4 56%.

The existence of the responsibility frame may again shape the public understanding of who is responsible for causing (or solving) social issues.[120] In this case we can see that in the majority of cases individuals (or groups) are responsible for the story. This is generally framed as Muslims inciting conflict. What is interesting is that in 58% the government (be it policy, politicians, local government, etc.) is not deemed responsible. This again

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[118] Iyengar, S., "Television News and Citizens' Explanations of National Affairs."
[119] Iyengar, S., *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*.
[120] Iyengar, S., "Television News and Citizens' Explanations of National Affairs."

reconfirms the episodic nature of news and lack of contextualisation. This is also in contrast with the findings from chapter 1. The actions and issues that are deemed newsworthy are not discussed in connection to others. Even though terrorism (whatever its form) is a reaction to something, the antecedence is most often overlooked. Terrorists wake up one day and commit to a violent action. This lack of contextualisation is a glaring problem as when we consider that this is the way people will then understand and create meaning out of the situation for themselves and their everyday lives. Thus, news encourages people to explain social problems simplistically because the issue or problem is covered in terms of an event, instance, or individual (episodically) rather than in terms of the larger historical social context (thematically).[121] Also of importance to consider is that although individuals or groups are considered a problem 92% of the time there is no solution given and mostly the problem is not deemed large enough to warrant immediate action. This may be symptomatic of news coverage as it is not trying to convince the audience, but rather provide factual information as it represents a problem. The cause and the solution of an issue is absent in most cases. This means that what are most often disseminated are simply statements of issues, without context, grounding or potential solutions, which are left entirely up to the imagination of the audience. With news' ability to set the agenda it can make the issues it discusses seem like much bigger issues than they are, especially if more than 80% of the stories are regarding Muslims being in conflict with something or someone.

In total 125 different terms were found describing Islam and or Muslims. The five individual terms used most often in articles mentioning Islam or Muslims can be found in Table 11 below.

Term	Percentage of Articles Mentioning Term
Terrorist	28.9%
Islamist	24.7%
Al-Qaeda	22.9%
Mosque	15.1%
Woolwich	15.1%

Table 11: Most Used Terms in Articles Mentioning Islam or Muslims

These terms indicate that the most commonly mentioned terms are relating to violence (terrorism and Al-Qaeda) or unwelcome behaviour (Islamist). An example of the implementation might be something like, Muslim Fundamentalist does x. The Mosque is an interesting term to appear often, as a site of religious worship it is often associated with piety and authority in the media discourses. It is also situates a lot of the issues surrounding Muslims with Mosques. Examples are not limited to Mosques as a site of problems with Islam but they also appear in stories about protests outside Mosques, protest about building Mosques or Mosque leader provides statement about an event. This gives the impression that the Mosque is central to

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[121] Iyengar, S., *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*.

Muslim social and religious practice. Whilst this certainly is the case for some individuals, it certainly is not the case for all. The use of Mosque as a frequent term suggests its qualities as an authority, something that is not necessarily given. Therefore, I suggest that the appearance of Mosque as such a central term reflects Western understandings of religion and the role of the Church in both the historical and contemporary British context. The attack by two men on drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich during the period of data collection has probably skewed the data in such a way that this became such a common term, because it was a news story during this period, a frequent reference in subsequent stories about Muslims and Islam, and the subsequent legal proceedings kept the term in the press.

Table 12 highlights the ten people, groups and institutions most often mentioned in articles about Islam and Muslims. The fact that the EDL, Anjem Choudary, Al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Mohammed, Abu Qatada, Taliban, Al-Shabaab are in the top ten further highlights the emphasis on conflict within the British press. The deportation of Abu Qatada from Britain to Jordan was a news story during this period and the continued conflicts with Al-Shabaab and the Taliban abroad were going on. However, the other terms mentioned were either selected by the journalist to include in the piece, or as is more likely the case with the EDL and Anjem Choudary, it highlights the ability of some groups or individuals to make it into the press and public eye.

Al-Qaeda	22.9%
EDL	14.5%
Anjem Choudary	10.2%
Al-Muhajiroun	10.2%
Omar Bakri Mohammed	9.6%
Abu Qatada	7.8%
Taliban	7.2%
Al-Shabaab	7.2%
Muslim Council for Britain	7.2%
David Cameron	4.8%

Table 12: People or Institutions Most Mentioned in conjunction with Islam and Muslims

The appearance of the Muslim Council of Britain in this list still shows the importance of the group as a representative organisation for Muslims in Britain. The fact that the EDL is mentioned twice as much as the MCB and that it is mentioned a lot less than other supposed authority figures shows the plight of the MCB in being able to engage the media and act as a spokesperson for the Muslims in Britain. With none of the other organisations mentioned earlier being mentioned with any great regularity, further highlights the inability of Muslims and Muslim organisations to participate as producers of information in news discourse.

The fact that 7% of the stories make a mention of Allah is also interesting. Whilst I do not want to divert into any theological debates regarding the nature of Allah here, I do wish to highlight that the mentioning of Allah this often is somewhat surprising. This is because in a study conducted by Knott, Poole, and Taira religious

cosmology is mentioned about 10% of the time.[122] Their definition of religious cosmology goes beyond God and entails other terms such as Jesus, the devil, salvation, etc.[123] So the appearance of Allah with an almost equal percent as the whole of religious cosmology (in Christian or generally religious terms) in stories about Islam and Muslims, further suggests that within press reports there is a link between Allah and the acts that Muslims undertake within these press reports. David Cameron is the only government figure that appears on this list. This suggests that when it comes to Muslims and Islam the prime minister generally does not comment, and is not required to comment. The stance of the government in general is also not mentioned very often in conjunction to Islam and Muslims, and only when issues are of a direct purview of a government minister is there a mentioning of that minister, for example Theresa May in the case involving the deportation of Abu Qatada or Michael Gove in the Trojan Horse Scandal.

Term	Percentage of Articles Mentioning Term
Woolwich	15.1%
Afghanistan	13.3%
London	11.4%
Iraq	10.2%
UK/Britain	9.6%
Pakistan	8.4%
Syria	7.8%
USA	6.6%
Jordan	6.0%
Somalia	5.4%

Table 13: Geaographic Location of Muslims and Islam in the Report

It may not come as a great surprise that Afghanistan or Iraq make this list with British forces and interests heavily involved in those countries during the data gathering period. The fact that London (12.1%) and (UK/Britain/British 10.2%) are mentioned a combination of 22.3% of the time shows the importance of News involving Muslims abroad and the potential consequences for the conceptualisation of Muslims in Britain based on events abroad. It also shows the London-centric aspect of Muslims in the News, which excludes large concentrations of Muslims in other conurbations.

Terrorist	28.9%
Islamist	24.7%
radical	14.5%
Jihadi	12.7%
Extremist	9.6%

Table 14: Other Common Terms Mentioned in Articles about Islam and Muslims

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[122] Knott, K., Poole, E., and Taira, T., *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change*, 197.
[123] Ibid., 192.

Table 14 further shows the emphasis on conflict, violence and unwelcome behaviour. The only term to appear significantly that is not used to suggest cultural or violent conflict is Human Rights (8%). When 'human rights' as a term is used, it is often used in conjunction with the idea of human rights abuses. This term may have featured in the discussion of Abu Qatada's deportation to Jordan and whether he would be tortured or not when he arrived there. Another example of when human rights enter the discussion could be the discussion on whether banning the Burqa contravenes human rights legislation. The results of this analysis are comparable to those found earlier by Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery between 1998-2009.[124] Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery, found that although there "was no evidence to suggest that extremely negative and generalising stereotypes about Islam along the lines of 'Muslims hate the West' or 'Islam is a violent religion'." But rather indirect aspects of anti-Muslim bias were found. Such as the prevalence of the term terrorist or terrorism, conflict related terminology and concepts, a discussion of Muslims rather than Islam, and a focus on London or conflict areas.[125]

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[124] Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., and Mcenery, T., *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press*, 35-66.
[125] Ibid., 255-56.

II.III   Symbolic Representations of Islam and Muslims

Researching metaphors and similes on Islam and Muslims gives insight into the symbols used and linked to describe them. This is because a metaphor can be a linguistic tool for understanding symbols; metaphors unite experience and symbols.[126] "The most salient characteristic of metaphor consists in an apparent violation of linguistic rules that results in the expression of a proposition that is either logically false."[127] For example, "Do not be scared of the filthy kuffar [non-believers]. They are pigs."[128] The key to understanding a metaphor is to interpret it as a comparative proposition (unbelievers are like pigs), rather than a declarative proposition (unbelievers are pigs).[129] This allows for the same metaphor to be interpreted in multiple ways (which is beneficial to reporting as we will see later). Herbert Read wrote that: "A metaphor is the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image; it is an expression of a complex idea, not by analysis, or by abstract statement, but by a sudden perception of an objective relation."[130] Therefore its meaning and understanding is constituted by the system of discourse to which it is associated. Compare this with a simile, for example, the sheep was white as snow. Experiential evidence provides understanding and gives meaning to the symbol (the sheep) and it gives insight into reality by telling the receiver what it is like (snow). The key difference between a simile and a metaphor for their meaning is for the receiver to be able to focus on what similar thing they 'do' (metaphor) and how they look similar (simile).[131] For example, "Stop acting like a baby!" vs. "He has a babyface".

Metaphors and similes give some insight into what the authors think the subject they are writing about is like in reality. A metaphor has different possible interpretations, and so whilst it might be the author's intent to be ambiguous about the nature of the metaphor, the understanding consumers take from it is important for the subject of this thesis. By examining this aspect of the discourse about Muslims and Islam, it is possible to ascertain not only what discursive symbols are used, in regards to Muslims, but also give some insight into how discourse affects interpretation, through the interpretation of metaphors.

In articles about British Muslims, events abroad are frequently cited to link ideas about a worldwide Islam and this has a homogenising effect. The Guardian, 'a liberal newspaper that champions the rights of minority groups'[132], was more likely to feature Muslims in Britain than the conservative press with almost twice as much coverage. This can affect an audience by heightening awareness and making issues related to Islam and Muslims seem more important. However, Islam was largely discussed in global terms of representation

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[126] Ricoeur, P., *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 69.

[127] Basso, K. H., *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology* (University of Arizona Press, 1992), 55.

[128] Martin, A. and Ledwith, M., "These Filthy Unbelievers Are Pigs, He Rants at Rally to in-Cite Youngsters", (*Daily Mail*, 30 May), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2333039/Woolwich-terror-suspect-Michael-Adebolajos-rant-rally-incite-youngsters.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[129] Basso, K. H., *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology*, 56.

[130] Read, H., *English Prose Style* (London: Bell and Sons, 1952), 23.

[131] Basso, K. H., *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology*, 65.

[132] Poole, E., "Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims before and after 9/11: The Uk Context," 52.

(which comprised of 76 percent of coverage not related to the killing of Lee Rigby in Woolwich) rather than local i.e., British coverage. The frameworks utilised in general were narrow and themes associated with British Muslims were mostly about conflict but these frameworks were still wider than the representations of Muslims abroad which were only about conflict and mostly violent. For example: "Muslims are like rabid dogs, because they are violent, dangerous, and unpredictable." Nathan, 18, Blackburn.

It is important to examine the use of metaphors on Muslims and Islam, their discursive descriptions, and their relative level of acceptance. In many senses a sedimented type of metaphor is the most common, because it is so deeply internalised by speakers that it appears as natural and common sense within the speech community.[133] The justification is often discursively rooted in local factors and personal experiences. This is the explained away because the metaphor offers up a situation that entitles, obliges, or even demands projection of its own model onto other actors, regions, or international institutions. When it comes to news coverage, the desire to place familiar structures and approaches over new information or challenges as the solution, is frequently justified in terms of the rightness of values and historical successes. This in turn creates an a-historical narrative that is common in "episodic" news reporting. However, rightness, progress, or uniqueness, do not hide the instrumental or protective logic behind the ideas represented or projected in the media. This is often a result of an individual's strategic aims and interests that are pursued to extend their influence.

The construction of the subject of news has increasingly emanated from this type of approach. Here then, the framing could be seen as resonating with the already dominant approach with its focus on problem(s), rather than furthering a new and broader understanding of the situation and its sociocultural underpinnings in the contemporary local or global community. This allows for the structuring of the discourse around Muslims and Islam while generally considering the interplay between the elements that make up the discourse, such as the extent to which the dominant tropes are reflected in the discourse and then put into practice. In light of the sample material analysed above, the most common metaphor is that of the Muslim as a terrorist. In most cases the perpetrators' Muslimness is emphasized, and any other motivations are ignored. Belief is the central explanation for behaviour. The media data analysed suggests that the metaphor of Muslims as Islamist, radical, fundamentalist, and religiously conservative has a large salience in the press.

Journalism in the mass-mediated communications age does this by taking events and arranging them within frames that are relatable to the viewer.[134]

> Largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [frames] organise the world both for journalists who report
> it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports. Frames enable journalists to

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[133] Drulak, P., "Motion, Container and Equilibrium: Metaphors in the Discourse About European Integration," 507-08.
[134] Altheide, D. L. and Snow, R. P., *Media Logic* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1979); De Vreese, C. H., "News Framing: Theory and Typology," *Information Design Journal & Document Design* 13/1 (2005).

process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognise it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus, for organisational reasons alone, frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organised to regulate their production.[135]

However, this choice has the boundaries set by the producer and not the consumer, moreover, such programmes usually prefer one vision of reality over another and invite the viewer to engage the message in a particular way, despite such a 'reading' not being guaranteed.[136] However, the 'active' in 'active viewer' should not be seen as an individual that is continuously struggling against the structures of textual power.[137] But rather that in their own way, audiences are in certain aspects *"active in their choice, consumption and interpretation of media texts, with recognition of how that activity is framed and limited, in its different modalities and varieties, by the dynamics of cultural power."*[138]

 In order to examine the discourse further we need to examine examples of the British media construction of Islam and Muslims. By doing so we can unpack some of the debates that are present in the discourse that surrounds Islam and Muslims in the news. In particular, this section will look at the narrative constructions of radical Islamic terrorism. Featherstone, Hollohan, and Poole note that,

> Previous research into the representations of Muslims or Islam demonstrates how British Muslims have been excluded from definitions of the 'Islamic terrorist' unlike their global counterparts. Further analysis post-9/11 reveals a huge shift towards media constructions that locate the British-born Muslim within this conceptualization. After the London bombings there was a massive increase in coverage of the British-born violent extremist, of terrorist 'sleeper' cells linked to al-Qaeda and of disenchanted British Muslims following the invasion of Iraq.[139]

While Poole argues that the images of British Muslims may have been more diverse than perhaps other nations because of the social relations within Britain[140], the discourse surrounding Muslims is firstly divided into the 'good' and 'bad' Muslims. In describing this division, Said has noted: *"in practice this notion has meant that when Orientals struggle against colonial occupation, … oppose racial discrimination, … and class interest, political circumstances, economic factors are [deemed] totally irrelevant."*[141]

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[135] Gitlin, T., *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*, 7.

[136] Hall, S., "Encoding/Decoding in Tv Discourse," in *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Hall, S., et al. (London, UK: Hutchinson, 1981).

[137] Curran, J., "The "New Revisionism" in Mass Communications Research," *European Journal of Communication* 5/2-3 (1990).

[138] Morley, D. and Robins, K., *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 127.

[139] Featherstone, M., Holohan, S., and Poole, E., "Discourses of the War on Terror: Constructions of the Islamic Other after 7/7," *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* 6/2 (2010).

[140] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*.

[141] Said, E. W., *Orientalism*, 107.

The actors in this discourse are the moderate Muslim and the lapsed Muslim, the antithesis of the misguided protagonist and his teacher, in short practical terms, the terrorist and the one who radicalised him. These are standard characters in the all too familiar ideology of terror. The construction of the evil mentor departs from the Orientalist discourse of the migrants polluting Britain with their barbaric and antiquated values, rituals and actions. This is often engaged through the lenses of (national) security. The central thesis is that the most fervent practitioners of Islamic faith are also the central source of extremist rhetoric. However, as others have suggested we can see complexities in the construction of this pattern if we consider the characteristics of the other parties involved.[142] In all the coverage which displayed the conflict frame, the central character follows a familiar path. The narrative consists of a regular, often not seemingly religious, individual (usually male), who has become brainwashed by 'extremist ideology'. [143] The discourse makes a point of painting the individual in a good light, mentioning previously positive or everyday characteristics. For example, his place in the community, school and being one of the lads and having nothing much about him etc. Then his subsequent change is dramatic, the framing as a person who has made an irrational choice. This has several effects. First, it divorces the individual from the context and creates an a-contextual narrative. It also creates a separation between the individual and the rest of the Muslim community. It relies on the promulgation of individualism, irrationality and psychosis. This fits into the western narrative of itself, greater individualism, greater choices, but the Muslim cannot cope and then succumbs to the irrational choice to follow Islam as a safety blanket in response to the developed western society.

This way of characterising Islam and Muslims has been described as *"cheering fictions and useful lies"* by Hanif Kureishi.[144] This is because the images of Islam and Muslims are produced because of what Lewis, Mason, and Moore state, namely that *"the most frequent portrayals tend to fit within an orientalist framework. Like most forms of orientalism, this stresses certain forms of difference and portrays Muslims as a problem or a threat."*[145] This way of portraying Muslims provides further examples of the superiority of non-Muslims over Muslims. The fiction it reinforces is twofold for the non-Muslim audience. First, that Muslims are a threat because of their religion and culture; and second, that British people are not able to succumb to those irrational or psychological ills because they are superior in culture and status. However, public and private identity is a struggle of a sexual, religious, cultural and political nature. Nobody is perfect by any means and relatability is needed, but it can only be achieved through a reporting of Muslim realities.

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[142] Featherstone, M., Holohan, S., and Poole, E., "Discourses of the War on Terror: Constructions of the Islamic Other after 7/7."

[143] This is similar to the discourse surrounding cults or new religious movements. One classic example of a similar discourse that was levelled at a new religious movement is that of Eileen Barker and her study of the Unification Church. Barker, E., *The Making of a Moonie* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1984).

[144] Moore-Gilbert, B., *Hanif Kureishi*, Contemporary World Writers (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 45.

[145] Lewis, J., Mason, P., and Moore, K., "Images of Islam in the Uk: The Representation of British Muslims in the Nmational Press, 2000-2008," in *Pointing the Finger: Islam and Muslims in the British Media*, ed. Petley, J. and Richardson, R. (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 64.

Unfortunately, those who aim to bring these realities to the foreground are often either obscured, forgotten or ignored by simultaneous forces of hard-line orthodoxy, public opinion and media logic.

Seaton suggests that in order to improve the media, accountability needs to return, as it has all but disappeared from the press and has been replaced by market success.[146] What is required, according to Seaton, is a new relationship between the media and the state.[147] Williams and Delli Carpini suggest that what is needed is verisimilitude*: "Verisimilitude in the media [is needed], [here] we mean the assumption that sources of political communications [need to] take responsibility for the truth claims they explicitly and implicitly make, even if these claims are not strictly verifiable in any formal sense."*[148] What the data suggests is that not only do the media institutions need to be held accountable for their output, but the output needs to be clearer in distinguishing what is comment, conjecture and fact.

This is again evident in the narrative surrounding the killing of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, whereby the discussion was focussed on how these ordinary young men from Christian backgrounds had succumbed to radicalized Islam. This narrative was repeated across the newspapers analysed in the current study despite their ideological and market differences. The study even shows a larger discussion in the Guardian than in the sensationalist Daily mail or the centrist Independent, for example "Why are young British men drawn to radicalisation? From the EDL to extreme Islam, angry males are being manipulated."[149]

The narrative continues as the person in question is described as 'fanatical', 'radical' and exhibiting an identity that would lie at the basis of their own radicalization. The individual is then linked back to the wider 'terror network', hence the high number of instances of Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, etc. named in the reporting. In turn this narrative legitimates the conflict framing of the discourse: The mosques and their clerics make the individual an extremist through exposing them to their ideology that they brought to Britain from the Middle East where they are established within the wider terrorist network. Ironically this ideology is not represented as a rational political ideology, but as an irrational religious ideology which could potentially render any Muslim susceptible to radicalization and therefore terrorism. However, due to the prevalence of its adherents, discussions and supporters (Anjem Choudary, Abu Qatada etc.) in the media, it has the effect of making it seem like a rational decision. This phenomenon is much like when during the election debates, Nigel Farage of UKIP and a number of other smaller parties participated. It gives the impression that voting for Farage or UKIP is equally rational and viable as it is to vote Labour, Scottish National Party or Green Party. In turn if you have a debate on Islam in Britain and you invite Anjem Choudary (which the BBC and Channel

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[146] Seaton, J., "Broadcasting and the Theory of Public Service," in *Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain*, ed. Curran, J. and Seaton, J. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 347.
[147] Ibid., 353.
[148] Williams, B. A. and Delli Carpini, M. X., "Media Regimes and Democracy," in *Media and Society*, ed. Curran, J. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).
[149] Lammy, D., "Why Are Young British Men Drawn to Radicalisation? From the Edl to Extreme Islam, Angry Males Are Being Manipulated", (*The Guardian*, 24 May).

4 have done in the past) then you give the viewer the impression that their version of Islam is equally rational or viable as that of the MCB, Baroness Warsi or Tablighi Jamaat. This all takes place even though acts of terrorism are presented as incongruous with 'acceptable' interpretations of the Quran by Muslims. This reflects the journalistic logic to always show two sides of a story, no matter how extreme the two sides of the story are. The journalistic logic works in binaries and seeks to oppose mainstream views with a counter perspective, but in doing so it legitimates the alternative view and makes it seem equal, even if it is a fringe or marginalised view that is held by a sincere minority of people.

The Guardian stressed 8 years ago, that 'Britain's Muslims are able to win the hearts and minds of the public, and distance themselves from the violent extremists'.[150] This places the responsibility on the wider Muslim population as being part of the problem because they should know what is going on in their own communities. Homogenizing Muslims and relieving the political authorities of blame is the logical consequence. This is borne out in the content analysis above, and here we can see how the discourse positions itself between Muslims and Britishness, in turn suggesting that the Muslim community is responsible for these problems and should eradicate them if it wants to be considered a part of Britain's fabric. Constructing the discourse with a lack of complexity means that external settings are amplified as media coverage focuses on the juxtaposition of Muslims or Islam and Britain. For example, the conflict between freedom of speech constructed as a liberal value versus censorship as a product of Islam's nature, resulting in a 'clash of cultures'.[151] This way of thinking serves to marginalize Muslim groups and reinforce adherence to a particular social order. The thought, "if they are not sufficiently rational to be open to persuasion, we must regrettably punish them for their unwillingness to comply", is an important part of the folklore of British society and contributes to the presentation of Muslims within the British social order as inherently irrational and prone to violence. In doing so, it helps to distract audiences from Britain's complicity in creating this context. This highlights the conflict between Britain's belief as a tolerant, inclusive society and the level of dissatisfaction exhibited by some members of this society, not only Muslims extremists but for example the EDL also fall into this paradigm). It also shows a separation between the political elites and the media machine. As political elites try to engage in promoting cohesion, some more successful that others, the press are keen to follow the described narrative above.

> Muslims' involvement in deviant activities threatens security in Britain. Muslims are a threat to
> British mainstream values and thus provoke integrative concerns. There are inherent cultural

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[150] Bunting, M., "Hearts and Minds of Young Muslims Will Be Won or Lost in the Mosques", ibid., 9 July).

[151] The clash of civilisations paradigm famously put forth by Samuel Huntingdon is a theory that posits that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. It has become a dominant frame for conceiving, perceiving, and addressing issues of cultural difference as well as Muslims in Britain and abroad. Huntington, S. P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London, UK - Sydney, Australia: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

differences between Muslims and the host community which creates tensions in interpersonal relations and Muslims are increasingly making their presence felt in the public sphere.[152]

The internet has been described as the most influential source for most negative things among young people at the moment; not only radicalisation is seen as being achieved online but also cyberbullying and a host of other social ills are believed to stem from the internet and are widely discussed.[153] The internet provides authors the ability to represent the wider terror networks, linking Islamists to any number of individuals, activities, groups and countries. In turn it allows for a simplistic reduction of the homogenized British Muslim population as being associated with and under the influence of Islamic radicals abroad. This can be the only reason why Omar Bakri Muhammad is mentioned so often despite being banned from Britain in 2005.[154]

Some participants in the discourse go further and suggest that all Muslims might be susceptible to radicalization, and that it might be something in or about their faith that is to blame. This discursive framework is typified by Tony Blair's response to 7/7:

> The extremist propaganda is cleverly aimed at their target audience. It plays on our tolerance and good nature. It exploits the tendency to guilt of the developed world, as if it is our behaviour that should change, that if we only tried to work out and act on their grievances, we could lift this evil, that if we changed our behaviour, they would change theirs. This is a misunderstanding of a catastrophic order. … In the end, it is by the power of argument, debate, true religious faith and true legitimate politics that we will defeat this threat.[155]

This narrative implies that the cause is located outside of the mainstream. Moreover, this narrative suggests that the mainstream or dominant groups do not need to think about their conduct as it is the minority who needs to adjust his or her behaviour to meet mainstream demands, as if it also assumes that what most people do or want in society is always correct, in line with a democratic ideal. In this narrative, the Islamic terrorist is always represented as a deviant. Community cohesion would result once Muslims were to meet the demands of the 'moderate' that is placed upon them by mainstream Britain and thus the 'problem' will be solved. As the discourse that surrounds Islamic fundamentalism never mentions neo-colonial aspirations or actions, let alone the colonial ones, Britain is also left out of context. Some have questioned whether these kinds of discursive representations are reflective of a racist core of contemporary British politics. As

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[152] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 84.

[153] For more see: Lewis, B., *Raising Children in a Digital Age: Enjoying the Best, Avoiding the Worst* (Oxford, UK: Lion Hudson PLC, 2014). & Clark, L. S., *The Parent App: Understanding Families in the Digital Age* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[154] On 27 July 2007, a special edition of Newsnight entitled 'Battle for Islam' was broadcast, in which Gavin Esler presented on the battle for the heart and soul of Islam. Benazir Bhutto and Maryam Namazie were in the studio in London and Omar Bakri was featured live from Lebanon alongside Reza Aslan in Los Angeles. This further points to my point about defining what are rational and viable choices mentioned earlier.

[155] Blair, T., "Speech to Labour Party Conference," http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4689363.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

Sivanandan states, "White racial superiority is back on the agenda – in the guise, this time, not of a super-race but of a super-nation, a super-people, a chosen people on a mission to liberate the world".[156]

The 'moderate' Muslims who achieve a voice in the news and are said to represent the 'real' face of British Islam are those that exhibit characteristics such as being liberal, tolerant, peaceful, and critical of the tradition. As Muslims contribute to the dominant ideological discourse, this practice separates into different categories the good (liberal) and bad (radical) Muslims. The people who commit violence in its name are misinterpreting their faith. Coverage of Islamic extremism mainly occurs in relation to the activities of Muslims in Britain. These acts are mainly framed in conflict but other examples can be in raising funds or supporting Islamic extremists or terrorists elsewhere (terms used in the news). Muslims in Britain is the preferred terminology rather than British Muslims signalling that Muslims around the world can all be understood and engaged with in the same way. Featherstone, Hollohan, and Poole note that,

> The British and American political elites are keen to escape from political debate through the construction of a discourse which presents their cause as 'beyond discourse', driven by right, goodness, justice and the care for humanity. By contrast, the others' cause is not legitimate. They are evil. They want wickedness and injustice and have no interest in the lives of other humans. Although there is a lot of talk about the nature of asymmetrical war, it is clear from countless studies that that we must also contend with the asymmetrical nature of discourse. In the context of contemporary discursive constructions surrounding Islamic terrorism, there is no political debate. The law is upheld by the British and American 'neo-liberal capitalist' states. Those who oppose these regimes are therefore criminal.[157]

The discourse has fixed the image on a disillusioned or extremist young Muslim male. The discourse stresses that moderate Muslims are law-abiding citizens, but Muslims are the ones susceptible to extremist violence. Simultaneously this violence is not the product of socio-political circumstance but rather the result of individual psychosis. Foucault refers to the 'dangerous individual', and argues how social structures seek out individual actors to secure wider social cohesion.[158] In turn these deviant individuals become the reason for far-reaching and ideologically motivated changes. The political authorities are able to utilise the trope of Muslim terror to undermine any legitimacy that extremist Muslims may have in their criticism of the state and in turn put in place restrictions that affect the freedoms of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.[159] This is born out of the data as the news does not feel the issues surrounding Muslims are the responsibility of the

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[156] Sivanandan, A., "Race, Terror and Civil Society," *Race and Class* 47/3 (2006): 1.
[157] Featherstone, M., Holohan, S., and Poole, E., "Discourses of the War on Terror: Constructions of the Islamic Other after 7/7," 181.
[158] Foucault, M., "The Dangerous Individual," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984*, ed. Kritzman, L. D. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1988).
[159] Foucault, M., *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).

state. The problem is regarded as Islam in Britain and so should be solved by the Muslims in Britain rather than the state.

British Muslims were not directly ascribed with this label.[160] It was at first Muslims in Britain who were the migrants, exiled, refugees and asylum seekers, who were deemed extremists. Members of these groups were accused of having links to political groups abroad. This is still a dominant topic of coverage which seeks to distance the British in British Muslim from the source of terrorism. The trials of, and raids on, suspects, are a dominant feature of coverage. The culturally embedded use of the language has implications for interpretation. The press uses the terms fundamentalist, Islamist, or radical, as if they are interchangeable, and all are infused with connotations of terrorism and violence and used in articles as sources of terrorism. Muslims are also often associated with if not synonym for asylum seekers. Kundnani has discussed the construction of asylum seekers as scroungers, dependent on handouts and charity with nothing to contribute.[161] This viewpoint ignores the causes of asylum seekers in which Britain could be implicated. In addition, the asylum seekers are categorised based on the characteristics of the countries they come from and this allows the government to use quotas to limit their freedom and treat them as scapegoats rather than as individuals suffering from the injustices of a globalised world. For example, this way of thinking allows the government to legitimize welfare changes and extend them to other groups.[162]

The discourse surrounding the immigration policy under which extremists entered Britain, was mostly secondary to other issues. The media coverage following violent attacks engaged the Government on immigration and minority issues and created an environment in which repressive measures were implemented, as highlighted above following the terror alerts etc. Such discourses often harbour other dominant topics which emphasise Muslim "difference" and issues of integration and a subsequent loss of British values and identity. Often this is seen as a threat to community cohesion and as institutional racism takes root it is often reformulated as separatism.[163]

Findings in the present study highlight the low visibility of Muslims in the press as agents of their own destiny. The Muslim population in Britain is only discussed in the news when it comes to terrorism and or violence and not with regards to other socio-political discussions. There was little coverage about healthcare, education or financial policy affecting the Muslim community, but this may change as Muslims become more vocal about their aims and identity. As suggested above, however, this Muslim voice in the media may be undermined by strategic media discussions of issues abroad, or domestic, violent or deviant behaviour.

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[160] Richardson, J. E., *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspaper* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004).
[161] Kundnani, A., *The End of Tolerance* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2007).
[162] Ibid., 88.
[163] Ibid.

There are indications from the local papers that the local press has a different perspective that leads to more inclusivity. This may be the result of their bottom line, where in contrast, national newspapers can overlook minority groups as consumers because they have enough other potential consumers to sell their product to. A minor newspaper is unable to do this. If you are a Birmingham, Luton or Bradford based news outlet, for example, then you are not in a position to alienate Muslims because, not only are they your consumers but they are also your advertisers. This stance may also be a consequence of engaging with the local community in other capacities than only in community relations or interfaith capacities. The local reports also have a higher number of stories that depict Muslims as ordinary everyday community members. Such stories are rare to find elsewhere[164], although outlets such as The Guardian, Channel 4, and the BBC do feature alternative or counter discourses. Occasionally, positive articles that sympathized with Muslims' perspectives were used to criticize Government policy. Yet they tended to assume one Muslim perspective and therefore still had a homogenizing effect. Alternative media that offers a distinctive narrative also exist, for example, Faimau's examination of Britain's Christian press indicates that Muslims and Muslim groups are frequently presented as partners sharing similar values and objectives to the Christian churches.[165]

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[164] Poole, E., "Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims before and after 9/11: The Uk Context."
[165] Faimau, G., "Naming Muslims as Partners: The Discursive Representation of Islam and Muslims in a British Catholic Newspaper," *Journalism Studies* 12/4 (2011).

Section III. <u>**Focus Groups & Interviews**</u>

This thesis project seeks to elucidate non-Muslim constructions of Islam and Muslims in the news media experience. The use of "constructions of experience" is not meant to appear distrusting of the recollections and accounts of participants. Rather it acknowledges the variables involved in collecting media experiences and the ways in which historical and cultural context intersect with those "experiences".[166] It is also important to note that many of the attitudes expressed in the media originate from those who are deemed important people (often celebrities), rather than average members of the population. The selection of newspapers and television news have conditional aspects (i.e. prestige, dates, page numbers, articles, paragraphs and words) that become representative symbolic phenomena for the news under investigation. The choice of method for this study was influenced by news reporting itself and relies on the intersection of qualitative and media studies methodologies.*[167]*

The use of focus groups makes it possible to gather data that is more than purely observational: you have the opportunity to ask participants questions about their meaning-making processes and they can be self-reflexive. This method provides rich and detailed contextual information provided by the participants.[168]

Focus groups have been chosen by a number of researchers as the most appropriate method for collecting data on audience or reader reception. As J. Stokes points out, *"the focus group is a good way of researching the responses, ideas and opinions of people in greater depth than [in] a survey."*[169] This has also been a method utilised in alternative studies on similar topics.[170] Kitzinger points out that focus groups are advantageous because, *"they do not discriminate against people who cannot read or write and they can encourage participation from people reluctant to be interviewed on their own or who feel they have nothing to say."*[171] This is an important consideration to take into account in the methodology of my thesis research. Also, *"group participants may actually develop particular perspectives as a consequence of talking with other*

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[166] Scott, J., "Experience," in *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, ed. Jaggar, A. M. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).

[167] Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 10.

[168] Seidman, I., *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2006).

[169] Stokes, J., *How to Do Media and Cultural Studies*, 148.

[170] In 2012 a report was produced about a research project entitled Danish Regulation of Religion, State of Affairs and Qualitative Reflections by Niels Valdemar Vinding and Lisbet Christoffersen. In this report focus groups had been used to analyse the relationship between religion and the state according to the views of leading figures in Danish public policy making. Vinding, N. V. and Christoffersen, L., *Danish Regulation of Religion, State of Affairs and Qualitative Reflections* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Centre for European Islamic Thought, Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, 2012). Focus groups were also a key part of the research done in the project by Poole, E. et al., "Uk Country Report," in *Muslims in the European Mediascape* (London, UK: Institute of Strategic Dialogue, 2012)., where Elizabeth Poole, Kim Knott and Teemu Taira conducted a study involving focus groups, that compares its findings with a study conducted by Robert Towler in 1982-3. The initial results have been published in Poole, E., Knott, K., and Taira, T., "Religion in the British Media Today," in *Religion and the News* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012). And the full study has been published in: Knott, K., Poole, E., and Taira, T., *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change*.

[171] Kitzinger, J., "Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Groups," 299.

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people who have similar experiences."[172] This process will also be examined bearing in mind that group dynamics and peer-pressure can affect responses in a focus group through forces that would not be present in a one-on-one interview.

The researcher can then discern how far participants share the discourse of the media and act on that basis, as well as revealing some of the socio-cultural factors important in the decoding of mediated information. The focus group will function, for this aspect of my research, as a way to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words, to develop insights on how subjects interpret some aspects of the world, in this case the media reports they will be prompted with. Developing a greater understanding of their interaction is a key aspect in the analysis of how an individual interprets media reports about religion. As explained by Kitzinger, *"Focus groups are group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues… The group is 'focused' in the sense that it involves some kind of collective activity."*[173] With focus groups *"there is an emphasis on interactive processes which is derived from anthropological and ethnographic traditions. … Focus groups are characterized by 'the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group"*[174] It is precisely these group interactions that I use to inform my conclusions.

A selection of reports from the content and discourse analysis of this study will be used as prompts in the focus groups and considered in relation to the data produced from the focus groups. The use of focus groups provides a setting for an audience reception study, which will give insight into how audiences understand and utilise media reports, analysing what media does to people and what people do with media.[175] In this instance, small focus groups will be asked to respond to and discuss media reports on Islam and Muslims in both formats (text and video).[176] The responses of the audiences involved in this study will be analysed in order to gain insight into the way meaning(s) and understanding(s) of Islam are constructed from media reports. Thus, by allowing discussion about specific media excerpts to flow, I will be able to gain insight into how people interpret those media excerpts. This is done with the *"purpose to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee(s) with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena."*[177] It is with this intent that subjects will be asked to partake in a focus group, in order to be able to analyse the spontaneous reactions by people to specific media reports that they are prompted with.

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[172] Ibid., 303.

[173] Kitzinger, J., "The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 16/1 (1994): 103.

[174] Reed, J. and Roskell Payton, V., "Focus Groups: Issues of Analysis and Interpretation," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26 (1997): 766.

[175] Jensen, K. B., "Qualitative Audience Research: Toward an Integrative Approach to Reception," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (1987): 23.

[176] In a similar manner to this aspect of the study conducted by Poole, E. et al., "Uk Country Report," 65.

[177] Kvale , S., *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 5-6.

In choosing the method to study the agency and reception practices of participants, many factors were considered, including: privacy, confidentiality, class, racism, potential for violence, comfort levels, accessibility and location. Asking people to come forward and discuss their news consuming habits (either in a newspaper or on television) could be deemed intrusive. Therefore, a strategy needed to be developed that would address these concerns. As many individuals cultivate their opinions in the context of social interactions[178], the focus group method was chosen because it offers the opportunity for consumers to debate, discuss and collaborate as well as offers the chance to analyse how the social interactions affect the interpretation process.

Based on the successes of Jenny Kitzinger's methodological model from '*The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants*'[179], the various group discussions can reveal how the informants' self-understandings related to the questions I was researching. As Kitzinger states, their research was looking

> … to explore how media messages are processed by audiences and how understandings of AIDS are constructed. We were interested not solely in what people thought but in how they thought and why they thought as they did. We were also concerned to examine how diverse identities and social networks might impact upon research participants' perceptions of AIDS and their reactions to the media coverage.[180]

The methodology of the current study offers a useful way, commensurate with Kitzinger's approach, to explore how media messages are processed by audiences and how understandings of Muslims and Islam are constructed. The study not only examines what people thought but also how they came to those conclusions and why they thought that way. It also offers the opportunity to examine how diverse identities and social networks might impact the research participants' perceptions of Muslims and Islam, in addition to their reactions to the media coverage.[181] This study lets me reflect upon the effects of race, class, education, religion, geography and any other ideological structures because the "consumer" population for this study was anticipated to be diverse. Focus group conversations will create a space for an explicit articulation of ideological issues related to Muslims and Islam, media and religion in general, and to some extent for side related issues such as gender, identity, multiculturalism and the processes of globalisation.

Participants will also fill in a short questionnaire describing biographical details and personal news consumption habits. Focus groups[182] were used to challenge and supplement existing explorations of media consumption by members of the English public. Participants in the focus groups and the observational study

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[178] Ibid.

[179] Kitzinger, J., "The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants."

[180] Ibid., 104.

[181] Ibid.

[182] For more information on Focus Groups see: Kitzinger, J., "Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Groups."

were non-Muslim volunteers recruited through advertisements. They were then selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Focus groups provided an opportunity to collect and analyse participant practices: by observing their media consumption during their participation, and then through discussion, by gathering their "perspectives"[183] and "social meaning making"[184]. This aspect of the methodology did run the risk of either misrepresenting the general English public, speaking for groups that did not hold those views, or generalising experiences where it is not possible to do so, in addition to containing implicit and explicit power relations between the researcher and participants.[185] This observational portion of the study allowed for a phenomenological research approach in which, according to Deborah Tolman, "*the point is not to test hypotheses but to develop an understanding of experience*"[186].

The method of using focus groups was chosen not only because I wanted to capture the nuances and intricacies associated with the reception process, but more importantly, I wanted to examine whether discussions with others reveals anything about the nature of reception, and, if it was affected by the views held by others who may differ in interpretation and or general outlook on Muslims and Islam? The reason for studying this aspect of the thesis was the result of having a desire for revealing the tensions, negotiations, and experiences made every day as they relate to the news consumption process. Interviews (and focus groups) have the potential to overcome the limitations of observation, as the things that we cannot observe (past events, feelings, thoughts and intentions) we can access by asking people questions.

George Kamberelis and Greg Dimitriadis suggest that focus groups can work to "validate" shared experience and serve as "*safe spaces for dialogue in the company of others who have had similar life experiences*"[187]. Although it is possible that focus group participants do not need this type of environment, it was thought that this space could open up unexpected and meaningful dialogue and debate.[188] Although focus groups are not generally a conventional method for religious research, it has been found to encourage discussion and has been widely used in communications and media studies research. The biggest challenge for this piece of research was to create a comfortable environment in which participants were relaxed enough to provide full and frank accounts of their media practices and the views that they held, even if they were potentially threatening or socially unacceptable. However, these possible challenges were outweighed by the potential for enriching discussions to take place. An awareness of shared experiences and connections between group members may encourage discussion of difficult and sensitive topics and give a more colourful illustration of

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[183] Patton, M. Q., *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

[184] Meyer, A., "Investigating Cultural Consumers," in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Pickering, M. (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

[185] For further discussion of this subject see: Alcoff, L., "The Problem of Speaking for Others," in *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, ed. Jaggar, A. M. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).

[186] Tolman, D. L., *Dilemmas of Desire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 43.

[187] Kamberelis, G. and Dimitriadis, G., "Focus Groups: Strategic Articulations of Pedagogy, Politics, and Inquiry," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 898.

[188] This could be due to the social (un)acceptability of certain ultra-conservative views or traumatic experiences suffered by armed forces members at the hand of Muslim insurgents overseas. It was with this in mind that focus groups were thought to be a good environment due to the potential pack mentality of the participants and the safety in numbers aspect of the space.

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everyday acts. In addition, when participants agree, some have mentioned that it can help build a more elaborate and fuller picture of their views. This is because the participants build on each other's narratives and give different perspectives of the same view that offers a more nuanced and complex insight into the issue at hand. Also, potential disagreement and fallout should not be avoided as it can lead to participants defending their views and providing detailed explanations for their views and beliefs. Lastly, another more practical consideration was that focus groups offer a more cost-effective form of data collection as the potential to generate a diversity of viewpoints and resulting discussion is higher and it takes less time than a multitude of interviews.[189] This was a factor when preparing this study, but certainly not the sole factor for utilising this method.

Recruitment was based on participants volunteering after being contacted (if necessary via a gatekeeper) or seeing a call for volunteers (this will be discussed in greater detail in the next section). Because the recruitment took place in several different cities in England— Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford, Durham, Leicester, Luton, and Newcastle—it was imperative that data collection occurred in the most efficient, cost-effective way possible. However, this did not mean that convenience was prioritised over privacy or transparency factors. When considering the existing literature, the financial and time constraints of this study, the positive outcomes of the focus groups and the possible diversity of reactions and discussions; all these considerations show that this method has stood out for its generative potential, and opportunities for participants to express their views and opinions in a safe space, providing a wealth of information for the researcher.

The semi-structured focus group included five stages: (1) Background questions and general questions about the project and a time for any concerns to be addressed; (2) The addressing of mainstream print and television news media depictions of Islam and Muslims; (3) viewing habits; (5) Beliefs about Muslims and Islam. The background questions (Appendix A) used during the focus groups addressed age, gender, occupation, sexual orientation and general media consumption and practices.

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[189] The Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News*.

III.I   Recruitment

The methodological aspects of this research relied on the participation of volunteers from the English public. It should be noted that people who feel socially marginalised or politically ignored may be underrepresented among the volunteers of this study. So while goals were set for the number of participants (maximum of 15 participants for each focus group) the research was ultimately reliant on people volunteering. The recruitment strategies for this research were based on the methods discussed earlier as well as on the response from the Durham University Religious Studies Ethical Review Board. While looking at the required characteristics from participants needed for this study it was essential to recruit members of the public that were not media specialists. This meant that journalists and other media professionals were excluded from participating. Therefore, recruitment strategies were based on attracting individuals from a diverse background. To attract participants with different religious backgrounds, visits were made to churches, synagogues, gurdwaras, temples and other religious community buildings to make a call for volunteers. This was done in dialogue with the religious institutions so as not to interfere with their daily operations or to offend the members of their community by showing up at inappropriate times. In addition, this led to a chance to reach out for volunteers when the largest number of people was in attendance. In a deliberate move to complement textual analysis, this study relied on the accounts of consumers regarding the textual and visual aspects of news stories. The aim of this research is not to provide a subjective, or framed, analysis of Muslims in the media. Rather, its goal is that the people in direct contact with this media could account for their experiences and interpretations of the media as it is received.

Most participants responded via email or phone to the focus group advertising but some who responded were sent the call for volunteers via a third party, or I had asked some people I knew to spread the word I was looking for volunteers in their specific professional or local context. I was then either offered a method for contacting them or my call for volunteers was passed around on my behalf. This was especially the case for contacting Military personnel returning from duty in Afghanistan and factory workers in Luton. In such cases the *'gatekeeper',* as it were, was not selected for an interview or to participate in the focus groups. This protected the neutrality of the space. The call for volunteers that were sent out included a short explanation of the study and the query if they'd be interested in participating in a focus group in their area of choice. This email also included the Ethics Committee-approved informed consent form[190], as well as the request to express any concerns or questions to me via email or phone.

All the respondents gave their consent to participate, to be recorded for transcription purposes, and agreed that this thesis could use their responses provided anonymity was protected. Therefore, the names used in this thesis will be pseudonyms in order to mask their real identity for their protection. The diverse collection of participants offered a unique insight into the media consumption practices of people in England. After the

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[190] Appendix 2

focus groups, the principle investigator transcribed the data—there was no assistance involved for this process— and the data was then transferred to an external hard drive with a cloud backup, which will be kept until the end of the study. It is important to note here that according to this study's survey and focus group data, participants do not exclusively consume news media; rather, it is part of a set of media activities.

Focus groups were organized for seven urban centres in Britain: Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford, Durham, Leicester, Luton, and Newcastle. These cities were chosen due to their demographic makeup. Blackburn, Birmingham and Bradford have percentage-wise the largest Muslim populations in the country outside of London. Leicester, however, is a very diverse city and at the time of this study had Hinduism as the largest minority religion in its census data. Durham and Newcastle, however, have almost exclusively white English populations and offer an important contrast with the other locations in this study. This allowed for insights into media consumption about Muslims and Islam where not only are there very few Muslims present in the local societies, but there is very little diversity of any kind present there. This allows for a greater opportunity to look at xenophobic, Islamophobic and racist elements in the media reports and its reception by a white English population with little diversity in the local community. A conscious choice was made to avoid studying London. Not only is the cosmopolitan nature of the nation's capital a potential problem, but as the economic and political hub of the country it dominates discourse and is a prominent public landscape. For the purposes of this thesis it was deemed important to gather data from other areas of the country, not to mention the
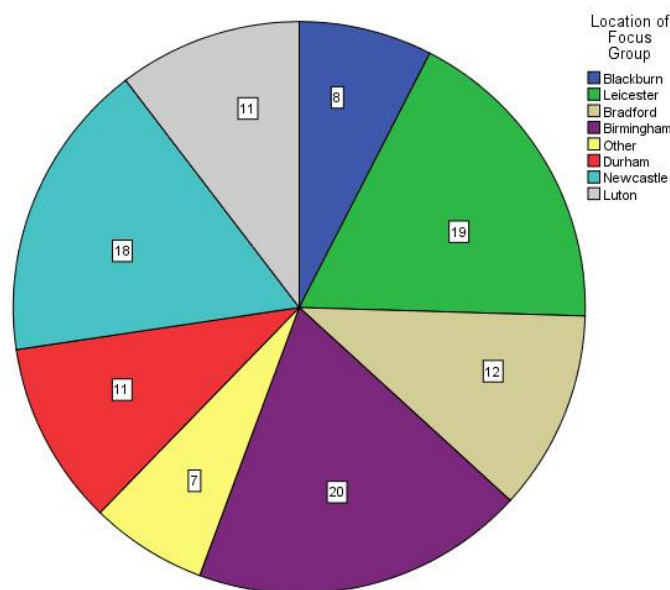
Figure 3: Number of Focus Group Participants According to Location

size of London meant that certain boroughs (such as Tower Hamlets) would have had to be treated as sites on their own rather than London as a whole.

Figure 3 gives an indication of the breakdown of participants according to the city that the focus group was held in. In these cities, (religious) community buildings were chosen as recruitment sites for the focus groups as these sites offered access to large groups of people with non-Muslim religious convictions to invite for

participation. These sites also embody a safe space where religion is central. One reason why the focus groups themselves were not held in these spaces is because participants that are religious might feel inhibited to discuss certain topics in religious spaces. For example, how people approach other religious traditions as a result of media coverage, might be hampered if the participants felt they could not question their convictions because of the space they were occupying at that moment.

After the decision was made to advertise for the focus groups in these locations and online, the 'managers' of each religious location were approached and permission was asked to hang a flyer in each location asking for volunteers. The flyer included the researcher's details and online pages about the research project as well as a contact email address (laurens.de-rooij@durham.ac.uk) in the event that visitors were interested in participating in the study. The call for participants was also shared via social media (Facebook and twitter) and via email to contacts the principal investigator had in the local areas. This approach helped, as some of the participants cited social media and email as the way that they heard about the study and the call for participants. The call for volunteers was distributed in August and the focus groups were held in November and December. A self-selection recruitment process was chosen for this study because of privacy and confidentiality concerns, yet it meant that the amount of responses could not be controlled for.

After contacting the email address for this project and expressing an interest in participating, each individual was given a hyperlink to an online webpage about the research[191]. It included a self-administered signup process, details about the research and informed consent sheet to download and read through. The signup process made use of doodle[192] and enabled people to sign up for the possible times to participate in their local area. At the start of the focus groups each participant was given a printed copy of that sheet and requested to sign and submit it to me if they were willing to participate. The personal questions conducted as a self-administered survey or questionnaire at the start of the groups allowed for participants to choose when and where they participated and did not require mailing materials. As described above much of the forms and information the participant received was via email and internet sites. This and other digital information sources are already integrated into the daily lives of many individuals and it is precisely these individuals who were sought out. Those volunteers who were not IT literate and thus excluded from the focus groups were in some ways not in the target demographic as media literacy is a requirement for participation. Those who did not exhibit this characteristic were not in the target group for media productions. Two respondents who participated were pretty much excluded from the media on a daily basis as they were homeless respondents in Leicester who saw the flyer and were enticed by the option of a free meal as a reward for participation. One of these two men was also severely dyslexic and so both respondents offered important insights into the exclusionary practices of media structures as well as being totally unaware of

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[191] http://community.dur.ac.uk/laurens.de-rooij/Media%20Portrayals%20of%20Islam%20Research.html
[192] Doodle is an Internet calendar tool for time management, and coordinating meetings. It can be found at www.doodle.com.

current events. In this way, they therefore served as somewhat of a control for the other participants of the focus groups.

Before participants could select their focus group time and location, they had the opportunity to review information about the study. Next, they had to "agree to participate in this study" by clicking continue. The collecting of demographic information through the questionnaire allowed for more time during the focus group to discuss more substantive matters. The missing statistical collection of occupation information on the questionnaire was an oversight, although it was asked of all participants present at the focus groups. In addition, not having a question on race was also an oversight, but it was observed unscientifically during the focus groups. Although the race of participants was predominantly White or Caucasian, there was representation of the Afro-Caribbean, South Asian and East Asian communities. However, because the question of race identification was not asked directly to participants, this information remains at the speculative level. The questionnaire administered during the focus groups asked for names to match the focus group responses with the respective questionnaire responses. This was then used to capture group demographics and emerging patterns.

The locations for the focus groups were primarily based on privacy and confidentiality concerns although cost and easy access were also considered. The rooms themselves needed to be separate, quiet spaces in locations that were neutral. Initially, requests were sent to universities and colleges in the cities but that proved unfeasible. However, hotel and business meeting spaces met the requirements and were secured for dates and times. Further privacy was protected in that the spaces were rented under "De Rooij Focus Group" and the only contact necessary with people not involved in this study would have occurred if participants needed directions to the room. Focus group locations and directions were provided through email once the location was secured and the principal investigator had a mobile number provided to all participants to ask for help if they were lost or to give notice if they could not attend or were delayed.

Each focus group was in a private space with lunch and refreshments. Before the focus group began, each participant was given an informed consent form and the text was explained before they had the opportunity to sign. They were informed that they could use an alternative name during the session if they felt more comfortable doing so. Participants were reminded of this before the focus group began to demonstrate the importance of this option.

III.II Background Data Describing Focus Group and Interview Participants

This section discusses the data provided by the respondents with regards to their personal background. The data was built up as a consequence of the answers provided to the short questionnaire found in appendix A. The people who participated in the focus groups came from a variety of backgrounds and locations around the country. In total, there were 106 participants from which the data to support this study was taken. The breakdown of the participants according to gender was 67 Males, 37 Females and 2 that ticked the box labelled other and identified their gender as queer. Although the gender of the respondents was majority male, the fact that two focus groups were female-only and that the other female participants who participated in a mixed environment limited the effect of a male-dominated perspective. Thus, one limit of the study is certainly that the male- female balance is not more 50-50. This may also reflect the presence of a male researcher, the power dynamics of society in general, and perhaps who has the right or ability to speak. The age breakdown can be seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Age of Focus Group Participants
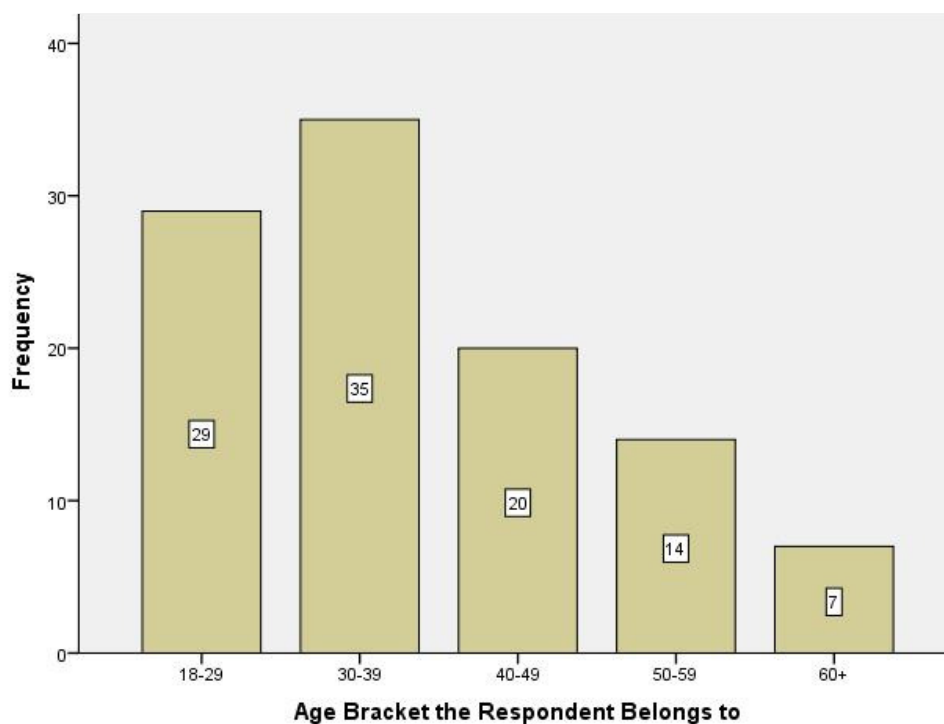
What we see is that the respondents cover a diverse range of ages although the case can be made that elderly people were not as well represented in the focus groups. While there were several participants over 60, one could argue that the nature of these focus groups did not lend itself well to studying the responses of elderly people for it required them to travel and to be multimedia literate which is still not that common among the elderly in this country.

Figure 6: Religious Affiliation of Focus Group Participants
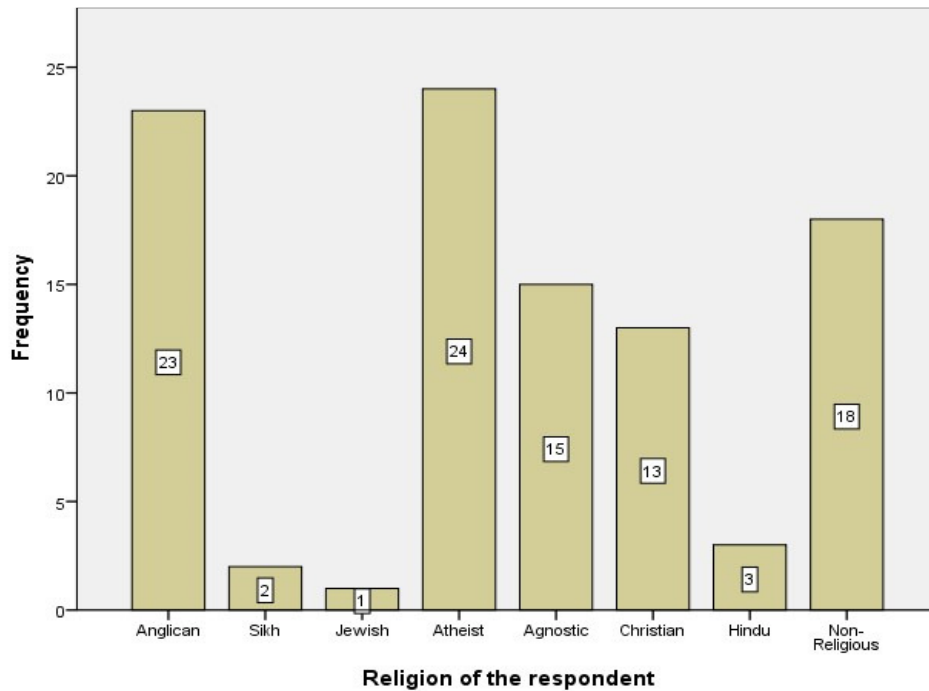
The self-reported religious affiliation of the participants is shown in Figure 6 above. Although no quantitative data was gathered on race some of the focus groups which had participants who were non-white were affected in different ways by the presence of non-Muslim ethnic minorities. For example, in the Luton focus group one of the participants was of Afro-Caribbean descent and it was not until he expressed similar negative views of Muslims, to those held by the other Caucasian participants, that the discussion of Muslims was really flowing. It is possible that the respondent, Kevin, 36, made those statements in order to belong to the group, but in the manner that he made those comments, I feel he was being genuine. In addition, the formation of the Luton focus group meant that one or two participants were familiar with each other, and as a result I feel that if he was being disingenuous that would have been made clear by one of the other participants. The marital status of the participants is represented in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Marital Status of Focus Group Participants
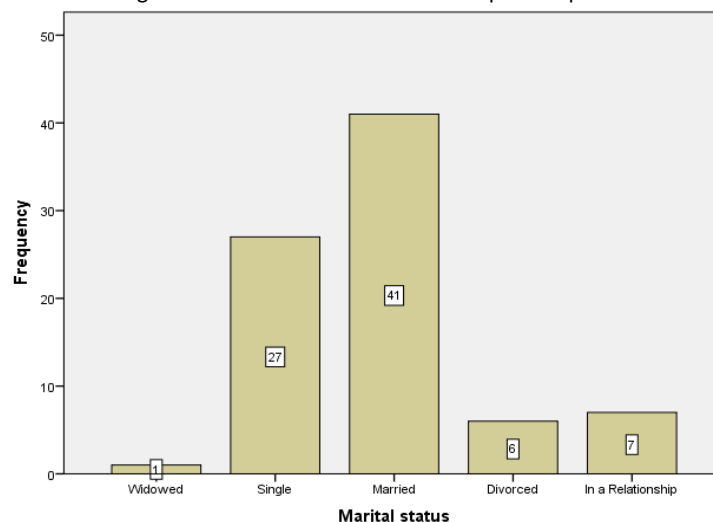
Figure 8: Educational Background of Focus Group Participants
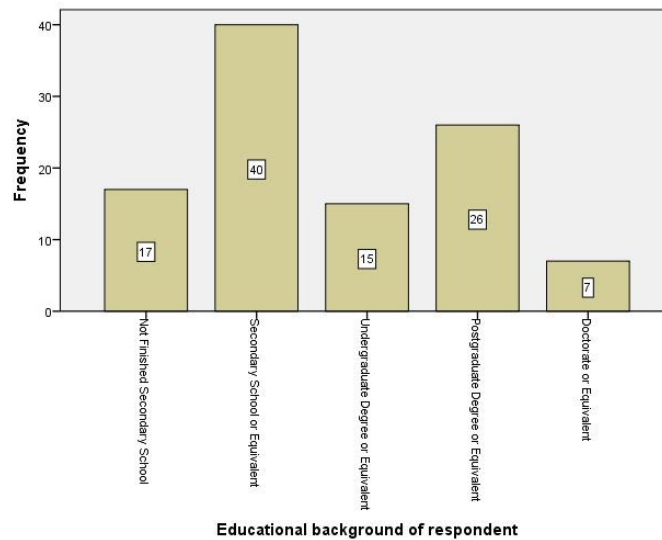
Figure 8 above shows the educational background of respondents. It indicates that a slight majority of the participants were not university educated. The educational background of the respondents showed that: 17 had not finished secondary school, 40 had finished Secondary School or something equivalent, 15 people had completed an Undergraduate Degree or similar, 26 had finished a Postgraduate Degree or Equivalent, and 7 had completed a Doctorate or Equivalent. Although the average education level was just below a university bachelor's degree (mean of 1.68) a good balance was found between the different levels of education seen among the population of Britain today. This corresponds with the responses of sector employment shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Employment Sector Breakdown of Focus Group Participants
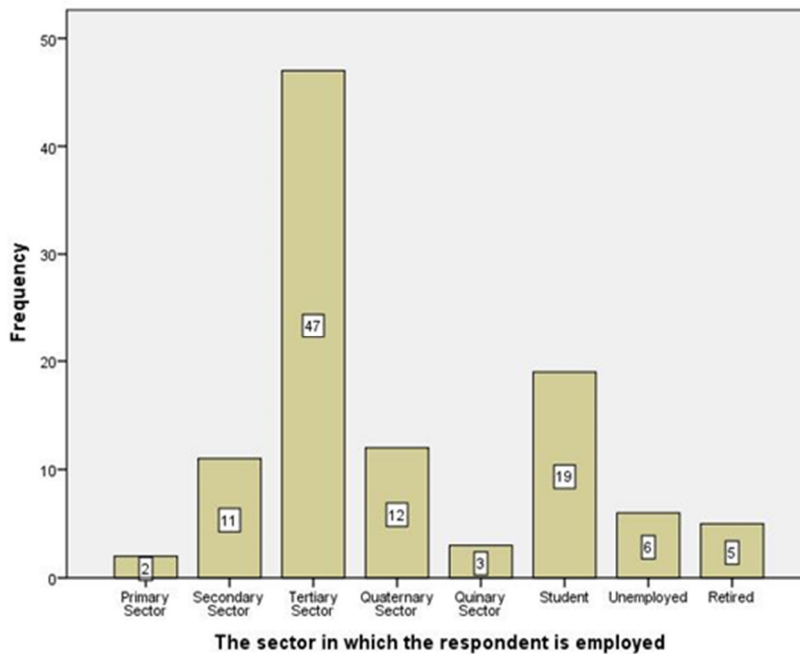
As can be seen above in Figure 7, the majority of the participants are employed in the tertiary sector.[193] This is indicative of the British economy, but as can also be seen, 56.1 percent of the respondents were active in other sectors of the economy. Therefore, if media reception and interpretation is affected by a person's strategic economic goals, social class, or social status, then this should show up in the focus group responses.

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[193] The primary sector of the economy is the sector that is making direct use of natural resources, like mining or agriculture. The secondary sector produces manufactured goods, and the tertiary sector (also known as the service sector) offers a variety of services within the national economy (like banks or the entertainment industry). The quaternary sector of the economy the knowledge-based part of the economy, and includes services such as research and development or education. Within the Quinary Sector the decision making of the high levels of government and governance are located. For example, the decisions made by government are located here. For more information see: Pitzl, G. R., *Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2004).

III.III Consumption Data Provided by Respondents

This section shows the data that was provided by the respondents with regards to their (regular) news media consumption. The data was built up as a consequence of the answers provided to the short questionnaire found in appendix 1.

Figure 9: Newspaper Readership of Focus Group Participants
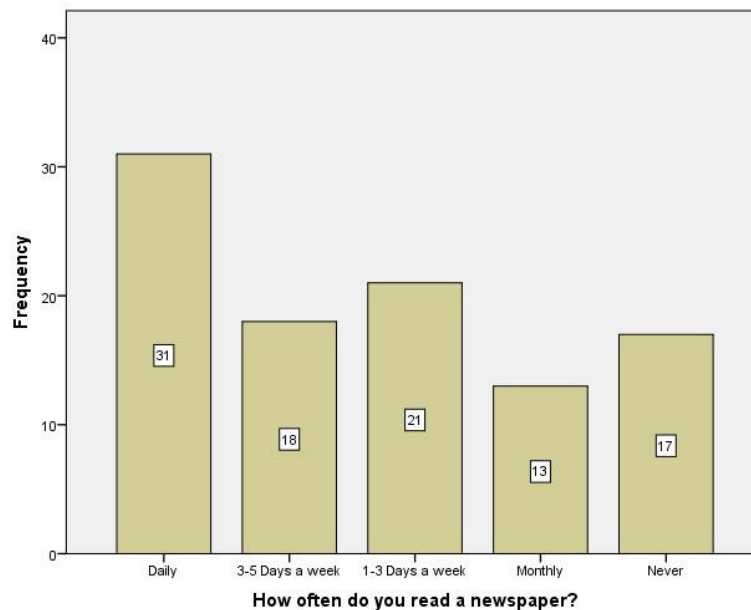
As can be seen from the chart above (Figure 9), most people who read a newspaper, read it on a daily basis; but as we can see when it comes to less frequent reading of the newspaper, it still remains a fairly regular occurrence. This is probably a result of the recruiting drive of this study which looked for people to discuss the news. It is imaginable that news consumers would have been more likely to respond.

Figure 10: Newspapers read by Focus Group Participants
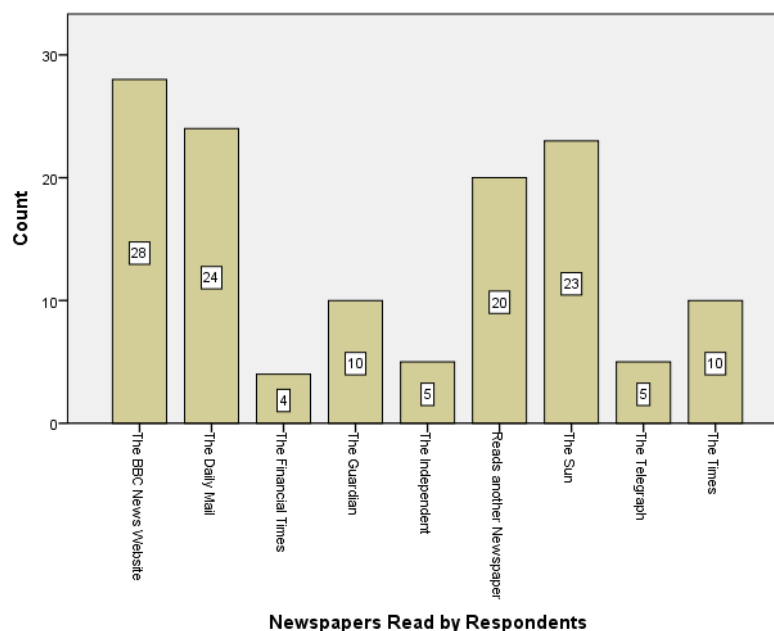
In line with the results from studies of newspaper consumption, the tabloids are more popular than the broadsheets (see Figure 10).

But as is suggested by the responses in the 'other' category most readerships are based on immediate needs and strategic goals rather than ideological outlook. Local news is surprisingly well read and further reinforces the idea that a person's immediate concerns are the priority.

Figure 11: Other Newspapers Read by Focus Group Participants
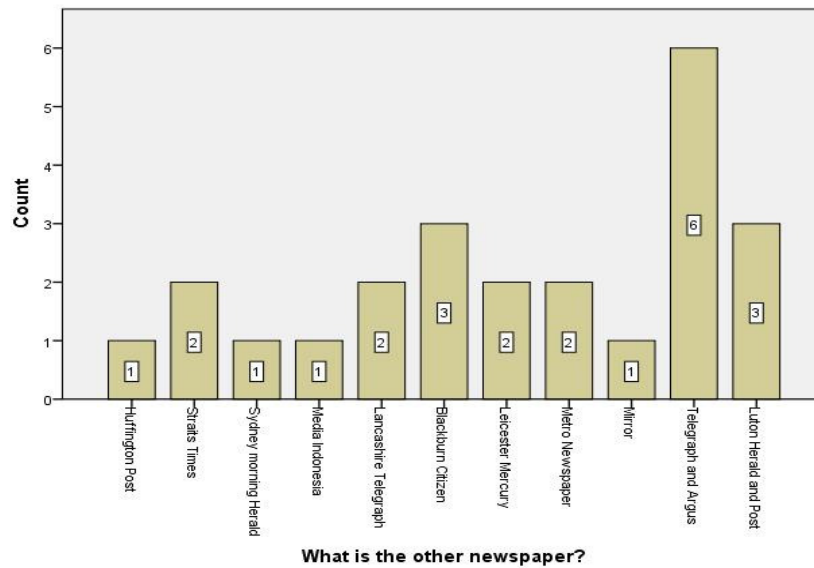
News media consumption is negotiated by the individual to cater to the needs that a person has, i.e., if that person has interests that lie in the local community they will read a local newspaper or if that person works in the financial sector they read the Financial Times.

Figure 12: Format of Newspaper That Is Read by Participants
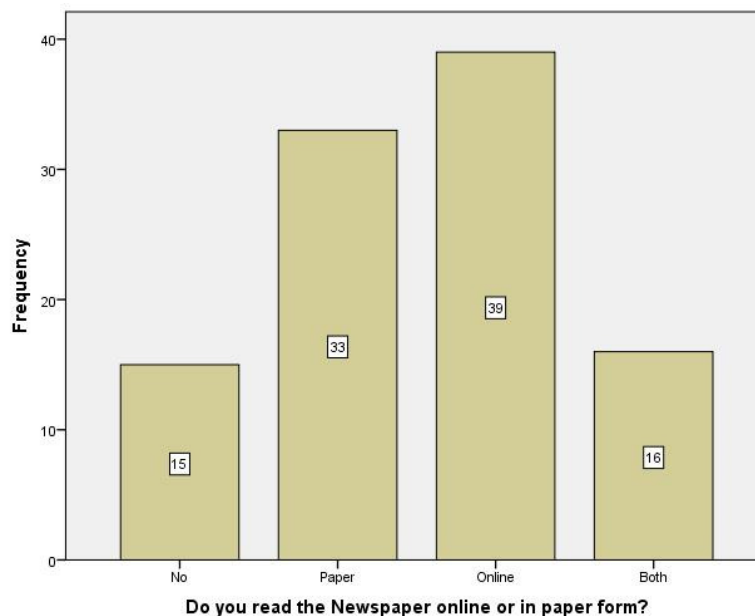
Can the same be said for network television? Does the saturation of society with television access, and even Internet access, have an effect on the newspaper consumption of British people? Although newspaper sales have declined over the years, online spaces have enabled newspapers to retain some level of influence and increase the accessibility of their product to reach new consumers and consumer demand. However, as Figure 12 indicates, newspaper consumption tends to have a format loyalty. Although this loyalty may be borne out of consumer needs, it nonetheless represents the fact that people either buy the paper version or access material online, although a few participants did state that they consulted both formats. For many the decision on whether to get a paper version or read the online version has to do with access. A paper version costs; money therefore some people would rather read the free content online, whilst others will read a paper version that is shared among co-workers, for example. What also has been mentioned are the aesthetics involved when consuming either format, for each format contains unique aesthetic characteristics that either appeal or shun (potential) consumers.

Figure 13: Television News Viewership of Focus Group Respondents
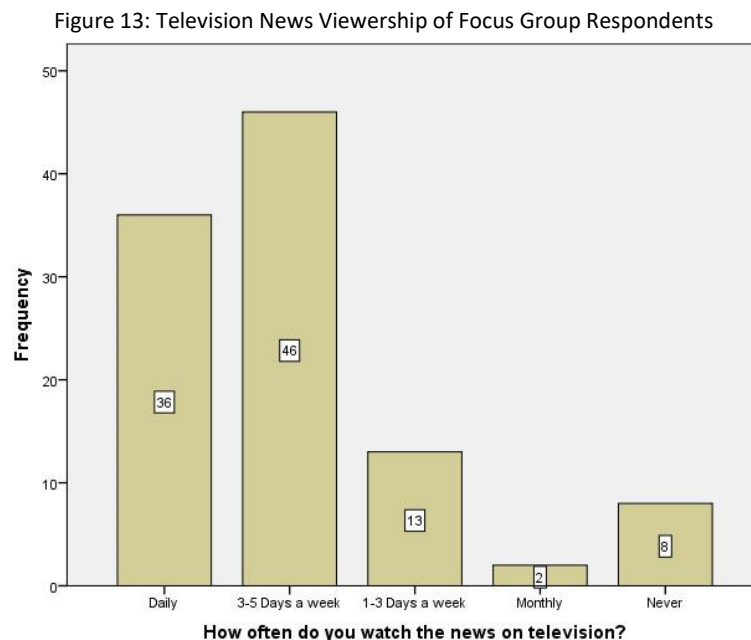
Despite regular newspaper readership (see Figure 13), many of the respondents watch television news on a regular basis as well. More than one third watch the news daily and a further third watch the news 3 to 5 times a week. This is interesting as just over half (45) also read the newspaper in the same frequencies. This means that at least 25% read both a newspaper and watch the news on television 3 to 5 times a week; 32 people said that they watch or read news as part of their normal media consumption. A further five consult other sources for news rather than traditional media. The most popular news programming amongst the research participants is BBC News. Forty per cent of the respondents said they watched BBC news and a further 7 respondents said they followed the news on BBC World. ITV was viewed by 25% of the participants and the rest viewed Channel 4 and Sky News.

Figure 14: Television News Channels watched by Respondents
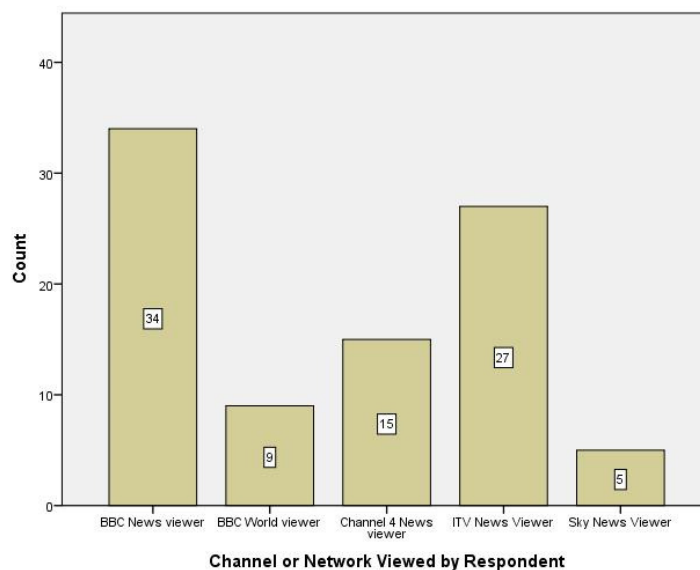
But what does this mean for foreign news networks? Through satellite television and Internet access news from abroad can be accessed within the domestic sphere. Twenty-seven people said they consulted foreign news networks, with CNN and Al Jazeera (English) being most popular. In addition to the ones listed in the graph above, ABC, Metro TV, Grenada Television, SikhNet and Sikh24 were also mentioned as other foreign news outlets that are viewed. Much like the readership of local newspapers, this seems to be the case because it meets individual demands that mainstream news is unable to cater to.

Figure 15:Television News Viewership Format for Focus Group Participants
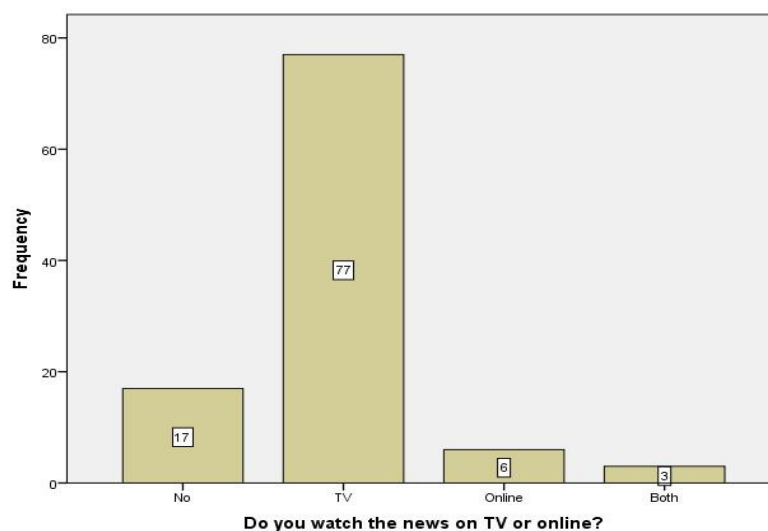
Unlike the fact that newspapers are accessed digitally or read in paper form, video news remains firmly a television phenomenon. As the chart above shows, television remains firmly in place when it comes to consuming video news, despite on-demand services and platforms such as Netflix gaining traction. It seems that whilst consuming entertainment online, be that YouTube, Netflix or online gaming etc., news consumption seems to remain for many an offline activity.

For the modern person in the contemporary era, life is seemingly incomplete without a social network account.

Figure 16: Social Networking Services Used by Respondents
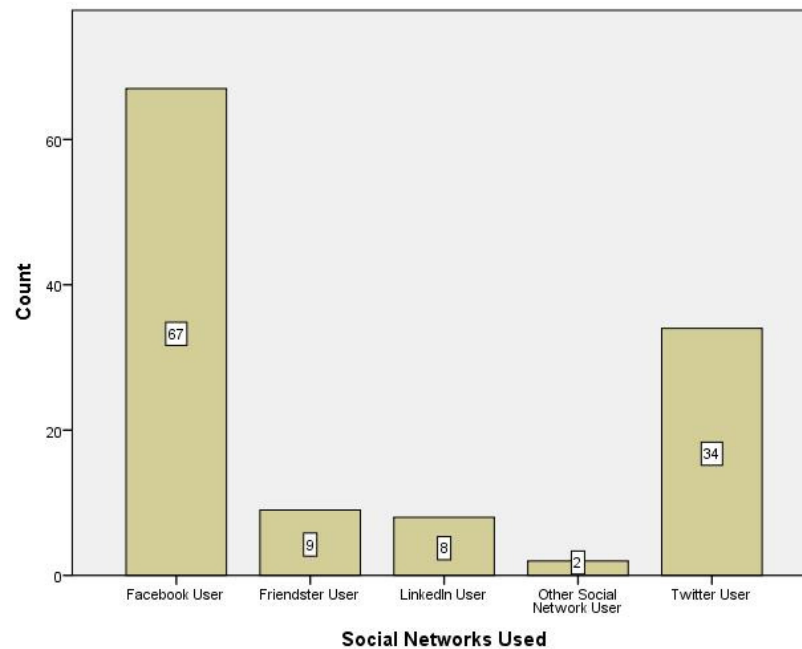
Sixty-nine respondents have social network accounts, the most popular account being Facebook. Although some have other social networks such as academia.edu and google+, Facebook and Twitter are most popular as evidenced by Figure 16. Fifty-seven of those 69 follow the news via social networking sites. Sixty follow links to news stories if they are provided the link by friends or followers on social networking sites. Fourteen people have a blog or personal webpage and 84 people share news stories they have come across with others. As Figure 17 shows, many share the news they have come across by word of mouth but also via social

Figure 17: Methods for Sharing News by Focus Group Participants
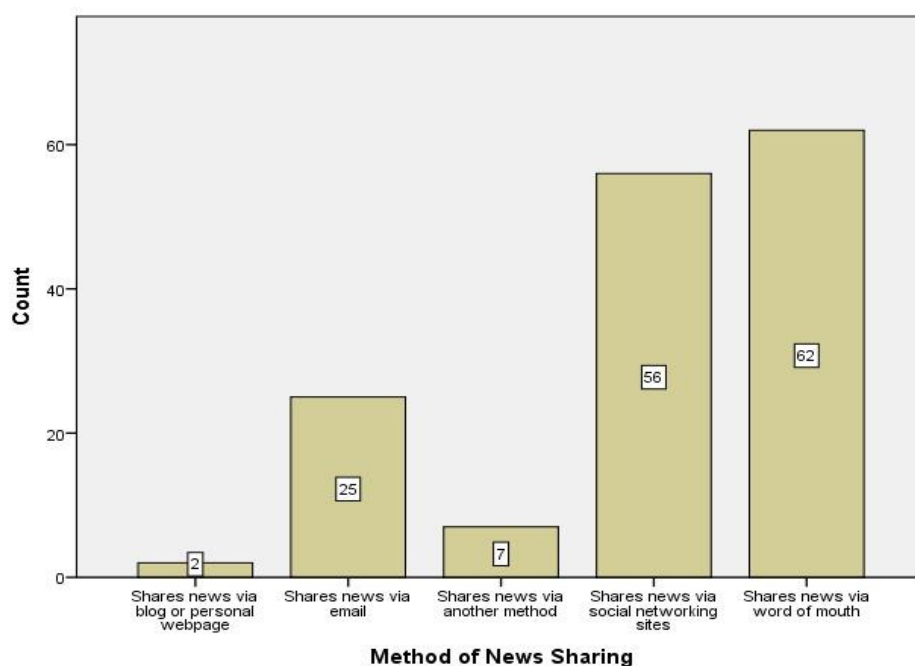
networking and to a lesser extent email. Personal websites or blogs and alternative methods, such as video or text messaging, are used by a small percentage of respondents.

III.IV   Prompts

There were eleven pre-selected prompts to initiate discussion should there be a lull in the conversation and discussion stagnate. The prompts consisted of 3 pieces of video footage and 8 newspaper articles. They each consisted of 3 pieces of footage from the different television channels and 2 articles from each of the selected newspapers and then 2 additional newspaper articles that articulated 'positive' news that was not limited to the content and discourse analysis. The way the prompts functioned within the focus groups was that each focus group would start with a brief discussion on Islam in their local area and Britain in general. Then they would receive their first prompt. The prompts were numbered one through eleven. They coincided with the eleven focus groups. Focus group number one started with prompt number one and focus group two started with prompt number two and so on. This was to avoid skewing discussion by always leading with the same prompt. The prompts on the same topic were discussed together in order to allow for participants to compare the data and information provided, and made it easier for the researcher to extract data from the interaction. This is also the reason why the prompts used needed to be representative; otherwise researcher bias could possibly affect the data.

The prompts[194] were numbered as follows:

1. Enemy Within That Hates Our Tolerance (Daily Mail, May 24th, 2013).
2. Drug Dealer Who Says Tattoos Would Endanger His Life in Iraq Is Given Human Right to Stay in UK (Daily Mail, April 29th, 2013).
3. Woolwich Killing: Suspect's Journey from Schoolboy Football to Phone-Jacking and Jihad: Friends and Neighbours Recall the Typical London Childhood of Michael Adebolajo - Before He Drifted into A Gang and His Family Moved to Keep Him Out of Trouble (The Independent, May 24th, 2013).
4. Six Plead Guilty to Plotting Attack On EDL Rally (The Independent, April 30th, 2013).
5. Woolwich Suspect Inspired by Banned Hate Imam; Omar Bakri Mohammed Applauds The 'Courage' Of Michael Adebolajo Banned Imam Had Called On Followers to Behead Westerners (The Guardian, May 24th, 2013).
6. 'I May Have to Die. I Hope Not. I Want to See My Family Again'; (The Guardian, April 22nd, 2013).
7. Suspects Arrested in Largest Terror Plot Since 7/7 Bombings. (26th April, 2013, BBC Evening News at 18:00).
8. Woolwich Attack (23rd May, 2013 ITV News at 22:00).
9. Wearing The Veil in Court Ruling (16th September 2013, Channel 4 News at 19:00).
10. Bradford Muslims Rally to Save Synagogue from Closure (Huffington Post, March 19th, 2013).
11. York Mosque Counters EDL Protest with Tea, Biscuits and Football (The Guardian, May 27th, 2013).

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[194] For reasons stemming from copyright legislation I am unable to reproduce the full text of the prompts in either the thesis or in the appendix.

Concluding remarks

The preceding section has answered the following questions: Who is speaking? How does the media describe Muslims? And what can be said of Muslim agency in the press? This will support the next chapter which explores how media functions as a discursive system in Britain. Exploring the questions: What interests does the description of Muslims and Islam in this way serve? What are the ends and means? And what are the implications for challenging and changing the existing media logic and practices? It is not enough to state that the stereotype is "wrong," "inaccurate," or "islamophobic". Such responses are expected, common, and futile. The conditions from which the stereotype is produced, and the systems of power and knowledge that legitimate its place need to be analysed. To do so we need to explore the systemic discourse. In order to establish what it means to be Muslim and non-Muslim, powerful and marginalized, accepted and tolerated.

Journalism in the mass-mediated communications age does this by taking events and arranging them within frames that are relatable to the viewer.[195]

> Largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [frames] organise the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognise it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus, for organisational reasons alone, frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organised to regulate their production.[196]

However, this choice has the boundaries set by the producer and not the consumer, moreover, such programmes usually prefer one vision of reality over another and invite the viewer to engage the message in a particular way, despite such a 'reading' not being guaranteed.[197] However, the 'active' in 'active viewer' should not be seen as an individual that is continuously struggling against the structures of textual power.[198] But rather that in their own way, audiences are in certain aspects "active in their choice, consumption and interpretation of media texts, with recognition of how that activity is framed and limited, in its different modalities and varieties, by the dynamics of cultural power."[199] How this plays out in the context of this research question will be shown in Section I of the next chapter.

Media doesn't function in the same way that the presence of another person or people would. The media contains a number of additional components. Such as technological and cultural symbols, and practices that

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[195] Altheide, D. L. and Snow, R. P., *Media Logic*; De Vreese, C. H., "News Framing: Theory and Typology."

[196] Gitlin, T., *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*, 7.

[197] Hall, S., "Encoding/Decoding in Tv Discourse."

[198] Curran, J., "The "New Revisionism" in Mass Communications Research."

[199] Morley, D. and Robins, K., *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, 127.

are disseminated through the medium of media. This will be explored in the following chapter. However, "News reporting is a social construct, and so are rituals, yet both are considered reliable. News is considered reliable because of its imputed objectivity. Ritual is reliable because of its imputed longevity or sacrality. Both are grounded in a social agreement that their messages are true, beyond strategic manipulation."[200]

This social contract is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipso)[201]. If it can be established that the press has made an error, then then it does have grounds to demand an apology or a retraction. This is mainly achieved based on accuracy criteria. These criteria are succinctly described in the code of practice[202] as follows:

1. The press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.
2. A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion once recognised must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and – where appropriate – an apology published. In cases involving the commission, prominence should be agreed with the PCC in advance.
3. The press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.

Yet news reporting is still subjected to the overarching system of discourse, therefore these standards must be viewed within that context, as well as the neoliberal market economics that underpin contemporary press practices. It is necessary to relate participant responses about their media usage to this context, which is why the following chapter on media as a discursive mechanism needs to be explored. Audiences, are subject to communication mechanisms that shape their opinions on a range of issues, including Islam and Muslims, therefore before the thesis is able to answer the question "In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?", the way that media engages the thoughts and actions of people in England needs to be established. This will form a key link between the media analysis of the previous chapter that presented the frames and subjects of discussion, with the mechanisms and methods behind the production of those frames and subjects.

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[200] De Haes, I., Husken, U., and Van Der Velde, P., "Media on the Ritual Battlefield," in *Ritual, Media, and Conflict*, ed. Grimes, R. L., et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 210.

[201] IPSO was previously the Press Complaints Commision (PCC). The PCC was closed down following the phone hacking scandal and has since been replaced by IPSO. The code of practice is found at: Independent Press Standards Organisation, "Code of Practice," https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[202] For further information on Journalistic practices please refer to: Harcup, T., *Journalism: Principles and Practice* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2015).

Chapter 2.   Modes of Production: British Media as a discursive system

Unlike some topics presented in the media which have been subjected to sustained academic analysis, research on the British media's representation of Islam is a recent phenomenon with important results.[203] Works on the wider context of the media treatment of religion, particularly 'fundamentalism' have been increasing. Yet there has been little empirical research into the British media's treatment of religion and the effect it has on its potential audience(s). My research will help to gain insight into the media representation of Islam, the consequences of its reception, and the construction of meaning(s) and understanding(s) based on those reports. This part addresses two main themes: Firstly, religion generally, and Islam specifically, and their respective relationship with the English media. Secondly, it addresses how media constructions continue to shape assumptions about the nature of Islam, potentially guiding public attitudes towards (British) Muslims.

It is important to consider how the media reflects and constructs social and cultural life, including public and private interests. In doing so the media locates and defines the place of Islam in society, simultaneously producing and shaping public discourse.[204] It is important to note, however, that in the contemporary age, media and religion are present in the same conceptual and practical spaces. This was not always the case in the past, and as a result one can see a development as religion has crossed a divide and now positions itself in the secular media space, both willingly and unwillingly.[205] Recent works from sociologists, theologians, and religious studies scholars have produced research of theoretical and cultural significance on the changing relationship between religion and media, not to overlook the impact of new media on religion.[206]

Contemporary media, culture, and religion, are the product of their relative histories and traditions. "If religion is inseparable from its mediation so that there is no unmediated religion against which we can measure contemporary practice, then religion exists in [the] symbiotic relationship to the media through which it is expressed."[207] Therefore media reveals something about religion in a particular context, it allows

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[203] For example: Norris, P. and Inglehart, R. F., "Muslim Integration into Western Cultures: Between Origins and Destinations," *Political Studies* 60/2 (2012)., Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*. & Richardson, J. E., "British Muslims in the Broadsheet Press: A Challenge to Cultural Hegemony?," *Journalism Studies* 2/2 (2001).

[204] Hoover, S. M., "Media Change and Religious Change, Religious Authority and Media Authority, the Religious "Marketplace", "Religious" and "Secular" Media, the Culturalist Turn in Media Studies, Audiences in Context, Religion, Spirituality, and the "Common Culture"," in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. Morgan, D. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 42.

[205] Hoover, S. M., "Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media," in *Mediating Religion: Studies in Media, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Mitchell, J. P. and Marriage, S. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003).

[206] For examples of such works please see: De Vries, H. and Weber, S., *Religion and Media* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Hoover, S. M., *Religion in the Media Age* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2006); Campbell, H., *When Religion Meets New Media* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2010). Mitchell, J. P. and Marriage, S., *Mediating Religion: Studies in Media, Religion, and Culture* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003).

[207] Mahan, J. H., *Media, Religion and Culture: An Introduction* (London - New York: Routledge, 2014), 73.

for engagement in rituals, and locates religion in media. However, contemporary mediated (religious) products are the result of negotiation, resistance, adaptation, and creative responses to issues over time. The scope of this thesis does not allow for research into this rich and storied history to be explored in detail here. The focus of this chapter is an analysis of how the news media in Britain functions today. Therefore, in order to allow for a detailed analysis of the subject of mediation (Islam and Muslims), the general history of media in Britain will only be referred to in relation to specific contemporary aspects. The aim is not to give a historical account of media, a history of religion in media, or exploring how media representations of religion have changed over time. Rather in exploring the current effect of media representations of Islam and Muslims on non-Muslims, an understanding of contemporary media must be provided. Particularly as it relates to issues of discourse and discursive formation.[208]

In this section, we shall employ Foucault's understanding of discourse[209], as suggested in the introduction, to analyse how media in Britain as a system of knowledge[210], engages with Islam. The British press is understood here as one method for managing and producing Muslims, in a political, sociological, ideological, and imaginative manner.[211] As a consequence, these statements constitute how Muslims and Islam are perceived and can transform their audience's understanding of Muslims and Islam in accordance with the presupposed system of knowledge. As Knott and Mitchell state: "The symbolic resources that film, television, and other media offer are often appropriated and recycled as people attempt to define their own identities, narrate their own life stories and understand the traditions and communities of interpretation to which they belong."[212]

The first section of this chapter discusses media and communication. This section explores the link between media and communication and places both in their current historical context. The second section looks at the workings of a media institution. It offers an analysis of the workings of a media outlet, as one cannot begin to conceptualise the effect a media institution has on its reports and the audience if one does not understand where reports come from. Each report is the result of a production process that has its own context and historical narrative. By offering a description of this process it will aid in the supporting of the overall aim of the project; namely analysing the influence of the media on the conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims by

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[208] For discussions of the history of media, religion, and culture see: Couldry, N., *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice* (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 2012); Hoover, S. M., *Religion in the Media Age*; Morgan, D., *The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).
For a discussion of the history of media in Britain see: Williams, K., *Get Me a Murder a Day!: A History of Media and Communication in Britain* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010).
For a discussion of the history of religion in British media see: Knott, K., Poole, E., and Taira, T., *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change*.
[209] Foucault, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 41-43.
[210] Ibid., 35-36.
[211] Said, E. W., *Orientalism*, 3.
[212] Knott, K. and Mitchell, J., "The Changing Faces of Media and Religion," in *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, ed. Woodhead, L. and Catto, R. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 245.

non-Muslims in Britain. The description of how media reports come to be will help situate their reception within the overall functioning of media.

The second part of this section is divided into three subsections in order to treat the different aspects of media as a discursive system in their own conceptual section as they relate to the overall part of the project. This section starts off by analysing the role that media has in the construction of reality. This is followed by an analysis of the economic implications of media. The second part of this section is rounded off by a discussion of the relationship between media, ideology and the political. Each of these spheres is key when considering the role of media in society today. In order to situate the discursive functions of media within a social context, we must look at how media reports are consumed. This will form a bridge between the theoretical and the practical. It will also form the basis for interpreting the participant data.

The third section of the second chapter will focus solely on analysing Islam, Muslims, and the media in its context. The portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media is important to analyse, but if one wants to know if and what the effect is of that media coverage on people's perception of it, one would have to look at how those media reports are received, hence the motivation for this thesis.

Section I.   'Media' and 'communication'

It would do a disservice to all media practitioners to speak of 'The Media' as a homogenous group and to treat all journalism the same. Klaus Bruhn Jensen defines communication as: *"the relaying of categorical information that can be recognised as information, and which can be recategorised – restated, responded to, or reprogrammed – in the course of communication".*[213] The relayed information is then received and negotiated by the receiver. Biocca describes this process as follows:

> [Receivers] read into a message. … The word 'read' implies an active engagement with the message. The meaning of a message is not 'received', it is extracted, inferred, worked on, and constructed. The audience member always 'reads into' the message. … The viewers contain within them a range of possible decodings. To say this another way, a viewer's interpretation of the message is not fixed, it will vary with mood, the viewer's situation, and the programming context of the message.[214]

Where communication refers to the act of transmitting information, media is broadly defined as the method used to store and transmit information or data. However, in the present thesis, media is the term used for the mechanisms used to store and transmit information or data to large audiences simultaneously. Peter Horsfield further elaborates:

> The most common use of the term media today is as a collective term for the constellation of institutions, practices, economic structures, and aesthetic styles of social utilities such as newspapers, movies, radio, book publishers, television, and the related creative industries (such as advertising, marketing, and graphic design) that service them.[215]

For the purpose of the current study the term media is commonly used synonymously with mass media in general or news media in particular. Even though in reality it may refer to a single medium used to communicate any data for any purpose, I will not be using that definition unless specified. Alternative examples of media may include: advertising media (billboards), broadcast media (television soaps), digital media (podcasts), new media (YouTube video), print media (newspapers), published media (government reports) and social media (twitter, Facebook and Myspace).

To consider the current functioning of media in contemporary societies, one must examine the position media has taken up. The following aspects are characteristic for media, for example, media are both simultaneously constructed and the constructor of reality; yet this is subjected to commercial and economic

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[213] Jensen, K. B., *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network, Mass, and Interpersonal Communication* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 57.
[214] Biocca, F., "Viewers' Mental Models of Political Messages: Toward a Theory of Semantic Processing of Television," in *Television and Political Advertising: Volume I: Psychological Processes*, ed. Biocca, F. (New York, NY - London, UK: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 29.
[215] Horsfield, P., "Media as Culture, Media as Industries, Media as Text, Media as Technologies," in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. Morgan, D. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 116.

factors and has ideological and political implications. Form and content are related in each medium, each of which has a unique aesthetic, codes, and conventions, and the receivers of media apply them to negotiate their meaning. [216] As an increasingly central actor in the realm of public life, its value and importance relies upon the ability of a media institution to utilise a variety of methods. Its ability to navigate these methodological factors is the main avenue down which media institutions exert their influence, albeit in a variety of ways. As there is always a personal aspect involved too, we must look at how agents position themselves in relation to social processes and public institutions. In this regard, it important to recognise Vincent Mosco's description of the following:

> Media systems in place today are the result of a deeply contested history, involving not just duelling capitalists and their allies in government, but labour unions, citizens' groups, consumer cooperatives, religious enthusiasts, and social justice organisations of all stripes.[217]

When analysing the news, we need to look at how media outlets work, how a receiving agent 'consumes' their stories and products, and examine the central role that the media occupies in the functioning of contemporary societies and personal lives. The ritual behaviour of media consumption among audiences and the imputed reliability of news among consumers means that the information put across by news media is often implicitly believed to be true.

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[216] Ashley, S., Poepsel, M., and Willis, E., "Media Literacy and News Credibility: Does Knowledge of Media Ownership Increase Skepticism in News Consumers?," *The Journal of Media Literacy Education* 2/1 (2010): 38.
[217] Mosco, V., *The Political Economy of Communication* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 110.

Section II.   The workings of a Media outlet

By positioning itself in such a way that it offers us an apparently unmediated access to reality, the media affects and defines how the individual approaches his immediate environment. This is exemplified by the quote below from the female only Birmingham focus group.

> Jane, 28: "People would not broadcast things that were not real."
>
> Angela, 40: "I don't know. They may think they are giving us the real truth but I'm not so sure. They are always issuing apologies for what's been said in the paper and such."
>
> Inge, 32: "BBC is best. It is accurate and correct. The rest is a bit hit and miss. Plus things like the daily mail are always trying to scare us into doing something."
>
> Researcher: "What do you think about media stories in the news?"
>
> Christy, 44: "The press always makes things bigger than they are."
>
> Henrietta, 50: "It's always blown out of proportion."
>
> Researcher: "But don't you think the news is accurate then in trying to inform people?"
>
> Christy: "The news is trying to inform us but it only tells us the 'exciting' stuff [mimicking quotation marks]. The normal everyday stuff doesn't make it onto the news."
>
> Researcher: "But then how do you understand Muslims in the news? If it's all blown out of proportion and doesn't show the everyday stuff, then how do you feel about the reporting of Muslims in the news?"
>
> Jane: "Muslims are like how we see them here. They are extreme and therefore the stories we read or hear about them are extreme too."
>
> Christy: "The press makes things bigger than they are, but Muslims are a big problem in this country. They are a threat to security and want to bring Sharia to Britain. How it is reported by some may be extreme but if everybody is talking about it then it must be a real problem. They can't all be wrong."

At the same time its agenda building processes as well as the way events are deemed newsworthy or not shows that not only is the media a great influence in the social sphere, it is also aware of the power it possesses and uses it to its own advantage to further its economic and political goals.

> The news does not tell you how the seed is germinating in the ground, but it may tell you when the first sprout breaks the surface. It may even tell you what somebody says is happening to the seed underground. It may tell you that the sprout did not come up at the time it was expected. The more points, then, at which any happening can be fixed, objectified, measured, named, the more points there are at which news can occur.[218]

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[218] Lippmann, W., "Newspapers," in *Media Power in Politics*, ed. Graber, D. A. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 37-38.

As the above quote by Walter Lippmann shows, news is not going to tell you how the events that are unseen are affecting things, but reports will occur when news breaks and becomes visible. Context given may be limited, and may take the form of a debate, especially if timing was unexpected. The news relies upon visible events that can be relayed to an audience, and the more points that can be deemed visible the more often news can refer to an event. Henrik Bødker[219] cites a work by Elmelund-Præstekjær and Wien[220] that list of four main necessary criteria, for something to become a media event:

1. The event must be appropriate for public debate, i.e., there must exist a range of legitimate positions as well as people willing to air and debate these.

2. The issues at stake must be, and this is linked to the first point, something that can be interpreted within a number of contexts or frames.

3. The event must also, at least in their study of a limited number of events, contain some deviation from, a break of, norms.

4. The event must be able to condense a complex problem into a striking image and or draw upon a number of existing stereotypes.

The above listed criteria highlight the ways media producers may judge the value of the information or event based on criteria in order to decide whether it is newsworthy or not. Thus, several judgements are made in the production of a news piece, even if it is something as simple as choosing to run a certain story and not another or the angle at which to approach it from. But in these criteria the expected reaction is also considered. The media report must not only adhere to certain values instilled in the reporting agent, but also elicit a certain response or set of responses from the prospective audience. It must also not be forgotten that most the media outlets are commercial institutions and therefore their commercial goals will undoubtedly influence their decision-making process. It highlights that in media reports the subjectivity of the producer crucially affects the way in which the media report is being presented. This creates a discrepancy between what media institutions want their audiences to believe about their role, and as Stuart Hall points out, what their actual productions are:

Press reports cannot be simply a straight reflection of what happened because there always intervenes a whole process of selection—which events to report, which to leave out; which aspects of an event to report, which to omit; and a whole process of presentation—choosing which sort of headline, language, imagery, photograph, typography to use in translating what happened.[221]

[219] Bødker, H., "Muslims in Print, or Media Events as Nodes of Cultural Conflict," in *Media, Religion and Conflict*, ed. Marsden, L. and Savigny, H. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 83.

[220] Elmelund-Præstekjær, C. and Wien, C., "Mediestormens Politiske Indflydelse Og Anatomi' [the Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm]."

[221] Hall, S., "The Treatment of Football Hooliganism in the Press," in *Football Hooliganism: The Wider Context*, ed. Ingham, R. (London, UK: Inter-Action Imprint, 1978), 34.

If the event is deemed appropriate for public debate, a choice is made that signifies a range of legitimate positions and the media institutions select the individuals that best fit their criteria and show a willingness to appear on air and debate and represent these positions. Although the issues must be something that can be related to by as many different people as possible, the possibility to interpret a news story from a number of contexts or frames and get a multiplicity of viewers makes the news report commercially viable. In this regard the fact that BBC news was accused of both anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and misrepresentation of the Gaza crisis in 2014[222] suggests that they probably did as good a job as possible in the way the news was broadcast and made it successful viewing, as people with very different if not opposite values watched the same broadcast and interpreted totally different things from it. However, it symbolises a larger aspect of the way news functions in society and the way it reinforces certain discourses. Contemporary media narratives are framed in ways that represent the ideals of a large part of society[223], this is what makes them intelligible[224]. However, due to the fact that they are framed from the perspective of these ideals, the reports, institutions, content, can take on mythological properties.[225] This means that any change to their regular 'typical' conduct or content will bring about a crisis amongst their audience, which will result in complaints.[226] Partly because it challenges the narratives of self, and the symbiotic relationship between audience and content, but also partly because it renders the information transmitted as unintelligible and therefore not able to achieve the intended result for the broadcaster. An example of this can be seen in the response to the Gaza coverage.

However, the paradox that stems from all of this is that rather than create an environment whereby these events are placed in a context that allows for novelty, innovation, creativity, and truly 'new' stories, frames, and perspectives to emerge, society demands that the producer of images and narratives conforms to existing paradigms.[227] Therefore removing the tension between producers and consumers.[228] Therefore, when we explore why there are protests and why there exists a public outcry over the reporting of the BBC, but not its rivals ITV, Channel 4 or Sky news. The reasons I suggest manifest itself along three lines that are inextricably linked: (1) It is because the consumer holds the BBC to a higher standard of quality, than the other commercial outlets; (2) it has a different status to a purely commercial institution and should therefore be treated differently too; and (3) the tradition of television watching and broadcasting that the BBC has created, results in the fact that any deviation of that tradition is viewed with suspicion and contempt. These consequences will be explored further in the discussion on authority and authenticity.

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[222] For example: "Enar Shadow Report 2010-11: Racism in the United Kingdom," UK Race and Europe Network, http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202010-11/26.%20UK.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. And http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.607049

[223] Eliade, M., *Myth and Reality*, 185.

[224] Fish, S. E., *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 354-55.

[225] Eliade, M., *Myth and Reality*, 185.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid., 188.

[228] Ibid.

Broadcasting is meant to illicit a response to the material, and successful broadcasts reinforce consumption, but all broadcasts risk alienating viewers. An event (in this case a news story) must also contain some deviation from the regular state of affairs.

Reports on Muslims or Islam in the news follows this same pattern when they are created. Five per cent of the population observes this religion according to the census, and this means that any Muslim is a deviation as they differ from 95% of Britain. This makes Muslims newsworthy, according to the third criteria above. In addition, its relatively easy to select one or two individuals, such as Anjem Choudhry or Abu Hamza) for a broadcast that deviate strongly from the majority of Muslims. A problem arises when these are the only images or stories one is familiar with, because then becomes very difficult if not impossible to envisage Islam or Muslims outside these frames of reference. It also shapes the narrative because the event portrayed must be able to condense a complex issue into a problem which is then discussed using a striking image and drawing upon several existing stereotypes. In addition, *"an image is a sight which has been recreated or reproduced. It is an appearance, or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved."*[229] Using catchy sound bites or pictures that catches people's attention, people understand media reports because *"they already have learned cultural codes to understand what is presented to them"*[230] These social representations are coded and decoded by people and form the basis for the construction of opinion. These are then preserved and repeated. In this way, these oversimplified explanations and stereotypes remain prominent in the social imagination of the majority of Britain. One example can be found from the all-male focus group in Birmingham:

> Steve,45: "Yes! British Muslims look like that."
>
> Researcher: "What do you mean?"
>
> Steve: "I mean they have a beard and wear, you know, a dressy-thingy [pointing at the salwar kameez]".
>
> Researcher: "But don't you think it is possible to wear other clothes and be a Muslim too?"
>
> Steve: "Yes but lots of them don't"
>
> Frederick, 32: "You wouldn't notice them if they wore jeans and a t-shirt."
>
> Researcher: "So how do you know they don't wear jeans and a t-shirt then when they go to the shops or whatever?"
>
> Frederick: "Because they have to be visible Muslims. It's like a symbol of their faith. Like a headscarf for women."
>
> Researcher: "Do all of you agree? Do you think that there is little room for freedom of clothing and such in Islam?"

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[229] Berger, J., *Ways of Seeing* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2008), 10.
[230] Staiger, J., *Media Reception Studies* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2005), 63.

Alisdair, 37: "The Quran tells them what they need to do. It tells them everything. What to wear, what to eat, who to marry."

But the abovementioned criteria by Elmelund-Præstekjær and Wien[231] highlight the need for sensation and controversy, both of positive and negative stories. Cinnirella points out that:

It has been noted many times that individuals often hold stereotypical beliefs about members of social groups with whom they have little or no contact. One way in which they are able to do this is because they are exposed to social representations of the target group in question, and … that these are endorsed less critically if the individual has little direct knowledge of, or contact with, members of the group in question.[232]

The nature of stories suggests that news reporting defines issues and presents it to the public as needing to reach consensus or challenging the consensus. As pointed out by stating that a newsworthy story must contain some deviation from the socially accepted norms of the target audience. Important to consider in this regard is that whatever actions a media producer undertakes there are commercial implications as well as ideological and political implications, whether they are aware of them or not. Positive news stories are rarely mentioned in the press, but when they are mentioned they also adhere to the abovementioned criteria. In the case of Muslims, media representations end up re-enforcing certain ideas, as people with little or no direct contact, are only exposed to these types of representation.

Alan, 47, Birmingham: "Well if they were wrong then they wouldn't be stereotypes. All stereotypes reflect some kind of truth."

Researcher: "can you explain that a little further?"

Alan: "Well it's like, ehm, Muslims don't like gays. Not all Muslims are against gays but if almost every Muslim country hates gays you decide from experience right? And form a view. Sometimes that view is wrong, but mostly it isn't, or at least not totally. That's why they are stereotypes because they are sometimes wrong but also right."

Yet if the newsworthy items rely upon existing stereotypes in their communication mechanisms in order to be understood and newsworthy it will be much more difficult to challenge media portrayals of reality and enforce a change in perception. Poulton[233], Denham[234], and Lang and Lang[235], have analysed the 'agenda

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[231] Elmelund-Præstekjær, C. and Wien, C., "Mediestormens Politiske Indflydelse Og Anatomi' [the Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm]."

[232] Cinnirella, M., "Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice," 180.

[233] Poulton, E., "English Media Representation of Football-Related Disorder: 'Brutal, Short-Hand and Simplifying'?," *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 8/1 (2005).

[234] Denham, B. E., "Building the Agenda and Adjusting the Frame: How the Dramatic Revelations of Lyle Alzado Impacted Mainstream Press Coverage of Anabolic Steroid Use," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 16/1 (1999).

[235] Lang, G. E. and Lang, K., *The Battle for Public Opinion: The President, the Press and the Polls During Watergate* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1983).

building process' that they argue is common in media circles. They suggest that in practice media agents highlight certain events and issues but these issues require different levels of news coverage depending on the type of issue and the desired reaction of the consumer. As a result, issues are generally described in such a way so as to be understood by the average news consumer. Yet the language used to describe an event or issue may affect public perception and could be used in order to elicit a specific response. But crucial to a successful transfer of information is the ability of a media producer to link the issues and events to 'secondary symbols' that are accessible to the desired audience.[236] They also argue that this process of agenda-building accelerates when well-known or authoritative individuals speak out. In short, an event happens, this receives a specific set of coverage and the manner by which it is covered (i.e., the language used, symbols involved etc.) determines how the public perceives this issue or event. This process is then accelerated and or increases in importance if a person who is well-known takes a public stance on the issue. This can be because it is an important issue if the prime minister is addressing it, but simultaneously if a celebrity raises awareness for an issue because they deem it a worthy cause. This enables that cause to receive airtime because it is mentioned by someone with access to media discourse, or able to capture media attention[237]. This is also why so many agents struggle for airtime and exposure because it is a place where one can increase notoriety and rally support for a cause. Some have argued that the airtime spent on the EDL or Islamic Jihadism has increased support for the groups at a much faster rate than if the issue did not receive any airtime.[238]

An example of such a media case can be seen in Emma Thompson's comments about the refugee crisis.[239] Despite Thompson being an ambassador for the charity ActionAid, an activist for Palestinians and a member of the British-based ENOUGH! Coalition, the Elton John AIDS Foundation, the Refugee Council and an Ambassador for the Galapagos Conservation Trust, none of this was mentioned in the reporting. This would suggest that the reason she was able to command air time had little to do with any of these functions but rather that she is a famous Hollywood actress. That has made her an authority figure, which noble as it is for her to speak up and show solidarity with the refugees, it does beg the question as to why there is not more airtime given to discussions with the prime minister, home or foreign secretary, academics with specialities on this issue, spokespeople for different activist groups (even ones that are against the letting in of refugees

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[236] For one analysis of these secondary symbols please see: De Rooij, L., "Believing and Belonging. The Aesthetics of Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and Its Relationship to British Civil Religion."

[237] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 107.

[238] Jackson, P. and Feldman, M., The Edl: Britain's 'New Far Right' Social Movement, (Northampton, UK: The University of Northampton, 2011), http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/6015/7/Jackson20116015.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[239] For the interview see: Maitlis, E., "Emma Thompson: If Refugees Were White, We Would Feel Differently", (*Newsnight*, 3 September), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-34135679, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. and an example of the reporting of her comments can be seen at: Mandle, C., "Refugee Crisis: Emma Thompson Claims Britain Is 'Racist' for Not Taking in More Refugees", (*The Independent*, 4 September), http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/refugee-crisis-emma-thompson-claims-britain-is-racist-for-not-taking-in-more-refugees-10485966.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. Or Mctague, T., "Britain Is Racist for Not Taking in More Refugees, Claims Hollywood Star Emma Thompson", (*Daily Mail*, 04 September), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3221243/Britain-RACIST-not-taking-refugees-claims-Hollywood-star-Emma-Thompson.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

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such as the BNP, EDL or Britain First, etc.) One could ask: What 'authority' does Emma Thompson have in order to speak on the issue? From a consumer perspective, why should I listen to her?

The media is a very powerful entity in the public domain of modern society. Its influence on the public opinion is considerable, especially when we consider controversial or topics of a sensational nature in relation to agenda building. This idea lead W. Shadid to conclude that *"the media adds both in a direct and indirect manner to the dissemination of negative imagery concerning allochthonous[240] people and might even play a role in their discrimination by society."*[241] The media is a source for the spreading of information, and disinformation; in turn it can be the source of producing and enforcing stereotypes and misrepresentation. This is often a result of the under-representation of specialised people in the sector and the short-sighted presentation of the issues at hand. [242] If media producers are ill-equipped to deal with the issues at hand, for whatever reason that may be, then the media report is going to reflect that.[243] However at the same time the various media-producing institutions are in a position of power where the effects of their productions can have far-reaching consequences, especially if it concerns a structural problem rather than a one-off oversight.

In the world of media, one can refer to the interactions of media productions as frames of meaning, which can interact, develop and conflict with each other. Media affects not only society through its ability to broadcast various frames of meaning to large audiences simultaneously, but it also has the ability to shape the audience's perception. However, the form of a news report is not entirely separate from the content. *Form and content are related in each medium, each of which has a unique aesthetic, codes, and conventions.* [244] Tele-evangelism is an example. It can reach a wide-audience with a message that can be found elsewhere, but the form does put some people off while others are touched by it in a way that they are not by other methods. Thus, the form and message though separate are intrinsically linked and they do affect one another.

However, it is not only the local news that is reported in local contexts that affects local people. In the age of global information technology, the news that is reported in one location can also be transmitted around the globe. It might be meant to show something different, as what is seen as positive in one location can be reported to show a negative in another or vice-versa.[245] Increasingly what is reported in the media in the various instances affect not only the local receiver and the perception he has of the item described in the report, but an increasingly information-literate global populace has access to information that transcends

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[240] The definition of allochthonous is nonindigenous. It is accepted as the antonym of autochthonous.
[241] Hoover, S. M., "Reception of Religion and Media," in *Religion in the Media Age* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 330.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Examples of why this may occur could be found in the ideology, prejudice, bigotry or ignorance of the producing agent(s).
[244] Ashley, S., Poepsel, M., and Willis, E., "Media Literacy and News Credibility: Does Knowledge of Media Ownership Increase Skepticism in News Consumers?," 38.
[245] Ewing, K. P., "Living Islam in the Diaspora: Between Turkey and Germany," *South Atlantic Quaterly* 102/2/3, Spring/Summer (2003): 405-06; Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P. S., "The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Causes and Solutions," 188-90.

their local production. This is also reflected in participant data in Part I III.III (Consumption Data Provided by Respondents). In turn this affects the mode of production, with large institutions investing in media outlets that can cater to foreign or global markets. Kraidy adds to this:

> Post-Fordist practices and systemic forces account for the fact that hybrid media texts reflect industry imperatives for targeting several markets at once with the same program or, alternatively, are symptoms of commercially motivated "borrowing". … [This is seen in] the present global structure where interlocking regulatory, financial, political, and cultural forces drive a race to reach the highest number of people for the lowest cost and the minimum amount of risk.[246]

As the quote above highlights, mass production mechanisms have led to a homogenization of media reports. This means that whilst reception practices are diverse and plural, the goal of production is a singular report with universal marketability. The marketability is what drives the form and content and this will be discussed in the next section.

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[246] Kraidy, M., *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005), 114.

II.I   Media and communication mechanisms

Austin argues that there are areas of spoken expression that are an action and not merely a reporting or describing of some kind of state of affairs.[247] For example: when people say 'I do' in getting married or, 'I christen this vessel, the Queen Elizabeth II'.[248] In that vein, contemporary media is a highly modern and efficient communication mechanism for undertaking such actions. Media reports not only report a state of affairs, but to the audience they bring it into being, 'Tonight the [news corporation] brings to you …. ', it has reduced time and space and people are becoming increasingly reliant on those mechanisms that can reach across vast distances instantaneously to exchange opinion and information for an increasing number of reasons. These can be for social, economic or educational purposes to name but a few.

Global corporations rely on media as an information source and method of communicating with staff around the globe. People use media for social interactions with relatives or friends across vast distances and increasingly e-learning is being implemented in educational institutions. The media has a vast number of uses and huge potential with social networking sites, YouTube, or applications such as Skype etc. that potentially democratise media access and bring the world closer together. These tools allow for people to connect with one another in almost a direct fashion although they are miles away and may never ever meet face to face.[249]

Examples of media affecting communication mechanisms are in many ways seen as a recent phenomenon, yet the origins can be traced back to examples such as Ella Cheever Thayer's book *Wired Love*[250] from 1880. It deals with the issue of meeting people and eventually falling in love 'online' via telegraph. This is something that is repeated throughout history as technology affects human interaction. There are also recent examples such as the acronyms YOLO[251] (*carpe diem* of the 2010's) and lol[252] entering the dictionary and challenging what is considered acceptable vernacular for communicating. The online is affecting the offline too when we consider Leetspeak[253] (or leet), an alternate representation of text that replaces letters with numbers or character combinations and is increasingly prominent among digital natives that communicate online in a variety of settings. However, communication mechanisms also affect the media, an example of this is how newspapers now all have online editions and twitter feeds.

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[247] Austin, J. L., *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[248] Austin, J. L., "Performative Utterances," in *The Semantics-Pragmatics Boundary in Philosophy*, ed. Ezcurdia, M. and Stainton, R. J. (Toronto, ON: Broadview Press, 2013), 21.

[249] For an analysis of the manner by which new media have been incorporated into the traditional media framework please see: Mcchesney, R. W., *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (New Press, 2015).

[250] Thayer, E. C., *Wired Love: A Romance of Dots and Dashes* (New York, NY: W.J. Johnston, 1880).

[251] You Only Live Once

[252] Laugh Out Loud

[253] The term leet comes from the word elite and the leet alphabet is a form of symbolic writing. The term leet is also used as an adjective to describe formidable prowess or accomplishment, especially in online gaming and derives its original usage from computer hackers. An example of leet spellings of the word leet include 1337 and l33t.

II.I.I   *Media logic, form and content*

So, as for media form and content, they have always been driven by an internal logic.

> Media logic consists of a form of communication; the process through which media present and transmit information. Elements of this form include the various media and the formats used by these media. Format consists, in part, of how material is organised, the style in which it is presented, the focus or emphasis on particular characteristics of behaviour, and the grammar of media communication.[254]

It is important to recognise that the Media logic, understood as the process through which media present and transmit information, affects reception. "*Format becomes a framework or a perspective that is used to present as well as interpret phenomena".[255]* The way material is organised, the presentation style, and the focus or emphasis, shape public perception of an issue through the framework or perspective that is put forward. This logic coincides with the ability of media to set the agenda, to signify what is important, and to illicit a response from the viewer. Therefore, the aim of media productions is not only to inform but also to transform, as the information that is broadcast not only offers the viewer the ability to see things in a new light, but simultaneously looks to align viewers to its particular perspective. The form of the symbolic content that is typically disseminated through mass media practices is generally the result of technological advances and institutional production mechanisms that are controlled and regulated.[256] This in turn leads to the cultivation of symbolic power as Thompson argues:

> Cultural or symbolic power stems from the activity of producing, transmitting and receiving meaningful symbolic forms. Symbolic activity is a fundamental feature of social life, on a par with productive activity, the coordination of individuals, and coercion. Individuals are constantly engaging in the activity of expressing themselves and in interpreting expressions of others; they are constantly involved in communicating with one another and exchanging information and symbolic content.[257]

In wielding symbolic power, media has always had a political and economic element to it. The earliest forms of writing were used primarily for the purposes of recording information relevant to trade and to defining the owners of property, and later it was used to control of the dissemination of information, through scribes or state media institutions, by regulating society through the collecting of official statistics, these are now produced by the ONS. Thompson notes that historically:

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[254] Altheide, D. L. and Snow, R. P., *Media Logic*, 10.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 27.
[257] Ibid., 16.

Many of the major innovations in the media industries … were directly concerned with increasing reproductive capacity for commercial purposes. But the commercial viability of media organisations also depends on the fact that they are able to exercise some degree of control over the reproducibility of a work, hence the protection of copyright.[258]

Jensen has suggested that *"Different media offer different degrees of programmability with respect to the information, communication, and action that they mediate".*[259] But as the programmability and reproductive capacity of news stories increases, the hybridity of media reports increases. But as it's marketability increases, the necessity for control over dissemination increases in order to maximise financial gain. As a consequence, the commercial demands of the media institutions decreases the diversity of images and reports. A media organisation's ability to exercise control over its broadcasts, has implications for stories that are less likely or less able to be produced, as these stories are unlikely to be broadcast. Simultaneously, there might be a reproducible story available but if there is not enough consumer demand then it still might not be broadcast. With access to production of news reports highly concentrated and the demand to produce reproducible material high, the opportunity for alternative voices to utilise traditional media as a place to voice their concerns and opinions is greatly reduced. Thus, as research on media representations of Muslims and Islam has shown, stories are often repeated and similar in outlook.[260] What I argue here is that this is a direct consequence of the media logic, and the social, political, and commercial concerns of the media institution.

In the past, the economic value of media used to be regulated on much more unequal terms, as it used to be the case that television broadcasts had to be seen at the time of broadcasting in order to be viewed. This made it distinct from video or cinema broadcasting because they can be watched at times that are in negotiation with the consumer, generally for a fee). Newspapers differ from television news, in the sense that, news on *"broadcast TV offers relatively discrete segments: small sequential unities of images and sounds whose maximum duration seems to be about five minutes. These segments are organised into groups, which are … simply cumulative."*[261] News in the written press offers discrete segments but they are not meant to be cumulative. The stories in the newspaper can be read sequentially and cumulatively but one can read only the stories that are interesting based on the headline or read the stories in an alternative order or from back to front. This is not possible with broadcast news.

Despite being able to access the footage online or through services such as BBC IPlayer, the recording of news would seem unnecessary due its repetitive nature in broadcasting. Yet even the on-demand services do not allow the user to consume one news story at a time. One must watch the entire broadcast or read the text

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[258] Ibid., 20.
[259] Jensen, K. B., *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network, Mass, and Interpersonal Communication*, 57.
[260] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*.
[261] Ellis, J., *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 112.

version. On terrestrial television, the News is broadcast on BBC 1 at 6.00, 13.00, 18.00 and 22.00. It is broadcast on BBC 2 at 11.00, and on ITV at 6.00, 10.30, 13.30, 18.00 and 22.00. Channel 4 offers its news services at 12.00 and 19.00 and Channel 5 at 12.10, 17.00, 18.30, 19.55 and 20.55. In addition to 24-hour news networks on satellite television the necessity to record news is not really there.

Most television broadcasts are made for consumption in the home, although this is increasingly changing to accommodate mobile and online platforms.

> Broadcast TV is a profoundly domestic phenomenon. The TV set has to be acquired by a person or persons before TV signals can be received, and the manufacture of TV sets has long assumed that its market is the domestic unit.[262]

But this broadcasting does rely on some form of consent, as the viewer needs to purchase a television and pay a license fee or subscription to receive broadcasts. There are a few exceptions, such as sports events or films that are broadcast for domestic settings and viewed in public spaces such as pubs or cinemas to attract large crowds for events such as world cups, local professional teams or blockbuster film releases.

Newspapers, with some exceptions such as the metro, like televisions need to be purchased, unless one reads it online. This has commercial implications for the newspaper, but they have a separate business model for online and offline news that takes this into account, and so only those willing to purchase the product are exposed to it. However, in today's media-saturated world, it is becoming increasingly difficult to participate in society without the necessary media available. This is one aspect why the elderly are often overlooked or excluded because they are not 'online'.[263]

Yet by broadcasting into the home, TV images have the effect of immediacy. The immediacy is not just a result of the idea that it is live, but by addressing the viewers in such a way that it simulates eye contact and everyday conversation, television gives the impression that the broadcast is personal and directed at the viewer. Some broadcasts go further and provide images, quotes, statements, or references that can only be understood by an audience sharing the same frame of reference.[264] This frame of reference is inherently determined by the formation of audiences, and is therefore exclusionary in nature towards those who are not in the intended audience. As K.B. Jensen points out: *"Media are, at once, material vehicles, discursive or modal forms of expression, and socially regulated institutions that facilitate and frame interaction."*[265]

Media material consists of text, sound, and images. And it is through the modal aspects i.e., the forms of expression that are programmable and experiential, that these material vehicles are able to be interpreted.

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[262] Ibid., 113.
[263] Van Dijck, J., *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.
[264] Ellis, J., *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video*, 133-34.
[265] Jensen, K. B., *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network, Mass, and Interpersonal Communication*, 57.

Vattimo adds to this, that, *"the 'sense' in which technology moves is not so much the mechanical domination of nature as the development specifically of information and the construction of the world as 'images'."*[266] Although reception of these images is grounded in our biological senses, the experiential conditions along with our historical and cultural conditioning affect our interpretations.

Another characteristic of mass media products is the separation between production and consumption. I.e., the location where news media is produced is separated and different from the space in which it is received.[268] The consequence is that whilst the producer may take this into account by employing certain methods for disseminating their message; the receiver is often left to decipher the message on their own. This means that the process of the exchange of symbolic content is necessarily uneven, as professionals in the production process are partnered with amateurs in the reception process. And whilst media is available to a plurality of people simultaneously, it is constructed in such a way as to appear direct and personal. This is because as the following quote highlights is what the consumers demand, a reduction of information to infotainment.[269]

> Jennifer, 41, Bradford: "I think television news information is lacking a personal account. The news is all about facts and that is accurate when reported but what it needs is a personal story of what happened."
>
> Researcher: "But what if they are not available? And what about the idea that the news is about only facts and not opinion?"
>
> Jennifer: "You see opinion all over the newspaper. So since when is it not about a personal story? Plus, facts can be explained by having someone tell about their experiences. It makes it easier to understand and touches people emotionally."
>
> Researcher: "But this is not the definition of news as a genre."
>
> Jennifer: "Maybe not but this is what I read and what I want to read."

Increasingly however, the *"patterns of behaviour that traditionally existed offline … are increasingly mixed with social and social technical norms created in an online environment, taking on a new dimensionality."*[270] In turn, we think about our lived experiences through the experiences of the media sphere. The outputs of the institutions reflect upon experiences, societies, and the world at large. In doing so, cultures and frames of reference are broadcast, engaging with publics and audiences in order to hook them into their narrative. Through this process of engaging publics, media affect communication patterns. Public communication is becoming more and more a reflection of the way in which media reports are produced and circulated. The following sub-section will highlight this. It will argue that as public communication mechanisms become

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[266] Vattimo, G., *The Transparent Society*, trans. Webb, D. (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 1992), 16.

[268] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 29.

[269] Thussu, D. K., *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment* (Sage, 2008).

[270] Van Dijck, J., *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, 19.

normative modes of communications, their presence as definers and shapers of discourse, forms how the subject of that discourse is discussed and approached in everyday contexts.

II.I.II   Media and public communication

The increase in a reliance on technology and long distance communication has as a consequence that the processes that traditional hermeneutics described, in relation to how the understanding of texts and oral messages functioned, are now a requirement for social life in general. As internet, email, video and radio broadcasting increase its global availability and importance, there is a strong need for information and technological literacy. The codes and conventions of these technological advances are affecting society and social praxis. In turn, where traditional hermeneutics discusses the negotiation of meaning between a written text and its reader, contemporary society requires its application to both text and images. A consequence is that an increased number of communications are monological as opposed to dialogical. In this sense, information is broadcast to the recipient but not communicated back to the receiver. Any responses that are returned are often not in equal measure due to the inequality of power between the original sender and receiver.

This imbalance also reflects the communication among people in Britain. Communication becomes more and more the assertion of a right to speak and to voice one's opinion rather than to consider the responses of others. The responses of others to assertions and contestations are secondary to the primary right to assert one's opinions and express one's feelings. Although supported by the right to freedom of speech, this particular characteristic of media, is influencing public communication on a daily basis. The asymmetry of media communication also reinforces the mutual dependence of producer and receiver in communication mechanisms and media logic. It is not the primary aim to provide a voice or to engage the receiver, but rather to create an audience. The producer is as successful as their ability to generate and audience, the audience needs media content but must also be willing to watch something that is chosen from a plurality of possibilities. But as Bourdieu points out, something to remain aware of is that *"the probability that an isolated agent, in the absence of any delegation, will form an explicit, coherent opinion on [x] … depends on the extent to which he depends on it for his reproduction and is objectively and subjectively interested in its functioning."*[271]

Institutional communication is increasingly a generation of audiences. Its primary goal is not to engage the viewer in a dialogue as that is not possible through the logic of its communication. Rather, the goal is to create audiences that are willing to receive a production. An example of this is the press release. Consumer focus groups are another example where corporations meet with consumers to gather opinions on their product. The aim is to tailor the product in such a way that consumers would consume it, it is not a survey looking at what product the corporation should produce. This logic reduces all media communication to some form of entertainment. As highlighted above, even news is not able to avoid the demand for entertainment, thereby

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[271] Bourdieu, P., *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Nice, R. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1984), 412.

becoming infotainment.[272] There exists a mutual dependence because the audience requires content and the producer requires an audience, the commodity that is negotiated is a person's attention span. Hereby is not the content up for debate, nor the opinion or values of the consumer, but rather whether the consumer is willing to submit his or her attention to the product on offer. In turn this affects inter-personal communication as people's attention spans are the commodity that is traded. The engagement with others is only available in as much as it hooks their attention. If it does not become worthy of audience attention, then it is not worth spending time (and often money) on.

> In the same way, it would be easy to show how much newspapers owe, even in an age of market research, to the logic of competition for advertisers and for readers. Like political parties, newspapers must endlessly work to maximise their clientele, at the expense of their closest competitors in the field of production, through more or less disguised borrowings of themes, formulae and even journalists, without losing the core readership which defines them and gives them their distributional value.[273]

The commodification of subjects in media reports has reinforced that perspective amongst viewing audiences. Subjects are either worthy of one's attention or they are not and one should not waste time offering one's attention to it. It also reduces the ability of someone to be seen and heard to the ability to command someone's attention. Unfortunately, this very often is coupled with one's ability to *"attract a television camera"*.[274] This explains the lengths some people will go to in order to be on television or in the newspaper, and celebrity endorsements.

Whilst social media has the possibility for dialogue it is very often a succession of monologues. Tweeting, Facebook posts, Pinterest, etc. are often used for monological expressions of opinions. A statement on Facebook has more often than not the primary goal of collecting likes, rather than start a meaningful dialogue about the nature of the statement. This is also reinforced by 'official' Facebook or twitter pages by authority figures such as the prime minister or the pope, or institutions such as the BBC or the guardian. Most social media posts are press releases, in shorter form, or links to the official statement. This is a further example of monological communication as commentary and engagement on the posts are of secondary importance. The aim is to get the information out there and if it is commented upon then that will be reacted to if necessary. This is very different in nature than creating a post asking for feedback or commentary where the primary aim is commentary, and feedback and not to voice one's opinion or broadcast information. The separation between producer and receiver has created a need for audiences rather than a need for engagement on

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[272] Thussu, D. K., *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment*.
[273] Bourdieu, P., *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 231.
[274] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 107.

topics and issues. It is here that one can see examples of the influences on communication by individualism[275], neoliberal economics[276], and media logic.

This means that people who have or want an opinion on Muslims and Islam do so in as much as that it is perceived relevant to their immediate lived experience, as Bourdieu points out earlier. These opinions are informed by a plurality of potential sources, but media may be one of them, and is becoming increasingly the mechanism for accessing all other potential sources. The effects of communication have two major consequences: (1) in engaging audiences about newsworthy subjects (Muslims and Islam), they must convince them of its relevance to their lives; (2) those that have the opinion that it is immediately relevant will feel the need to share and discuss it. This contributes to the high volume of media material produced (see Media Analysis), and on its lasting presence in public discourse.

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[275] Littlejohn, S. W. and Foss, K. A., *Theories of Human Communication: Tenth Edition* (Waveland Press, 2010), 203-04.
[276] Harvey, D., *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (OUP Oxford, 2005).

II.II   Media as a discursive institution of influence

Media discourse(s) exert its influence on the public, simultaneously affecting everyday people and everyday contexts. Increasingly people are subjected to this influence. This renders our experience of reality mediated and therefore interpretative and requiring constant (re)interpretation. *"The activity of reception takes place within structured contexts and depends on the power and resources available to the potential receivers."*[277] For example, one needs to have a television to have access to television news. One might only have access to a certain type of newspaper because another type is too expensive. Similarly, media reception is often routine or ritual, in the sense that it is a repetitive action that takes place under similar circumstances on a regular basis, such as reading the newspaper on the train to work or whilst waiting at the hairdresser, or listening to the news on the radio during the commute to work in order to receive the traffic report. Whatever the reason may be, media reception takes place in a structured environment and requires certain prerequisite elements. In doing so, the media has power and influence over human action and interaction. In order to stay in touch one must be in possession of certain products and information. Which products and information one needs to be in possession of is also strongly influenced by media, otherwise marketing and product placement etc. would not function the way it does.

The power of a media institution is not solely based on what it broadcasts but also in its ability to almost guarantee a set number of viewers at a given time. Different social agents increasingly struggle to get access to or take control of media discourse as part of their own (strategic) goals because the institutions that govern the media have developed a stranglehold on its production and dissemination. Consequently, the life of organisations and everyday people in everyday contexts, have become subjected to a more and more mediacratic[278] regime. *"In this conception, the media assert influence on both politics and public and are in that way most powerful in shaping political decision-making processes and public opinion"*.[279] This means that experiences of reality are mediated due to outside influences beyond our control affecting our positioning in a social context.

The dissemination of technological and cultural symbols through the media also affects the power struggle between media, producer, and receiver. The media triangulates through its presence as technical and socio-cultural factor, thus mediating interpretation between concepts, ideas, pictures, symbols, and concrete, singular agents. The symbolic power of the producer is enforced upon the receiver during transmission. Some

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[277] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 39.

[278] Mediacratic societies are ones where a fusion of political power and media has taken place. I.e., the power holding institutions carry out their duties via media institutions. Mediacracy is, then, a definition of political engagement whereby political activity is carried out via mediation. Governance is heavily involved in media and utilises mass communication mechanisms as a strategic element in its political activity. One can see that in the struggle for power, policymaking, and public debate media is increasingly used. Examples include but are not exclusively reduced to, investigative journalists, spin doctors, and press releases. For more information see: Vliegenthart, R., " Framing Immigration and Integration: Facts, Parliament, Media and Anti-Immigrant Party Support in the Netherlands" (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2007).

[279] Verbeek, S., Entzinger, H., and Scholten, P., "Research-Policy Dialogues in the Netherlands," in *Integrating Immigrants in Europe* (Springer, 2015), 215.

scholars have argued that the information received from a broadcast is not only *'triangulated'* by media but also the product of the will to power by the person in possession of the information for dissemination. The dissemination is product of the intent of maintaining power or increasing influence over others.[280] Public communication is becoming more and more a reflection of the way in which media reports are produced and circulated.

> News workers are predisposed to treat bureaucratic accounts as factual because news personnel participate in upholding a normative order of authorised knowers in the society. Reporters operate with the attitude that officials ought to know what it is their job to know. … In particular, a news worker will recognise an official's claim to knowledge not merely as a claim, but as a credible, competent piece of knowledge. This amounts to a moral division of labor: officials have and give the facts; reporters merely get them.[281]

This is then transferred to audiences who have access to the media. However, by utilising *"the journalistic practices of favoring official sources and employing 'active agents with specific purposes,"[282]* The corporations then in turn *"promote elite social discourses as the public discourse, or the common sense of society."[283]* This is reliant upon the trust or believability of the source. The ability of the media institution to command its audience's attention as an authority is the key to a successful transfer of these elite social discourses. As the focus group excerpts below highlights this is not always as straightforward.

> Arthur, 25, Durham: "The media coverage is damaging and irresponsible. There is no difference between television and newspapers. But the news just reports what the government and the security services want us to think. We are all manipulated to do what the government wants through their propaganda. Look at the Iraq War!"

> Frederick, 32, Birmingham: "The news tells us what is going on, but it's always the same and bad news. War, death and what the government is going to do."

The following discussion ensued at the Birmingham women's focus group:

> Researcher: "Are all these stories an account of what is going on?"
>
> Jane, 28: "Yes. I think so. People would not broadcast things that were not real."
>
> Angela, 40: "I don't know. They may think they are giving us the real truth but I'm not so sure. They are always issuing apologies for what's been said in the paper and such."

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[280] Chomsky, N., *Media Control the Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*, Second ed. (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2002); Ott, B. L. and Mack, R. L., *Critical Media Studies: An Introduction* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley - Blackwell, 2009).

[281] Fishman, M., *Manufacturing the News* (Austin, TX: University of texas Press, 2014), 144-45.

[282] *Waymer, D., "Walking in Fear: An Autoethnographic Account of Media Framing of Inner-City Crime," Journal of Communication Inquiry (2009).*

[283] ibid.

Inge, 32: "BBC is best. It is accurate and correct. The rest is a bit hit and miss. Plus things like the daily mail are always trying to scare us into doing something."

Researcher: "What do you think about media stories in the news?"

Christy,44: "The press always makes things bigger than they are."

Henrietta, 50: "It's always blown out of proportion."

Researcher: "But don't you think the news is accurate then in trying to inform people?"

Christy: "The news is trying to inform us but it only tells us the 'exciting' stuff [mimicking quotation marks]. The normal everyday stuff doesn't make it onto the news."

Researcher: "But then how do you understand Muslims in the news? If it's all blown out of proportion and doesn't show the everyday stuff, then how do you feel about the reporting of Muslims in the news?"

Jane: "Muslims are like how we see them here. They are extreme and therefore the stories we read or hear about them are extreme too."

Christy: "The press makes things bigger than they are, but Muslims are a big problem in this country. They are a threat to security and want to bring Sharia to Britain. How it is reported by some may be extreme but if everybody is talking about it then it must be a real problem. They can't all be wrong."

Thus, although there usually is more than one perspective operating within a given discourse about a specific issue, the dominant frame is usually used to define the preferred reading of an issue, event or character. This suppresses alternative readings, and limits the scope and ability for minority opinions to be heard. It also renders the perspective of the dominant institutions or social actors to speak and define the legitimate opinions, set the status quo and retain the existing order and structure.

> The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The media need a steady, reliable flow of the raw material of news. They have daily news demands and imperative news schedules that they must meet. They cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all places where important stories may break. Economics dictates that they concentrate their resources where significant news often occurs, where important rumours and leaks abound, and where regular press conferences are held.[284]

The disparities in financial power, however, render groups unable to access media equally, especially as a socio-political resource. This lack of resources translates into how minorities are unable to *"advance their definitions of political issues through the news media"* because of the financial resources *"available to those who hold institutional power contribute to their sponsorship of frames and to their ability to have these frames*

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[284] Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N., *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 18-19.

influence public discourse".[285] Different social agents increasingly struggle to get access to or take control of media discourse as part of their own (strategic) goals because the institutions that govern the media have developed a stranglehold on its production and dissemination. As a consequence, the life of organisations and everyday people in everyday contexts, have become subjected to a more and more mediacratic regime. This means that experiences of reality are mediated due to outside influences beyond our control affecting our positioning in a social context. But following the concentration of power, and monotony of images, people are exposed to engagements with Muslims and Islam from a limited number of possible ways.

From this vantage point, framing allows us to explore how and why media present or ignore "competing explanations of what factors are causing a problem, and what solutions might be possible".[286] In turn, frames are strong discursive tools that can help social actors define and solve problems and shape public opinion. They serve as the foundation of public discourse. However, this does not seem to include the emotional nature of the terminology that surrounds stories related to Islam in Britain. This may cause audiences to respond differently to a story. For this reason, the next section will discuss how news stories relate to the construction and perception of reality.

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[285] Ryan, C., Carragee, K. M., and Meinhofer, W., "Theory into Practice: Framing, the News Media, and Collective Action," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 45 (2001): 179.
[286] Maher, T. M., "Framing: An Emerging Paradigm or a Phase of Agenda Setting? ," in *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, ed. Reese, S. D., Gandy Jr., O. H., and Grant, A. E. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), 88.

II.II.I   *Media, construction and reality*

Several authors have written eloquently on media, construction and reality.

> Society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic. This process is characterised by a duality in that the media have become integrated into the operations of other social institutions, while they also have acquired the status social institutions in their own right. As a consequence, social interaction – within the respective institutions, between institutions, and in society at large – takes place via the media.[287]

As shown by Hjarvard above, the media is increasingly influential as a signifier[288] and source of information for an increasing percentage of the population[289].

> These resources for social interaction and cultural expression are not myriad in form and substance, but narrowed parameters (and restricted codes) of media form and content that channel imaginary possibilities in repetitive patterns.[290]

As a consequence, how Muslims and Islam are treated in the media affects the way they are perceived and understood by those receiving the media. This is because the media creates, reflects and enforces social representations. *"Social representations are socially shared and constructed representations that act as a fundamental backdrop for the construction of individual attitudes and beliefs."*[291] As McQuail elaborates:

> Here what matters is less the monopoly of ownership and control than the monopoly of attention and the homogeneity of content. Uniformity and repetition establish the important result of monopoly without the necessity for the structural causes to be present, the more consistent the picture presented, and the more exclusively this picture gains wide attention, then the more likely the predicted effect to occur. We can suppose, too, that matters outside the immediate experience and on which there are not strongly formed, alternative views, will also be most susceptible to the level of influence spoken of. Further, we can think that here, as with media campaigns, the trust in the source and an attribution of authority will be an important factor in the greater extension of media derived opinions and values.[292]

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[287] Hjarvard, S., "The Mediatization of Society. Atheory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change," *Nordicom review* 29/2 (2008): 113.

[288] *"the symbols used to create a representation"* in Langlois, G., "Meaning, Semiotechnologies and Participatory Media," *Culture Machine* 12 (2011): 5.

[289] Cassidy, W. P., "Variations on a Theme: The Professional Role Conceptions of Print and Online Newspaper Journalists," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82/2 (2005).

[290] Griffin, M., "From Cultural Imperialism to Transnational Commercialization: Shifting Paradigms in International Media Studies," *Global Media Journal* 1/1 (2002): 17.

[291] Cinnirella, M., "Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice," 180.

[292] Mcquail, D., "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. Curran, J., Gurevitch, M., and Woolacott, J. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1979), 79-80.

The reports that are broadcast or published in the newspapers influence the audience through the agenda setting effect of media producers.[293] In addition, if all the perspectives are repetitive and homogenous, it is much more likely for an individual to take on that information and hold that outlook for oneself. For example:

> The media are associated with a view of immigrants as likely to be a cause of trouble or to be associated with conflict. It also seems that impressions attributed to the media as source show a rather higher degree of internal similarity and to be in general less evaluative than those derived from personal contact. The main contribution of the mass media is not, according to this study, to encourage prejudice (often the reverse) but in defining the presence of immigrants as an 'objective' problem or the society.[294]

But what is the role of journalists and media institutions in spreading these frames of reference and sharing their information with their audiences? Lippmann describes the role of journalists as follows:

> Journalists point a flashlight rather than a mirror at the world. Accordingly, the audience does not receive a complete image ... it gets a highly selective series of glimpses instead. ... They cannot tell the truth objectively because the truth is subjective and entails more probing and explanation than the hectic pace of news production allows.[295]

The consequence is that the mass media does not tell you how to think about reality, but it does encourage you to consider what it broadcasts as something important to think about. It does so in the following manifest ways according to McQuail:

> First, the media can attract and direct attention to problems, solutions or people in ways which can favour those with power and correlatively divert attention from rival individuals and groups. Second, the mass media can confer status and confirm legitimacy. Third, in some circumstances, the media can be a channel for persuasion and mobilisation. For, the mass media can help to bring certain kinds of publics into being and maintain them. Fifth, the media are a vehicle for offering psychic rewards and gratifications. They can divert and amuse and they can flatter. In general mass media are very cost-effective as Means of communication in society; they are also fast, flexible and relatively easy to plan and control.[296]

Contemporary media's portrayal of reality is often perceived as being reality. Nick Couldry makes an important point when he states that "*Media institutions claim to speak for, or to be our privileged access to*

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[293] Shaw, D. L. and Mccombs, M. E., *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press* (Eagan, Minnesota: West Publishing, 1977).
[294] Mcquail, D., "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," 78.
[295] Lippmann, W., "Newspapers," 37.
[296] Mcquail, D., "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," 93.

'the social'."[297] The idea is that what is conveyed in the media is not a portrait of the social reality but actually the reality itself. Yet, *"there are no such things as 'pure' facts. A pure fact is simply something that is taken for granted and not put into question. … [however, it is easy] to insist upon its factual status, its 'neutrality', so as to reassert, with even greater authority, a still prevalent cultural convention."*[298] All media reports are affected by this and the subjective influences of the reporting agent. This can be one reporter on location via live-feed, but it can also be a piece edited by a multitude of people before it is broadcast months after the fact. However, the 'discourse' of the news is that it presents only pure facts and neutral information. This is a part of the social contract upon which it is built. The authority of the news is predicated upon its presence, availability and its ability to generate information that is not put into question. Therefore, it reports on events made understandable through cultural conventions with increasing authority as the material it puts out is not questioned. Simultaneously it defines, signifies, and reinforces those conventions through the information it puts out. Contemporary journalism does this by taking events and arranging them within frames that are relatable to the viewer.[299]

> Largely unspoken and unacknowledged, [frames] organise the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports. Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognise it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus, for organisational reasons alone, frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organised to regulate their production.[300]

Through the use of mass media, social actors, including various publics, define what is and what is not relevant to an issue by framing their concerns in particular ways.[301] *"Frames organize discourse, including news stories, by their patterns of selection, emphasis and exclusion"*.[302] Thus, by *"select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and make[ing] them more salient in a communicating text"*[303], mass media coverage of politics and political issues often contain frames that define current political controversies.[304] Therefore, we can see that participants who do not have any engagement with Muslims or Islam outside of media reports. Adopt these frames and are unable to discuss Muslims and Islam in another manner.

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[297] Couldry, N., "Media Rituals: From Durkheim on Religion to Jade Goody " in *Exploring Religion and the Sacred in a Media Age*, ed. Deacy, C. and Arweck, E. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 46.

[298] Glynos, J., "Sex and the Limits of Discourse," in *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change*, ed. Howarth, D. R., Norval, A. J., and Stavrakakis, Y. (Manchester, UK - New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2000), 209-10.

[299] Altheide, D. L. and Snow, R. P., *Media Logic*; De Vreese, C. H., "News Framing: Theory and Typology."

[300] Gitlin, T., *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*, 7.

[301] Maher, T. M., "Framing: An Emerging Paradigm or a Phase of Agenda Setting? ."; Elmelund-Præstekjær, C. and Wien, C., "Mediestormens Politiske Indflydelse Og Anatomi' [the Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm]."

[302] Ryan, C., Carragee, K. M., and Meinhofer, W., "Theory into Practice: Framing, the News Media, and Collective Action," 175.

[303] Entman, R., "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 52.

[304] Brewer, P. R., "Framing, Value Words, and Citizens' Explanations of Their Issue Opinions," *Political Communication* 19 (2002); Elmelund-Præstekjær, C. and Wien, C., "Mediestormens Politiske Indflydelse Og Anatomi' [the Political Influence and Anatomy of the Media Storm]."

Alex, 40, Newcastle: "I think violent extremism is rare in Britain but Islam and UK are not compatible. Islam contains problems and these are preached by online preachers from Saudi Arabia. Those preachers are fanatics."

Darren, 47: "There are fanatics everywhere but we have Muslim fanatics."

Brett, 30: "Islam is so extreme. You can't drink or eat pork. Women have to be covered and have permission from a man to do anything. It's all so extreme."

Geoff, 32: "I think all Muslims are extreme, but then they move here and bring it with them. It's not extreme there but acceptable, even encouraged. But because we are so different it is a big problem."

This further highlights the role of media as a signifier, a producer, and a disseminator of discourse.

II.II.II   *The media and its commercial and economic implications*

Media institutions have commercial goals and are driven by their primary objective to sell newspapers or attract viewers, in order to build revenue through the selling of advertisement space. However, these commercial implications have a number of consequences. Namely as Kevin Williams points out:

> The relentless search to maximise profits is not only driving out information at the expense of more entertainment but also is a direct threat to literary culture and reading. The extension of visual communication is changing the nature of public discourse, contributing to a reduction in educational standards, diminishing the attention span and encouraging apathy, isolation and passivity. But perhaps more crucial is the view that commercialisation is changing the relationship between the mass media and their audiences: no longer are we seen as citizens but as consumers.[305]

This is increasingly the case following developments in the production mechanisms of media. For example, television media gives us the opportunity to witness things that normally pass us by. The recording of images enables people to see and analyse things that normally happen so fast that our consciousness cannot record them; in video recordings things can be seen and analysed through the power to pause.[306] Images that pass by too fast to see in reality can be slowed down and examined in film but simultaneously the focus can be placed on an object and its every move examined. It also increases the power of those behind the camera who have the option to include or exclude something. Through the lens of a camera, first through photography and now accompanied by video, the director is master of the domain with the ability to instantly capture life, signify it and through the production mechanisms it can be endlessly reproduced and broadcast the world over. This is something which separates it with 'analogue' art which needs to be reproduced by the artist, but contemporary media, and some art as well, can be endlessly reproduced because of its digital nature. This is to the advantage of media institutions because it fits into their commercial structure. It seeks out easily reproduced material to be broadcast to a mass audience. Where art is valued based on the uniqueness of the product and the demand for it, a commercial value is the result of low amount of product coupled with a high demand. Media value however is based on the cost of the production of a product and the ability to broadcast it to satisfy demand. Here a high commercial value is based upon low production cost, high demand and an ability to broadcast in such a way as to meet that demand. David Morgan points out:

> [The] value of a commodity is determined entirely in terms of the marketplace, which operates with a history and competitive range of options. Value is determined in part by the use-value of a thing and certainly by consumer demand for a particular commodity. But the dominant basis of value is

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[305] Williams, K., *Get Me a Murder a Day!: A History of Media and Communication in Britain*.
[306] Benjamin, W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1969), 230.

established by the degree to which producer, merchant, and consumer collectively determine desirability.[307]

However, the power of the participants in the marketplace is not equal. The desirability of a commodity may be the result of all participants' evaluations but the producer and the merchant in the case of contemporary media are often the same conglomerate and therefore there is no power of influence on the part of the consumer because if they want a particular product they will need to get it from a particular merchant, not all products are available from all merchants and the restriction of availability inhibits consumer power.

> European media systems [are moving] away from the world of politics and towards the world of commerce. This changes the social function of journalism, as the journalist's main objective is no longer to disseminate ideas and create social consensus around them, but to produce entertainment and information that can be sold to individual consumers.[308]

The consequence of this paradigm is that news reporting is also determined by these factors. Whilst it is also subjected to the earlier characteristics, the consumer demand is arguably the largest factor. Whilst audience demand can be constructed as seen earlier, i.e., what they want to consume, the bottom line is that news media is broadcast to a certain extent on the basis of what people will give their attention to. This may be a certain style of reporting (for example, *the Telegraph* vs. *the Daily Mail*), rather than content or it may be content driven as well (the BBC news vs. Channel 5 news). However, the stories that survive the cutting room floor are those that are deemed interesting for the viewer to watch and that are able to meet the financial constraints of the institutions. In short, the value of the commodity produced by a media institution is increased by undermining the use or non-commodity values of alternative products or modes of production. In turn this increase in value is used to further enhance its own attraction and, in the process, increase its exchange values.[309]

> If the managers fail to pursue actions that favour shareholder returns, institutional investors will be inclined to sell the stock (depressing its price), or to listen sympathetically to outsiders contemplating takeovers. These investors are a force helping press media companies toward strictly market (profitability) objectives.[310]

The BBC and the television license are an exception as the public funds the BBC out of their TV license payments. But there are debates as to whether the TV license and public funding for the BBC should be cut and if that is the case then the BBC also becomes a fully commercial institution that answers to shareholders rather than the public or government officials for media and culture. Because of the financial implications, it

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[307] Morgan, D., *The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America*, 73.

[308] Hallin, D. and Manciini, P., *Comparing Media Systems* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 277.

[309] Mosco, V., *The Political Economy of Communication*, 144.

[310] Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N., *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 12.

is less of a risk to import the premiere season of a new 'foreign' show on local television that has proven successful in other countries to fill a slot rather than create new programming. The same goes for game show formats. It is even the case that to rerun a programme that may be old but still popular is easier to defend to shareholders than it is to broadcast a programme that is both radically new in content and format. To counteract that to some extent BBC 3 was created to give rise to new programming and Channel 4 has also been involved in the development of new programmes as well. This was done in part to capture new and younger audiences, because not having those demographics watching their network affects their bottom line. As a result of *"the proliferation of channels and the portability of new computing and telecommunications technologies, we are entering an era where media will be everywhere and we will use all kinds of media in relation to each other."[311]*

Cultural imperialism is a concern that is mentioned in relation to this. For example, as some products produced abroad, largely in the USA, become successful they are in turn broadcast on British television. This has led to discussions such as *"by the mid-1980s [when] Dallas had become the privileged hate symbol for all those who saw the worldwide popularity of the programme as an indication of the growing threat to the variety of world cultures that was posed by American dominance over the world's media industries."[312]* However, as Thompson points out:

> The globalisation of communication through electronic media is only the most recent of a series of cultural encounters, in some cases stretching back many centuries, through which the values, beliefs and symbolic forms of different groups have been superimposed on one another, often in conjunction with the use of coercive, political and economic power. Most forms of culture in the world today are, to varying extents, hybrid cultures in which different values, beliefs and practices have become deeply entwined. This does not imply, of course, that the globalisation of communication through the electronic media may not give rise to new forms of cultural domination and dependency.[313]

In addition, media convergence has created a situation whereby news rooms, journalists and other media producers are working together on productions across disciplines as it were. As a consequence, contemporary journalists have to be multi-skilled, but as Cottle suggests this may have led to a reduction of quality journalists by creating a jack of all trades master of none consequence for journalists.[314]

Media institutions are a source of wealth and capital, not to mention social capital, it becomes desirable to own, and a struggle for ownership ensues. But as the ownership of media institutions becomes more

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[311] Jenkins, H., "The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence," *International journal of cultural studies* 7/1 (2004): 33-34.

[312] Morley, D. and Robins, K., *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, 126.

[313] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 170.

[314] Cottle, S. and Ashton, M., "From Bbc Newsroom to Bbc Newscentre: On Changing Technology and Journalist Practices," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 5/3 (1999).

concentrated there is a reduction in differentiation among outlets as the production mechanisms are streamlined. In turn journalism and news institutions start to resemble *"assembly-line production with little room for professional initiative. Furthermore, the commercialisation of the media has introduced various marketing tools into the newsroom."*[315] And as news rooms are working on a 24/7 deadline the pressures of the journalistic field take their toll on quality productions and output.[316] Yet among some journalists it is seen that despite the access of the consumer to news, the role of the journalist is there to filter all the information and provide the information. This further re-enforces the 'power and identity' of journalists as individuals possessing particular skills, abilities and knowledge that are used to transfer an 'avalanche of information' in concise consumable reports to an audience.[317]

The economics and media logic of an institution are the foundations on which the report is built. Yet as I have argued, this forces journalists to employ certain techniques that do not lend themselves to delving deep into issues. When this is coupled with a context of partisan press and little press regulation, the manner in which issues are discussed will rely on internal decision-making. This increases the importance of diversity and specialists in the editing room in order to do justice to the various subjects reported on. Media logic, and financial constraints mean that one-sided reporting on Muslims and Islam may be as much a product of journalistic bias and discrimination, as a pragmatic need to provide information within a set timeframe. The ideological reasons for this will be discussed in the next subsection, before looking at the consequences for consumption.

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[315] Hjarvard, S., *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 54.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Chadwick, A., *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 165.

II.II.III   *Media, ideology and the political*

The process of information production and information that is designated for dissemination through text, images and symbols is always subject to certain conditions. The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time of the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of production are subject to it.[318] Through the financial and capital capabilities of those higher up in society, they are able to purchase airtime, finance studies, and invest in ventures and projects that they deem worthy, important, or financially profitable. In turn, becoming an actor in public discourse is difficult if not impossible without the necessary financial means or modes of production available. This explains why people jump at the chance to appear in the media, as it is a moment to either become or act as a force in public discourse and it signifies a legitimacy or position of authority for the agent in question.

Whilst in ordinary life every person is able to distinguish between what people profess to be versus what they really are, our media practitioners have not yet come to this seemingly trivial conclusion, for often they appear to take every person at their word and believe that everything they say and imagine about themselves is true, coherent, and ideal in form. The production of narratives be they autobiographical or about others, is always subject to structural conditions. These conditions place restrictions upon the conceivability of certain narratives. With media airtime at a premium, those appearing in media spaces take full advantage of the exposure. However, the media machine has constructed a narrative surrounding itself that everything it disseminates is true, unmediated, and an insight into things as they really are. Couple that with the notion of access to subjects in objective form, and problems of representation start to emerge.

In England, a person positions themselves in relation to that mediascape, because it is so saturated in society, be that as a follower, consumer, resistor, or producer. In English society *"representation in the mediated reality of our mass culture is in itself power."*[319] Minorities, alternative cultures, and subaltern classes, that stray from the mainstream become subjected to the ideologies of representation. But it would be wrong and naive to think that this distinction has a simply juridical and political function; the organic nature of these relationships means that their effect can be felt throughout civil society. Although the minorities and alternative classes are by definition not unified or united, their ability to exercise self-determination is subject to their ability to engage the state and to be actors in the socio-political domain. But as this affects the

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[318] Marx, K. and Engels, F., "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas," in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1976), 59.

[319] Gross, L., "Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media," in *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power*, ed. Seiter, E., et al. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 131. & Gross, L., Katz, J. S., and Ruby, J., *Image Ethics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 190.

distribution of wealth and power within the mainstream and majority classes, real engagement is often met with resistance. Castells argues that:

> We should, then, add another layer to the social dynamics of the network society. Together with state apparatuses, global networks, and self-centred individuals, there are also communes formed around resistance identity. However, all these elements do not glue together, their logic excludes each other, and their coexistence is unlikely to be peaceful.[320]

Castells points out that there are a number of people whose identity construct is simply based on not being what the rest is or wants them to be. He adds this to the various state institutions, global (private) institutions, as well as the self-indulging nature of human beings, and he argues that the individual rationale of all those entities necessarily excludes some of them. He contends that this is necessary from the perspective of a network society.[321] Therefore in a society such as Britain, Castells argues that it is a necessary element that there will be groups who are unlikely to be able to coexist.

In the public market place of social dynamics, the media plays an important role in the spreading of identity and ideological frameworks. The media productions one has access to, as frames of meaning, are always interacting, developing and necessarily conflicting.[322] Where the media may refer and give access to a variety of cultures, it only does so in the manner that it fits into its overarching identity logic. In Britain, these dynamics of exclusion and incompatibility with reference to Muslims and Islam is dominating the public discourse. This can also be the case for other minority and fringe groups. The identities people identify with and attribute to others are also subject to the same interaction as the cultures that are spread through the media. It is the way the media affects the process not only in its ability to broadcast the frames of meaning to large audiences simultaneously, but also by shaping them into news is of interest. Locating the discourse about Muslims in the British press within global-technological processes is important because global-technological capitalism has transformed and transgressed the geopolitical structures, particularly the nation state and civil society, and affected the logics of cultural production and political hegemony.[323]

We must first situate the effect and position of ideology. Ideology is here understood as a historical, socio-psychological, and power-laden force that affects the way people organise themselves, define the environment around them, and develop a consciousness of their place in society. The ruling class and mainstream society is naturally geared towards protecting its ideological structure. The structure of society

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[320] Castells, M., *The Power of Identity*, 421-22.

[321] A network society is a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks in Castells, M., "Informationalism, Networks, and the Network Society: A Theoretical Blueprint," ed. Castells, M., *The network society: a cross-cultural perspective* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004), http://annenberg.usc.edu/Faculty/Communication/~/media/Faculty/Facpdfs/Informationalism%20pdf.ashx, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. 1.

[322] Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," 23-24., Bird, E. S., "Are We All Producers Now?," *Cultural Studies* 25/4-5 (2011): 502-03.And De Vreese, C. H., "News Framing: Theory and Typology."

[323] Abbinnett, R., *Culture and Identity: Critical Theories* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 202.

is organised to maintain, defend, and develop the theoretical, material, and ideological concerns of the dominant class(es). Antonio Gramsci refers to this when he describes ideology's relationship to the media:

> Its most prominent and dynamic part is the press in general: publishing houses (which have an implicit and explicit programme and are attached to a particular tendency), political newspapers, the articles of every kind, scientific, literary, philological, popular, et cetera, various tree articles down to parish bulletins.… The press is the most dynamic part of this ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of streets … All this requires a complex ideological Labour.[324]

This Labour is provided by the organised masses, and the populace that make this up mass are organised according to the structure provided by the dominant ideology. David Dwan has noted that, *"The revolutionary potential of newspapers was also acknowledged by governmental efforts to suppress them. These involved direct legal restrictions on writers, publishers and printers, but taxes also provided a covert means of curtailing the growth of a radical press."[326]* The media in contemporary society is an actor in the formation of society. In mediacratic societies it can be perceived as a disciplinary power in society. Through mediacratic practices this power is exercised. As Foucault points out, the purpose of exercising this power is to 'train' individuals in order to use them. It delineates subjects by disciplining individuals as both objects and instruments.[327] This formation creates audiences in relation to what is being broadcast. This is the media logic.

> The radio announcer does not need to talk in an affected voice; indeed, he would be impossible to understand if his tone differed from that of his designated listeners. This means, however, that the language and gestures of listeners and spectators are more deeply permeated by the patterns of the culture industry than ever before.[328]

The majority of persons in a news media audience identify with or belong to the dominant cultural discourse as it is reported in the media. This is further reinforced in perceived times of crisis.[329] Therefore, minorities and subaltern classes are not only excluded by conscious practices of discrimination but also because they do not belong to majority of the designated audiences. This is why alternative television networks have risen up (for example: Black Entertainment Television or British Muslim TV). With increased diversity and multiculturalism perceived as a potential threat to British national identity, the dominant/majority discourse is promulgated. This supports the claims that media claims to cater to the will of its audience, giving the

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[324] Gramsci, A., "(I) History of the Subaltern Classes; (Ii) the Concept of "Ideology"; (Iii) Cultural Themes: Ideological Material," 16.

[326] Dwan, D., *The Great Community: Culture and Nationalism in Ireland*, ed. Deane, S. and Mac Suibhne, B., Field Day Files 5 (Dublin: University of Notre Dame Press & Field Day Publications, 2008), 144.

[327] Foucault, M., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Sheridan, A. (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1977), 170.

[328] Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. W., "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Noerr, G. S. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 124.

[329] De Haes, I., Husken, U., and Van Der Velde, P., "Media on the Ritual Battlefield," 209.

audience what they want. This suggests that to be entertained or to be consuming implies one agrees. Although the amusement factor of different sources relies upon the subjective responses from individual viewers, amusement is always an escape, a forgetting of the daily struggles even when presented with the suffering of others. Therefore, as the desires of the audience are met, the audience submits its time, it's will, and it is wealth to the media machine. It seems that the ordinary person is captivated by developments in the mediascape, such as the rise in celebrity culture described by Horkheimer and Adorno as follows:

> Ideology hides itself in probability calculations. Fortune will not smile on all – just on the one who draws the winning ticket or, rather, the one designated to do so by a higher power – usually in the entertainment industry itself, which presents itself as ceaselessly in search of talent. Those discovered by the talent scouts and then built up by the studios are ideal types of the new, dependent middle classes.[330]

Duhamel describes the situation of film as *"a fast time for helots, a diversion for uneducated, …, a spectacle which requires no concentration and presupposes no intelligence…, which kindles no light in the heart and awakens no hope other than the ridiculous one of someday becoming a 'star' in Los Angeles."*[331]

It is important to recognise the effect that ideology has on people. As Althusser explains, ideology acts or functions in such a way that it recruits people, and in doing so transforms them into subjects.[332] Furthermore, the ideological apparatus organises the ideas, actions, and practices of that subject. One key actor in the ideological apparatus is the media, and by imposing essential characteristics on characters, features, and storylines, the overarching ideology makes reception initially easier for the audience. Castells argues that although media does not have direct power itself, its power stems from its ability to act as a conduit for the powerful.[333] Media also serves to strengthen ideological goals in that it comforts people and reinforces the idea that life is the way people expect it to be and that they do not need to change or adapt in order to survive, or even to succeed, and flourish.

Contemporary media functions as photological and 'minimalogical'[334] definitions of what is deemed acceptable and held to be true. Through using standardised modes of production, the industries of contemporary media, create an illusion of diversity and freedom of identity using their products. But in reality, all that exists is pseudo-individuality[335], through calculations and meticulously constructed personalities. The personalities are constructed in such a way as to be conceivably fragmented. The illusion of a personal identity remains in place and in turn the character and narrative 'must' be real. A minimalogical

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[330] Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. W., "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," 110.

[331] Duhamel, G., *Scènes De La Vie Future* (Paris, France: Mercure de France, 1930), 58.

[332] Althusser, L., *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 166-76.

[333] Castells, M., *The Rise of the Network Society*, The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture (Cambridge, MA - Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 312-17.

[334] Taken from the Greek: μήνυμα to mean message or communication

[335] Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. W., "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," 116.

proof has been provided through the constructed narrative or overarching media ideology. *"The peculiarity of the self is a socially conditioned monopoly commodity misrepresented as natural."*[336] It is reduced to pseudo-individuality, whereby difference and similarity are constructed within the margins of the mainstream. Within this context, real difference and alternative modes of being are feared, resisted, and shunned, forced to remain on the periphery of society.

Media discourse constitutes an area of public communication where norms are shaped and rules get contested. But these contestations are not conducted by ordinary people; these debates are conducted by elites and selected public figures. As Habermas notes:

> The communicative network of a public made up of rationally debating private citizens has collapsed; the public opinion once emergent from it has partly decomposed into the informal opinions of private citizens without a public, and partly become concentrated into formal opinions of publicistically effective institutions. Caught in the vortex of publicity that is staged for show or manipulation, the public of nonorganised private people is laid claim to-not by public communication but by the communication of publicly manifested opinions.[337]

Yet these norms constitute the social and cultural grounding for legal regulations. The power of these norms is much more influential than the power of law and order. This is because contemporary methods of power use methods whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalisation, not like punishment but by control.[338] As the economic influence grows, and the technology develops, the surveillance of consumer habits further fuels what Mark Deuze describes as the process of mediated panopticism[339]. Consumers are encouraged to participate in certain media practices and punished if they do not participate in a certain way. When participating, the consumer provides labour for the services monitoring our media consumption. Through developments in technological monitoring services, monitoring and collecting the consumption habits has become automated. This data is then provided to corporations and governments as a commodity to help them progress towards their strategic goals.

> Some manufacturers refuse to advertise their products during certain programs because they do not want their product associated with the content of the program. … Manufacturers, through their advertising agencies, are increasingly interested not only in how many viewers or listeners will receive their advert but whether program content will "prime" this audience to be more receptive to positive messages about their products. This interest in the content of the program is particularly

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[336] Ibid., 125.

[337] Habermas, J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Burger, T. and Lawrence, F. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

[338] Foucault, M., *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 89.

[339] Deuze, M., *Media Life* (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 113.

strong in instances of "product placement", where the program itself acts as a vehicle for advertising certain commodities.[340]

However, this does not mean the media is a free entity available to all. The logic behind advertising is that there is a consumer you are looking to reach that is going to purchase your product. Potential advertisers will not purchase advertising space if they cannot reach the potential consumers they desire. As a consequence, class targeting has a strong presence within media advertising and newspaper audience creation. It also rules out the economic disadvantaged, because as Chomsky states: the poor are *"not purchasers, and any money thrown upon them is so much thrown away."*[341]

This is why the selection of spokespeople and representatives is important not only for organisations but also for media institutions that select who to interview or who gets to participate in these contestations.

> From the viewpoint of the producers, it [the use of spokespeople or representatives] enables them to determine the course and content of the quasi-interaction without having to take account of recipient response. This gives the producers much more liberty than they would typically have in face-to-face interaction. They do not have to pay attention to the recipients and try to determine whether they are following what is being said, and they do not have to respond to the interventions of others.[342]

The media plays an active part in the creation of a public sphere Jurgen Habermas states that the public sphere was originally a place to have people or issues subjugated to public reason and critique and to have public opinion influence political decision-making. [343] Now the public sphere serves as an arena where organised groups struggle whilst trying to meet their strategic goals. Jürgen Habermas states that *"Only these organised individuals could participate effectively in the process of public communication; only they could use the channels of the public sphere which exist within parties and associations and the process of making proceedings public."*[344] But within this context Couldry highlights an emerging paradox: *"A broader paradox then emerges: that, as more and more fields of social competition become open to the dynamics of media visibility, and so in a sense 'democratised', the force of media power increases."*[345] The paradox is that as the parties and associations of the public sphere become more and more reliant on media in their struggle, that struggle is in some sense democratised; however, as this progresses the power of media institutions is consolidated. In practice this means that whilst the democratic forms of debate and discussion increase, the sources and modes for access to this debate and discussion are reduced. As a consequence, institutional

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[340] Lynch, G., *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley - Blackwell, 2005), 66.

[341] Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N., *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 15.

[342] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 97.

[343] Habermas, J., "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," in *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*, ed. Bronner, S. E. and Kellner, D. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1989), 136.

[344] Ibid., 142.

[345] Couldry, N., *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*, 155.

power promotes one particular logic and eliminates alternatives. This process is central to the construction of a dominant view or the creation of hegemony.[346] This process is further exacerbated by media convergence where convergence means the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres, and audiences which is subjected to a small concentration of owners of multinational media conglomerates that dominate all sectors of the media and entertainment industry.[347] Therefore as Muslim advocacy groups and representative bodies organise , and engage media in their political struggle, their ability to get their message across decreases as the avenues for media representation are limited. This limits the representation of Muslim diversity, and favours hegemonic processes. The consequences for consumption will be explained in the next section.

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[346] Mosco, V., *The Political Economy of Communication*, 144.
[347] Jenkins, H., "The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence," 33-34.

II.III   The consumption of media reports

> Consumption is a form of exchange in which consumers take little or no role in the production of the goods they acquire by money, credit, or barter. Commodities are things produced for the purpose of exchange in a marketplace by those who possess knowledge, skill, and locale that consumers generally do not have. … Consumption consists of the practice of relying on the marketplace for the acquisition of commodities.[348]

The choice of materials up for consumption is limited to the sample constructed and disseminated by media institutions, resulting in asymmetrical power relations in the marketplace. However, there is space for an active choosing by the viewer because of the consumption of commodities requires consumer participation in the marketplace. So, whilst the power balance is in favour of media institutions they are unable to have everything their way because if they alienate their consumers then the institution dies.

> With the wide range of electronic communication now available, it is not uncommon for families to be in the same physical space but inhabiting separate communicative cocoons. … The result is that, even from within the same family, different people can put different media to different uses. … Digitization has contributed to exponentially increased choice for listeners, viewers and surfers. If you have access to the net, the choice is literally endless.[349]

Nevertheless, this choice has the boundaries set by the producer and not the consumer, in that, such programmes usually prefer one vision of reality over another and invite the viewer to engage the message in a particular way, despite such a 'reading' not being guaranteed.[350] Yet this 'active viewer' should not be seen as an individual that is continuously struggling against the structures of textual power.[351] Rather, in their own way, audiences are in certain aspects *"active in their choice, consumption and interpretation of media texts, with recognition of how that activity is framed and limited, in its different modalities and varieties, by the dynamics of cultural power."*[352]

Simultaneously, during the reading of a text or the viewing of a broadcast, audiences are constituted into a community and socialised into a group that is bound by the shared experiences of media.[353] This influences the consumer because as Zygmunt Bauman argues, we increasingly find ourselves in a position in which we can trust only ourselves. Global business practices demand fluid and unstable modes of organisation, and the government is seemingly powerless to control or alleviate this problem. Families, communities, and relationships all seem vulnerable, jobs are temporary, skills are becoming obsolete, and there are demands

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[348] Morgan, D., *The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America*, 73.
[349] Knott, K. and Mitchell, J., "The Changing Faces of Media and Religion," 244.
[350] Hall, S., "Encoding/Decoding in Tv Discourse."
[351] Curran, J., "The "New Revisionism" in Mass Communications Research."
[352] Morley, D. and Robins, K., *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, 127.
[353] Rath, C.-D., "Live Television and Its Audiences," in *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power*, ed. Seiter, E., et al. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 89.

for change from all perspectives. The nation state, he argues, is becoming incapable of providing the economic and social support demanded and individuals are left to their own devices as a result.[354] As a consequence, individuals are increasingly unable to buy into the image of society as a "common property" where its members buy into and to some extent run and manage it together.[355] As private life has become something for individuals to deal with rather than something that the state organises, it has created a feeling that society is in flux as no one is managing it.[356]

In contemporary Britain, the structures and stabilities which historically sustained the idea of British society are under siege, and critiques such as feminism, post-colonialism, pose problems for the individuals who have their identity based on the now challenged ideal of what constitutes a socially cohesive world. Thus, the act of witnessing the events in the news takes on even greater value for the consumer as it constitutes their understanding of what is going on. The individualising effects of society re-enforce this perspective, and personal narrative constructions become and remain 'canonical' as Benjamin has put it.[357] Additionally, as de Haes, Husken, and van der Velde mention: *"Regardless of whether a political system is democratic or despotic, in times of crisis the dominant discourse is ritualised and broadcast by a country's mainline media and, consequently, embraced by the majority of the population."*[358] Elizabeth Poole has argued that following a crisis of British identity and what Britishness is, and meant to be, has lead to *"a defensive construction of a common national culture to provide stability and certainty…excludes Muslims from Britishness"*[359]. This has resulted in media institutions employing the technique de Haes, Husken, and van der Velde mention[360] in its coverage of Islam and Muslims.[361]

The consumer negotiates an opinion out of the plurality of images, stories, reports, opinions and information broadcast 24/7. However, as Mitchell states: *"The symbolic resources that film, television and other media offer are often appropriated and recycled as people attempt to define their own identities, narrate their own life stories and understand the traditions and communities of interpretation to which they belong."*[362] In addition to this, emotional identification with these materials is achieved not only through the stories that elicit a positive response, based on the 'positive' message in the eyes of the consumer, but also through 'negative' stories and images which imply the positive aspects by reinforcing the binary between 'positive'

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[354] Bauman, Z., *Society under Siege* (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 2002), 36.

[355] Ibid., 49.

[356] Ibid., 18.

[357] Benjamin, W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 232.

[358] De Haes, I., Husken, U., and Van Der Velde, P., "Media on the Ritual Battlefield," 209.

[359] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 22.

[360] De Haes, I., Husken, U., and Van Der Velde, P., "Media on the Ritual Battlefield," 209.

[361] De Rooij, L., "Believing and Belonging. The Aesthetics of Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and Its Relationship to British Civil Religion."

[362] Mitchell, J. P., "Emerging Conversations in the Study of Media, Religion and Culture," in *Mediating Religion: Studies in Media, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Mitchell, J. and Marriage, S. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), 339-40.

and 'negative'. Through mediated identification, the images and stories bind the viewers to the stories and the information the media broadcast.[363]

Whilst the media engage and subject their audience to their own agenda building process, the relationship between a person and the media still requires some participation from the receiving agent. This active participation may vary from person to person and across time and space; however, the direct influence of media reports is only possible if you are an audience member.

> From a hermeneutic perspective, members of an audience themselves share a status and role as readers of a text. In attempting to understand a programme, they exercise this common position in active and rule-governed 'projections' of meaning: 'the meaning of a literary text is not a definable entity, but if anything, a dynamic happening.[364]

As a consequence, the consumption of media products and the appropriation of the information that it provides is always contextual. Active audiences fill gaps in the narrative that appear between scenes, stories, and images. This filling of gaps is based on the pre-knowledge they possess of a given story, the context of its production, and the context of its reception. These are a function of the similarities between the consumer's own experiences and those available in the text.[365] For example: In a discussion of prompt #2 in Birmingham and prompt #9 in Leicester.

> Christy, 44, Birmingham: "I did not think it was right. He broke the law and should be deported to where he came from. If he then would have problems there then that is his problem and he should have thought about that before he broke our laws. However, he is spared because of his 'human rights' [mimicking quotation marks] and now get to stay here. I mean look at that guy [pointing to prompt #2], why should we have to pay for this dickhead?"

> Sandra, 54, Leicester: "They come over here with the freedom to wear the burkha and look like letter boxes. Because of freedom of women and religious freedom. I once saw a woman have to ID herself on the bus. It was shown separately to women not to the male bus driver. It should be banned."
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> Tim, 26: "It's a breach of rights to ban veil. The removing of a veil should be done in private for security reasons but I know Muslims and Muslims are treated easier in some cases. Islamophobia is blown out of proportion; some are bad but most are okay."

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[363] Lynch, G., *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103-04.
[364] Wilson, T., *Watching Television: Hermeneutics, Reception, and Popular Culture* (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 1993), 64.
[365] Ibid., 64-65.

Although it can occur that you are not a key demographic for certain outlets, this is because they cater to a different target audience. However, the repeated targeting of issues can "make" a problem. The news must be sensational, but at the same time it must stay within the norms and expectations of what news is; i.e., something out of the ordinary. As Armstrong points out above, that which is newsworthy and out of the ordinary is something that is constructed through media rhetoric. With a lack of access and control over media outlets for the average person, the access to media and news is reliant upon third parties. The power and control of what is newsworthy is handed over from the consumer to the media institutions, who in turn create things which are in keeping with the ideal of that which is considered newsworthy and what is considered normal and ordinary everyday business. *"The media thus provide the news that fulfils the expectations they create, whether or not they actually elicit fulfilling behaviour."* [366]

Within the discipline of media studies, general discussions of media representation have continued to focus on misrepresentation and re-presentation rather than any discoveries of unfiltered, non-distorted representations of reality. For example, Walter Benjamin[367] and later Jean Baudrillard[368] point toward the inability to maintain authenticity in the wake of mass production, for objects are infused with power dynamics that directly influence mediated symbols or representations, and thus complicate intentions of transparency or realism. This necessarily complicates the reception of news reports because not only are the reports themselves infused with ideological content, but the communication process between producer and receiver is necessarily mediated because of the power dynamics implicit in that relationship. As Deuze below shows, in his discussion of the internet, the internet as a medium is becoming increasingly important as a tool in managing that power dynamic.

> Both deliberately and unintentionally, people generate more information about themselves, what they do and what they care about than any social institution or agency at any time in history. In the process people collectively create a vast repository of their lives in media – a living archive that gets continuously updated and, unlike our brains, always remembers information in the same way it was originally recorded and stored.[369]

Indeed, people depend on the media to receive information and opinion. Studies of the influence of mass-mediated coverage of subjects have found a correlation between increased coverage of a subject and public perceptions of that subject.[370] Manuel Castells has noted that: *"For citizens to have an informed opinion, they need information and counter-frames to exercise a choice in interpretation."*[371] What happens is that three aspects of media production affect mediated information reception: The deliberate spreading of biased

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[366] Poulton, E., "English Media Representation of Football-Related Disorder: 'Brutal, Short-Hand and Simplifying'?," 32.
[367] Benjamin, W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
[368] Baudrillard, J., *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
[369] Deuze, M., *Media Life*, 72.
[370] Castells, M., *Communication Power* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 170.
[371] Ibid., 160.

information by media professionals; The consistent promoting of one perspective over others; and the decisions made by media producers prior to broadcasting or publishing their material. What also needs to be considered is that the information that is broadcast is increasingly of a hybrid nature. This means that, "*media texts have the intertextual traces of an increasingly standardised global media industry where successful formats are adapted ad infinitum, hybridized to cater to the proclivities of one audience after another, but always remaining firmly grounded in the same commercial logic where hybrid texts are instruments finely tuned in pursuit of profit.*"[372]

It is often assumed, however, that the relationship between the viewer and the media is one where the media is in the middle, i.e., it mediates between the realities of, object and the receiver. The event is flowing to the receiver like water through a tube. The image on the screen (or the text) is not real but the events it describes and portray are.[373] Consumption is only of the images and narratives but not the event themselves.[374] This means that reception differs from the production of media which is 'fixed'; because once a media report is created it is a 'fixed' piece of physical material with a historical creation process. Reception implies that this 'fixed' nature is undone because interpretation and reception is left to the freedom of the receiver and his or her historical context. This process can be gradual and thus is not even limited to a fixed moment in time.[375] As a result, it is mediated; the viewer is being offered a glimpse at reality via a mediated form.

> Reception should be seen as an activity: not as something passive, but as a kind of practice in which individuals take hold of and work over the symbolic materials they receive. In the process of reception, individuals make use of symbolic materials for their own purposes, in ways that may be extremely varied but also relatively hidden, since these practises are not confined to a particular locale.[376]

But a media report is not reality itself, although the differences could be almost non-existent, but as the individual is experiencing it in a different form, the reality received is always different from the one providing the access and those having the direct experience. That is why seeing a natural wonder on television does not really do it justice. One can watch all the documentaries, collect all the news footage and cut out and read all the articles on the Taj Mahal but it is still an entirely different experience to when visiting it. Yet the visit itself would also be experienced differently if one knew everything there is to know about what one is experiencing, compared to not knowing anything about it. The consequence for media consumption is that due to its saturation it affects intersubjective relations in an offline context. This means that people are not only affected by media in an abstract, ideological sense; but that based on an individual's engagement with

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[372] Kraidy, M., *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 115.
[373] Grimes, R. L., "Ritual and the Media," in *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media: Explorations in Media, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Hoover, S. M. and Clark, L. S. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 220.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Thompson, J. B., *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, 39.
[376] Ibid.

media, that individual's desire and ability to meet, engage, and form social relations with Muslims is affected by media in all aspects as highlighted before.

Section III. Religion, Muslims and the Media

Media reports with religion or religious issues at the forefront are a small percentage of the media reports that are released overall. Most the news that is covered in the newspapers or on television is of a political or social nature and for that reason it is deemed relevant to the majority of the public. However, that does not mean that religious issues are not covered; it just means they are of secondary nature, implied, or not present. There are other stories that are deemed of a religious nature when one can argue that they are political, social or …. The relationship is established in the reception of the media report by the receiver although it is guided by the elements that make up the media report. But very few reports are focussed on religious aspects alone. There are issues or news stories where the lines between the political, social, and religious, etc. become blurred. This is related to the earlier mentioned criteria of what is deemed news, but also the product of the agenda building process. For example: The new election of the president of Iran receives news coverage in Britain as does the election of president for the United States of America, yet the place religion takes in the media reports covering both events is very different. As Bowen points out: *"this distinction allows us to recognise that events that do not establish distinctly religious 'moods and motivations'[377] may nonetheless be construed in a religious framework"*[378] because of discourse(s).

In Britain one can see a development where religion has bridged the divide into the secular media space.[379] There is a *"complex and nuanced nature of the relationship between religious and social values and viewing practices of the media sphere. It is not really possible to see a clear line of demarcation between religion 'religion' and 'television' here.*[380] The media both reflect and construct social and cultural understandings of the interest in and the place of religion within them. In recent years, sociologists, media scholars, philosophers, theologians and religious studies scholars have produced research of theoretical and cultural significance on the changing relationship between religion and the media and the impact of (new) media on religion.[381]

Yet there exists a lack of interaction based on sustained and mutual engagement with Muslims for people in Britain, and as a consequence the media remains a large source of information. If this media is largely unrepresentative, biased, ideological, and unable to deal with the complexities accurately, it can be argued that these qualities are taken into the realm of public discourse and interaction. These same weaknesses of the media could conceivably be one of the reasons for a lack of sustained mutual engagement with Muslims. As has been pointed out earlier, the media informs the primary understandings and interpretations of the

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[377] Geertz, C., "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Banton, M. (London: Tavistock, 1966), 8.

[378] Bowen, J. R., *Muslims through Discourse: Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society*, 10.

[379] Hoover, S. M., "Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media."

[380] Ibid., 18.

[381] For examples of such works please see: Lynch, G., *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*., De Vries, H. and Weber, S., *Religion and Media*., Hoover, S. M., *Religion in the Media Age*., Campbell, H., *When Religion Meets New Media*. Or Mitchell, J. P. and Marriage, S., *Mediating Religion: Studies in Media, Religion, and Culture*.

issues it discusses. But if the media reports are the sole source of information on Islam and Muslims, it is not surprising that the meaning of Islam and Muslims among the public reflects what is portrayed in the media. This means that to the British public, the media seems to be successful at informing them. If media portrayals are as impactful as some would suggest, then that raises questions about the impact of education, politics, and other arenas of public and private life that are unable to inform people about Muslims and Islam on such an authoritative level as what the media purports to do.

It must be stressed at this point that the perspective from which Media, Muslims, and Islam are discussed in a western context is largely from the perspective of the media reporting on Islam and Muslims. There is little mention of the perspective of the *'ulama'* or Muslim individuals in relation to communication and media technology. An observation by Larsson that would be helpful to keep in mind from this point on is that *"from a general point of view, the debates over the information and communication technologies [for Muslims] encompass larger questions about colonialism, western influences, modernity, freedom of expression, democracy, the rise of the secular society and the position of Islam in the modern world".*[382]

British newspapers and television news networks address Islam and Muslims in a number of ways, but *"that the media focus lies basically on representing a single monolithic Islam"*[383] It is important to understand the plurality of descriptions and the effect that is brought about among the British publics, particularly as an increasing number of news outlets describe Islam and Muslims as violent, unreasonable, and incompatible with British society.[384] It is then conceivable that an increasing number of persons in Britain grow to believe that message, and hold that as their outlook on Islam and Muslims. The increasing association of Islam with violence and unwelcome or irrational behaviour raises questions about the extent to which the media is able to steer public opinion and foster attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. The interpretation of reality and news stories is done in light of the outlook held by people, whose views and behaviour toward others are to a large extent informed by their perception and interpretation of reality through media discourse.[385] Therefore, by looking at the way people understand and construct meaning from media we can begin to understand how people's conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims is being shaped and influenced by the media.

It has been argued that the manner in which Islam is covered is narrow and that many stories cover the same aspects repetitively.[386] However, what was first argued by Edward Said in *'Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World'*[387], the starting point for most scholars looking

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[382] Larsson, G., *Muslims and the New Media* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 193.

[383] Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press*, 214.

[384] De Rooij, L., "Believing and Belonging. The Aesthetics of Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and Its Relationship to British Civil Religion."Morey, P. and Yaqin, A., *Framing Muslims* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[385] Jensen, K. B., "News as Social Resource: A Qualitative Empirical Study of the Reception of Danish Television News," *European Journal of Communication* 3 (1988): 275-76.

[386] Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., and Mcenery, T., *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press*.

[387] Said, E. W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*.

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at the media coverage of Islam, is that the media determines the legitimate viewpoints regarding Islam. The Muslims that appear in the press are identified as either terrorists at war with the West, or as apologists defending Islam as a peaceful religion.[388] A contributor to this dynamic is what Mahmoud Eid describes as follows:

> Despite the fact that the media are seen as major drivers of social cohesion in multicultural Western societies [by the majority of the population] because they construct and define communities, the majority of mainstream media tend to ignore Islam and Muslims until the occurrence of negative circumstances.[389]

E. Elgamri's book '*Islam in the British Broadsheets*'[390] is a work that departs exactly from this premise and argues, among other things, that orientalism in the British press is one of the causes of Islamophobia as well as the wider social impact on the integration of Islam in British society. This thesis examines that argument as one of its primary research aims, and critiques the validity of that assumption. It is important to consider is that in a survey conducted in 2002, 74% of the British population claimed they knew nothing or next to nothing about Islam and 64% of the population stated that what they did know came from the media.[391] Allen and Nielsen discuss these findings in greater detail and state that *"the role and impact of the media is contentious and debatable, … the media continue to play a major role in the formulation and establishment of popular perceptions in the public sphere."[392]*

In '*(Mis) Representing Islam: the racism and the rhetoric of British broadsheet newspapers'*, John E. Richardson argues that "the reporting of the broadsheet press is dominated by racist assumptions and outputs".[393] In his research ,which was collected systematically over a period of several months, and which paid detailed attention to dominant reporting patterns, Richardson found that *"the Muslim-ness of certain countries [was] persistently backgrounded or absent from reporting"* ,as was the case with Indonesia, for example, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, whereas *"the Muslim-ness of certain other countries was persistently foregrounded".[394]* He also contends that "the more 'ordinary' political decisions of Muslim nations are…not understood in relation to their Islamic-ness".[395] Richardson found that many portrayals of British Muslims *"are based on a 'White fantasy' regarding the rights and abilities of 'White'*

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[388] Sardar, Z., "The Excluded Minority: British Muslim Identity after 11 September," in *Reclaiming Britishness*, ed. Griffith, P. and Leonard, M. (London, UK: Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), 86.

[389] Eid, M., "Perceptions About Muslims in Western Societies," in *Engaging the Other: Public Policy and Western-Muslim Intersections*, ed. Karim, K. H. and Eid, M. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 111.

[390] Elgamri, E., *Islam in the British Broadsheets: The Impact of Orientalism on Representations of Islam in the British Press*.

[391] Allen, C., *Islamophobia* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 96.

[392] Allen, C. and Nielsen, J., *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the Eu after 11 September 2001* (Vienna, Austria: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2002), 46-48.

[393] Richardson, J. E., *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), xvi.

[394] Ibid., xvii.

[395] Ibid., 230. & Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 99.

society to regulate the parameters of British society– to include or exclude".[396] She argues that *"press coverage of British Islam represents a project intent on 'cultural closure'"*[398] and that such *"patterns of representation…legitimise current social relations of dominance, power structures and therefore continuing patterns of discrimination"*.[399] It is within this context that Chris Allen defined Islamophobia as follows:

> Islamophobia is no longer restricted to understanding and defining it in terms of highly questionable and sometimes unreasonable unfounded hostilities and widely interpretable misconceptions, both of which remain relevant and important but not as pre-requisites for definition or identification. Instead Islamophobia must now be conceptualised in terms of it being about the way in which Muslims and Islam are thought about, spoken about and written about; perceived, conceived and subsequently referred to; included and also ultimately excluded: Islamophobia can now be concerned with every means of thought, deed and action that relates to or references Muslims or Islam, whether true or untrue, fact or fiction, real or imaginary.[400]

This is further exacerbated by the fact that there is a proliferation of negative imagery, a large number of *"Muslim monsters found across numerous fields of cultural production and the disparate locations in which they function as social, literary, artistic, and filmic characters."* [401] It is also important to bear in mind that whilst negative imagery is pervasive, even the positive stories that are broadcast can be used to legitimise a negative image of Muslims. The positive stories that are broadcast about Muslims and Islam contrast greatly with reports of terrorism and unwelcome behaviour. However, because of the pervasive nature of the negative stories it can be argued that those depictions have become the norm and that the positive stories or stories that depict Muslims as regular people are the exception. It is within this paradigm that the 'Islamophobia Industry'[402] operates in order to generate support for its ideological outlook.

Indeed, many scholars have noted that in Britain, 'Britishness' often tends to be tacitly associated with 'Whiteness', meaning that some British Muslims, as well as other British citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds, have perhaps found it hard to maintain a strong sense of British identity. W. Breed adds that: *"A key problem facing any society is the maintenance of order and social cohesion, … [and this] has been the thesis of Durkheim, Weber, and many sociologists, especially the functionalists. Not only is the division of labour and of roles necessary ("functional integration"), but also "normative integration"-consensus over a value system."*[403] With a divisive rhetoric being used with regards to the values represented by Muslims in

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[396] Richardson, J. E., *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers*, 152-53.

[398] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 186.

[399] Ibid., 259.

[400] Allen, C., *Islamophobia*, 195-96.

[401] Arjana, S. R., *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7.

[402] Lean, N., *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims*, 76-77.

[403] Breed, W., "Mass Communication and Socio-Cultural Integration," *Social Forces* 37/2 (1958): 109.

relation non-Muslims in Britain, it is a problem to maintain social cohesion. Nonetheless according to the latest British Value Survey, Muslims are more likely to identify with traditional British values.[404]

As Karim Karim points out: *"One of the most significant barriers facing the development of informed reportage about Islam is the lack of knowledge and unease among many Northern journalists about religion in general."*[405] This has led to a situation whereby Arabic words have been appropriated into the discourse. "Jihad," as a consequence, has come to mean violence against the West. As Tahir Abbas points out: *"the deeper Quranic meaning of the term is, in fact, far broader and refers more to the idea of a 'struggle'".*[406] He continues to show how other words *like "'extremist', 'anti-integrationist', 'radical', and 'fundamentalist' are repeatedly employed in ominous headlines across the entire range of press in Britain"*.[407]

Within this context, this thesis asks the general research question: *In what ways do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England?*

The findings of John E. Richardson and Elizabeth Poole are in line with a number of more general works published in relation to Islam or Muslims in the media. H. Bødker discusses the discourse surrounding Muslims in the media and how that relates to conflicts in culture and the challenges it presents for the resident majority as well as the immigrant minority in his article '*Muslims in Print, or Media Events as Nodes of Cultural Conflict'.*[408] He argues that conflict is inevitable where there are inadequate means for dealing with the issues arising from immigration. Marco Cinnirella's publication, *'Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice'*[409], departs from the context highlighted above and looks at how a person is affected by social dynamics and the consequences it has, specifically on the strong association made between terrorism and Islam and vice-versa in British social environments. The *"disproportionate attention to Islam is triggered largely by current national and international tensions as they have risen to the top of political agendas rather than by a sudden interest in spirituality. … Problematic "Muslim issues" are endlessly recycled, often in sensationalist tones."*[410]

One thing that is often overlooked in media studies and academic research is the media consumption by Muslims themselves. S. Ahmed's article is one that offers a good analysis of '*The Media Consumption of Young British Muslims'.*[411] Very often it is overlooked that Muslims can, and often do, have different media

[404] University of Essex, "Ethnic Minorities Living in the Uk Feel More British Than White Britons," https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/2012/06/30/ethnic-minorities-living-in-the-uk-feel-more-british-than-white-britons, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[405] Karim, K. H., *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*, 184.

[406] Abbas, T., "Islamophobia in the United Kingdom: Historical and Contemporary Political and Media Discourses in the Framing of a 21st-Century Anti-Muslim Racism," in *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century*, ed. Esposito, J. and Kalin, I. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 74.

[407] Ibid.

[408] Bødker, H., "Muslims in Print, or Media Events as Nodes of Cultural Conflict."

[409] Cinnirella, M., "Think 'Terrorist', Think 'Muslim'? Social-Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Anti-Islamic Prejudice."

[410] Morey, P. and Yaqin, A., *Framing Muslims*, 57.

[411] Ahmed, S., "The Media Consumption of Young British Muslims," in *Muslims and the News Media*, ed. Poole, E. and Richardson, J. E. (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

consumption compared to the rest of British society. This is not only because of their consumption of community language material disseminated in Urdu, Arabic or Hindi for example, but also through specific publications aimed at their community, such as the magazine Passion Islam or the website Muslim News. Although most Muslims still consume the mainstream news outlets, they are more likely to read the more socialist leaning newspapers (such as the guardian) or watch BBC news rather than ITV news or channel 4, something one also could associate with the large percentage of Muslims in Britain voting for the labour party). Billig et al. highlight that in political discourse Islam has become an increasingly politicised topic.[412] Their report suggests that Muslims have different strategic goals to the rest of the voting public. This is despite some of their research data contradicting that suggestion.

If we take a look at a specific suggestion, as pointed out by Shadid and van Koningsveld, one can notice that the effect of colonisation, philosophical and religious differences, political debates, uncritical and undifferentiated media coverage and immigration are held as the core arguments for the negative press that surrounds Muslims in Europe.[413] Arguing that most of the press does not take into account the subtleties of the situation at hand and does not look further than absolutely necessary, these authors feel that as a consequence the Muslim communities of Europe are affected by the way in which the various stories are reported.[414] John E. Richardson described in *'Who Gets to Speak? A Study of Sources in the Broadsheet Press',* a related issue: not only do Muslims consume media differently, but they are also very much under-represented as producing members of the press. There are but a handful of Muslim journalists for major outlets and many work for magazines, newspapers, etc. that are aimed at Muslims.[415] Most Muslims who appear and speak on television are Muslim men.[417] These often become targets for controversy and 'juicy' coverage, Anjem Choudary appearing on the BBC for example, and further enforces the liberal media (us) versus ultra-conservative Muslim (them) perspective. Other actors who appear to speak on behalf of Muslims or in relation to issues faced by Muslims serve a distinct purpose, according to the framing of the programme, and the media logic involved. For example, "Many British Muslims have divided loyalties"[418] according to a BBC Panorama episode, which then broadcasted footage of "police in riot gear confront[ing] an angry mob of Muslim protesters, radical preachers speak[ing] out against democracy, and [how] a troubled White Muslim convert attempts to bomb a restaurant in Exeter."[419]

However, as in France, the most effective advocates were 'moderates' who would embody a secular, private, and sanitised form of Islam; and the Women who could speak authentically about the oppression they have

[412] Billig, M. et al., "Britishness in the Last Three General Elections: From Ethnic to Civil Nationalism," (London, UK: Commission for Racial Equality, 2007).

[413] Shadid, W. and Van Koningsveld, P. S., "The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Causes and Solutions," 177-94.

[414] Ibid., 188-90.

[415] Richardson, J. E., "Who Gets to Speak? A Study of Sources in the Broadsheet Press," in *Muslims and the News Media*, ed. Poole, E. and Richardson, J. E. (London, UK - New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

[417] Bowen, J. R., *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 232.

[418] Vine, J. and Watson, R., "Muslim First, British Second", (*Panorama*, 16-02-2009).

[419] Dehanas, D. N., *London Youth, Religion, and Politics: Engagement and Activism from Brixton to Brick Lane*, 54.

suffered.[420] S. Vetovec's work entitled *'Islamophobia and Muslim Recognition in Britain'*[421] highlights the close relationship between a desire for recognition, acceptance, and tolerance, by the Muslim community in Britain and the resulting countermovement broadly described as Islamophobia. Yet the examples that reach the news further reinforce the orientalist discourse, as the issues faced by Mulsims, are used as examples to highlight 'problems'. The demands for recognition, claims for equality, choices and responses, given by Mulsims are examples, and these need to be explained by "experts".[422] These experts are determined by media values, media logic, public opinion, and dominant discourses. As a consequence we can conclude with Said that, *"the irony is that Western views of Islam on the whole prefer to associate "Islam" with what many Muslims themselves are opposed to in the current scene: punishment, autocracy, medieval modes of logic, theocracy."*[425] Something that is often recycled and repeated in in discussions of Islam and Muslims in Europe.[426]

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[420] Bowen, J. R., *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, 233.
[421] Vetovec, S., "Islamophobia and Muslim Recognition in Britain," in *Muslims in the West*, ed. Yazbeck Haddad, Y. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[422] Bowen, J. R., *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, 240.
[425] Said, E. W., *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, 68.
[426] Bowen, J. R., *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, 240.

Section IV. **Participants' View of the Media**

> Lucy, 31, Newcastle: "It's really important for me to watch the news, because, if you switch on the TV, they're always talking about things that are important and new ways to do things."

All groups commented on the propensity for the media to exaggerate. Amongst women and men there was a feeling that the media "blow things out of proportion." For the small number of women who participated they were more likely to react to stories involving women or seen to be linked to the oppression of women. Men only reacted to these issues when they were used as examples to criticise Islam or Muslims and it was not reflected upon in other contexts such as equal pay or maternity or paternity leave, for example.

There were several participants across all groups who, because of the practices of the media, in one form or another —predominantly the tabloids—no longer had an appetite for the material they offered. Mentioned examples were the phone hacking scandal(s), or simply regurgitating party policies. Rather they were resigned to the fact that their access to the type of information they wanted would be limited in the mainstream press and that they were therefore forced to seek out sources elsewhere: usually this meant looking up material on the internet, but satellite television also offered an opportunity for this type of consumption.

One of the most strongly articulated features, in all of the groups, was the sense that television news consumers were jumping from one issue to another, with no time to share or discuss as well as absorb what it was that they had just witnessed. I use the term witness consciously because the participant testimony reflects the definition of religious witnessing. Participants who discussed this felt a need to be part of the event and allow it to reach them, but because of the news quickly moving from one story to another, this was not really possible and therefore they felt the material was never really internalised.

> Tim, 26, Leicester: "It's all crammed in, and you either force yourself to take it all in or it is just white noise. You can catch bits of it, but then it can get confusing, you put the wrong bits together and, if you don't understand it then it's your own problem. It also doesn't help if you have others in the house either asking you what's going on or just making further background noise. In these contexts, it's not a surprise why people can't grasp it."

Their points suggest that a broadcast covering foreign affairs, domestic politics, sport and weather in the limited time of 30 minutes leaves little space for reflection. This places considerable pressure and responsibility on the audience. The results often were that participant's viewing practices were affected by the structures of television news and their reception context which largely had a reduced reception outcome in the subject.

> Bindra, 53, Bradford: "You're trying to follow along, you haven't had time to read it or follow it at your own pace while you're viewing, it's only when you finish watching that you think 'I did not understand that'. But you don't have a chance to ask anyone or look it up because the broadcast just continues."

This shows that as an activity, television news consumption is not necessarily undemanding but that in its current format the activity is reduced in value. Echoing comments about news media, was that it is essentially a body of knowledge characterized by its content, predominantly because it is associated with an outdated mode of information transmission, which research has shown to be less affective in helping audiences to attain knowledge and understanding of a subject. Television news still relies on the hypodermic needle approach to information dissemination.[427] This theory suggests that media could influence a very large group of people in a direct and uniform manner by 'injecting' them with information.[428] The theory suggests a direct flow of information from the sender to the receiver. This view entails a passive audience which is immediately subjected to the message. People are seen as passive and in need of having media material sent to them. Now whilst what happens on a consumer level follows more instrumental models and even media broadcasts are asymmetrical in power and influence, the news broadcasts are a product of the early years of television and still follow these underlying assumptions. In doing so it is problematic for the consumer who does not engage with the material in this way. The explanation for their lack of interest perhaps lies in the way that the broadcasts offers viewers little control over their own information input, and this ultimately leads to boredom, disenchantment and possibly alienation.

When an audience is denied the opportunity to raise questions about specific points of interest as defined by the news media, the power dynamics are asymmetrically flowing from broadcaster to viewer. The appeals to authority as a means of justifying the world view to the audience are problematic for the following three reasons. Firstly, broadcasting from a position of authority makes the audience rely on that authority because of an oral assertion of that authority. "The propounders are deferred to as the accredited agents of tradition".[429] Secondly, an agent of information dissemination which claims to be an authority because of an epistemologically sound commitment to evidence as the basis for its authority forces its audience to accept its predefined world-view based on their authority rather than their evidence. Thirdly, to ask of other human beings that they accept and memorize what the news disseminates without any justification as to why, leaves audiences bereft of the reasons for submission to media authority as well as being unable to justify their position(s) to others.

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[427] Dominick, J. R., Messere, F., and Sherman, B. L., *Broadcasting, Cable, the Internet and Beyond: An Introduction to Modern Electronic Media* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 298.

[428] Defleur, M. L., *Theories of Mass Communication* (New York, NY: Longman, 1989).

[429] Horton, R., "African Traditional Thought and Western Science," in *Knowledge and Control*, ed. Young, M. D. (London, UK: Colin-MacMillan, 1971).

As such, it is a failure to acknowledge the agency of the individual, and this leaves them with information that is superficial. In addition, the audience is subjected to knowledge produced and disseminated by authority figures outside their specialist domain. Issues of Islam and Muslims (like other religions) are not discussed by a religion correspondent, for example.

A major contributing factor to participants' responses was repetition of news stories. Repetition was described as taking two forms: first, a number of participants commented on the repetition of information day after day.

> Brett, 30, Newcastle: "The news is very repetitive and when they repeat a story they'll say. 'He was such a normal man until he was radicalised' and you have to sit there and it's, like, he killed that soldier [referring to Lee Rigby] and we've received this same information about four times already."

Whilst the repetition used here can be a rhetorical means to persuade the audience of the validity of the information, used to fill a gap in a broadcast, or to contextualise new developments, its use, without explicitly addressing why it matters, is clearly a point of disengagement for people.

The second dimension of repetition was similar stories being repeated.

> Sunny, 36, Newcastle: "Every news story seems to be about Muslims and terrorism. It's not as if it is new or in more depth. It is literally the same thing."

> Angela, 40, Birmingham: "We all saw these unbelievable things at 9/11 and 7/7. I don't know about you guys but I got really worried about it, I talked to my family about it. But now it's the same type of thing. Them wanting to blow us up and us trying to stop them. It's so repetitive. That was not news."

Fundamentally, these comments raise questions about how the repetitive nature of the material itself as well as the types of stories we are seeing in the news is affecting people; particularly if stories about Islam, Muslims and violence are not newsworthy anymore then it could suggest that those images are saturated enough to be considered every day and rudimentary. However, this does not explain or account for the problem within news broadcasts themselves. In part, the solution here lies in having news media practitioners think more carefully about audience experiences and contextualise and explicate how any topic they introduce will be newsworthy.

Concluding remarks

The previous chapter has highlighted the structural elements present in news reporting. These structural elements place a limit on the way news can be produced, disseminated, and received. Therefore, the consequences of reception are not only a product of content and subject matter, what the next chapter will highlight, but also of the structural deficiencies of media. Consequently, media logic, news values, the mechanisms of public communication, economic constraints, and ideological concerns, all affect in their own way, news reporting.

Chapter 3.   Islam and Britain

A brief review of the global distribution of Muslims can put the presence of Islam in Britain in context.[430] Although of the total world Muslim population, most Muslims belong to either the Sunni (87-90%) or Shia (10-13%) denominations, there is in fact a plurality of religious affiliation. Most Shias, however, (between 68% and 80%) live in just four countries: Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq.[431] The republic of Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country with a total population of around 250 million; 88.2% of which (about 202,867,000) are Muslim, the majority are Sunni Muslims. This means that 12.9% of the total Muslim population lives in Indonesia.[432] There are about 1.57 billion Muslims in the world; that equals 23% of an estimated 2009 global population of 6.8 billion. Although Muslims are found on all five inhabited continents of the world, more than 60% of the world's Muslims are found in Asia.[433] That is considerably more than the 20% living in the Middle East and North Africa and the few million that live in Britain (2.7 million people according to the statistics from the 2011 census).[434] In total, Europe has 38,112,000 Muslims which is about 5.2% of its population, amounting to 2.4% of the global Muslim population.[435]

An overview of the history of Muslims in Britain is important because the media coverage of Islam and its reception in Britain needs to be put in context. The chapter is supposed to give some much-needed background of Islam in Britain before the thesis looks at the media treatment of Islam and Muslims. This chapter considers Muslims as active agents in British society and offers important information on understanding how Muslims participate in British society. The aim is to develop a greater understanding of Islam and Muslims in Britain, in order to be able to critique media constructions based on a grounded understanding of Islam and Muslims as living and developing in British society.

The arrival of Islam in Britain, the current demographics of Muslims in Britain, and their place and role in society will be discussed. The aspects of Muslims in Britain that are most directly related to the coding themes in chapter 4 will be analysed: economic status, education, multiculturalism in Britain. Terrorism and the

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[430] Doré, L., "People in Europe Massively Overestimate the Muslim Population, Study Shows", (*The Independent*, 14 December), https://www.indy100.com/article/europe-muslim-population-rising-myth-survey-ipsos-mori-perception-uk-7474801, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[431] The Pew Research Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population," (2009), http://www.pewforum.org/Muslim/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[432] De Rooij, L., "Islamic Identity in the Secular Environment of Post-Colonial Indonesia," in *Religious Transformation in Modern Asia: A Transnational Movement*, ed. Kim, D. (Leiden, The Netherlands - Boston, MA: Brill, 2015).

[433] For More in-depth look at the role of Religion in Contemporary Asia please see: Kim, D., ed. *Religious Transformation in Modern Asia: A Transnational Movement*, Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions (Leiden, The Netherlands - Boston, MA: Brill, 2015).

[434] Office for National Statistics, "Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales - Religion Statistics," http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[435] The Pew Research Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population".

London terror attacks of 7th July 2005 will also be discussed. Muslim political representation and social organisations that are active in Britain today will also be put in context.

The part discussing their economic status focuses largely on the positions that Muslims hold within the labour and housing markets, as integration of a minority group means integration and equality in these areas of society as well.

I continue by discussing the role of Islam in education; not only the issue of Islamic schools, but also the participation of Muslims in higher education and the role that education plays for the Muslim community in British society. Integration into British society for minority groups has been a long and arduous process and it is still not complete. There are still issues that hinder the integration of Muslims, such as inequality in the labour and housing markets. The lack of acceptance and recognition of Islam and Muslims (as well as other minority groups) into British society also hinders integration. As a result, the part on the effects of multiculturalism in Britain and the place of Muslims within that paradigm discusses this in greater detail. Islamic extremists have unfortunately committed crimes and horrific action on people living in Britain. The part on British based terrorism and the London terror attack of 7th July 2005 aims to describe not only the aftermath but also contextualise the situation facing Muslims in relation to terrorism in Britain. The final part of this section will offer a description of British Muslim political representation and their social organisations. As with any other minority groups, Muslims have formed their own organisations and lobby groups. These organisations represent their voice and opinions in a political domain, as reflected in Muslim MP's, unions and other organisations. Some are specifically Muslim in identity created to represent the Muslim population in a particular context; others are representative in other capacities and just so happen to be members of the Islamic faith (MP's for example have to represent their entire constituency not just the Muslims). As a lot of the media rhetoric surrounding Muslims is in relation to the aforementioned issues, I feel it would be important and necessary to offer a contextual account of the position of Muslims in relation to terror and security, within an economic sphere, and their political activity.

Section I.   The arrival of Islam in Britain

By 1855, as many as 10 000 - 12 000 Muslims are estimated to have been residing in Britain.[436] In the years leading up to the end of the Second World War, there had been small localised Islamic communities in Britain. Britain's colonial history meant that it had come into contact with Islam in a number of nations for up to several centuries. When during the nineteenth century foreign workers arrived in Britain's seaport cities as a source of cheap maritime or dock labour, the Islamic presence in Britain expanded. This led to the emergence and development of small Muslim communities in a number of places such as London, Liverpool, Cardiff and Hull. This culminated in the construction of Britain's first all-purpose Mosque, built in Woking in 1889.[437] Another reason for regions such as South Wales and Northeast England to see an influx of Muslims was because the maritime trade that employed them relied upon the coal that was produced in these regions.[438] It must be noted that maritime related industries were not the only source of Muslims to Britain; Muslim elites throughout the empire would travel to Britain to be educated at British universities or to establish businesses (although that was a significantly smaller amount of people).[439]

It was in the years following the end of World War II, however, that the majority of Muslim immigration to Britain occurred. This was an era of decolonization and the founding of a number of independent states. For example, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) were established following the partition of India in 1947. The majority of the Muslim immigrants were from Pakistan and arrived in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. After the Second World War, Britain was in the process of rebuilding its devastated economy and infrastructure, and so it benefited in many ways from this source of cheap labour.

Push and Pull theories of migration[440] consider the structural reasons for migration. This can be supplemented by network theory studies of migration[441]. This considers the human aspects of migration such as emotional, spiritual and economic aspects related to migration. In this regard, we can see that the local contexts in South Asia for example created a number of 'push' factors whilst the need for labour in Britain created pull factors that drew migrants to Britain. Here one can concur with Ikhlaq Din that *"many Pakistanis who came to Britain… [Were not] reluctant migrants".[442]* Instead he contends that for many of these people, *"England was a vilayat, 'a place of dreams'".[443]* He supports this by pointing out that many of the Pakistanis who came to

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[436] Ansari, H., *The 'Infidel' Within: Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present* (London, UK: Hurst, 2004), 35.

[437] Fetzer, J. S. and Soper, J. C., *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 26.

[438] Lawless, R., *From Ta'izz to Tyneside: An Arab Community in the North East of England in the Early 20th Century* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1995).

[439] Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 23-27.

[440] Portes, A. and Böröcz, J., "Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on Its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation," *International migration review* (1989).

[441] Boyd, M., "Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas," ibid.23/3.

[442] Din, I., *The New British: The Impact of Culture and Community on Young Pakistanis* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 20.

[443] Ibid., 34.

Britain *"belonged to the lower castes…and had little opportunity to better themselves back in Pakistan".*[444] With what has been said so far, care should be taken not to assume that the terms *'Pakistani'* and *'Muslim'* are synonymous with one another. Although the majority of South Asian Muslims to arrive in Britain after the war were Pakistani, a small number of Indian Muslims also arrived, and they were followed by a wave of new Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh during the 1980s. But network theory analysis of Muslim migration to Britain shows that the migrants were often from the same area, involving networks of kinship and family.[445]

In due course Muslims from Africa arrived in Britain during the late 1960s and early 1970s as a result of '*Africanization*' policies in countries (formerly) under British colonial rule. Muslims from nations such as Kenya and Tanzania settled in Britain. Additionally, some people from countries such as Uganda had come seeking refuge in Britain amid political unrest in their home country in the years following independence.

Different Muslim communities have continued to arrive in Britain since the 1970s. For instance, there are those that have arrived from Somalia, Afghanistan, Bosnia and other areas, as refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, there is a growing number of Muslims from the gulf regions purchasing property and investing in the British economy (primarily in London). The 2011 census data shows that 48 % are under 25 and four in five people are under the age of 50. Given the younger age profile of the Muslim community (in comparison to the rest of Britain), and the continued practice of marrying 'back home' within ethnic and kinship boundaries of South Asian communities, Samad & Eade suggest that as large numbers will be reaching marriageable age, it is possible that this will be reflected in increased migration to Britain.[446]

Also during the late 1970's and early 80's a number of Iranians came to Britain following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The people who left Iran after the revolution joined the Iranians who had already migrated to Britain before the revolution. Those who migrated before the revolution were those with the financial means to do so or who may have held positions abroad under the pre-revolution regime. In addition to these two categories of people leaving Iran to settle in Britain are those who left Iran because of the upheaval and instability of the country during the revolution and immediately thereafter.[447] Many have journeyed to Britain to profit from better economic conditions and to take advantage of a better education system in order to offer their children a better life and more opportunities in the future. For many Muslims migrating to Britain throughout history, the reasons for doing so are diverse, but can be seen as reactions to the unpredictable socio-economic and political situations that envelops many countries Muslims inhabit and migrate from. However, the migration of Muslims to Britain has not always been smooth or well received. As Avtar Brah notes:

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[444] Ibid.

[445] Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain*, 47.

[446] Samad, Y. and Eade, J., *Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage* (London, UK: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2002).

[447] Nassehi-Behnam, V., "Iranians in Britain," in *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*, ed. Moghissi, H. and Ghorashi, H. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 73-74.

[There have been] a number of well-publicised deportation cases (e.g. that of Nasira Begum, who was served a deportation order when she divorced her husband who held British citizenship) and other types of immigration cases e.g. that of Anwar Ditta, a British-born Asian woman who was refused permission to bring her children from Pakistan to live with her in Britain until … demonstrated that the children were indeed her and her spouse's.[448]

Such deportation cases often receive media attention and this may influence public opinion. But when these cases are discussed in the media, the broader context of Muslims in Britain is often overlooked. For this reason, this will be discussed in the next section.

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[448] Brah, A., "The 'Asian' in Britain," in *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*, ed. Ali, N., Kalra, V. S., and Sayyid, S. (London, UK: Hurst, 2006), 51.

Section II.   <u>Muslims in Contemporary British Society</u>

This section shall give an overview of the contemporary geography of Muslims in Britain. This is important because in order to critically appraise the media coverage of Islam and Muslims, and its reception in Britain, there needs to be a description of the status and functioning of Islam and Muslims in contemporary Britain. This will allow for the analysis of participant responses to contemporary issues through their historical developments. The various forms of media coverage on Islam and Muslims can be analysed not only on their choice of topics to cover but also on the accuracy of the coverage in and of itself. In this way, a greater understanding of the context and background against which media reports about Islam and Muslims will be presented. Because there exists a variety of elements that are most alluded to in public discourses related to Islam and Muslims in Britain, commonly recurring elements in media discourse will be analysed in separate subsections. These subsections will discuss: Socio-Economic status, Muslim political representation and Muslim social organisations, terrorism, and multiculturalism. The data provided by the focus groups will be discussed in relation to these subjects and this will in turn allow the researcher to gauge the role of the media within the discussion of Islam and Muslims in Britain.

Within this study the verbal responses of participants can be categorised using the above tropes. It is this data that provides the most insight into the current experience of non-Muslims in Britain with regards to the research questions. Whilst this might not incorporate all the responses of all the individuals, they do manage to capture the major elements of what the participants had to say, and hence, are used as the method of analysis. These categories were selected because they allowed for the grouping of the participant responses according to subjects that they felt necessary to discuss after viewing the prompts. It is important to note here that whilst the labels are my own and resulting from a need to cluster participant responses in a meaningful way, the subjects that make up the clusters are the result of participants engaging with the media prompts.

Section III. Demographics of Muslims in Britain

The statistics from the 2011 census reveal that the number of Muslims in Britain had grown to 4.8% of the population (2.7 million people).[449] The Muslim population is *"a fast growing and young population"*; with 60% being below 30 years old[450]. This is congruent with the 2001 census data that revealed that there were roughly 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain at that time (2.7% of the overall population). As a result, Muslims made up the second largest religious group within Britain. The top five cities with the largest Muslim populations in 2006 were: London (607,000), Birmingham (140,000), Greater Manchester (125,000), Bradford (75,000) and Kirklees (39,000).[451] In 2011 this had grown to: London (1,012,000), Birmingham (234,000), Greater Manchester (233,000), Bradford (129,000) and Leicester (62,000). Kirklees is sixth with (61,000) Muslims.[452] The areas with the largest percentage of Muslims living in them are Tower Hamlets 34.5%, Newham 32%, Blackburn with Darwen 27.0%, Bradford 24.7% and Luton 24.6%.[453]

Although most Muslims living in Britain are of either Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, Britain's Muslim community is ethnically diverse.[454] The 2011 census data reveals that Muslims were considered more ethnically diverse than other religious groups. Two-thirds of Muslims (68 per cent) were from an Asian background (within this group Pakistani 38% and Bangladeshi 15% were the largest groups). The proportion of Muslims reporting as white was around 8%, mixed ethnicity reported 4%, those belonging to Black/African/Caribbean British communities made up about 10% of the Muslim population and this was a similar reporting size to those identifying as belonging to another ethnic group (about 11%).[455] The number of Muslims increased between 2001 and 2011 in all ethnic groups but had a particularly strong growth among Asian Muslims. The number of Pakistani Muslims increased by 371,000 (from 658,000 to 1,028,000) and the number of Bangladeshi Muslims grew by 142,000 (from 260,000 to 402,000). However, despite the large growth of Pakistani Muslims, the percentage of Muslims who are ethnically Pakistani went down by 4.5%. In 2011, 53% of all Muslims were born outside Britain and the number of Muslims born abroad had almost doubled between 2001 and 2011 with a rise of 599,000 from 828,000 in 2001 to 1.4 million in 2011. A similar pattern exists for the number of Muslims born in Britain where the rise was 560,000 from 718,000 in 2001 to 1.2 million in 2011. However, it was Hindus, according to the 2011 census, that were the least likely of all

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[449] Office for National Statistics, "Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales - Religion Statistics".
[450] Dunleavy, P. et al., *Developments in British Politics*, vol. 8 (London, UK - New York, NY: Pallgrave - Macmillan, 2006), 198. See Table 15: Muslim population by age bracket from 2001 -2014. for a further breakdown.
[451] Ibid., 197.
[452] Office for National Statistics, "Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales - Religion Statistics".
[453] Office for National Statistics, "Religion in England and Wales 2011," http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_290510.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[454] Dunleavy, P. et al., *Developments in British Politics*, 8, 197.
[455] Office for National Statistics, "Full Story: What Does the Census Tell Us About Religion in 2011?," www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_310454.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

religious groups to be born in Britain (with only 33% born in Britain), whereas within the Muslim community 47% are born in Britain.[456]

Age Bracket	ONS Statistics for 2001[457]	Labour force Survey 2008[458]	Percentage of Muslim Population	ONS Statistics for 2011[459]	Estimates for 2014	Percentage of Muslim Population in 2014
0-9	338.000	527.000	22%	603.000	717.000	22%
10-19	312.000	405.000	17%	468.000	528.000	17%
20-29	307.000	502.000	21%	511.000	596.000	19%
30-39	246.000	440.000	18%	497.000	614.000	19%
40-49	169.000	257.000	11%	299.000	355.000	11%
50-59	82.000	156.000	6%	172.000	216.000	7%
60-69	64.000	68.000	3%	80.000	86.000	3%
70+	29.000	56.000	2%	73.000	96.000	3%

Table 15: Muslim population by age bracket from 2001 -2014.

According to a Labour Force Survey published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in January 2009, Muslims in Britain in 2008 could be sorted according to age as in column 2 of Table 15: Muslim population by age bracket from 2001 -2014..[460] Based on those numbers and the data from the 2001 and 2011 census I have estimated these numbers for 2014 (column 5).[461] According to the ONS, of those who responded to being Muslim on the census, 48.4 were aged 0-24, 39.5 were aged 25-49, 8.1 were aged 50-64 and 3.9 were 65+. The data shows the younger age dominance of the population with increasing numbers in the younger age groups. As was the case in 2001, there were more Muslim men than women in 2011 (52 per cent to 48 per cent). There were 505,000 more Muslims aged under 25 in 2011 compared to 2001, and 503,000 more aged 25 to 49 in comparison to 2001. The percentage of the population reporting as Muslim increased for all age groups under 60 and across the gender divide. Eight per cent of all people in Britain aged under 25 identified as Muslim in 2011 compared to 5 per cent in 2001. Migration did contribute to the increase. But based on these values, the breakdown according to age is consistent. This means the age distribution throughout the community is not changing and the data suggests that this will remain this way in the near future.

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[456] Ibid.

[457] Dunleavy, P. et al., *Developments in British Politics*, 8, 197.

[458] Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain*, 121.

[459] Office for National Statistics, "Religion in England and Wales 2011".

[460] Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain*, 121.

[461] The 2011 and 2014 estimates were made by me and the numbers were based on applying a growth rate of 0.052325 to the data from the labour force data from 2008. The growth rate was determined from the 2001 and 2011 total Muslim population data. Each of the age brackets is 1% of the total British population or less and the number of Muslims under 30 is around 3% of the total population of Britain.

The estimations for the number of mosques in Britain range from around 500 -1500 official mosques in Britain.[462] An official registration gives tax benefits as well as the right to perform recognized marriage ceremonies. Up until 30 June 2012 there were 973 certified Muslim places of worship in England and Wales, and that up until the same date 213 of these premises were registered for the solemnisation of marriages.[463] It is estimated that at least those numbers of unregistered mosques exist as well. It is not possible to determine how many marriages took place at the 213 Muslim places of worship in England and Wales prior to 2011, as the data does not include a venue code. However, it is possible determine the number of marriages solemnised in England and Wales that have a Muslim denomination for the years 2008-2010: 187 in 2008, 238 in 2009 and 200 in 2010. Marriage statistics by denomination can be misleading though, as Muslim marriages can take place at unregistered premises. For that marriage to be recognised as legal, the couple have a further marriage ceremony in a registry office or approved building. Such weddings are coded as civil marriages because only the civil marriage certificate is received. Islamic burial practice has not been impeded, and there are sections in public cemeteries for Muslims as well as several that are solely for Muslims, with Islamic funeral operators and religious institutions taking care of the practical and ceremonial duties that the bereaved may require.

The participants saw Muslims as being a large group within society that is increasing in numbers and having a growing presence and influence in society. The perceived size of the Muslim community and the actual size differed greatly: some respondents estimated that as high as 40% of the British population was Muslim, yet most people responded that Muslims make up around 20-25% of the population. Reasons given were that Islam or Muslims are 'all around us'. It was indistinguishable as to whether such rationales were more clearly or more often articulated by the female or the male participants. Gary, 33, from Luton explained this by stating that "The Muslim community feels huge because they are always in the news". For those that live in areas with high local Muslim populations their estimates of the size of their local community as well as that of Britain was sometimes highly overestimated because they seemed to be everywhere in their local environment and therefore extrapolated to the rest of Britain. In other cases, people seemed to have the right idea but others were then surprised to hear how low the figure actually is, or put off by examples mentioned by others highlighting how common Muslims are in Britain. For example:

Researcher: "How many people in Luton are Muslim?"

Kirsty, 28: "70% is Muslim."

Researcher: "Are you sure? That seems a bit high. What do others think?"

Roger, 43: "it's like 4-5%"

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[462] For a discussion on Mosques in Britain see: Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain*, 181-205.
[463] Office for National Statistics, "Number of Muslim Weddings," http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/business-transparency/freedom-of-information/what-can-i-request/previous-foi-requests/population/number-of-muslim-weddings/index.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

Kirsty: "But that's so low. It must be more than that. They are everywhere!"

Kevin, 36: "In Luton it's like 40% or more is Muslim."

Researcher: "How large do you think the Muslim community is in Britain?

Tony, 58: "Do you mean a number or what?"

Researcher: "As a percentage or a number whatever you think is easier."

Tony: "ehm, maybe like 10,000,000"

Carl, 56: "I think it is less cos it's like 5%"

Ben, 35: "I think it must be bigger than that! 5% is too small, 15%"

Tim, 47: "Yeah something like that maybe between 15-20%"

Steve, 45: "like 1/3 of the population"

Researcher: "Really? Ok. Well, what do you think it is for Birmingham? How many Muslims are there living in Birmingham?"

Carl: "Yeah, I think maybe like 100,000" [others nod approvingly].

In the participant discussions, many of the reasons given for Islam or Muslims being in Britain were similar to the media prompts that were used during the focus groups. This suggests that Muslims and Islam are discussed immediately within the framework of the media prompts. This will be discussed in further detail later. Statements from the participants emphasized the idea that Muslims in Britain "chose to come here" to lead a better life. This ignores one large group of Muslims in Britain: Namely, 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims who were born in Britain. Refugees in Britain did not choose to be in the circumstances where they had to flee, but many did choose, at some point while underway, to come to Britain. Muslims are described in terms of migration, both in the news and in the focus group discourses. Therefore, they are also often linked to other issues associated with migration and government policy on migration. For example, respondents stated that the government designated areas of living which has led to large migrant groups in certain regions. George, 62, from Blackburn referred to this: "You can come for work but you have to live here and there". This was echoed when participants said that the north is forgotten by London or the government: "Unemployment and low prospects are exacerbated by migrants but because the government do not help anyone here it just turns our community into a shithole" Bill, 58, Blackburn. Dave, 60, Blackburn: "In the current times Britain helps Muslims but those here turn it to shit."

Such arguments reflect a lack of any distinction between Muslim refugees, Muslim migrants and British Muslims. The complex and diverse manner in which Islam and Muslims have come to Britain as well as stay and settled in Britain is not only absent from news discourse, it is also absent from the consciousness of individual Britons, irrespective of whether they live in an area with a large population of Muslims or a small population of Muslims. Those who have direct interpersonal contact with Muslims might describe it as follows:

Michael, 45, Bradford: "In the past, Britain used to help Muslims in their own countries. But now they seem to come over here and want to be helped. This puts a strain on all of us. I try to do a lot of interfaith work and it is becoming more important as people have to be integrated into our way of life."

Helen, 31, Newcastle: "She [Muslim co-worker] was born in Britain and is not really Muslim at all. She doesn't wear a headscarf and comes with us for drinks after work. As normal as you and me, not like those ones that come over here for a handout."

The nature of the public discussion on Muslims in Britain was reflected in participants' comments, and there was no recognition of the historical aspects that preceded the contemporary context. Critical engagement with the media reports, or the issues at hand was absent, and their responses were in keeping with antiquated ideals of empire, white or British supremacy, and colonialism. The only reasons for Muslims coming to Britain that was discussed with regards to Islam and Muslims was to take advantage of the British welfare system or to create a better life for themselves because of Britain's liberal values and state democracy. It also places the responsibility for improving society with the autochthonous population. Calls for change by minorities, especially those considered immigrants, are unappreciated, and seen best left up to 'real' British people. Hence what was articulated clearly, in all of these comments, was a description that Muslims chose to be in Britain and that if they wanted to stay they should adapt to be like the rest of British citizenry. Changes they suggested in order to improve Britain for all are not accepted as legitimate. For example:

Nathan, 18, Blackburn: "Like if they walk in the street or so, they are always in groups. And if you speak to one then they all react. Make you feel scared and make you leave them alone and stuff. But then they want to change our laws and stuff but they can't do that, they are not even English."

Whilst Nathan, and others, were unable to offer examples of 'how' Muslims actually change laws and British society, their presence is often associated with change that was deemed to affect participants like Nathan negatively. Other forces that may be in play in bringing Islam to Britain including British immigration or employment policy are not discussed. The agency in this regard is fully placed on the Muslims coming to this country from the Middle East and South Asia. In recent times, what these findings suggest is that participants see Muslims solely as migrants by choice and that they could not be intrinsically a part of British society as long as they remained Muslims. It also shows that the narrative of the British national identity is exclusive, and that certain groups and communities are excluded from it but that it is also used as a tool to exclude individuals, groups, and communities.[464]

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[464] For a further discussion on how this exclusion may take place, see: De Rooij, L., "Believing and Belonging. The Aesthetics of Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain and Its Relationship to British Civil Religion."

Section IV. Socio-Economic Status

The economic environment of people has a lasting impact on their ability to act within society, and as a result the economic status of Muslims in Britain affects their agency in British society. This section explores the economic conditions that affects Muslims within Britain. Migrants are discussed in stereotypical narratives that differ from the complex contributions that migrants make to Britain's economy. This section will explore the place of Muslims within the economy, both as migrants and as natives, in order to prepare a context for those narratives when they are discussed in greater detail later in the thesis.

In its 2004 Annual Population Survey, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Britain found that unemployment rates for Muslims were higher than those for people of any other religion, for both men and women.[465] In 2011, 17% of economically active Muslims were unemployed (this includes unemployed students) compared to around six per cent of Christians and nine per cent of people with no religion. This is a growth of 4% since 2004 when 13% of Muslim men in Britain were unemployed, which was over three times the rate for Christian men (4%). Muslims between the ages of 16 and 24 years old were found to have the highest unemployment rates (28%, compared to 11% for Christian males from the same age group). Based on these statistics the unemployment rate for Muslims living in Britain appears to be disproportionately high. As the Open Society Institute's 2004 report *Aspirations and Reality: British Muslims and the Labour Market* states, "*in Britain, 17 per cent of Muslims have never worked nor are currently long-term unemployed, compared to 3 per cent for the overall population.*"[466]

The ONS survey also revealed that *"men and women of working age from the Muslim faith are…more likely than other groups in Great Britain to be economically inactive, that is, not available for work and/or not actively seeking work"*[467]. Some have argued that up to 68% of Muslim women in Britain are economically inactive.[468] The 2011 ONS census found that the group with the lowest levels of economic activity were Muslim women (55%), specifically: Bangladeshi (54%), Pakistani (52%), and Arab (39%). These women accounted for their economic inactivity by responding that they were looking after their relatives or the family home.[469] In addition to gender, age is a major factor in economic activity. The older age profile of Christians for example meant that a large proportion of Christians were not participating in the labour force because

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[465] Office for National Statistics, "Labour Market Muslim Unimployment Rate Highest," http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=979, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[466] Bunglawala, Z., "Aspirations and Reality: British Muslims and the Labour Market," (2004), http://www.soros.org/resources/articles_publications/publications/eumapmuslims_20040722/british_muslims.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[467] Office for National Statistics, "Labour Market Muslim Unimployment Rate Highest".
[468] Değirmencioğlu, S. M. and Council of Europe, eds., *Some Still More Equal Than Others?: Or Equal Opportunities for All?* (Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing, 2011), 121.
[469] *"Economic activity includes those aged 16 or over who are employed or unemployed (those who are actively seeking and available for work). Economic inactivity, includes people who are aged 16 and over who are not in employment and are either not actively seeking and/or not available for work."* Office for National Statistics, "Full Story: What Does the Census Tell Us About Religion in 2011?".

they had 'retired'. However, Muslims have a very young demographic (as seen earlier) and had the youngest age profile in the census. The reason most were economically inactive was because they were either 'looking after the home or family' (31%) or because they were 'students' (30%). Alternative reasons for why Muslims are economically inactive are: 11% are long-term sick or disabled, 13% have retired and a further 15% gave up another reason. Of the economically active Muslims, 59% were employees, 17% were self-employed and 7% were full time students that had a job too.

Among these economically disadvantaged or economically inactive groups Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are estimated to be the poorest groups in the country. Just two in 10 of these women are active in the job market, compared with seven in 10 black Caribbean and white women.[470] According to Heidi Safia Mirza of the Centre for Racial Equality Studies at Middlesex University:

> [Muslim] women are not necessarily shackled to the kitchen sink because these figures don't record home-working, time spent on family-run businesses, and unpaid work, so the idea that they don't participate is not very helpful. Yet still people make the assumption that they are stuck at home being oppressed by their men folk.[471]

The idea that women are economically inactive as a result of being oppressed or not being allowed to work because of religious reasons is not necessarily borne out of the aforementioned data. By not including working at or from home, time spent in family-run businesses, and unpaid work as Mirza points out, the correlation of unemployed women and supposed or suspected oppression remains unclear.

In Birmingham (the British city with the largest Muslim population outside of London), Mohammed Anwar has noted that there exists a strong correlation between the areas of Birmingham where the city's Muslims are most concentrated, and the areas of Birmingham, which contain the city's highest unemployment rates.[472] However, the extent to which religious identity and unemployment are linked remains unclear.

> Over 80 per cent of Muslims live in the five major conurbations of Great Britain, compared to 50 per cent of the general population. These conurbations are Greater London, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and East Midlands. While such clustering reflects little population drift outside of the original settlement areas, it is uncertain if this is through religious or cultural preference or limited access and affordability of alternative housing. Similar conurbation settlement patterns are also found with the Hindu and Sikh communities. However, … these two groups do not suffer the same level of employment disadvantage as Muslims. Hindu and Sikh communities may

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[470] Muslim Council of Britain, "Disadvantage, Poverty, Unemployment," http://www.mcb.org.uk/library/statistics.php#4, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[471] Ibid.

[472] Anwar, M., "British Muslims: Socio-Economic Position," in *British Muslims: Loyalty and Belonging*, ed. Seddon, M. S., Hussain, D., and Malik, N. (Markfield, UK: Islamic Foundation, 2003), 63.

be clustering in more affluent parts of these conurbations, resulting in this variation in employment.[473]

Ludi Simpson among others has questioned the common assumption that Muslims living in Britain choose to 'cluster together' and self-segregate.[474] Deborah Phillips argues that *"segregated patterns of living have not necessarily arisen through the minority ethnic choice implicit in discourses of self-segregation. Given ethnic inequalities in access to power and resources, the sustained patterns of settlement in deprived inner-city living are more likely to reflect the choices of white, non-Muslim people and institutions."*[475] In an earlier article Phillips had suggested that *"The fear of racial attack remains a pervasive force for clustering"*.[476] When considering the relevance of this idea to the current subject under discussion, we must remember that considerable ethnic variation exists among Muslims living in Britain. For instance, in a 2007 survey, 49% of Pakistani's said they felt racial prejudice had gotten worse over the last five years, compared with only 34% of Indians.[477]

> Because the age profile of the Muslim community is young, issues relating to the support of older and frail people are not as high on the agenda as in the wider community, and there is an assumption that families will cope. This may no longer be the case as the community ages and numbers increase, especially if adult children's jobs take them away from the community. The need to provide support to older and frail Muslims through sheltered housing or floating support will have to be faced.[478]

Scholars such as M. Mirza and S. M. Değirmencioğlu believe that the levels of social disadvantage that affect Muslims in Britain is actually more symptomatic of the relationship Islam has with the ethnicity and socio-economic class of its adherents rather than the religious grouping itself.[479] A 2004 survey by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) showed 80% of Muslims saying that they had experienced discrimination because of their faith, up from 45% in 2000 and 35% in 1999. The IHRC attributed these changes both to increased hostility and an increasing awareness of discrimination among Muslims. The First Fair Treatment at Work Survey from 2005-2006 by the Department of Trade and Industry found that the least common

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[473] Open Society Institute, "British Muslims and the Labour Market," http://www.fairuk.org/docs/OSI2004%208_UKmuslimlab.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[474] Simpson, L., "Statistics of Racial Segregation: Measures, Evidence and Policy " *Occasional Paper, Urban Studies*/24 (2003), http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/publications/occasion/Occ24.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[475] Phillips, D., "Parallel Lives? Challenging Discourses of British Muslim Self-Segregation," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (2006): 30.

[476] Phillips, D., "Black Minority Ethnic Concentration, Segregation and Dispersal in Britain," *Urban Studies* 35/10 (1998): 1684.

[477] The Department for Communities and Local Government, http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/citizenshipsurveyaprjun2007.pdf [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[478] Cheesman, D., "The Margins of Public Space – Muslims and Social Housing in England," *People, Place & Policy Online* 1/1 (2007): 45.

[479] Değirmencioğlu, S. M. and Council of Europe, *Some Still More Equal Than Others?: Or Equal Opportunities for All?*, 123; Mirza, M., Senthilkumaran, A., and Ja'far, Z., Living Apart Together. British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism, (London, UK: Policy Exchange, 2007), http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/publications/category/item/living-apart-together-british-muslims-and-the-paradox-of-multiculturalism, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

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reason for unfair treatment, as experienced by employees, was religion. The accent and way someone spoke, or race and ethnic group, for example, received a much higher response rate by respondents.[480] This suggests that Muslims are more likely marginalised and excluded in the labour force because of their status as ethnic minorities rather than their religious affiliation.

The lack of Muslims starting their own businesses could also be a symptom of social disadvantage. But this could be a result of people valuing family and religion more than professional success. However, when Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans note: *"In a society that places such a high value on 'work', economic productivity and wealth, it is sometimes difficult for employers to understand communities that so explicitly value religion and family."*[481] One could envisage this as being the impetus for starting a business for oneself and employing others who share those same values. While this may be true in some cases, self-employment among Muslims remains low, the reasons for which, are unexplained.

Moreover as many of the Muslims living in Britain are immigrants, usually from less developed or developing countries-- it has been argued that they have imported their disadvantages into British society through the process of immigration.[482] In addition, in 2004 a BBC investigation found that *"candidates with English-sounding names were nearly three times as likely to get [a job] interview as those with names indicating that they might be Muslim."*[483] This is comparable to a study done in Canada where a person's curriculum vita with an English-sounding name was 35 per cent more likely to receive call-backs than a person with an Indian or Chinese name.[484] This is further evidence to support the idea that Muslims are more likely to be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity rather than religious affiliation.

The Equality Acts of 2007 and 2010, which offered greater protection on the basis of religion and belief, were put in place to rectify these issues. The primary purpose of these Acts was to codify the numerous acts and regulations, related to anti-discrimination law in Great Britain. Primarily, these laws include the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the three major statutory instruments protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. Required is equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

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[480] Office for National Statistics, "Labour Market," in *Social Trends*, ed. Self, A. (London, UK - New York, NY: Pallgrave - Macmillan, 2008), 60.

[481] Bowlby, S. and Lloyd-Evans, S., ""You Seem Very Westernised to Me": Place, Identity and Othering of Muslim Workers in the Uk Labour Market," in *Muslims in Britain: Race, Place & Identities*, ed. Hopkins, P. and Gale, R. (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

[482] Değirmencioğlu, S. M. and Council of Europe, *Some Still More Equal Than Others?: Or Equal Opportunities for All?*, 123.

[483] Muir, H., "Muslim Names Harm Job Chances," *The Guardian* (2004), http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2004/jul/12/discriminationatwork.workandcareers, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[484] Dechief, D. and Oreopoulos, P., "Why Do Some Employers Prefer to Interview Matthew but Not Samir? New Evidence from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver," (Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Department of Economics, 2012).

Yet with the diversity that exists within the Muslim community it is also possible to discern a further difference with regards to unemployment rates. For example, the levels of unemployment among British Muslims of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are significantly higher than those among British Muslims of Indian descent[485], something that might be explained by the effects described above along the lines of ethnic or socio-economic ties rather than religious ones. Despite this possible explanation, on the issue of unemployment, many have concluded that significant discrimination towards Muslims, as a whole exists in Britain.[486]

The prevalent institutionalized discrimination in Post-war Britain meant that many Muslims suffered a distinct disadvantage in the housing market.[487] Indeed, it was not until the late 1960s that the Local Authority housing sector began accepting applications from ethnic minorities, and even then *"minority ethnic applicants were offered a very limited range of local authority housing options, which brought them a disproportionate share of poor accommodation on the least popular estates"*.[488]

In the early days of Muslim migration to Britain, Muslims were not identified on the basis of religion in the same way as they are now. They were discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity rather than religion. Yet in a post-9/11 world, discrimination against Muslims still places them at a disadvantage even if it is for different reasons than it was historically. Unemployment or working in lower paying occupations were also additional contributing factors leading to Muslims occupying poorer quality dwellings. The effects described above may again reflect socio-economic disadvantages rather than ethnic or religious differences inherent in Islam or Muslims from different countries of origin. Nevertheless:

> Recent analysis revealing that Muslims are more dependent on the social and private rented sector, are more likely to live in inadequate accommodation without central heating in the most deprived neighbourhoods, and that large numbers are in overcrowded properties.[489]

This would be equally applicable to these households if they were classified as Bangladeshi or Pakistani.[490] This illustrates the need to consider the relationships between income and class and ethnicity and religion. In addition, the long history of discrimination against ethnic minorities in private and social housing allocation processes is unlikely to have had a discernible religious, as distinguished from racial, element.[491] Cheesman has noted that,

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[485] Office for National Statistics, "Ethnicity and the Labour Market, 2011 Census, England and Wales," (2014), http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/ethnicity-and-the-labour-market/rpt-ethnicity-and-the-labour-market--2011-census--england-and-wales.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[486] Bunglawala, Z., "Aspirations and Reality: British Muslims and the Labour Market". 8-9.
[487] Phillips, D., "Black Minority Ethnic Concentration, Segregation and Dispersal in Britain."
[488] Ibid., 1684.
[489] Flint, J., "Faith and Housing in England: Promoting Community Cohesion or Contributing to Urban Segregation?," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36/2 (2010): 265.
[490] Ibid.
[491] Phillips, D. et al., "Housing Achievements, Diversity and Constraints," *Housing,'race'and community cohesion* (2005).

Although multiple deprivation constrains the housing choices open to many Muslims, the extended family system appears to be adapting to British circumstances, and at its best provides a strong social infrastructure. Faith in the family is matched by suspicion of external support services, especially sheltered housing. There is a significant proportion of lone parents and women-headed households.[492]

One example of a report on housing deprivation, is the report released by the Islamic Human Rights Commission in 2001. Which argues that in the city of Oldham, which famously experienced some of Britain's worst ever race riots in May 2001; *"the predominantly Muslim Asian community…suffers disproportionately".*[493] The report notes, *"thirteen per cent of Oldham's housing stock is "statutorily unfit for human habitation and a further 28% are in serious disrepair".* This report also noted the suggestion by Oldham Council*, "that the principal victims of these poor conditions are the predominantly Muslim Asian community."*[494] The principal victims of poor housing conditions are the predominantly lower class inhabitants of Britain; as a consequence of the majority of Muslim inhabitants being members of low-income families, it is understandable that the large number of the Muslim community inhabit these areas. As a result of the low income of many Muslim households, many are prevented from carrying out necessary repairs or improvements to their homes, or from moving into larger accommodation which is better suited to their needs. Dire property conditions are compounded by the high rates of household overcrowding and unemployment among the Muslim community.[495]

In conclusion, structural injustices, institutional discrimination, racism and Islamophobia (whether real or perceived, or both), and many other factors have meant that Muslims tend to incur relatively more socio-economic difficulties in Britain than other groups. Furthermore, as Phillips summarises *"disadvantage arising from exclusion in the housing market is linked if not reinforced by the weak position of the minority ethnic groups in the labour market".*[496] Among these contributing factors of socio-economic disadvantages researchers indicate that racial discrimination and the concentration of poverty in cities are the principal underlying causes of urban distress.[497] In turn urban distress contributes to behaviour stereotypically associated with marginalised Muslims, such as violence and (criminal) delinquency.[498] The education people receive impacts upon their ability to progress professionally within society, combine that with the economic

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[492] Cheesman, D., "The Margins of Public Space – Muslims and Social Housing in England," 45.

[493] Ahmed, N. M. et al., "The Oldham Riots: Discrimination, Deprivation and Communal Tension in the United Kingdom," (2001), http://www.ihrc.org.uk/file/proofThe_Oldham_Riots01_jul_01.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[494] Ibid.

[495] Ibid.

[496] Phillips, D., "Black Minority Ethnic Concentration, Segregation and Dispersal in Britain," 1685.

[497] Blau, J. R. and Blau, P. M., "The Cost of Inequality: Metropolitan Structure and Violent Crime," *American Sociological Review* 47 (1982); Wilson, W. J., *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1996).

[498] Ahmed, N. M. et al., "The Oldham Riots: Discrimination, Deprivation and Communal Tension in the United Kingdom"; Anwar, M., "British Muslims: Socio-Economic Position."; Beckford, J. A., Joly, D., and Khosrokhavar, F., *Muslims in Prison: Challenge and Change in Britain and France* (London, UK - New York, NY: Pallgrave - Macmillan, 2005).

status of Muslims in Britain; you get a clearer picture of their agency in British society. This section explores the educational attainment of Muslims in Britain and explores the place of Muslims as education providers (Islamic schools etc.), and as consumers (student demands and achievement).

In a report co-authored by FAIR (Forum against Islamophobia & Racism) published in 2004, it was argued that *"Qualitative aspects such as spirituality and independence of thought are as important as quantitative aspects such as key stage assessments and examination grades in setting a vision for education. The education system should aim to produce individuals who can survive in and relate to a society of diverse faiths without feeling a need to compromise their own faith".*[499] It is with that in mind that a number of Islamic educational institutions have been established. This is supported by a *"recent Ofsted report showing that independent Muslim schools were at least 'good' and in some cases 'excellent' in the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of their pupils".*[500]

For young Muslims, the education system is their earliest and most significant point of contact with the non-Muslim communities of Britain. The messages that the school system provides in respecting and accommodating their needs will be a vital influence on their attitude towards integration and participation in society. The majority of Muslims continue to be educated in non-Muslim state schools and many Muslim community organizations have expressed concern about the ability of these schools to meet the needs of Muslim pupils, for *"a lack of appropriate and accessible facilities for Muslim children in the mainstream sector has in many cases spawned a heavy reliance upon supplementary education. This is often organised on a mosque by mosque basis".*[501]

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism and the Muslim College UK have argued in a report published in 2004 that understanding the pressures and influences acting upon children in schools is just the start. They argue that given the fact that they are no longer dealing with a first wave of immigrant worker families, schools should tackle problems of a very different moral and spiritual nature that now arise in society.[502] Integration, the decline in the availability of single-sex education, as well as overcoming language difficulties (both English and community languages) are just some of the needs and demands that Muslim parents and students feel should be addressed. A policy Exchange report shows that in 2007 there was a significant difference amongst ages with regards to Islamic education. Younger people preferred the choice of the Islamic (state) school. Thirty-seven per cent of 16-24 year olds preferred the Islamic (state) schools, compared to 25% of 45-54 year olds and 19% of 55+ year olds. There was no discernible difference across socio-economic class or geographical location. This led the investigating

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[499] The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (Amss Uk) et al., Muslims on Education, (2004), http://www.fairuk.org/docs/muslims_on_education_policy_paper.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. 9.
[500] Association of Muslim Schools Uk, "Muslim Schools and Community Cohesion," http://ams-uk.org/about-us/community-cohesion/, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[501] The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (Amss Uk) et al., *Muslims on Education*. 35.
[502] Ibid., 37-39.

team to conclude that many younger Muslims value a religious education above a secular education.[503] This can be the result of a reactionary identity formation as mentioned earlier.

The increasing number of Muslim young people within the overall British demographics should in turn lead to an increasing proportion of British students and graduates being Muslim. However, where it might lead to an increase in the number of Muslim students across the board, it may also lead to an increase of Muslim students at the lower end i.e. those not finishing or simply finishing secondary school and then leaving the education system. With the increase in university fees and the possibility of Muslim students being reluctant if not unwilling to take out (student) loans because of their faith, it could conceivably mean that many potential university students find themselves priced out of British higher education.[504] This could lead to the decrease in the high-end graduates and an increase in the low and medium parts of the educational attainment statistics. In addition, South Asian Muslims still encounter bias in the 'old' (i.e. pre-1992) universities in Britain: The chance of a white applicant being offered admission was almost a third higher than for an equivalently qualified Pakistani or Bangladeshi.[505]

> Despite being more likely than their white British counterparts to enrol in higher education generally, British students from black Caribbean, black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic backgrounds continue to be strikingly under-represented in the UK's most prestigious universities.[506]

Tariq Modood has researched the entry into Higher Education in Britain among different ethnic groups.[507] What he found is that for old universities the most preferred group were whites (75%) according to the probability of an initial offer to identical candidates for equivalent courses. The least preferred candidates were Indian (58%), Bangladeshis (57%), Black Africans (57%) and Pakistanis (57%). New universities seemed to desire minority applicants with Indians (85%), Chinese (83%), Bangladeshis (82%) and Pakistanis (77%), preferred, as these groups compared more favourably than whites (73%).[508] For Russell Group Universities the offers of admission for applicants from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian backgrounds, are 30.3%, 31.2% and 43.1% respectively.[509] Vikki Boliver's research concludes that despite *"ethnic minority applicants being more likely than white applicants to choose oversubscribed courses, ethnic minority applicants are less likely*

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[503] Mirza, M., Senthilkumaran, A., and Ja'far, Z., *Living Apart Together. British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*.
[504] For further discussion of this issue see: Leathwood, C. and O'connell, P., "'It's a Struggle': The Construction of the 'New Student'in Higher Education," *Journal of Education Policy* 18/6 (2003). Or Dearden, L., Fitzsimons, E., and Wyness, G., "The Impact of Tuition Fees and Support on University," (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2011).
[505] Shiner, M. and Modood, T., "Help or Hindrance? Higher Education and the Route to Ethnic Equality," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23/2 (2002): 232.
[506] Boliver, V., "Exploring Ethnic Inequalities in Admission to Russell Group Universities," *Sociology* (2015): 1.
[507] Results were controlled for identical attainment scores, type of school background, age, gender, parental occupation, and applying to the same course in the same type of institution.
[508] Modood, T., "Ethnicity, Muslims and Higher Education Entry in Britain," *Teaching in Higher Education* 11 (2006): 246.
[509] Boliver, V., "Exploring Ethnic Inequalities in Admission to Russell Group Universities," 10.

to receive offers from Russell Group universities than comparably qualified white applicants even after the numerical competitiveness of courses has been taken into account."[510]

A British study by David Tyrer and Fauzia Ahmad in 2006 on the routes Muslim women take into Higher Education found that *"a large number resided in areas of high Asian and Muslim concentration that were socially deprived across all social indicators and attended comprehensive schools. Schools and colleges in these areas on the whole, lacked resources to prepare students for university or make them aware of educational opportunities".*[511] Muslim women who participated in the study took a number of diverse routes into university, which they argue contradicts arguments that suggest that Muslim women's educational choices are limited as a consequence of cultural or religious reasons, or because they are supposed to be active in the home and not look to better themselves professionally. Although the report concurs with T. Modood's work in that they were more likely to attend local post-1992 'new' universities, the presence of Muslim women in higher education and the issue of Muslim young people's post-16 choices is one that is located within the production and reproduction of gendered, racial and socio-economic inequalities rather than simply their Muslim identities.[512]

There is a decreasing number of Muslim higher education institutions in Britain. The first of these institutions was the Muslim College in London which was established in 1981, but as most others it has now closed down due to losing its funding. The only remaining Muslim higher education institutes in England are the Markfield Institute, and the Islamic College, which offers recognised degrees in conjunction with Middlesex University.[513] In May 2006, the MCB published a study on British mosques and imams. It demanded an improvement in imam training, for the existing programmes did not enable imams to meet specific demands of the contemporary Muslim. It argued that the imam should receive basic legal training, training on legislative and governmental procedures as well as interpersonal communication geared at the demands of chaplaincy. As a consequence there is an increase in opportunities for Islamic chaplaincy training.[514] The study also noted that 29% of imams have a basic university degree, 36% a British master's degree and 14% a doctorate, but 86% of imams were born outside Britain and 59% have been in the country less than 10 years.[515] The educational standard of the imams in this study differed from a study in 2008 by Ron Geaves

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[510] Ibid., 14.

[511] Tyrer, D. and Ahmad, F., Muslim Women and Higher Education: Identities, Experiences and Prospects : A Summary Report (Liverpool, UK: John Moores University European Social Fund, 2006), http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Education/documents/2006/08/02/muslimwomen.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. 10.

[512] ibid.

[513] For more extensive discussion on the issue of Islamic Higher Education see: Scott-Baumann, A., "Collaborative Partnerships as Sustainable Pedagogy: Working with British Muslims in Collaborative Partnerships," in *Greener by Degrees In : Exploring Sustainability through Higher Education Curricula*, ed. Roberts, C. and Roberts, J. (Cheltenham, UK: Geography Discipline Network, 2007). & Scott-Baumann, A., "Developing Islamic Higher Education for a Secular University Sector: Orientalism in Reverse?," in *Muslim Schools and Education in Europe and South Africa*, ed. Tayob, A., Niehaus, I., and Weisse, W. (Munster, Germany - New York, NY: Waxmann, 2011).

[514] Gilliat-Ray, S., Ali, M., and Pattison, S., *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013).

[515] The Muslim Council of Britain, "Voices from the Minarets – Mcb Study of Uk Imams and Mosques," (2006), http://www.mcb.org.uk/uploads/vfm.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]..

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that suggested that imams are largely educated in the traditional Dar Al-Uloom religious curriculum, once ubiquitous throughout the Muslim world during the Middle Ages but now prevalent only in South Asia. Geaves suggested that only a small minority have obtained higher education qualifications, most frequently in the subject of Islamic studies (BA, MA, or PhD).[516]

The British government has expressed concern regarding the level of education of imams who are contracted to British mosques from abroad and has considered refusing entry visas to foreign imams who cannot demonstrate a basic knowledge of the English language or of British society. However, in the long term, Britain Home Office has said it hopes British Muslim madrasahs or Dar Al-Ulooms will be able to produce more home-grown British imams.[517] This might be due to an increase in demand for Muslim chaplains in public services, such as hospitals and prisons. As in England and Wales, Muslims represent 7.71 % of the inmate population, but they only account for 4.8 % of the whole population.[518] This is often explained by their disadvantaged position in society. Significant variations within the Muslim inmate population exist as well: 74 % of Asian prisoners are Muslim, but they only make up about 29 % of the total Muslim prison population.[519] In addition the lack of social mobility, underrepresentation in the labour force and on the housing market, as well as performing worse at school than the rest of the population means that those with Muslim backgrounds are at a disadvantage in society. This enhances the chances of turning to a life of crime.

However, this concern regarding imams is also linked to the terror and security paradigm, as non-British imams are often perceived as the cause for radicalisation, and home-grown imams can be trained to educate and disseminate acceptable versions of Islam. But with government funding being cut to many of the existing institutions and only institutions with money from abroad being able to be set up or continue, the problem appears to be growing. The Dar Al-Ulooms are the providers of such education in many parts of the Muslim world especially South Asia, where studying and completing the Dars-I-Nizami curriculum remains as the key religious rite of passage to the status of Ulema. Transnational organisations such as the Deobandi movement or the Tablighi Jamaat[520] are organisations that have set up several Dar-Ul-Ulooms independently in Britain.

A large number of imams are selected on a pragmatic and practical basis from the community with little if any training. But with many imams having to function as community leaders -- often involved in counselling, youth work, chaplaincy and being called upon by the media to speak on behalf of their community and their religion-- it is not difficult to see that only few imams are capable of this, partly owing to cultural differences

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[516] Geaves, R., "Drawing on the Past to Transform the Present: Contemporary Challenges for Training and Preparing British Imams," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28/1 (2008): 104-05.

[517] For a more detailed discussion please see: Gilliat-Ray, S., Ali, M., and Pattison, S., *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*.

[518] Office for National Statistics, "Prison Statistics," https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2016, [Accessed 26-01-2017]; Office for National Statistics, "Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales - Religion Statistics".

[519] Beckford, J. A., Joly, D., and Khosrokhavar, F., *Muslims in Prison: Challenge and Change in Britain and France*, 30 & 72.

[520] Tablighi Jamaat is a religious missionary movement inviting people to Allah aiming to do so in the manner that Mohammed did. The movement was started in 1926 by Mohammed Ilyas al-Kandhlawi in India and its primary aims are spiritual reform for Muslims as opposed to recruiting non-Muslims to the movement De Rooij, L., "Tablighi Jamaat," in *Islam: A Worldwide Encyclopedia*, ed. Çakmak, C. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016).

that exist between their background and secular Western society, and partly owing to a simple lack of education.[521] Ron Geaves' study depicted the British imamate as *"a deeply conservative body of individuals"* that maintain the traditional languages and qualifications and as a consequence are still largely recruited from the community's place of origin. For British-born imams, the Dar Al-Uloom qualification remains the key qualification and there is little deviation from the medieval curriculum.[522]

When the discussion reached beyond the material prompts participants spoke about aspects and experiences from their daily lives. In doing so a large number of comments were logged about the way that Muslims affect the everyday lives of non-Muslims (although sometimes faulty reasoning was apparent and causation was attributed to Muslims and not who were directly responsible). In some cases, it was seen as challenging, troubling or disturbing to need to think of non-alcohol related post-labour activities, or to bring halal meat to the company barbecue, for example:

> Inge, 32, Birmingham: "Once a year we have our company picnic with a barbecue. I have been organising it for about 5 years now, but we now not only have to cater for vegetarians, which used to be, "just don't eat the meat", but now we have to buy veggie burgers etc. But we also have to make sure all the meat is halal, and that was just extra inconvenient and expensive, not to mention that it is not really a barbecue without a pork chop. [Some chuckle] So if people want to not eat something that was fine if they arrange it themselves but we now need to cater for everyone's individual needs and it was so much easier before."

Other examples mentioned by participants were local Muslim community organisations that lobby for recognition, Muslim schools, and needing to engage with Muslims in business or professional arenas. For the participants who voiced a discontent about Muslim presences in England, the root of their discontent is the lack of opportunity for control over their own lived experience. As Poole[523] has pointed out, the fragmentation of the national identity and alternative views on public and private practices challenges the everyday lived experience. In cases where participants had not felt in control of their lives, by definition, these situations instilled fear and resentment. Muslims, and migrants in general, were seen as taking up opportunities and carving out their own opportunities which challenged the existing order of white hegemony, and in subsequent discussion many participants sought out a point at which they could regain some control of their lived experience. This 'point of engagement' differs from subject to subject, but for some this was a motivating factor in supporting right wing policies and advocacy groups. In short, being in

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[521] Geaves, R., "Drawing on the Past to Transform the Present: Contemporary Challenges for Training and Preparing British Imams," 99-100.

[522] ibid., 105.

[523] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*.

control of one's social environment was increasingly important to participants especially if they felt challenged or threatened in a socio-political context.

Two significant themes appeared in comments about Muslims in Britain. Firstly, the perceived extreme cultural differences between Muslims and non-Muslims resulted in a stated failure to see any commonality or unity between these two groups. Participants reported that they acted differently when around Muslims and questioned "when will they be normal and be like us?" Participants found that media portrayals backed this up and made sense in their individual outlook. The commensurability between media portrayals and individual outlook made those reports coherent to the viewer but also clearly identified the separation between the two subsets of the population for the viewer (us and them).

Secondly, participants also complained that the forces of society disadvantaged them, especially when viewed in light of accommodations made to meet the demands of minorities. These disadvantages were seen as reducing the position of the white majority rather than benefitting all. Another frustration for participants was the way that news media offered up limited explanations for events. Such comments suggest that news media is failing to construct a picture that is acceptable to all parties. The way news media portrays Muslims and Islam presents consumers with fragmented pieces of knowledge due to mediacratic methods and media practices. However, a media approach that has its roots in a foundationalist approach, reserves the whole picture for those who seek out the knowledge themselves. This again places great onus on the viewer, which most viewers are not going to indulge. Such comments suggest that it may have the opposite effect for the majority of viewers as it leaves them lacking an overview of some of the major points relating to Muslims and Islam in Britain and worldwide.

Although as a counterbalance to this critique some participants were able to offer some examples of Islam and Muslims that engaged their interest, the important thing to remember in this case however was that these examples were all closely linked to media portrayals of violence and deviant behaviour. There were no participants who discussed Sufi religious practices or Islamic religious poetry, for example. Whilst this may be explained by a lack of knowledge about Muslims and Islam, it further highlights the point that participants were only able to discuss elements that were discussed in the media. This narrowed focus of reports in the media meant that participant responses focussed on issues of conflict, and as the next section will show, aspects that participants found threatening.

Section V.   <u>Muslim Political Representation and Social Organisations</u>

Even though there has been a relatively long history of Muslims in Britain, Muslim members of parliament or similar political offices are only relatively recent phenomena. Dadabhai Naoroji, born in Mumbai, India, was the first ethnic minority member of parliament in 1892 when he won a seat in the House of Commons for the liberal party as representative for the constituency of Finsbury central. It took more than 100 years for the first Muslim Member of Parliament to be elected: Mohammad Sarwar, a labour party MP represented Glasgow central from 1997 until his retirement in 2010. Muslims have since made a steady progression into political participation in Britain, with an increase in MP's in 2015 continuing the trend in British politics.

In the 1992 Elections, there were 11 Muslim candidates up for election, 4 from the Conservatives, 1 from Liberal Democrats and 6 from other parties: none were elected. In 1997, there were 24 Muslim candidates, 3 from the Labour party, 6 from the Conservative party, 4 from Liberal Democrats and 11 others. Yet in 1997 only 1 was elected. In the 2001 general elections, there were 53 Muslims standing for election, 7 from Labour, 8 from the Conservatives, 11 from the Liberal Democrats and 27 from other parties. Eventually Mohammad Sarwar was re-elected and Khalid Mahmood was elected to represent the Birmingham Perry Bar constituency. In the 2005 General Elections, there were 79 Muslim parliamentary candidates, 13 from Labour, 16 from the Conservatives, 21 from the Liberal Democrats and 29 from other parties; with 4 from Labour being elected. Mohammad Sarwar was re-elected, Khalid Mahmood was re-elected and Shahid Malik from Dewsbury and Sadiq Khan from Tooting were elected as Labour MPs. And although it is difficult to say with any certainty what the reason is for the lack of not only Muslim members of parliament but also a lack of candidates, one can say that if there was an equal percentage of Muslim MP's as their percentage of the population there would be around 20 Muslim MP's in Britain. However, as it stood in 2005 all four MPs were from the Labour Party, with Shahid Malik MP and Sadiq Khan MP having been newly elected in 2005, and Mohammad Sarwar MP and Khalid Mahmood MP having been re-elected.

In the elections of 2010, 9 members of parliament with a Muslim background were elected: Nadhim Zahawi MP, Anas Sarwar MP, Yasmin Qureshi MP, Shabana Mahmood MP, Sajid Javid MP, Rehman Chishti MP, Rushanara Ali MP, Khalid Mahmood MP and Sadiq Khan MP were all winners in their respective constituencies. Shahid Malik MP lost his seat and Mohammad Sarwar MP had retired (with his son Anas Sarwar running for election and winning the Glasgow central seat). But the General election had more than 80 Muslim candidates running for election of which 16 were Muslim females. With the Labour party having four female candidates, the Conservative party six and the Liberal Democrats four candidates and 2 from other parties. There are three female Muslim Labour MPs: Yasmin Qureshi, Shabana Mahmood and Rushnara Ali. The first Muslim MPs to enter parliament for the Conservative Party are Sajid Javid, Nadhim Zahawi and Rehman Chisti. The new Cabinet only has one Muslim minister, but it is the first female Muslim minister.

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, who is also a peer and a member of the House of Lords, became the Conservative Party's chairwoman and minister without portfolio in the new coalition government.[550] During the Conservative's opposition, Baroness Warsi was the shadow minister for community cohesion. She resigned from her position within the government in 2014 following what she said was a conflict between her conscience and the government's handling of certain policies, most notably what she called its morally indefensible stance on Gaza.

In 2015, a record of 13 Muslim MPs were elected (up from 8 in 2010). Eight of the new Muslim MPs are women. Nine Muslim MPs are from the Labour party, the conservatives contribute three and the Scottish National Party one. Despite fielding 24 Muslim candidates, the Liberal Democrats have no Muslim MP. The new MP's are Tasmina Ahmed Sheikh (SNP) who will represent Ochil and South Perthshire, Rupa Huq (Labour), is the new MP for Ealing Central and Acton, Tulip Rizwana Siddiq (Labour) was elected to the Hampstead and Kilburn seat, Nusrat Ghani (Conservatives), was elected as MP for Wealden, Naz Shah (Labour) is the MP for Bradford West and Imran Hussein (Labour) the MP for Bradford East. Khalid Mahmood (Labour), Shabana Mahmood (Labour), Rushanara Ali (Labour), Yasmin Qureshi (Labour), Sadiq Khan (Labour), Rehman Chisti (Conservative) and Sajid Javid (Conservative) all retained their seats.

In 2011 the first Muslim woman mayor was elected. Navida Ikram was born in Britain, and apart from some years she spent in the Punjab as a teenager, she has lived in Bradford for most of her life. She studied psychology and sociology and already served as deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford since 2009. In the European Parliament, Bashir Khanbhai was the first Muslim MEP to be elected and although he retired in 2004, there are currently two Muslim members of the European Parliament, Syed Kamall and Sajjad Karim. There are also several Muslim members of the House of Lords: Baroness Paula Uddin, Lord Nazir Ahmed, Lord Patel of Blackburn, Baroness Kishwar Falconer, Baroness Hussein-Ece OBE, Baron Ahmad of Wimbledon, Baron Hussain and Lord Amir Bhatia. Fiyaz Mughal is a former adviser to the Leader of the Liberal Democrats on Interfaith and Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism (2009-2010), was a prospective Liberal Democrat London Mayoral Candidate (2007) and the former Deputy President of the Liberal Democrat Party (Jan 2006-Feb 2007).

According to the book *Ethnic Minority Migrants in Britain and France* by Rashaan Maxwell and published in 2012, the south Asian population in Britain is more likely to be more proportionally represented in local government than the other ethnic minorities. As "f*or many Muslims in Britain, the politics of representation has been more of a local issue than a national one. There are now over 200 Muslim local councillors in Britain, a number that has been growing".[551]* In cities with large ethnic minority populations there are a proportional

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[550] For a greater analysis of the progress and influence of Muslim MP's in Britain see: Kolpinskaya, E., "Muslims in Parliament," in *Muslims and Political Participation in Britain*, ed. Peace, T. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).
[551] Gilliat-Ray, S., *Muslims in Britain*, 249.

number of Muslim representatives in local government.[552] This differs largely from other minority groups in Britain such as the Afro-Caribbean and Indian community in general. As most migrant groups in Britain are living in the same set of circumstances, Maxwell argues that it is due to the level of political participation as a collective unit, that has seen the development of not only proportional representation in local government in majority of places, but also why it has outpaced the other migrant groups over the same period of time.[553] Despite Muslims in Britain not being dispersed equally throughout the country but mainly situated in the large metropolitan areas, their presence within local communities is largely representative of the percentage of their community. As a result, in 2010-2011, 51 of the 100 largest cities in Britain had Pakistani or Bangladeshi councillors on their local council, this outnumbers the 32 cities with Indian or 23 cities which had Afro-Caribbean representation.[554]

For a number of years, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was seen as the primary representative organization for Muslims in Britain. A network consisting of at least 380 smaller organizations, it was founded in 1997 after a meeting of a number of Muslim organizations. It is composed of national, regional, and local organizations organized into geographical zones. There are also other academic and elite organizations which also play important roles in Britain. To date though, the MCB has been the most influential national umbrella body and had a close tie to government ministers until the 7/7 bombings caused a change of direction on the part of the government. Like what Bowen has argued is the case in France, the reason for these close ties is that *"the state wants a single, national body with which to negotiate and deliberate, and from which it may draw legitimacy for its decisions"*.[555] Critics have argued that the close nature of the government's relationship with the MCB was not due to their grassroots support and ability to speak for the majority of Muslims but for its ability to achieve strategic interests.[556]

In the past two years, however, there has been much debate about the value of 'community leaders' and their ability to truly represent the views of their communities. The Muslim population discussed and represented in the press, is often regarded as homogenous while in fact it contains considerable division and disagreement. Several newer organisations have spoken out against unaccountable community leaders whom they claim are driven by narrow political agendas. For example: What new organisations share, is a feeling that existing Muslim representative organisations fail to adequately represent the majority views of Muslims, or even worse, misrepresent their views. Amongst younger people, who make up the majority of the Muslim population in Britain, there is the sentiment that the MCB is dominated by older men, with insufficient representation of young people or women on their board. This gives them the impression,

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[552] Maxwell, R., *Ethnic Minority Migrants in Britain and France: Integration Trade-Offs*, 106-07.
[553] ibid., 110-39.
[554] ibid., 106-07.
[555] Bowen, J. R., *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*, 48.
[556] O'toole, T. et al., Taking Part: Muslim Participation in Contemporary Governance, (Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship: University of Bristol, 2013),
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/ethnicity/projects/muslimparticipation/documents/mpcgreport.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. 17-19.

whether real or not, that the MCB is an irrelevant institution unable to represent their views and those of the wider British Muslim population.[557] In recent years, particularly in the wake of the July 2005 London bombings, the government has sought to engage with 'representative' Muslim organizations such as the MCB. However, questions have been raised about the extent to which such organizations are in fact representative of and authoritative within Britain's Muslim community. The problem is that the government *"does not know how far [these representative] …organizations…can reach out to, let alone influence, the sections of the Islamic community who are susceptible to extremism"*.[558]

Other groups representing Muslims have been established in recent years. The Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) was founded after September 11th and does lobbying and research work but has been inactive since 2008. The Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC) works to empower Muslims at a grassroots level. The Islamic Cultural Centre, which includes the London Central Mosque, was established in 1944 and maintains a board of trustees of prominent Muslims, local and international. The Federation of Student Islamic Societies in Britain and Eire organizes student groups, and the Islamic Mission pursues education and other charity work across Britain. In 1884, the organization Islamic Relief was founded in Birmingham. The Quilliam Foundation is a London-based think tank. Its aim is to counter Islamism, which it argues is the cause of Muslim terrorism. It offers advice to the government and other public institutions for a more nuanced approach to public policy regarding Islam and the need for greater democracy in the Muslim world. It was founded in 2008 and received government funding until 2010.[559] Its founders are Maajid Nawaz, Rashad Zaman Ali, and Ed Husain and its inception is in part due to their personal experiences; Ed Husain for example has written extensively on his background as a reformed Islamist activist.[560]

In 2006 The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) was launched in Britain. Its aim was to promote best practice in British mosques. It is an independent body aspiring to help deliver standards and ensure mosque personnel have a better understanding of British Muslims' needs so that it can address any concerns more effectively. It was founded by support from four organisations: Al-Khoei Foundation, British Muslim Forum, Muslim Association of Britain and Muslim Council of Britain. MINAB now has over six hundred mosques and Islamic institutes as its members. The MINAB seeks to build and develop mosques through five core standards:

1. Standard of good corporate governance
2. Standards ensure that services are provided by suitably qualified and or experienced personnel
3. Standard of Youth participation
4. Standard of Women participation
5. Standard to promote civic responsibility of Muslims in the wider society

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[557] Mirza, M., Senthilkumaran, A., and Ja'far, Z., *Living Apart Together. British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*.
[558] Dunleavy, P. et al., *Developments in British Politics*, 8, 210.
[559] O'toole, T. et al., *Taking Part: Muslim Participation in Contemporary Governance*. 21.
[560] Husain, E., *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw inside and Why I Left* (London, UK: Penguin books, 2007).

When Muslims were asked, 'Which organisation represents you?', 6% responded with the Muslim Council of Britain, 1% Muslim Association of Britain, 1% the mosque that they attend, 1% Islamic Society of Britain, 14% other, 51% none, and 26% do not know or refused to answer.[561] This illustrates that there is a large dissensus among the Muslim populace as to which body (best) represents them. In turn, this is why Britain government has had a change of strategy from one that tends to prioritize the MCB and in its position as the representative of the Muslim population to a diversity of resources and representative bodies for the British Muslim community.

Radical Middle Way is a group that aims to connect Muslims with their faith and explore what it means to be Muslim in the 21st century. Founded in the wake of the 7/7 attacks on the London underground, it promotes what it calls *"a mainstream, moderate understanding of Islam that young people can relate to. Radical Middle Way is a safe place for people to ask difficult questions and explore challenging issues."* By working at a grassroots level, it hopes to create platforms for open debate, critical thinking and deep spiritual reflection; encouraging positive civic action to develop a more open, engaged and cohesive community. This is achieved by organising a range of events such as debates or expressions of spiritual and cultural identity in music or art.[562]

Inspire is a non-governmental advocacy organisation (NGO) working to counter extremism and gender inequality. It aims to empower women and to support human rights and to challenge extremism and gender discrimination. By empowering women, the group aims to create positive social changes and help in developing a more democratic, peaceful and fairer Britain. By not overlooking the role that women play in the development and prosperity of any society, *"Inspire believes that Muslim women are no different and are capable of being at the forefront of strengthening communities as well as tackling problems both within Britain and internationally."*[563]

Muslim communities in Britain have expressed a need for a nationally coordinated means of reporting anti-Muslim incidents, and the Tell MAMA Project aims to provide a means for such incidents to be reported, recorded and analysed. Tell MAMA, Measures Anti-Muslim attacks and is a service that allows people from across England to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse. By using the 'Report an Attack' section, you can describe the details of the abuse suffered, whether verbal or physical, and then add in the location of the attack. It also offers to refer you for support if you have been a victim of an Anti-Muslim incident. Reporting an incident can be done via the Telephone, Email, SMS, Facebook or Twitter. Tell MAMA classifies an anti-Muslim incident as any malicious act aimed at Muslims, their material property or Islamic organisations and includes incidents where there is evidence that the act has anti-Muslim motivation or content, or that the victim was targeted because of their Muslim identity. This also includes incidents where the victim was

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[561] Mirza, M., Senthilkumaran, A., and Ja'far, Z., *Living Apart Together. British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*. 80.
[562] For more see: http://www.radicalmiddleway.org/page/about-us
[563] For more see: http://www.wewillinspire.com/about-us/

perceived to be a Muslim. The MAMA project also records incidents by Muslims against other Muslims, which may be due to inter-religious issues.[564] Tell MAMA was launched in February 2012 by Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government and is co-ordinated by the interfaith organisation Faith Matters. Founded by Fiyaz Mughal OBE, the project was set up with government support. In November 2012 Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced a further £214,000 annual funding for Tell MAMA up to October 2013. The group's funding was not renewed after its data in relation to Islamophobic attacks following the murder of Lee Rigby was deemed questionable.

The Department for Communities and Local Government set up the National Muslim Women's Advisory Group (NMWAG) in November 2007. Its remit is to work against the ideology spread by extremists. Basically, it is seen as a grassroots counter-terrorism strategy that addresses issues of communities and (local) governments to prevent violent extremism. Nineteen women, who work toward preventing extremism in addition to discussing issues and addressing concerns that affect Muslim women, lead the NMWAG. The Young Muslim Advisory Group (YMAG) is a government advisory group in Britain, consisting of 23 members between 16 to 21 years old. Founded in October 2008, the Young Muslim Advisory Group works with the Government to find solutions to a range of challenges facing young Muslims in Britain today. The structure of the advisory group includes regional representatives who are accompanied by a peer network of young people.

Some have criticised the effectiveness of groups such as YMAG and NMWAG, as well as other organisations linked or tied to the government. With the ability to advise and engage on policy matters questioned, it may be that the government has a bias towards engaging with young Muslim men who it deems a security threat rather than the community as a whole. [565] The lack of awareness amongst participants also highlights the inability for such organisations to capture a media audience. Although this might also be their desire and intention, or the result of their method of working.

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[564] For more see: http://tellmamauk.org/about-us/

[565] Roohi Ahmed, Z., "The Role of Muslim Women in Britain in Relation to the Government's 'Prevent Agenda'," in *Islam in the West: Key Issues in Multiculturalism*, ed. Farrar, M., et al. (London, UK - New York, NY: Pallgrave - Macmillan, 2012), 92.

Section VI. British based Terrorism and the London Terror Attacks of 7th July 2005

In Britain, the Terrorism Act of 2000 superseded the existing anti-terrorism laws, namely the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1989 and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act of 1996. Association with proscribed groups, including participation in forums in which these groups were also involved was to be considered a criminal offence. Police were entitled to the powers of arrest and search without warrant for those they considered possible terrorists. A separate legal system for terrorism offences was affirmed. This includes special on-going courts without access to jury trial, as Britain had been using in Northern Ireland. Access to lawyers was restricted relative to other offences, and interrogation rules were relaxed. Virtually all of the proscribed domestic groups were associated with the conflict in Northern Ireland, while most of the international groups were Islamic to some degree.

With the decline of the threat from Northern Ireland and the increased threat from Islamic terrorism, this emphasis has shifted. However, Europol data shows that less than one percent of terrorism-related offenses committed in Europe are committed by Muslim extremists. Most crimes are committed by separatist groups such as the ETA in Spain. One difference, however, is that most Islamic extremists plan attacks that cause as many civilian casualties as possible. This differs from a group such as ETA which generally targets government offices and infrastructure and tries to minimalize civilian casualties.[566] Britain published a new Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill on November 13, 2001.[567] This bill was largely aimed at addressing the problems of terrorism from international sources, and thus it differentiated between terrorism associated with Northern Ireland, and that associated with Islamic radicalism. For instance, the law allows for the indefinite detention of foreign nationals for whom it is not considered safe to deport them to their country of origin.

A study by the Institute of Race Relations suggests that some of the new anti-terrorism statutes have been used overwhelmingly against Muslim defendants.[568] Of the hundreds of arrests, only a handful have to this date led to convictions. There has also been a tendency to extend the anti-terrorism laws to cover routine criminal acts and immigration violations committed by Muslims. Of the cases reviewed, one in eight was a Muslim arrested for terrorism violations and turned over to the immigration authorities without any prosecution for the alleged initial offences. Several Muslims have been arrested for crimes such as credit card fraud due to the expanded police powers provided by the anti-terrorism statutes. The increase in the number

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[566] Based on the reports published between 2009 and 2014 (a 6-year period), there were 1650 registered terrorist attacks in the EU countries covered by the report (not all EU countries are counted). Islamists or 'religiously inspired' terrorists committed 12 of these, or 0.727%. In 2012, the report stopped referring to Islamist terrorism and started using religiously inspired terrorism instead. The reports can be found here: https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/37
[567] Kundnani, A., "Stop and Search: Police Step up Targetting of Blacks and Asians," *The Institute of Race Relations* (2003), http://www.irr.org.uk/news/stop-and-search-police-step-up-targetting-of-blacks-and-asians/, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[568] Ibid.

of Asians stopped and searched has also been disproportionately high in recent years. In 2003, it was reported that nationally, Asians were now 2 and a half times more likely to be stopped and searched than Whites.[569]

However, the government has claimed that it will not pursue selective policies against Muslims in response to the July 7 attacks. On July 7th 2005, four British-born Muslims bombed the London Underground.[570] Fifty-two people were killed. The leader of the attacks seems to have been Mohammed Sidique Kahn, one of the four bombers. He lived in the Beeston area of Leeds, and only months before the 7/7 attacks had been a teaching assistant at Hillside Primary School. After the attacks a video was aired on the Arabic television channel Al-Jazeera, where Kahn explains his motives.[571] Among his stated motives were the British involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; these actions inspired him to undertake the bombings.

In the wake of the London bombings, two major reports were issued: The Report of the Official Account of the London Bombings in London on 7th July 2005[572] and the Intelligence and Security Committee's Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005.[573] The former concluded that *"the extent of Al Qaida involvement is unclear"* and also that *"it remains unclear whether others in Britain were involved in radicalizing or inciting the group or in helping them to plan and execute [the attacks]"*.[574] Two weeks after the 7/7 bombings, on July 21st 2005, there were four more attempted bomb attacks on London's transport network, although these failed. In August 2006, British authorities foiled another major terrorist plot, where the apparent plan was to blow up aircrafts over the Atlantic Ocean during flights between Britain and the US. It seems that those involved had planned to use liquids in order to do this.[575]

The invasion of Iraq was highly unpopular in Britain. After the London bombings, many questioned whether the government's decision to join with the United States in the invasion of Iraq might have contributed to the problem of radicalism. The Federation of Islamic Student Societies took a poll in August 2005 among Muslim students and found 95% opposed to British foreign policy and 66% believing that the invasion of Iraq contributed to the problem of domestic terrorism.[576] On 5th April 2007, the government announced a new action plan to step-up work with Muslim communities to isolate, prevent and defeat violent extremism[577],

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[569] Ibid.

[570] "London Bombers 'Were All British'," BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4676577.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[571] "London Bomber: Text in Full," BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4206800.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[572] "Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005," (2006), http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc0506/hc10/1087/1087.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[573] Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy Mp, "Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005," Intelligence and Security Committee, http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm67/6785/6785.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[574] "Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005".

[575] Cowell, A. and Filkins, D., "British Authorities Say Plot to Blow up Airliners Was Foiled " NY Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/10/world/europe/11terrorcnd.html?hp&ex=1155268800&en=13f881599701f2d5&ei=5094&partner=homepage&_r=1&, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[576] Federation of Student Islamic Societies, "The Voice of Muslim Students: A Report into the Attitudes and Perceptions of Muslim Students Following the July 7th London Attacks," (2005), http://www.fosis.org.uk/resources/resource-pool/sac/12-fosis-muslim-student-survey-2005, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[577] "Prevent Strategy," https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

and announced that it was making available £5m in 2007-8 to support priority local authorities in their work to tackle violent extremism in their communities.[578] In her first major speech on counter terrorism in January 2008, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith talked of "violent extremism" (as opposed to "Islamic extremism") and stressed that terrorist acts were in fact "anti-Islamic".[579] This shift in the language used by the British government to talk about terrorism highlights the ever-evolving nature of the government's counter-terrorism policies.

The bombings of the London underground resulted in the government introducing a number of new anti-terrorism measures, most notably the Terrorism Act of 2006. Britain deported at least 500 suspected extremists in the weeks following the attacks. British intelligence has also begun to establish internal security units to monitor Muslims suspected of sympathy towards Al Qaeda. An on-going controversy has developed over the new policy of 'shoot-to-kill' terrorism suspects by British police. This has been fuelled by the mistaken killing of a Brazilian immigrant in a case in which the London police department has been severely criticized for its policies and openness to public inquiry. On June 11th 2008, Gordon Brown's government passed a controversial measure that would allow terror suspects to be held 42 days without charge. The previous measure allowed for 28-day detainment without charge. In 2006, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act[580] was passed by parliament. The majority of the act is now in force in Britain, and while it affords Muslims in Britain protections they did not previously possess, it also makes it illegal to say or write things with the intention of stirring up religious hatred. In 2007, Sheikh Abdullah al-Faisal (who is thought to have been an influence on one of the four London bombers) was deported from Britain for seeking to incite racial hatred.[581]

Whilst laws have been enacted in order to punish terrorists, the Prevent strategy was implemented in order to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. As part of this strategy the countering of terrorist ideology and the challenging of those who promote it is also emphasised. Under the strategy, individuals who are especially vulnerable to becoming radicalised are supported and government and security agencies work together with sectors and institutions where the risk of radicalisation is assessed to be high. However, it is problematic that the Prevent strategy (see below) frequently uses extremism and terrorism as synonyms.[582]

> The necessity to incorporate terrorism (and the associated discourses of extremism and
> radicalisation) into English Secondary School Education is the result of influential political agendas, in

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[578] Department for Communities and Local Government, "Prevent Funding,"
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-funding, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[579] Travis, A., "Smith Vows to Tackle Ideology of Violent Extremists," The Guardian,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/jan/18/uk.terrorism, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[580] "Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006," http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/pdfs/ukpga_20060001_en.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[581] "Race Hate Cleric Faisal Deported ", BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4206800.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[582] Richards, A., "The Problem with 'Radicalization': The Remit of 'Prevent'and the Need to Refocus on Terrorism in the Uk," International Affairs 87/1 (2011): 143-52.

particular the Prevent Strategy. However, the lack of clarity over terminology has brought into question what exactly is being taught, as well how schools are expected to discuss such difficult and controversial subject matter.[583]

Some have commented that the lack of community integration is strongly linked to extremism, terrorism and threats to national security.[584] The integration of communities is therefore not seen as a public good in and of itself but rather something that is done out of concerns for safety and security. The British Muslim community has been disproportionately considered suspect when it comes to questions of trust and public loyalty.

> Their disproportionate focus on one community as part of a counter-terrorism strategy could be deemed discriminatory and institutionally racist; this focus could be seen as undoing progressive work since Macpherson [Stephen Lawrence Inquiry] and in contradiction to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), which places a positive duty on public authorities to promote good race relations.[585]

It has also been noted that the Prevent strategy has institutionalised (through education, for example) its ideological legitimation for unjustifiable surveillance and the policing of cultural and theological attitudes and opinions of mainstream Muslims in Britain with the aim of preventing them from committing violent actions.[586]

In Britain, anti-Muslim sentiment, while problematic prior to September 11th, seems to have worsened. Assaults, arsons, and other violence seem to have been highest immediately after the attacks, but, although they have dropped since then, they have stayed at a higher level since the attacks compared to before.[587] After the July 2005 bombings in London, bias crimes increased greatly there. Scotland Yard reported 269 crimes in the three weeks following the attacks, while only 40 had been recorded during the same period one year earlier. As of early 2012, only 3 police forces out of a total of 43 collated information about Islamophobic or anti-Muslim hate crime. As a consequence, there exists a lack of incidences being reported and collated, and this is a large barrier to knowing how many or how often incidences take place. Across the period 2006-7 to 2010-11, there had been a 26 per cent decrease in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences in England and Wales. However, an indicative breakdown (2011) from official figures reveals that, of those where the victim's religion was 'known' (n. 1,216), 52 per cent (632) were recorded as religious hate

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[583] Quartermaine, A., "Discussing Terrorism: A Pupil-Inspired Guide to Uk Counter-Terrorism Policy Implementation in Religious Education Classrooms in England," *British journal of religious education* /ahead-of-print (2014): 1-17.

[584] Birt, Y., "Promoting Virulent Envy? Reconsidering the Uk's Terrorist Prevention Strategy," *The RUSI Journal* 154/4 (2009): 52-58.

[585] Mcdonald, B. and Mir, Y., "Al-Qaida-Influenced Violent Extremism, Uk Government Prevention Policy and Community Engagement," *Journal of aggression, conflict and peace research* 3/1 (2011): 32-44.

[586] Kundnani, A., *Spooked! How Not to Prevent Violent Extremism*.

[587] There have been problems with attacks on asylum seekers and increasing Islamophobia. Up to a third of Muslims say they or their family members have been victims of hostility. Schmitz, K., "Enar Shadow Report 2010-11: Racism in the United Kingdom".

crimes against Muslims (compared to 26 per cent against people of Jewish faith; and 14 per cent against people of Christian faith). Therefore, when it comes to religious hate crime, the available statistics indicate that most victims are Muslim.[588] Following a precedent set by FAIR UK (FAIR UK collected anti-Muslim media reports until 2005)[589], the organizations Tell Mama and Faith Matters have been the most recent collectors of anti-Muslim incident reports.

Aspects of Islam that the participants discussed because they found it threatening were mostly of what they deemed oppressive or violent and incongruent with liberal British values. Although it was on occasion veiled as a concern for Muslims' wellbeing, what seemed to be the driving force behind that sentiment was rather the feeling that if Muslims truly believed those things, then they would push those values on non-Muslims and that was what was the concern. For example, "What is wrong with having a drink every now and then? I want to have a drink but now they are regulating where and when I can have a drink. It's not right!" (Steve, 45, Birmingham).

In conducting this research, it was anticipated that the subject for which there would be the most antipathy would be veiling. This subject has a history of public discourse, it is a clear marker of Muslim identity and is often tied into narratives of oppression of women, fundamentalism while often being regarded as an outdated, conservative method for men to control women. However, this topic was mostly taken-up by women and the discussion among men was low. The surprise that emerged in this regard was that, for most men the subject was not of immediate importance. It was often used by men to add to the point or example they were highlighting. For example, Gary, 33, from Luton, "Islam is violent, it trains violence, and from what I've read it contains violence and calls for violent action. I mean, just look at the way they oppress their women."

It was violence and the perceived encouragement for violent action (jihad) that attracted the most vehement expression. Its lack of debate seemed to suggest that amongst the participants there was a consistency and agreement that Islam contained inherently violent aspects. Those who suggested that Islam was a religion of peace were challenged by those who disagreed and had to concede that Muslim terrorists were Muslims and therefore must get their inspiration from somewhere in their religion or they would not call themselves Muslim or commit violent acts to please Allah. Another major feature of this aspect of the data set is that women in the various groups made more diverse comments about Islam than men, which would suggest that among women Islam is of concern for more of a variety of different reasons than for men. Upon further discussion in the women-only focus groups it was suggested that the status or place of women within Islam

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[588] Copsey, N. et al., "Anti-Muslim Hate Crime and the Far Right," (2013), http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/antimuslim2.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[589] Forum against Islamophobia & Racism (Fair), "Media Monitoring," www.fairuk.org/research/FAIRuk-ResearchData-MediaMonitoring.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

could be one of the reasons why. Whilst men's main concern was violence and terrorism, women seemed to also be concerned with other issues, mainly as they related to women and children.

One aspect of Islam that attracted consistent antipathy among non-Muslim participants was sharia law. Not only did they express difficulty in accepting an alternative system of laws, but it was the examples of sharia courts that created additional antagonism. As the rule of law is a core British cultural value, participants deemed it threatened by demands for amendments according to principles of Sharia. This is further evidenced, for example, by the reaction to statements made by the then Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams in 2008.[590] The constituents of the focus groups failed to perceive its relevance to the everyday lives of Muslims as well as the actual role in society and the British legal system that sharia courts have at present or may have in the future.

> "Muslims come over here to change our country, forcing us to obey their laws!" Trevor, 33, Luton.

Similarly, some were unable to see the benefit of Muslims to Britain and how their inclusion in society benefits all.

> "Dogs are dirty for Muslims and we don't think so, so if they feel that way then they should just go back to where they came from. Sharia should be banned from Britain; they can have it elsewhere but not in Britain! Especially when they are so hypocritical. Having all the rules and regulations about drinking and food but then breaking them. But they still judge others and force it upon others." Sandra, 54, Leicester

The lack of perceived benefit to Muslims' lives of such topics was a recurring theme throughout these discussions in all groups. For instance, it was argued, "It would just be better if they did not oppress women or gays, could eat and drink what they wanted and then they could be free like the rest of us', Brandon, 18, Blackburn.

Many of the more 'spectacular' demonstrations of violence have also been influential in defining threatening aspects of Islam due to the frequent examples portrayed in the media. There has been a concentration of media reports about negative or unwelcome behaviour and these are considered to be the more fundamental aspects, as seen from an audience perspective. However, the emphasis on these aspects does not seem to appear to obstruct alternative perceptions provided there are alternative narratives (this will be covered further later), but these concerns are often far removed from non-Muslims' daily concerns. The few south Asian participants did complain about being compared or even perceived as Muslims despite exhibiting

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[590] "Sharia Law in Uk Is 'Unavoidable'," BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7232661.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

their own religious identity markers (Khalsa Sikhs wearing turbans and other items for example). This again highlights the ignorance present in British society when it comes to religious traditions.

While, as noted before, other research has highlighted a shift in British values, where the 'traditional' British values are no longer a mainstay of the British society, many participants invoked a claim to British values when certain aspects of Muslim life were brought up. For example, "The burkha is a sign of oppression. It should not be acceptable as it's un-British." (Peter, 48, Leicester).

British values (for some participants these were also Christian values) were seen as being very logical, which in one way makes sense, as the matter-of-fact-ness or unquestionable status of those values meant that most people were familiar with relatively stereotypical definitions of acceptable values. However, there was recognition from some participants that changing values is difficult and that the participation of Muslims in British society has shaped their conceptions of acceptable behaviour. The key factor making people more aware seems to be found in those people who were more informed through education (and the younger participants with advanced degrees certainly fall into this category). Older individuals who may not have been particularly well-educated but have seemingly used their life experiences to cultivate this notion may also be included in this group. Amongst all participants there was general agreement that many aspects of Islam were 'hard' or 'difficult to understand', which in turn made them threatening for some. Other points of difficulty mentioned were: the language barrier with Muslims, difference in attitudes towards work or school, difference in approaches to childcare, and how food or drink prescriptions created a barrier for people. For example:

> Julie, 52, Newcastle: "I work as a PA in an office and am in charge of arranging office parties, etc. But it is a bit of a hassle to arrange food that is halal all the time for one person in the office. It is also a shame that when we have landed a big contract that we can't have champagne to celebrate because we have to have alcohol-free office parties."
>
> Researcher: "But is not it more beneficial to the company to create an inclusive environment?"
>
> Julie: "But just because we want to celebrate with champagne, doesn't mean that he has to drink it? I mean we can get him apple juice or whatever but it just takes a little bit of the spark out of celebrating you know."
>
> Researcher: "But what if you get non-alcoholic champagne then?"
>
> Julie: "Why? That stuff tastes awful, plus why should we conform to him? Company policy has dictated that we have to because of his religion but what about us?"

With its unfamiliar words and prescripts, the nature of Islamic practice seemed a complex web often inconceivable and unintelligible for non-Muslim participants. The nature of the religious orientation for the Muslim subject was challenging, and other participants with Muslims co-workers described cases of sustained difficulty and found that demoralizing. However, others found mutual ground in which

engagement could be reached, some of which was the result of religious similarities and others because of similar interests or values. For example:

> Holly, 19, Bradford: I think sometimes when we don't understand something that was what makes it threatening. But at the same time, if you see something and you want to know what it is, that was what makes it interesting. Through my church I have been part of an interfaith reading group where people from different faiths come together to read each other's texts and discuss them. It has been a really interesting and fruitful experience and made me understand my faith better.

In this case a Christian woman who chose to engage Muslims as equals, in a space for mutual engagement for all parties involved, and developed a greater understanding of their faith. She found such an experience enlightening and through the challenges of alternative views and practices had a greater understanding and appreciation of her own. Somewhat in contrast to Muslims Julie described her Christian faith as a lifelong journey 'you can't just memorize it, you have to understand it'. This suggests that her understanding or engagement with Islam seems to show an emphasis on orthopraxy such as is present in certain strands of Islam and some denominations of Christianity, whereby the simple submission to the will of god and ritual following of his commands would be enough.

Some participants had indicated that South Asian had become a synonym for Muslim: "South Asian is Muslim" (Lee, 43, Leicester). The prevalence of South-Asians in groups made them seem intimidating.

> Liam, 19, Blackburn: "When you see them walking they make you feel scared. And when you speak to one they all react."
>
> Brandon, 18: "Yeah, and they walk around in gangs and are unpredictable. They will snap and come at you for no apparent reason ".
>
> Researcher: So there is no provocation from people when they walk in the market square for example?
>
> Nathan, 18, "No, we are just being ourselves and like doing normal things. It was all fine before they were here."
>
> Researcher: "But that was a situation before you were born. You have never known any different?"
>
> Nathan, "Well no, but it is shit now here in Blackburn. It used to be better before they were here."
>
> Bill, 58: "Yeah it's a shithole here now and I knew what it was like before. The government has let it go to hell and made it worse by allowing all these immigrants to come here and cost us money. They contribute nothing and just take the benefits of being here."
>
> Researcher: "But are you not conflating two different things? Immigration policy and the fact the government has historically neglected the north of England?"

> Dave, 60: "Migration makes it harder because the government has to now take care of more people. Big families and such just make it harder to help everyone. Britain has tried to help these people but they come here and turn it to shit."
>
> George, 62: "Government told them they had to live here but then forgot about them and us."
>
> Dave: "See! And then the money meant for people from here to take care of them goes to people who are not from here, who don't care for the city and stuff."

What is often deemed as intimidating are the large groups, which was reported to give the impression of a group mentality that participants equated to gangs and thuggery. This is not surprising given that research suggests white flight takes place when the number of non-whites passes 10-15% of the local population.[591] So in an area like Blackburn and Darwen with a Muslim population of over 30%, it is hardly surprising that feelings that are often associated with white flight are prevalent.[592] However, when it comes to whether white flight exists within Britain's current migration phenomenon, the answer would be no. Ethnic minority populations have increased in Britain over the last 15 years (since the 2001 census) and it has not resulted in an increase in the number of areas dominated by one ethnic group. Instead, areas are becoming more mixed and diverse. In turn, there has not been an increase in segregation (in the sense of an increased distribution of ethnic minorities into certain areas), nor is there a sustained movement of people into self-segregated areas with high concentrations of minorities. In reality, migration in Britain seems to be in proportion to the ethnicity of the population in local areas: [593]

> In short, the rich data of the population census do not support the much publicized claims of increasing segregation and the creation of ghettos. Instead, the behaviour of the indices of segregation and diversity reflect the demographic consequences of relatively recent immigration streams.[594]

A closer examination of the many descriptions given about Islam and Muslims reveals that there is a marked difference between the statements by individuals with personal contact with Muslims and those with no personal contact. This personal contact may be brief and superficial such as a co-worker or neighbourhood shopkeeper, but those with no personal contact had difficulty in elaborating upon their views of Islam and Muslims. The descriptions and the reasons for those views in relation to themselves and their own everyday lives were restricted to media prompts and stereotypical content. These participants also found it hard to describe Muslims on an abstract level without referring to a media report. People with interpersonal contact

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[591] Boustan, L. P., "Was Postwar Suburbanization" White Flight"? Evidence from the Black Migration," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 125/1 (2010).

[592] "White Flight," in *Encyclopedia of race, ethnicity, and society*, ed. Schaefer, R. T. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2008).

[593] Simpson, L., "Ghettos of the Mind: The Empirical Behaviour of Indices of Segregation and Diversity," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 170/2 (2007).

[594] Ibid., 420.

spoke from a much more personal level. Stories often referred to their own experiences (both positive and negative) and as a consequence they were able to deal with Muslims or Islam at an abstract level because they seemed able to reason beyond the information they were presented with in the focus group. But, as in the example of Al in Bradford shows, interpersonal contact does not necessarily mean a positive engagement. At the same time, there were respondents in Newcastle who had never met a Muslim and held a neutral or positive outlook. Men and women largely made similar comments; however, men, in contrast to women, had a more traditional gender bias. A good example, found in the following comment, illustrates the point that everyday life is the context where the salience (or not), of the images and portrayals of Muslims and Islam in Britain is realized:

> Allison, 28, Leicester: "Like when I see something about Muslims or Islam on television, I remember my friend Aisha and what she does and I remember learning from her what Islam is about and from what is reported that was faulty. I told my mum and dad and some friends and if I hadn't learned that I would have never known."

Participants in the majority of groups engaged in discussions about their particular interests.

> Jane, 28, Birmingham: "The main thing is that people relate it back to themselves, how are they affected etc."

Participants developed the importance of relevance further, arguing that they would like to understand the ways in which Muslims and Islam benefit society, but more importantly, how integration might be achieved and maintained. These aspects of were of interest because of the demand for Muslims to become 'more modern'.

For some participants, their sense of self-esteem was linked to being able to explain everyday phenomena involving Muslims and Islam to their peers or family, and their awareness of information was deemed important. Their interest in Islam or Muslims was not necessarily positive but they would search out alternative information sources as opposed to only (news) media sources. Important in this regard was 'seeing it for yourself, because it affects you.' Essentially it is an extension of fundamental questions in regards to identity and our place in society. This knowledge helped to construct versions of self, identity and a role in society for the participant in question. By proceeding to look beyond news reports the participant had a degree of control over the information consumption process offering him a greater sense of ownership of the knowledge. However, this material is not without its own biases and inconsistencies. As a result, the increased sense of ownership also made it harder to dissuade participants from erroneous opinions.

Section VII. <u>British Multiculturalism and the Place of Muslims</u>

A number of events in the last fifty years or so have had a lasting impact on race relations within Britain's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and religious pluralist society. None had arguably a more intense public impact for Muslims in Britain as the Rushdie affair. It has been suggested that it was this event that saw the first coming to a head of the questioning of the place of Islam and of Muslims in Britain. It created the conditions for a critique of public culture.[610] This is not to suggest that the race riots of 1958 and 1981, or Enoch Powell's famous "rivers of blood" speech in 1968 were insignificant events; rather, the Rushdie affair was a milestone in the evolution of multi-cultural relations in Britain, and more specifically the place of Islam within Britain. Until that point, members of the majority population had mainly led the debate about how multiculturalism is best achieved, while minorities were deemed mainly passive. "Integration" had been seen to mean, in effect, "assimilation" (that is, the adjustment of minorities to the dominant society). After the Rushdie affair, however, it came to be seen more as a mutual process, where the majority population would also have to adapt to a certain extent. Within this context however, the origins of organised attempts at interfaith dialogue must also be situated. As in "*the early 1980's, Christian Leaders were making attempts to meet with Muslim communities to establish interfaith dialogue, but others still viewed non-Christian communities as targets for evangelism.*"[611]

Kenan Malik has stated, "*When most people say that multiculturalism is a good thing, they mean the experience of living in a society that is less insular, less homogeneous, more vibrant and cosmopolitan than before.*" [612] However, we need to "*separate the idea of diversity as lived experience from that of multiculturalism as a political process, because the latter amounts to a political project that will seal people into ethnic boxes and [...] police the boundaries*"[613] In other words, the further management of minorities by the dominant groups.

> Historically, multiculturalism as a public policy in Britain has been heavily localised, often made voluntary, and linked essentially to issues of managing diversity in areas of immigrant settlement. The legislative framework on which this policy is based – for example, the Race Relations Acts (1965[1968] and 1976[2000]) – recognised this contingency, giving additional resources to local authorities as well as new powers to better promote racial and ethnic equality. With these enabling powers, most local authorities with large ethnic minority populations have transformed themselves from initially being the bastions of official racism to being promoters of anti-racism and

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[610] For one example see: Modood, T., "British Asian and Muslims and the Rushdie Affair," *The Political Quarterly* 61/2 (1990): 143.

[611] Guest, M., Olson, E., and Wolffe, J., "Christianity: Loss of Monopoly," in *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, ed. Woodhead, L. and Catto, R. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 74.

[612] Quoted in Meer, N. and Modood, T., "The Multicultural State We're In: Muslims, 'Multiculture' and the 'Civic Re-Balancing' of British Multiculturalism," *Political Studies* 57 (2009): 487.

[613] Quoted in ibid.

multiculturalism, and in this change the strength of local ethnic communities and coalitions has played a pivotal role.[614]

Whilst improvements have been made on the local level, on the national level, there is an on-going debate within Britain today about British identity and the future of multiculturalism. There is disagreement over the role Islam and other religions should play in public life and the importance of Britain's Christian heritage. In 2006, the ex-foreign secretary Jack Straw MP sparked controversy in Britain by suggesting women who wear veils over their face can make community relations harder.[615] Similarly, Although Britain does allow for Halal slaughtering to take place, it is not without controversy, and the government has determined that banning the practice would not be consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights. Increasingly questions have been raised about the extent to which Britain can now be described as a 'secular' society. Immigration remains a hot topic of debate in Britain. Recent waves of Eastern European integration from the new EU member states have re-focused attention on this issue. There is also certain level of unease throughout much of Europe about the possibility of future Turkish membership of the EU, a country whose population is predominantly Muslim.

In 2008, a report commissioned by Gordon Brown on British citizenship[616] suggested that school-leavers should be encouraged to swear an oath of allegiance to Queen and country to promote a better sense of belonging among British teenagers.[617] The report also suggested establishing a "Britishness" public holiday. The report is part of on-going plans by Britain government to introduce a new Citizenship and Immigration Bill.[618] If introduced, the bill would aim to simplify existing immigration legislation, and would mean that new immigrants to Britain would be required to take language tests. However, certain obstacles arise, from the many social practices that are structured around basic Christian assumptions, which accommodate the needs of Christians but not the need of other minority faith communities. For example, In Northern Ireland and Scotland religious discrimination is usually understood to refer to sectarian tensions between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. This also affects the attitude towards issues raised by the Muslim community. In Scotland, faith-based schools are seen, by some, as part of the problem in terms of the sectarian divide. The assumed solution is to treat everybody the same, to not have different services, not to have different schooling, or to meet the needs of different faith communities.

With regards to the public perception of Islam in Britain, in 1997 a major report created by the Runnymede Trust explored anti-Muslim sentiment in Britain. It was from this report that the term 'Islamophobia' is

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[614] Singh, G., "British Multiculturalism and Sikhs," *Sikhs Formations* 1/2 (2005).

[615] "Straw's Veil Comments Spark Anger ", BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5410472.stm, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[616] Department for Justice, "Citizenship Report," http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/citizenship-report-full.pdf [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[617] "Archbishop Backs Sharia Law for British Muslims," The Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/07/religion.world, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[618] Walker, P., "Government Proposes Citizenship and Immigration Bill," The Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/nov/06/queensspeech2007.immigration, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

generally seen as originating.[619] In 2000 the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain published a report (which later became known as the Parekh report, as the Commission was chaired by Lord Parekh) which suggested that "the national story and national identity" of Britain needed to be rethought.[620] The report and its possible future implications caused some controversy within Britain, but in 2005 a team from York St. John University found that British teenagers are increasingly likely to hold negative attitudes towards Muslims and to sympathize with far right political organizations such as the English Defence League and BNP.[621]

There are various examples one could cite of tensions regarding the future of multiculturalism in Britain. In one notable example, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams sparked a vicious debate by suggesting that some aspects of Sharia Law could perhaps be incorporated into British law. Williams himself argued that he had been misrepresented.[622] There has also been recent controversy in Britain over proposals to increase the size of a mosque near the site of the 2012 London Olympics. It was first reported that the Abbey Mills mosque would be the biggest mosque in Europe and Britain's largest religious building, although these reports may have been exaggerated.[623] The Islamic missionary group Tablighi Jamaat would finance the mosque's construction. Yet the historically close relationship between the Anglican Church and the state in Britain may actually benefit Muslims in some respects. Fetzer and Soper have argued that in Britain, *"the existence of a religious establishment implicitly aids Muslims"*.[624] This is due to the fact that religious freedom and equality is expressed in legislation and as a consequence any privileges or positions afforded to one must be afforded to all. An example that is brought up by Fetzer and Soper was when Muslims in Britain recently pushed for state funding of Muslim schools, it was in fact the relationship between the state and the Anglican Church that helped give them an audible voice.[625]

The 2006 Equality Act[626] banned discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief or sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, the management of premises, education and the exercise of public functions. The Muslim Council of Britain supported the Act, although some Muslims (as well as the Catholic Church in England) criticized some parts of the act relating to banning discrimination on the grounds

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[619] Conway, G. R. and Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London, UK: Runnymede Trust, 1997).
[620] The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, "The Parekh Report," Runnymede Trust, http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects/past-projects/meb/report/reportIntroduction.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[621] Press Association, "Racism Simmering in British Schools, Says Survey," http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/apr/01/schools.uk4, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[622] Williams, R., "Civil and Religious Law in England: A Religious Perspective," The Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/07/religion.world2, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. & Butt, R., "Archbishop Backs Sharia Law for British Muslims". & "Sharia Law in Uk Is 'Unavoidable'".
[623] "Biggest Uk Mosque: Newham Council Rejects Plans," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-20605213, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[624] Fetzer, J. S. and Soper, J. C., *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany*, 60.
[625] Ibid.
[626] The Commission for Equality and Human Rights, "Equality Act 2006," http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/3/pdfs/ukpga_20060003_en.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

of sexual orientation.[627] Most controversially, the act meant that religious adoption agencies could no longer refuse applications from gay couples wanting to adopt children.

In many cases, the relationship between British society and Muslims has been defined in terms of their culture and ethnic background being regarded as 'outsiders' rather than as authentically British (despite 47% being born in Britain). Like their ancestors who were subjected to colonisation, the community and their religion have frequently been described as inferior or incongruous with authentic British society. However, a report published by the University of Essex found that Muslims actually identify with Britishness more than any other group of people.[628] This study (just one of several recent studies) shows that Muslims in Britain express a stronger sense of belonging in Britain than their compatriots.

The report describes the following examples[629]: 83% of Muslims are proud to be a British citizen, compared to 79% of the general public. 77% of Muslims strongly identify with Britain while only 50% of the wider population do. 86.4% of Muslims feel they belong in Britain, slightly more than the 85.9% of Christians. 82% of Muslims want to live in diverse and mixed neighbourhoods compared to 63% of non-Muslim Britons. 90% of Pakistanis feel a strong sense of belonging in Britain compared to 84% of white people.

The Understanding Society study conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex concluded that Muslims are most likely to consider themselves British whereas the white population of Britain would more likely describe themselves as English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish.[630] With an on-going debate within Britain today about British identity and the future of multiculturalism these figures suggest that Muslims are dealing with the same issues as non-Muslims in much the same way. This would also suggest that the policies favouring multiculturalism and mutual religious engagement are paying off. As Koenig argues:

> The analysis of the incorporation of Muslim immigrants in Western Europe shows that how nation states respond to religious diversity is, on the one hand, shaped by the institutional arrangements of political organisation, collective identity, and religion characteristic of the historical trajectories of modern nation states. On the other hand, it also shows convergent trends that correspond to the

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[627] Bunglawala, I., "Gay Rights and Muslim Rights," The Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/may/08/gayrightsandmuslimrights, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[628] University of Essex, "Ethnic Minorities Living in the Uk Feel More British Than White Britons".
[629] Ibid.
[630] Institute of Social and Economic Research, Just Who Does Feel British?, (Colchester, UK: University of Essex, 2014), https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/2014/01/09/just-who-does-feel-british, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. & Institute of Social and Economic Research, Britishness and Diversity Presented at Party Conferences, (Colchester, UK: University of Essex, 2014), https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/2013/09/24/britishness-and-diversity-research-presented-at-party-conferences, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

development of cognitive and normative expectancy structures at the transnational level and amount to [an] uncoupling of political organisation and national identity.[631]

Yasir Suleiman has pointed out that the engagement of Muslims in social and political issues, is a personal negotiation of global and local sensibilities.[632] The *"hyphenated British-Muslim identity is a reality that seamlessly weaves together both their 'Britishness' and their 'Muslimness'".[633]* Therefore, it is no surprise that a majority of Muslims do not regard non-compliance with English law (and following sharia law[634] instead) as an appropriate manner in which to participate in British society. [635] Muslims may act in this way to address issues of Muslim suffering globally or British issues locally. Through the achievements and the contributions they make, Muslims in Britain become normalised and more and more accepted.Although the descriptions of Muslims, typified by the comment below, were not extensive, they were similar to the media prompts that were used during the focus groups. What seemingly happened in the majority of the participants was that they discussed Muslims and Islam within the framework of the media prompts. This will be discussed in further detail later. In the majority of the comments, the emphasis was on the general role of Britain or British society as a safe haven for Muslims but that Muslims were the source of the problems in society. This was often illustrated with examples of negative behaviour from the media or examples from challenges in the participant's personal life. For example, "Unemployment and low prospects are exacerbated by migrants but because the government don't help anyone here it just turns our community into a shithole" Bill, 58, Blackburn. Dave, 60, Blackburn: "In the current times Britain helps Muslims but those here turn it to shit."

Such arguments reflect a lack of any distinction between Muslim refugees, Muslim migrants and British Muslims. Other participants also responded to the role of Muslims in British society in a manner that addresses integration, for example, "there should be some give and take, but they only take." Sarah 32, Leicester. Al, 45, from Bradford also mentioned that "problems from the Middle East are brought to Britain by immigrants."

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[631] Koenig, M., "Incorporating Muslim Migrants in Western Nation States," in *After Integration: Islam, Conviviality and Contentious Politics in Europe*, ed. Burchardt, M. and Michalowski, I. (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer, 2015), 55.

[632] Suleiman, Y., "Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives," (2009), http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk/assets/media/cibpreportweb.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[633] Weller, P. and Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., "Muslims in the Uk," in *After Integration: Islam, Conviviality and Contentious Politics in Europe*, ed. Burchardt, M. and Michalowski, I. (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer, 2015), 323.

[634] Sharia law is the religious law governing the conduct of Muslims but this code of conduct is enforced by personal choice. The Government does not prevent individuals from seeking to regulate their lives through religious beliefs or cultural traditions; and provided that it did not contravene the law of England and Wales, there was nothing to prevent people from living by it. As a consequence, a number of sharia councils in Britain have helped Muslim communities to resolve civil and family disputes by making recommendations by which the parties would abide. If they follow the arbitration system, then the rulings are considered binding and decisions can be enforced because both parties agreed at the start to give the ruling body power over them. If any of their decisions or recommendations are illegal, contrary to public policy or national law then national law will prevail all the time, every time. That is no different from any other council or tribunal. The record of the parliamentary debate on Sharia Law is available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130423/halltext/130423h0002.htm#13042392000002.

[635] Ansari, H., Muslims in Britain, (Minority Rights Group International, 2003), http://www.wnss.agh.edu.pl/other/materialy/90_2011_03_31_10_03_41_MRG%20muslimsinbritain.pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. 23.

The controversial nature of Muslims in Britain was prominent in participants' comments, and there was no recognition of the historical aspects that facilitated the contemporary context. Most participants did not engage critically with the media reports, or the issues at hand, but this approach was probably similar to how they respond to other contemporary issues. Rather, the role that was discussed with regards to Islam and Muslims in Britain was emphasized because the media offered a point of entry into the discussion.

Hence what was articulated clearly, in all of these comments, was a description that Muslims were 'guests' (invited or uninvited) or refugees and that their presence in England was associated with an increase in problems. This is an important finding because it suggests that their understanding of Muslims and Islam is of such a level of significance that it is unquestioned by the participants. Many of the ideological forces that are driving the European public debate come across as promoting the idea that European Muslims should be indebted and grateful to be in Europe. Farid Esack described how this feels to a Muslim immigrant in Germany using a metaphor:

> Being outside in the rain of repressive Muslim countries like Iran, or in the cold of a bad economic climate in Turkey 40 years ago and then a car stopped along the way, and they got in. But now you are in the car and you are grateful for the fact that the car stopped; you are a passenger, and all the questions that you are asking of yourself and of your Islam are those of a passenger in a German car heading in a German direction.[636]

This metaphor is equally applicable to Muslims in Britain and perhaps to all people coming to live in Britain. However, as Esack continues, over time the migrant community changes its outlook and challenges this implicit guest status.

> So the questions you are asking are: how can I be a better passenger? This is the assimilationist project. The driver wants to make you comfortable in the car, but always as a passenger. There are fundamental questions that German Muslims have to ask themselves: for how long do we want to be passengers in this car? When are we going to share the driving responsibilities? When are we going to become co-owners of the car?[637]

The assimilationist view of integration is damaging to a thriving and vibrant multi-cultural society. This is because it aims to negate multi-culturalism by effectively demanding that Muslims adopt the customs and practices of the host society, especially in the public sphere, but ideally, also in the private sphere. The consistent mentioning of the role of Muslims in society seems to follow that narrative. Interestingly, the debate in the focus group was whether the driver in this case, British society, wants, should, could, needs,

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[636] Mende, C., "Interview with Farid Esack "Pluralist Societies Are About Give and Take"," Qantara, http://en.qantara.de/content/interview-with-farid-esack-pluralist-societies-are-about-give-and-take, [Accessed 26-01-2017].
[637] Ibid.

etc. to make passengers (immigrants) comfortable in the car. It was always a passenger-driver relationship; the discussion centred on the role, needs and obligations of the driver. This has raised fundamental questions as a consequence of the globalization of labour markets, agriculture, and commodity production coupled with disenfranchisement of populations and violence in the name of religion. However, at the forefront of public discourse, it seems to be Muslims demanding recognition, responsibility and engaging with wider society in order to take (co-)ownership of the car that is British society. This despite most migrants, historically, being from commonwealth countries, although most recently it is predominantly from European countries.

What these findings suggest is that in the eyes of the participants, Muslims' main value is their instrumental value as 'guests' rather than as intrinsic members of British society. The lack of range of possibilities exhibits the limited discussion about the space and place for Muslims in society. Whilst there would appear to be a growing awareness amongst some participants with regards to the right of Muslims to live in Britain, the lack of specific examples as to in what capacity they may do so raises questions about the way people are informed and implies that little has been successful in emphasizing alternative narratives.

One of the key aspects to interpreting information about Islam and Muslims in the news are the pre-existing views on Muslims and Islam by the participants. Views about Islam and Muslims were mostly negative, even by people who were living in an area with a high Muslim population. Extremism within Islam was prevalent, and examples of areas with high Muslim populations were considered dangerous and prone to violence. According to participant responses, extreme religious conservatism[638] contains within it an element of violence, especially for Muslims. It is impossible to hold extremely religious conservative views as a philosophical outlook. Eventually, it seems, Muslims will act upon that conservatism and commit a violent act. Whilst Muslims extremism might be located in local areas, it is often cited as a problem more so in London than in local areas with many Muslims. For example:

> Keith, 34, Leicester: "Islamic extremism happens a lot especially in London."
>
> Researcher: "But Keith how do you know this?"
>
> Keith: "Well you hear these things."
>
> Researcher: "From who?"
>
> Keith: "Well like the news story said those guys that killed the soldier they were from London and the group they belong to is from London. The 7/7 guys were from London. All extremism is in London."
>
> Researcher: "There is no extremism in Leicester?"

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[638] I feel that would be the best description of religious extremism, as discussed in the press, because it seems no one has a problem with what can be defined as extreme religious liberalism.

> Keith: "In Leicester its wall to wall weapons in the Highfield's area. Leicester has a big Muslim community with a big temple there."
>
> Researcher: "But how do you know its terrorism that the weapons are for in Highfields and not gang warfare or so?"
>
> Josh, 36, Leicester: "Because there are lots of Muslims there. You might get drugs or so from the blacks there and they have guns and stuff for their protection but why do Pakis, Somalis and stuff all have guns? The Somalis are psycho. Really violent and unpredictable. That's what you get with Muslims."

Keith was the individual who was extremely dyslexic and as a consequence admitted he was unable to read a newspaper. Highfields has been an extremely multicultural area, with a large ethnic minority, and is traditionalil an area occupied by recent immigrants to the city. The various populations have contributed to the area's cultural diversity. Highfields contains many mosques, madrassas and Islamic community centres. Highfields is an inner-city area and it is one of the highest areas in the city. As with many inner-city areas in Britain, Highfields and its residents have often suffered from economic and other forms of social disadvantage. The above section of the discussion also highlights the relationship between nation of origin, ethnicity, and religion. In countries where Islam is a sizeable religion, all people are fervent practitioners of Islam and practice the same form of Islam. A stereotype that research on Islam around the world has sought to debunk.[639]

Discussions of Islam also very often mentioned the oppression of women. This was often referred back to or reinforced by the showing of prompt #9. Discussions of religious freedom and whether the burkha was acceptable was debated heavily. As can be seen from the excerpts below the participants do not agree on whether the burkha can be seen as an option as the result of a free choice but also whether it is compatible with the British way of life. What is clear is that the veil, and to a large extent the burqa as well, is seen as a key part of Islam. Something which is certainly not the case from the literature on the subject.[640] The participants also view that those women who choose to wear the veil in Britain do so because of their religion or because of peer pressure.

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[639] For an example see: Santesso, E., *Disorientation: Muslim Identity in Contemporary Anglophone Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[640] Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., "Marginalisation or an Opportunity for Dialogue: Exploring the Hijab as a Discursive Symbol of the Identity of Young Muslim Women," in *Islam and the Veil: Theoretical and Regional Contexts*, ed. Gabriel, T. and Hanan, R. (London: Continuum, 2011); Byng, M. D., "Symbolically Muslim: Media, Hijab, and the West," *Critical Sociology* 36/1 (2010); Tissot, S., "Excluding Muslim Women: From Hijab to Niqab, from School to Public Space," *Public Culture* 23/1 (2011); Watson, H., "Women and the Veil: Personal Responses to Global Process," in *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, ed. Ahmed, A. S. and Donnan, H. (New York, NY - London: Routledge, 1994); Wadud, A., *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1975); Tarlo, E., *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith*.

Leicester:

Researcher: "Is the veil a cultural problem?"

Vivienne, 66: "Not a cultural problem but Muslims are influenced or indoctrinated by external forces."

Researcher: "What do you mean by external forces?"

Vivienne: "people and actions from abroad. Therefore, the reason people wear the burkha or veil is not because of a free choice but because someone somewhere is telling them to wear it."

Sandra, 54: "They come over here with the freedom to wear the burkha and look like letter boxes. Because of freedom of women and religious freedom. I once saw a woman have to ID herself on the bus. It was shown separately to women not to the male bus driver. It should be banned."

Rachel, 29: "Religious freedom is paramount. But veil is a security threat and problems for identification."

Renee, 40: "The veil is forced in some way or another. This is not an Islamic country."

Allison, 28: "Islam is oppressive to women. Sharia should be banned from Britain. Have it elsewhere but not in England."

Peter, 48: "I refused to provide medication to a woman in burkha once because I could not see her face, even though she had a prescription for her small child (who was not present). I don't approve of the burkha. It is a sign of oppression and it's un-British."

Lee, 43: "The veil or burkha should be banned to remove a cause for division."

Researcher: "Ok, but what if people wanted to wear it themselves?"

Tim: "It's because someone somewhere is telling them to do so. This is not the British way of life and if you want to live here then you should live a British life."

Luton

Roger, 41: "Driving a car or similar action is dangerous in a burkha."

Sara, 31: "burkha is personal choice."

Kevin, 36: "Islam is oppressive. People wear a burkha not out of choice but because they have to."

Matt, 28: "Islam is oppressive to women"

Birmingham

Angela, 40: "The veil is forced in some way or another. This is not an Islamic country."

Jane, 28: "Islam is oppressive to women. Sharia should be banned from Britain. Have it elsewhere but not in England."

Bradford

Elizabeth, 68: "veiling is bad and it's not even Koranic. It breeds hostility, isolates women from society and interaction."

Al[641], 45: "I agree and Islam is oppressive to all especially women and gays. Too many veils especially young and unmarried women. Hair and face mean more to a woman than anything else. You never hit a woman in the face."

Researcher: "But isn't that the intent about veiling? To keep the 'precious' face hidden from unsolicited attention?"

Al: "Hell no, you want to see a woman smile, enjoy life, not be kept a secret, hidden away from the world and society. When in Rome do as the Romans do! I remember I was in Liverpool during the dockworkers strike picking up some clothes from a warehouse. Some people thought we had broken the picket line and a fight broke out. I saw this guy punch a woman. You never hit a woman, especially in the face! [Others nod in agreement] So I got hold of him and punched him a few times before I slammed his head into the concrete floor. Then I just left him there to go clean up my hands that were all covered blood."

In the discussion on Islam some spoke about doctrinal issues and how they are implemented in a variety of cases. As the example below shows it conflates state law in certain countries with Muslim religious practice in Britain. In doing so the discussants want to highlight the perceived hypocrisy between what Muslims ought to do, according to the faith they profess and then what they actually do in real life. In doing so they suggest that Islam is a backwards and untenable religion in modern Britain and that it has no place in Britain.

Sandra: "sex on beach in Dubai gets you the death penalty."

Tracy: "some give and take but they [Muslims] only take."

Sarah: "They complain when customers go drinking or smoking outside. We can't have people smoking inside anymore so what is their problem?"

Sandra: "They are hypocritical. Drinking [alcohol] despite food rules and then critical of others. They push their religion on others."

Vivienne: "halal slaughter is cruel and agony, where is the RSPCA?"

Sandra: "Islam is barbaric and bloodthirsty."

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[641] Al was just released from prison after doing 18 months for assault. He made a point of stressing it was not attempted murder. It was just a pain that the boy he beat up ended up falling awkwardly through a table. "It happened in a bar and the kid was being a nuisance. So I twatted the paki bastard" He argues it was not racially motivated but more like gang war fare type of fistfight. "The Paki kid deserves to be twatted". He described the other scrapes he was in and times he was in prison. He described the occasions he would "sort people out" for friends and acquaintances and that the worst of the worst were lawyers and paedophiles. He "would do them for free". I was happy that most of these stories were discussed after the focus group with only 2-3 left in attendance. His candid description of this aspect of his life history was borne out of the fact that we bonded over the fact that I was Dutch. "The Dutch a marvellous friendly people and they always treat me and my wife right. They know how to have a good knees up and a good fight too. We go back most years around new years." Now whilst I deplore violence it was interesting to hear the many stories and his reaction to the justice system. I also feel that this needs to be added to the story in order to add some context to Al's responses.

Tracy: "Islam has a tribal mentality."

Researcher: "Do you think Islam has segregation?"

Lisa, 31: "Yes. Muslim women cannot talk to men without another man present."

Rachel: "Muslim women don't talk to men especially non-Muslim men."

Vivienne: "Women are not free. There are rules for food, drink, clothing, behaviour etc."

Researcher: "Has Britain ever had segregation?"

Sandra: "Britain never had segregation or apartheid. Always had contact between groups never overpower."

Tracy: "The white British are now in the minority. But even migrants that are integrated are worried about Muslims."

Birmingham

Alisdair, 37: "The Quran tells them what they need to do. It tells them everything. What to wear, what to eat, who to marry."

Shane, 32: "Yeah, and when I am with my friends, some are gay, and ehm, they judge and comment. Telling us it's against Allah because of the Qur'an. And you see it on the news and stuff. Saudi Arabians and Iranians killing gays and stuff. This is what they want to do here too. Bring their Sharia law and change our way of life."

Researcher: "Even British Muslims, who are born here and educated here?"

Alan, 47: "Some of them. They get brainwashed in the Mosque and stuff by those crazy Imams."

Criticism of Islam, either in public or private, was often seen as legitimate. Groups such as the EDL and BNP have the right to voice their opinions and some of their criticisms are correct. Whilst participants may not always agree with the methods of the EDL or BNP, they seem as vital in protecting the 'British' way of live from Muslim threats and creeping sharia.

Luton

Researcher: "The EDL are founded in Luton. What do you think about a group like the ELD or the BNP?"

Martin: "The EDL and BNP have a point but maybe not the right method too extreme themselves."

Matt: "EDL use freedom of speech"

Andrew: "Muslims are over here to change our country. We can't change there's why should we change ours?"

Researcher: "Do you think the problems from elsewhere are brought here?"

Kevin: "Yes that's exactly right. The problems from wherever they are from are brought here."

Trevor: "religious freedom is exploited to create sympathy or to do things against white majority."

Justin: "religious freedom is exploited by Muslims against the white majority. It means we can't critique them or ban their backward practices like the Burqa."

Trevor: "Muslims segregate and create an us and them."

Martin: "Luton immigration has moved whites out and created segregation."

Newcastle

Researcher: "The EDL have marched and received support in Newcastle. What do you think about a group like the ELD or the BNP? Are they extremists?"

Alex: "They are not like Muslim extremists and they are right in some respects. The EDL and BNP have a point; Britain should be for British people and those who accept our culture. If you don't then you should go somewhere else rather than demand we change everything."

Geoff: "EDL are just saying what we all think and use freedom of speech to stand up for our values. That is more than the government ever does."

Researcher: "What do you mean?"

Geoff: "Muslims want to change our country. We don't want to change but the government is just doing what they want. Soon we will have Sharia law in this country."

In discussing whether some of the criticism itself was legitimate, and in what way Islamophobia may play a role, views were more mixed.

Leicester

Tim, 26: "It's a breach of rights to ban veil. The removing of a veil should be done in private for security reasons but I know Muslims and Muslims are treated easier in some cases. Islamophobia is blown out of proportion; some are bad but most are okay."

Researcher: "How is Islamophobia blown out of proportion?"

Tim: "For example certain things you can't say anymore because people say they are Islamophobic but they are not offensive"

Researcher: "Such as? Can you give an example?"

Tim: "well obviously things like Paki and towelhead are offensive and racist but why is being against the burkha Islamophobic? I don't think people should be made to hide their entire body and almost erase themselves from existence."

Birmingham

Researcher: "Is that not Islamophobic?"

Shane: "No wanting people who come over here to play by our rules or to go somewhere else is acceptable. If it is so bad here then don't come here. Don't complain about being criticised for extremist practices like wearing a burkha if you come here. It's not normal. People complain about

jokes like, I was standing in the supermarket and I had my list and I forgot something. So I called home to find out what it was and I misdialled and so the Muslim in aisle 3 blew up. But when do the supposed moderate Muslims stand up and distance themselves from the Muslims who do that?"

Researcher: "A joke like that is incredibly offensive because you equate Muslims with suicide bombing or something of the like. That may be its appeal but its offensive nonetheless."

Shane: "But Islam is inherently violent. So some things may be in poor taste but can't we joke about that? At least we have a sense of humour. Muslims are very sensitive. Look at the treatment of those Danish cartoons. Also it says in the Quran to kill the infidel. We are all infidels here and so in theory a good Muslim is supposed to kill us. How is that not violent?"

Researcher: "ok. But how does this relate to Burkhas and veiling?"

Shane: "Burkhas and arranged marriages are all unBritish things that are a problem to us British but Islamophobic if we critique Muslims about it. If you come here you should play by our rules and not try to get us to accept sharia law or something."

When asked to look at the prompts for images and depictions of Islam, it seemed that most participants felt that the press represented Muslims accurately.

Researcher: "Do you think these are accurate depictions of Islam?"

Steve, 45, Birmingham: "Yes! British Muslims look like that."

Researcher: "What do you mean?"

Steve: "I mean they have a beard and wear, you know, a dressy-thingy [pointing at the salwar kameez]".

Researcher: "But don't you think it is possible to wear other clothes and be a Muslim too?"

Steve: "Yes but lots of them don't"

Frederick, 32: "You wouldn't notice them if they wore jeans and a t-shirt."

Researcher: "So how do you know they don't wear jeans and a t-shirt then when they go to the shops or whatever?"

Frederick: "Because they have to be visible Muslims. It's like a symbol of their faith. Like a headscarf for women."

The perspectives here are often in keeping with the orientalist discourse that has surrounded Muslims in Britain. It also highlights the binary understanding of Muslims that live in Britain: the (good), integrated, lapsed and protestant Muslim (as it were); and the (bad), oppressive, hypocritical, backward, tribal, Muslim. These responses are constitutive for all subsequent responses to the discourse. They produce the possibilities

and the rules of the formation of future information.[642] Material that fails to fit into the pre-existing narratives of media, and Islam and Muslims, will be either seen as an exception, or manipulated to fit their existing narrative. For example:

> [When prompted with positive stories from prompts #10 and #11]

> Gary, 33, Luton: "These are the exception, they are simply masking their true intentions to lull us into a false sense of security".

> Tim, Leicester: "Some of them are ok, I suppose. Like this guy Ali at work. He is just like a normal guy so you wouldn't know."

Whilst the difference between these two specific examples may be the referral to personal experiences which are deemed authoritative, it cannot be assumed that all experiences are positive or enriching. Even experiences that are not necessarily experiences of conflict, might still re-enforce certain views and perspectives of Muslims. As the responses indicate, the presence of Muslims on a local level, is enough to challenge personal values and identity. Therefore, whilst those that interact with Muslims (positively or negatively) might have deeper entrenched opinions on Muslims and Islam, those that merely pass by, see or observe Muslims on a daily basis, in public spaces, may feel they have enough 'experiences' of Muslims to consider their views acceptable and authoritative.

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[642] Michel Foucault refers to this in his discussion of formations of discursivity Foucault, M., "What Is an Author?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Rabinow, P. (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1984)., this will be discussed further on page 245.

Concluding remarks

Living in mixed communities makes ethnic minorities feel more British.[652] As the preceding sections have shown, Muslims have low rates of social mobility, and improving education does not appear to lead to more job opportunities in the British labour market.[653] Despite these findings, the negative perception of Islam in the British press[654], and the increase in Islamophobic attacks, Muslims participate and are increasingly able to participate in British Society. Muslims form a diverse group which increasingly exhibit the same behaviour and values as non-Muslims. The situation on a local and representative level has enabled the Muslim community to increasingly mobilise itself and demand recognition and act as an agent for change in British society.

Interestingly, the audience research in this project, showed how non-Muslim audiences that were not ethnically or culturally South-Asian shared similar 'cultures of ignorance'[655]. The audience research revealed the interaction between social groups, belief systems and frameworks of interpretation. Contact alone is not sufficient to mitigate negative beliefs and assumptions. This is because interaction and engagement can be a negative experience. Not all contact is positive and therefore it depends on the presence of other conditions.[656] For those who do not have regular contact with Muslims the media appear to act as an important information resource for knowledge of Islam and Muslims, but it severely limits the way Muslims are known as agents and beings in Britain today. This leaves media consumers with an illusion of causality. A lot of evidence suggests that erroneous beliefs aren't easily overturned, and when they're tinged with emotion, erroneous beliefs are even more intransigent. Explaining the context and helping people understand are the first steps towards changing such beliefs. If you want people to accept information that contradicts what they already know, you have to find a story they can believe. That requires bridging the narrative they've already constructed to a new one that is both true and allows them to remain the kind of person they believe themselves to be. As can be seen from the responses in the data, meaning is inherent in the ritual practices involved in media consumption. *"[These] help to sustain an identity that is replete with emotion."[657]* It helps the consumer to make sense of the world around them. It also allows the audience to participate, maintain, and sustain social practices that can be considered as traditional practices in Britain.[658]

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[652] Trueman, T., *Living in Mixed Communities Makes Ethnic Minorities Feel British* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 2014).

[653] Institute of Social and Economic Research, Immigrant Minorities Suffer Low Rates of Social Mobility, (Colchester, UK: University of Essex, 2014), https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/2014/06/13/immigrant-minorities-suffer-low-rates-of-social-mobility, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[654] For more on this see Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*., Richardson, J. E., "British Muslims in the Broadsheert Press: A Challenge to Cultural Hegemony?." & Richardson, J. E., *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers*.

[655] Karim, K. H. and Eid, M., "Clash of Ignorance," *Global Media Journal--Canadian Edition* 5/1 (2012).

[656] For example see: Allport, G. W., *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954), 537. & Pettigrew, T. F., "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual review of psychology* 49/1 (1998).

[657] Davies, D. J., *Emotion, Identity, and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 66.

[658] Ibid., 66-67.

Chapter 4. <u>Dialectic of Theory and Praxis</u>

This research offers an important discussion of the audience's perspectives of Muslims and Islam in the media and their reactions to their experience. Emerging clearly are a number of issues related to current media practices, including the importance of media on daily lived experiences, and the negotiation of meaning by participants in their media practices. Often the dominant issues in the news are Muslim terrorism and violence. This is consequently considered to be an important subject among the participants, and that is commensurable with their responses during the focus groups. Missing for far too many participants were immediate relevance and greater diversity of images. News media engages when it makes connections to the participants' everyday lives. However, this doesn't explain the association with terror and violence as so few participants are exposed to this on a daily basis. However, the relevance may be the perceived threat of death rather than the real experience of violence. Yet, the success of certain images must rest on information production(s) that create meaning through immediate, transparent and unquestionable mechanisms.

The emphasis on certain aspects of Islam over others in media discourse, is akin to introducing a game but only sharing some of the rules before playing. The findings of this research would suggest that individuals define Islam and Muslims for themselves and negotiate the meanings of media reports to be commensurable with their personal paradigm. Vital to any such paradigm would be a component that allowed for the incorporation of new experiences and for the relatability to one's existing social network(s).

From the participants' perspective, such an element is essential to constructing a thread between Muslims in the news and the 'real' world of Muslims and Islam, endowing the subject with the relevant information. The data here suggest that current media reports are both insufficiently varied and in turn offer legitimacy to certain extreme points of view. The unintended effect of television news in particular is the elimination of anything extraneous or of a time-consuming nature such as placing news in an historical context or offering opportunities for discussion. Yet, it is exactly these components that are necessary for audiences. In such circumstances, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the imposition of such mediacratic practices is simply harming the long-term image of Muslims in Britain and abroad.

Moreover, in an age where society increasingly places a premium on the cognitive abilities of a person to retrieve, sort and sift information, it is problematic that media practices continue to place an emphasis on lower order abilities or simply the absorption of information rather than critically assessing the information and its source. The data supports to some extent the idea that Islamophobic media lead to Islamophobic acts in that those who are considering Islamophobic acts or ideologies are given material to support their views. However, there is no evidence to support the idea that Islamophobic media content forces people to commit Islamophobic acts. In addition, the data merely confirms previous research findings about participants' views

and attitudes towards Muslims and Islam, albeit using a different methodology.[659] Likewise, it confirms the value and significance to participants of the opportunity to experience and appraise media portrayals with physical phenomena first-hand.

The issue of repetition also needs to be addressed. The asymmetry of power between media institutions and individual actors and the nature of the subject means that many topics will be revisited. In addition, there is good evidence that media narratives are still failing to recognise the diversity of Muslims and Islam. What is needed are enriched media narratives in a more complex and sophisticated form.

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[659] Marco Cinnirella

Section I.   Participant Voices

The data provided by the focus groups will be discussed allowing for the opportunity to establish differences across regions and locations. Seeing similarities in responses in Birmingham and Newcastle or differences between Blackburn and Luton could provide information worthy of consideration. The most common themes will be discussed in order to compare findings and discuss the information that participants took from the media material. This will allow for an analysis of the material and allow for the researcher to establish whether the information discussed in the focus groups is the result of the prompts or whether it is the result of external forces. This will in turn allow the researcher to gauge the role of the media within the discussion of Islam and Muslims in Britain. The largest differences found in the focus groups' findings with regards to Islam and Muslims can be summarized under (1) Regional differences and (2) Ideological outlooks.

This correlates with previous research that suggests that the traditional political divide of "left-wing" vs "right-wing" is complemented by additional lines of divide made up according to opinions held on aspects of immigration, security, and fiscal policy for example.[660] However, these aspects that create new subgroups and form individual political outlooks are strongly linked to social class, gender, and values.[661] However, the values and views of individuals correlate heavily to their social environment[662], meaning that regional differences play a big role in this study because in the UK it affects people's socio-economic position disproportionately, and in turn people build up an ideological outlook that is the result of their social class, gender, and values etc. This relates to media in the following way:

> Audience research on the consumption of Dallas, in different cultural contexts, far from demonstrating any automatic 'media effects', has tended, rather, to demonstrate that viewers from different cultural backgrounds 'read' the programme in quite different ways, depending on their own cultural contexts.[663]

As the citation mentions for the programme *Dallas,* so a similar effect can be seen for the consumption of news reports. People negotiate media reports to fit their existing (cultural) narrative. Media discourse and narratives influence what topics people associate with Islam and Muslims. These reports do not directly influence how participants think about a given subject but they do set the agenda and influence what people

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[660] Elchardus, M., "Autonome Volgzaamheid," in *Kiezen Voor De Kudde. Lichte Gemeenschappen En De Nieuwe Meerderheid*, ed. Duyvendak, J. W. and Hurenkamp, M. (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2004), 206.
[661] Elchardus, M., ed. *Zonder Maskers. Een Actueel Portret Van Jongeren En Hun Leraren*, Globe, Gent (1999); Stevens, F., "Gemaakte Keuzes? Een Analyse Van De Muziek-En Mediaprefrenties Van Vlaamse Jongeren," *Sociologische Gids* 48/2 (2001); Derks, A., *Individualisme Zonder Verhaal: Een Onderzoek Naar De Verspreiding En De Betekenis Van Individualistische Vertogen in Vlaanderen* (Brussels: VUB Press, 2000); Derks, A., "Progressief of Populistisch? De Economische Attitudes Van Sociaal Zwakke Categorieën Nader Onderzocht," *Sociologische gids* 48/3 (2001); Elchardus, M., "Verschillende Werelden. Over De Ontdubbeling Van Links En Rechts," *Samenleving en politiek* 1/7 (1994).
[662] Elchardus, M., "Autonome Volgzaamheid," 205.
[663] Morley, D. and Robins, K., *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, 126.

think about, the role of the media as an institution of authority sets the parameters of acceptability. Media discourse sets the boundaries of acceptable discourse, including which alternative views and opinions may be held (which may necessarily be illegitimate); however, the appearance of certain views and opinions in the news makes them gain legitimacy and traction. It also marginalises alternative views and thus the mediacracy of the British mediascape is evidenced.

There were two focus groups that took place in Birmingham. These focus groups were segregated along gender lines in order to gauge whether gender made a difference in the discussion of Muslims and Islam. The following table shows a split according to age of the participants.

		The gender of the respondent		
		Male	Female	Queer
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	1	1	0
	30-39	5	2	1
	40-49	3	2	0
	50-59	4	1	0

Table 16:Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Birmingham Focus groups

The participants in the focus groups were of about an equal split among age groups. This was good in order to gauge opinions across generations. It also meant that the researcher could analyse to what extent personal experiences [assuming older individuals have had more] affect the process of media interpretation.

		The gender of the respondent		
		Male	Female	Other
How often do you read a newspaper?	Daily	9	3	1
	3-5 Days a week	2	0	0
	1-3 Days a week	1	2	0
	Never	1	0	0

Table 17: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Birmingham Focus groups

What is interesting from the table above is that reading a newspaper is more common among the male participants than the female participants. It also shows that it is a ritualistic act, often occurring frequently and at regular times. The same can be said for television viewing in the table below; however, here the female participants' exhibit behaviour in a similar vein to the male participants.

		The gender of the respondent.		
		Male	Female	Other
How often do you watch the news on television?	Daily	10	5	1
	3-5 Days a week	1	1	0
	1-3 Days a week	1	0	0
	Never	1	0	0

Table 18: Television News Consumption of Participants in Birmingham Focus groups

There was one focus group that took place in Blackburn and was only open to men; the following table shows a split according to age of the participants.

		Total
	18-29	4
Age Bracket the	30-39	1
Respondent Belongs to	50-59	1
	60+	2

Table 19: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Blackburn Focus Group

The participants in the focus groups again were balanced among age groups. This meant it was possible to gauge opinions across generations and allow older individuals to engage with younger participants in discussing the media prompts.

		Total
	3-5 Days a week	1
How often do you read a	Monthly	2
newspaper?	Never	3
Total		6

Table 20: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Blackburn Focus Group

What is noticeable here is that not everyone read a newspaper but that newspaper consumption was also quite low. This was different with television news as the table shows below. Television news consumption was a more regular occurrence but not in the same numbers as in Birmingham.

		Total
	Daily	1
How often do you watch	3-5 Days a week	6
the news on television?	Never	1

Table 21: Television News Consumption of Participants in Blackburn Focus Group

There was one focus group that took place in Bradford and this was open to any members of the public. The following table shows a split per age of the participants and although the balance may be shifted towards participants being a little on the older side there seems to be a plurality of ages present.

		The gender of the respondent	
		Male	Female
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	0	1
	30-39	1	0
	40-49	3	1
	50-59	2	1
	60+	2	1
Total		8	4

Table 22: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Bradford Focus group.

What was noticeable of the focus group in Bradford is that not everyone read a newspaper regularly but that it also was quite like the television news consumption, as the tables below show. Television news consumption was a more regular event.

		The gender of the respondent	
		Male	Female
How often do you read a newspaper?	3-5 Days a week	2	0
	1-3 Days a week	5	2
	Monthly	0	1
	Never	1	1

Table 23: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Bradford Focus group

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you watch the news on television?	3-5 Days a week	3	3
	1-3 Days a week	4	0
	Monthly	0	1
	Never	1	0

Table 24: Television News Consumption of Participants in Bradford Focus group

There was only one focus group in Durham. This focus group was mixed along gender lines and all participants were students. Due to Durham being a large university and dominating the town in many ways. It is obvious that there is more diversity brought by international students. Muslims make up a part of this student community but it is nowhere near the size of cities like Blackburn or Luton. However, for many of the participants there is some interaction with Muslims which was not present in the other focus groups. This is either because they share classes or because they are members of the same colleges. In addition, Durham University offers a wide variety of extra-curricular activities that are open to everyone and it is within that context that interaction is also mentioned. The participants in the focus groups were mostly male but this could be the result of the researcher being male and therefore being able to gather support easier among peer groups mostly involving men. The fact that most participants were young and Durham students allows for this focus group to inform the researcher about opinions across generations but also about students, and the class background and strategic aims and goals that Durham students have as an elite university in Britain.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	7	3
	30-39	1	0
Total		8	3

Table 25: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Durham Focus group

Whilst the newspaper readership of Durham students is in keeping with national averages and would suggest that the students wished to remain aware of what is going on in news.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you read a newspaper?	Daily	3	0
	1-3 Days a week	1	1
	Monthly	2	1
	Never	2	1

Table 26: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Durham Focus group

Television was a high scorer as with other groups. This is somewhat interesting given that one would assume that most students didn't have access to a television in their room. This also shows the influence of streaming broadcasts online and that people try to access the news on televisions in common rooms in their college for example.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you watch the news on television?	Daily	3	1
	3-5 Days a week	5	2

Table 27: Television News Consumption of Participants in Durham Focus group

Leicester had two focus groups. These focus groups were segregated along gender lines to gauge whether gender made a difference in the discussion of Muslims and Islam. This adds an important layer to the analysis because Leicester is one of the cities in Britain with a large South Asian population but majority are Hindu and not Muslim. The Muslims in Leicester are not only South Asian but there is also a large Somalian community in Leicester for example.

		The gender of the respondent.		
		Male	Female	Queer
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	2	2	1
	30-39	4	6	0
	40-49	2	0	0
	50-59	0	1	0
	60+	0	1	0
Total		8	10	1

Table 28: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Leicester Focus groups

The participants in the focus groups were of about an equal split among age groups. This was good to gauge opinions across generations. It also meant that the researcher could analyse to what extent personal experiences [assuming older individuals have had more] affect the process of media interpretation.

		The gender of the respondent.		
		Male	Female	Other
How often do you read a newspaper?	Daily	1	6	0
	3-5 Days a week	2	1	0
	1-3 Days a week	2	1	0
	Monthly	0	1	1
	Never	3	1	0
Total		8	10	1

Table 29: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Leicester Focus groups

The participants here followed the trend to be a mix of newspaper readers and television news viewers. However, what is interesting is that six of the female participants responded to reading the newspaper every day and a further six females watch television news every day. Now it is the case that those that watch television news daily do not read the newspaper daily (in general) it is either/or however in this case we have two individuals who not only read the newspaper everyday but also watch the television news every day. Even more interesting is that these individuals were not pensioners or unemployed and therefore consumed news in order to fill their day.

		The gender of the respondent.		
		Male	Female	Other
How often do you watch the news on television?	Daily	3	6	0
	3-5 Days a week	2	2	0
	1-3 Days a week	1	1	1
	Never	2	1	0

Table 30: Television News Consumption of Participants in Leicester Focus groups

The Luton focus group was made up of nine Male and two Female participants.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	1	1
	30-39	4	1
	40-49	2	0
	50-59	2	0
Total		9	2

Table 31: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Luton Focus group

The participants in this focus group were of variety of age groups. This was good to gauge interactions between different ages. It also meant that the researcher could analyse to what extent personal experiences [assuming older individuals have had more] affect the process of media interpretation, but more importantly to what extent those experiences would be: (1) relatable to others, and (2) influential to others. The

newspaper readership and television viewership was comparable with the data provided in the other focus groups.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you read a newspaper?	Daily	7	0
	3-5 Days a week	2	2

Table 32: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Luton Focus group

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you watch the news on television?	Daily	1	0
	3-5 Days a week	6	2
	1-3 Days a week	2	0

Table 33: Television News Consumption of Participants in Luton Focus Group

Newcastle had two focus groups. These focus groups were also separated along gender lines to gauge whether gender made a difference in the discussion of Muslims and Islam. The aim here was to gauge whether limited to no exposure to Muslims (as is the case with most people living in the Northeast of England) was the reason for differences among data provided in the focus groups when compared with other single-gender focus groups.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	1	1
	30-39	2	5
	40-49	4	1
	50-59	1	1
	60+	1	0
Total		9	8

Table 34: Age Breakdown and Gender of Participants in Newcastle Focus groups

The argument here is that in areas with little to no exposure to Muslims, the importance of news the increases as a source of information. This would allow the researcher to explore to what extent, and why, media narratives are transferred to the consumer.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you read a newspaper?	3-5 Days a week	1	2
	1-3 Days a week	1	3
	Monthly	2	1
	Never	3	1
Total		7	7

Table 35: Newspaper Consumption of Participants in Newcastle Focus group

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you watch the news on television?	Daily	1	4
	3-5 Days a week	7	0
	1-3 Days a week	0	2
	Monthly	0	1
	Never	1	1

Table 36: Television News Consumption of Participants in Newcastle Focus Group

To complement the other research participants, veterans of the Afghanistan or Iraq war were sought out. This was done using a gatekeeper the researcher knows personally. The result was that six Afghanistan war veterans volunteered to share their experiences and feelings in a location near Cambridge. The aim of this was to see if those who had been in direct conflict with Islamic militants interpreted news reports in a manner that was different to the public and if it was affected by their experiences of conflict.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
Age Bracket the Respondent Belongs to	18-29	3	0
	30-39	1	2
Total		4	2

Table 37: Age Breakdown and Gender of Veteran Military Participants

The focus group was not segregated but participants were required to have served in at least one tour of duty. The reason being that if one has experienced violence, death, military conflict with Muslim militants, how does that affect the interpretation of news material about that conflict, Muslims, and Islam in general.

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
	3-5 Days a week	2	1
	1-3 Days a week	2	0
	Monthly	0	1

Table 38: Newspaper Consumption of Veteran Military Participants

		The gender of the respondent.	
		Male	Female
How often do you watch the news on television?	3-5 Days a week	4	2

Table 39: Television News Consumption of Veteran Military Participants

In the preceding pages, it has been shown that media consumption for the participants is still a routine activity and is a positive experience rather than a chore. People want to be informed. Their descriptions of their consumption practices border on entertainment-linked values, yet news consumption is seen as a civic duty. A regular comment from participants was that it was important to remain informed and that quality reporting is demanded, and often assumed to be given by national newspapers.

The inability to remember sources for news stories or to distinguish between sources when asked suggests that there is not as much difference between the sources as media sources would like their consumers to

think, i.e., the editorial lines of the newspapers when it comes to the discussion of Islam and Muslims are largely similar. However, there is a bias among participants as to which source is preferred for them to consume. This suggests that although the content or discourse might not differ much on this one topic, the preferences as to which source people consume, is still affected by personal choice and rationalisation.

From a consumer perspective, it appears that critical abstraction is not a primary activity, and this makes it hard for participants to avoid stereotyping and generalising. As news consumption is not seen as a formal activity but rather a casual one (like the entertainment values mentioned above), the information put forth by the media institutions is not analysed, but rather uncritically internalised. During the internalisation process, the negotiations of media prompts are mediated by personal contact experiences; i.e., people with contact discuss Muslims on a much more personal level. People with no personal contact can only engage with the subject of Muslims or Islam through the media prompts. Abstract thought about Islam and Muslims remained a difficult thing for most participants and that was mainly the result of a lack of information. Therefore, the media prompts became a much more important source of information and it was only through the information provided in the media prompts that people could discuss Islam and Muslims. These further highlight this effect of the media, for the prompts influenced not only *what* participants talked about but also *how* they discussed it as well.

A strong finding from this research is that neither the need for repetition, nor the distinction between a diverse corpus of Muslims and divergent Islam(s) is self-evident to participants. The apparent simple repetition of a topic, which fails to build and develop an audience's knowledge, has the potential to alienate many viewers. It does so because while it reinforces certain views of Islam and Muslims, it also makes the consumer feel like they have heard this already and that it is not adding anything new to the discussion. In the longer term, it begs the question whether news is best disseminated in the current manner. An alternative would be to cover fewer topics in more depth, eliminating some of the potential for repetition. The disparity between broadcasting epistemology and audience epistemology, and the lack of time for a broader range of reports, suggests that media practitioners should revisit aspects of the existing paradigm. Particularly for television it is imperative that the system should accurately reflect the intentions of both the broadcaster and the receiver for successful communication.

The other message apparent in this data is that there is an increasing plethora of prescribed reports. This suggests that the provision of a critical overview is removed from the reporting process. Given this situation, the data in this study show that the limited scope of reporting on Islam and Muslims is reflected in the views of the participants. A concern is that the negative media reports translate to experiences, including possible disenchantment with political authority, and its use to legitimise islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-Muslim violence by some of the participants. Simultaneously, the national narrative which is defined as being exclusive and 'not for everyone' is problematic in an era where plurality of ethnicities, religions and other

markers is increasing. Issues such as genetic modification of foods, global warming and others are comparatively silenced in relation to the media attention given to Muslims. Islam is only mentioned in relation to the political and moral dilemmas confronting British society today, and the disengagement or disenchantment of certain segments of society may increase the separation that exists in society today. This could have a knock-on effect for British society, where it might lead to the rejection of society by certain individuals, or it might be used to support placing limits on freedoms that are currently enjoyed by people. This could have potentially harmful outcomes for people in general, but more likely for minority groups.

The issue of training came up in the discussion with military veterans and this seems to suggest a key formation process.

> Harry, 30: "That is why people getting deployed in Afghanistan get an Afghani cultural course. They learn things like what hand signals to use and avoid. No thumbs up for example as it means fuck you [group chuckles]. And no sign for ok [circling your index finger and thumb] because that means you are gay. When you first get out there you think what a strange thing to be told and you catch the odd child making those signs at you as you drive by on convoy or patrol. But it's all about making a good impression. Soldiers get cultural code courses and courses about the Koran to help with this."

However, despite the MOD making efforts to inform and train the men and women they deploy, none of the other participants made a mention of their educational background. Whilst it may not have come to mind, be deemed relevant, or have another reason, I am somewhat surprised that out of over a hundred participants no one made an explicit mention of anything they learned in school or at university. This means that whilst education institutions are forming their pupils and staff, they are not explicitly mentioned as an information source on media, Islam and Muslims. Like some of the literature on this subject suggests, this is the result of out of date curricula on the makeup of contemporary Britain, contemporary media practices, and the multicultural makeup of Britain.[664]

Whilst there were no great discernible differences between genders in the focus group discussions. The main difference centred on the identification with female subjects by female participants, and narratives of patriarchy and misogynism by male participants. For example:

> Elizabeth, 68, Bradford: "Veiling is bad and it's not even Koranic. It breeds hostility, isolates women from society and interaction."

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[664] Cole, M., "'Rule Britannia'and the New American Empire: A Marxist Analysis of the Teaching of Imperialism, Actual and Potential, in the British School Curriculum," *Policy Futures in Education* 2/3-4 (2004); Quartermaine, A., "Discussing Terrorism: A Pupil-Inspired Guide to Uk Counter-Terrorism Policy Implementation in Religious Education Classrooms in England."; Gillborn, D., "Citizenship,'Race'and the Hidden Curriculum," *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 2/1 (1992); Lewis, B., *Raising Children in a Digital Age: Enjoying the Best, Avoiding the Worst*.

Vivienne, 66, Leicester: "The reason people wear the burkha or veil is not because of a free choice but because someone somewhere is telling them to wear it."

Al , 45, Bradford: "I agree and Islam is oppressive to all especially women and gays. Too many veils especially young and unmarried women. Hair and face mean more to a woman than anything else. You never hit a woman in the face."

Peter, 48, Leicester: "I refused to provide medication to a woman in burkha once because I could not see her face, even though she had a prescription for her small child (who was not present). I don't approve of the burkha. It is a sign of oppression and it's unBritish."

Personal exposure and engagement is not necessarily a solution. People with negative personal experiences find it hard to consider positives. However, people with no personal experiences are still able to consider positives and hold positive opinions. This is dependent on existing values and how the individual negotiates the information and experiences with and about Muslims and Islam into their own frame of reference. However, for those with limited exposure to Muslims, their input(s) into the discussions were supported by media vocabulary, i.e., they talked about Muslims using the words the prompts had provided rather than in their own words. Participants with personal experiences, however, used media inputs that were much more linked to their personal experiences and offered a narrative to think through and to share with others their views. This all further highlights the fact that news media consumption is often a social activity and is watched, discussed and shared with others, in a family setting, at work or in other private or public spaces. In this way, the influence of the media coverage of Islam and Muslims is tangible beyond the immediate receiver.

I.I Regional differences

Although socio-economic status is known to be a confounder in studies of social values.[665] Participants belonging to different social classes seemed to converge on certain opinions of Islam and Muslims although the reasons for doing so are different, and their ability to articulate it may differ too. Four points need to be kept in mind in order to understand variations between the classes. Some researchers state that lower-class culture has distinct values and forms of social organization.[666] Therefore can we see that different classes place different values on religious practices. Other analysts suggest that differing levels of parental involvement affects the development of certain values.[667] Some research participants have mentioned that they sense (institutional) discrimination, claiming that they make people or families belonging to a certain class or group feel more welcome than others.[668] Other scholars maintain that institutional differentiation, particularly the role of authority and leadership, is a critical determinant for the practice of, evaluation of, and involvement in religious life.[669] Another perspective for understanding these variation in values draws on the work of Bourdieu and the concept of cultural capital.[670] Literature on family life suggests that differences in social class are the result of differences in social networks, leisure time, and childrearing activities.[671] As an individual's social practices draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources available to him or her. Bourdieu suggests that the socio-cultural experiences present in the home facilitate an adjustment to the sociocultural environment, thereby transforming cultural resources into cultural capital.[672] This suggests that social class and the culture associated with that class and becomes a form of cultural capital through which individuals engage others.[673] Therefore although people who differ in class may share certain values, their social location leads them to construct and utilise different means of engaging and living those values.

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[665] Kraus, M. W. et al., "Social Class, Solipsism, and Contextualism: How the Rich Are Different from the Poor," *Psychological review* 119/3 (2012): 547.

[666] Jones, O., *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class* (Verso Books, 2012).

[667] Nelson, L. J., "The Role of Parents in the Religious and Spiritual Development of Emerging Adults," *Emerging Adults' Religiousness and Spirituality: Meaning-Making in an Age of Transition* (2014).

[668] Hirschman, C., "The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States," *International Migration Review* 38/3 (2004).

[669] Luckmann, T., *The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society* (New York - London: The Macmillan Company - Collier-Macmillan LTD., 1967).

[670] Bourdieu, P., "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, ed. Karabel, J. and Halsey, A. H. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Bourdieu, P., *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.-C., *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.*, trans. Nice, R. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977).

[671] Bott, E., *Family and Social Networks* (New York: Free Press, 1971); Kohn, M. L., *Class and Conformity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

[672] Bourdieu, P., "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction."; Bourdieu, P., *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

[673] Bourdieu, P., "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction."; Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.-C., *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*; Bourdieu, P., *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Nice, R. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

The differences between the people living in different regions of England, can be partly explained by their local context and the presence of Muslims within that context. For example, there are Islamic or oriental effects noticeable in Bradford, in such things as house architecture and there is some observable ethnic segregation. However, this could be explained by other reasons and religious or ethnic overtones need not be the case. Linguistically Bradford offers an interesting case, as some signs have Urdu on them, such as the picture below.

Figure 18: Picture taken of Morley Street Resource Centre in Bradford showing both English and Urdu on the signs

With signposts being in Urdu it suggests that enough people are unable to communicate in English in order to require signposting in Urdu. It is also important to mention that the signpost here is for social services, especially the social services that may cater to those with a disability, or the suffering the effect of ageing. Not all signposting is in two languages. Traffic or road signs are only in English for example. The possibility for people to have a lack of ability in English and a large enough constituency speaking a community tongue make it necessary to have signposting as above. However, the linguistic aspect has led to critique and division. There are those who feel that in England all signposts must be in English and some went further and equated the Urdu translation to Arabic and thought this was an example of 'creeping sharia'. However, in Wales signposts are in both Welsh and English, and there are areas that have signposts in Polish for example.[674] There are other areas where signposting caters to other minority groups such as information tables that have their writing in Braille for example. However, it does raise questions related to place and privilege among other South Asian communities whose community language (Hindi, Bengali etc.) was not on signposts. Even if in some areas, they are an equally large group.

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[674] Diez, T., "Speaking Europe, Drawing Boundaries: Reflections on the Role of Discourse in Eu Foreign Policy and Identity." Or Hull, L., "Signs of the Times - How Polish Drivers Are Kept on Track in Cheshire", (*Daily Mail*, 15 February), http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-436334/Signs-times--Polish-drivers-kept-track-Cheshire.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

The focus groups offered some important distinctions. As individuals who lived in areas with little Muslims living there (Durham and Newcastle), provided different responses to individuals living in areas with a high number of Muslims (Blackburn and Bradford for example). Most noticeable distinction was the ability to engage the subject matter beyond media narratives. People who have experiences with Muslims will often refer to those experiences (positively or negatively) in their engagement with media reports. However, those with little to no experiences respond to media reports about Muslims and Islam through the interpretation they have of the report. For example:

> Researcher: "Do you think Muslims in Britain are a big problem?"
>
> Alex, 40, Newcastle: "Yes"
>
> Researcher: "Why do you think that? Have you had problems with Muslims?"
>
> Alex: "Well no, but you are always reading or seeing about the problems. If it wasn't important then the news wouldn't be talking about it. Always they are talking about Muslims on the television and in the newspapers."
>
> Ian, 58: "Yeah, and enough must be true. People wouldn't report things that were not true. In the Middle East it is always war, it's not surprising it makes people violent and hate each other."
>
> Researcher: "But do you think Islam is the reason for it?"
>
> Brett, 30: "Maybe sometimes, but they still have to kill non-believers and so anyone who doesn't believe what they believe needs to be killed."
>
> Billy, 18: "And that is what is happening here. They come over here and try to convert us; if we don't then they get really aggressive."
>
> Researcher: "Has that happened to you?"
>
> Billy: "When I go out in Newcastle it is not a problem, we don't have Muslims here, but my cousin is a student in Leeds and when he goes out there it's always a problem. Always having fights."
>
> Researcher: "Do you think that Muslims and non-Muslims are too different to ever be able to live together peacefully?
>
> Billy: "For some maybe, but if they come here and integrate and behave like us then there is no problem."
>
> Ian: "The problem is they come here and want that we do things differently."
>
> Brett: "They want us to change our culture but we can't tell them to change theirs."

As the above quote highlights, news brings to attention issues in the country, and when that is framed within an overarching system of discourse, demanding assimilation from immigrants to Britain, the responses are understandable. Simultaneously, the social constructions of the discourse are highlighted by references to experiences. Whilst these experiences were not even lived by the participants, the responses highlight the authority of experience over knowledge. As information sourced from the media report, was deemed

accurate because it was perceived corroborated by experiences known to the participants. The focus group involving military veterans offered another layer to this.

> Noel, 29: "News reporting is like Blinkering. Think of perceptions of plane crashes versus car crashes. More people die in car crashes than plane crashes in a year. But we think of flying as more dangerous. It's all about perception and focus."
>
> Emma, 32: "But army training is drilling into you a particular way to look at things"
>
> Researcher: "But does that not make it difficult to work with Muslims or to see them in any other way than a threat?"
>
> Georgina, 32: "In training it's all about everyone is 'out to get you'. It takes a few weeks to months to get to see that 99% of people are normal."
>
> Oliver, 25: "Muslims in Afghanistan are friendly but in London no one is friendly let alone Muslims."
>
> Noel: "Muslims in London are just trying to get by in an oppressive environment. In Afghanistan for many they see you as a friendly group trying to help them create a better environment for them and the future."

The military veterans were aware of their experiences, but since they received a lot of training, they could contextualise and articulate their experiences. Further supporting this thesis that the discourse(s) participants are exposed to forms their engagement in social settings.

I.II   Ideological outlooks

The presence of South Asian immigrants in cities such as Leicester and Bradford is seen in shops or businesses, restaurant or food stores, banks, theatre et cetera. With the various ethnic and religious groups, large enough to sustain its own local economy and be a self-sufficient community. Therefore, it was interesting to notice that there was little intermingling among south Asians themselves. Here it appears ethnic, linguistic and religious ties bonded people together that were hard to transcend. Not to mention geo-politics affecting the local context. This was most obvious when in one street there were two Kashmiri restaurants almost opposite each other in the street. One was an Indian Kashmiri restaurant and the other a Pakistani Kashmiri restaurant and the white stripes of the road marked the border. There seemed to be little tension between the two restaurants (in stark contrast to the geo-political situation) yet neither would engage with the other and they both seemed to cater almost solely to their own ethno-linguistic community. The only exceptions to this were the occasional non-South Asian who went into one of their restaurants seemingly unaware of their differences. Another example of Muslim permeation into the city is the location of the universities' catholic chaplaincy in Bradford. The chaplaincy is only open at select times and there is only one for both Bradford University and Bradford College. The location of the chaplaincy is next to a Muslim community college near the town centre.

Although for many people, the collective of Muslims may contain a separate category for people of different heritage such as Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi origin, but all are similar because of their religious persuasion. This was even the case in the focus groups that contained participants from minority ethnic groups. For example:

> Josh, 36, Leicester: "The Somalis are psycho. Really violent and unpredictable. That's what you get with Muslims."

But it can cut both ways:

> Bindra, 53, Bradford: "I have no contact with Muslims, but religion or religious people are good people. Religion leads to good citizens. That is said in all religions. You must be kind and good etc."

Whilst in the first example, Josh was speaking from personal experience (although negative), Bindra was speaking about her understanding of Muslims, based on an ideological outlook. Both examples, support the argument that a person's outlook on a subject (in this case Muslims and Islam in the news), affects the way they engage that subject. This is also exhibited by examples such as from Christy in Birmingham, who shows that ideological views on crime for example, further inform articles about Muslims in the British press, when there is a disproportionate amount of coverage of Muslims as criminals or delinquents.

Christy, 44, Birmingham: "I did not think it was right. He broke the law and should be deported to where he came from. If he then would have problems there then that is his problem and he should have thought about that before he broke our laws. However, he is spared because of his 'human rights' [mimicking quotation marks] and now get to stay here. I mean look at that guy [pointing to prompt #2], why should we have to pay for this dickhead?"

Researcher: "So you mean people who would be killed or face violence in their home country should be deported?"

Christy: "Yes. That would stop them from breaking our laws. We should be tough on crime."

The identification of participants with a character or narrative in a story involves mediation, "an interpretation of the ideology articulated by textual subjects through the categories of understanding [that constitute] the extra-textual viewer".[675] The way participants interpreted and identified narratives in media, and about the role of the news is exhibited in a variety of ways by the participants. For example:

Elizabeth, 68, Bradford: "Islam is peaceful. The violence is committed by a few extremists who use the religion to justify their actions."

Arthur, 25, Durham: "The media coverage is damaging and irresponsible. There is no difference between television and newspapers. But the news just reports what the government and the security services want us to think. We are all manipulated to do what the government wants through their propaganda. Look at the Iraq War!"

Yet in stories about Islam and Muslims, there seems to be a strong identification of ethnicity, country of heritage or origin, and Islam, and makes it difficult for consumers to make alternative identifications. The parameters for media interpretation are set by three items, each influenced by discourses and ideology. Firstly, the understanding a participant has of the media source, this is further influenced by the ideology, narratives, and discourses about the media source. Someone who trusts the source is likely to approach its information differently to someone who has a distrust of the source. For example:

Justin, 38 Luton: "Yes of course. It is there to inform us and it helps to keep us safe and aware of what's going on. They wouldn't broadcast it if it was not true."

Secondly, the understanding a person has of the subject matter discussed in the media report. As the example involving Christy above highlights; the interpretation of a story about a Muslim individual involved in a deportation case, is as much the product of one's opinion of Muslims and Islam as it is one's perception and opinion of crime. These are inevitably formed by a variety of information sources and knowledge

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[675] Wilson, T., *Watching Television: Hermeneutics, Reception, and Popular Culture*, 63.

practices. Thirdly, the way that a participant interprets news reports is also based on the report itself. The way that a story covers a subject is also influential on how a subject interprets the information provided. Much like the way subjects were questioned in Elizabeth Loftus' study[676], the aesthetic and linguistic elements that make up a story influence the interpretation. The choice of image or vocabulary in publications are the result of ideological and discursive choices made by the news outlet. This can be seen in participant responses in the following way:

> Researcher: "Do you think these are accurate depictions of Islam?"
>
> Steve, 45, Birmingham: "Yes! British Muslims look like that."
>
> Researcher: "What do you mean?"
>
> Steve: "I mean they have a beard and wear, you know, a dressy-thingy [pointing at the salwar kameez]".

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[676] Loftus, E. F., "Leading Questions and the Eyewitness Report," *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975).

Section II.   Hermeneutics and the negotiation of meaning in media reports

According to the trope of media as text, the only way we can make sense of the world is through the use of language, and language can operate only through texts of mediation. A major approach to thinking about media, therefore, has been through the theorization and study of texts and textual practice. In a discursive approach, this involves more than just deciphering overt content. In its broadest use, a media text is any signifying structure that uses cultural signs and codes to convey or evoke shared meaning.[677]

Meaning is not determined by media products or messages; rather, it is the consequence of their appropriation by the consumer. This appropriation may lead to the creation of what Hepp calls media cultures which are constituted by media products as resources of meaning.[678]

Media producers may tend to use well-known formulas and symbols so that the text will be intelligible to a mass audience without great difficulty, interpretations vary a great deal because each member of the audience is a complex composite of cultural identities and can call on very diverse repertoires of interpretative codes.[679]

Yet in the age of global information technology, events that are reported in one location are potentially available in other locations around the globe. This is a product of what Kraidy calls the hybridity of media texts.[680] This greatly increases the diversity of interpretative frameworks for a given product, but it reduces the diversity of the products. The various events reported in different instances in the media, affect not only the receiver and the perception he or she has of the item described in the report, this receiver also has been affected by the existence of that medium in the first place. As a result of the coverage an item has received an opinion is formed, but simultaneously that opinion is formed in conjunction with how an audience interacts with the institution of media. Kraidy also suggests that the product that is broadcast is the result of its ability to be broadcast in a number of different contexts without requiring alteration. Therefore, with the increase of satellite television and 24/7 news networks, what is important is not only their mechanical reproduction (as we saw earlier), but the fact that the same media report can generate meaning in a host of different contexts. This means that Armstrong's observation, "*the media have their own agenda, and by their*

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[677] Horsfield, P., "Media as Culture, Media as Industries, Media as Text, Media as Technologies," 118.
[678] Hepp, A., *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge, UK - Oxford, UK - Boston, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 70.
[679] White, R. A., "Religion and Media in the Construction of Cultures," in *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Hoover, S. M. and Lundby, K. (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 49.
[680] Kraidy, M., *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, 4-14.

targeting of issues can "make" a problem[681]*,* is not only the case in the local context of the broadcast but increasingly in the global context.

There is a need for clarifying the relationship between the processing, developing and transferring of information and knowledge at this point. This relates to the research question in the following way: in trying to establish the manner by which Islam and Muslims portrayed in the media are interpreted, it is important to define how the information shared by the media is transferred to the receiving agent. In doing so the work of Michael Polanyi is elucidating. Karl-Erik Sveiby, states that Michael Polanyi's concept of knowledge rested on the following three principles. [682]

1. True discovery, cannot be accounted for by a set of articulated rules or algorithms.
2. Knowledge is public and also to a very great extent personal (i.e., it is constructed by humans and therefore contains emotions, 'passion').
3. *The knowledge that underlies the explicit knowledge is more fundamental; all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge.

With these three criteria I will approach the research question. Because ultimately the research question is concerned with how Muslims and Islam (focal knowledge[683]) is constituted by (news) media reports (as tacit knowledge[684]). If we follow the logic of Michael Polanyi's thought on the issue, the following elements will need to be considered: the media report, the representation it offers and the experiences involved. In following Michael Polanyi, we can see that a receiving agent in trying to balance those three elements is required to make judgements.

> The outcome cannot be predicted from the previous use of language, for it may involve a decision to correct, or otherwise to modify, the use of language. On the other hand, we may decide instead to persist in our previous usage and to reinterpret experience in terms of some novel conception suggested by our text, or at least to envisage new problems leading on to a reinterpretation of experience. And in the third place, we may decide to dismiss the text as altogether meaningless.[685]

Thus, if an individual were to be confronted with a media report (video footage or newspaper article, for example) the agent will make judgements based on the relationship between his subjectivity and the object of his focus. If we see personal subjectivity as structures of meaning or tacit knowledge they act as a means to deal with and act on new information or experiences. Couldry describes this as follows:

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[681] Poulton, E., "English Media Representation of Football-Related Disorder: 'Brutal, Short-Hand and Simplifying'?," 32.
[682] Sveiby, K.-E., "Transfer of Knowledge and the Information Processing Professions," *European Management Journal* 14/4 (1996): 380.
[683] *Knowledge about the object or phenomenon that is in focus* ibid.
[684] *Knowledge that is used as a tool to handle or improve what is in focus.* Ibid.
[685] Polanyi, M., *Personal Knowledge* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 95.

Media work, and must work, not merely by transmitting discrete textual units for discrete moments of reception, but through a process of environmental transformation which, in turn, transforms the conditions under which any future media can be produced and understood.[686]

However, Krippendorff notes that "*Common linguistic habits render information as an attribute of messages or data, or as the purpose of human communication – as if information were an objective entity that could be carried from one place to another, purchased, or owned. This conception is seriously misleading*"[687]

Audiences and media producers have done and are continuing to … [add] new materials onto or between the original stories. This is a rapid and ever-changing process. … Narratives do not remain still and are never owned by only one individual, community or institution. They are iterated and amplified in many different forms for numerous ends. … There are times when amplification can both bring a narrative close to audiences and yet distance them from the original story. Narratives are also creatively elaborated on, becoming sites of devotion, celebration, commemoration, persuasion and contest. Narratives are transformed as they are adapted or translated into a new media.[688]

The following section will analyse the media as a text, and relate that to the reception process. Klaus Bruhn Jensen argues, "*Societies come before media as generators of meaning. Meaning flows from existing social institutions and everyday contexts, via media professionals and audiences, to the mass media, not vice versa.*"[689]

"*Hermeneutics in this manner forms an interrogation into the deepest conditions for symbolic interaction and culture in general.*"[690] The human being, is a being in language and culture.[691] It is through language that the world is opened up for us. We learn to know the world by learning to master a language. Hence, we cannot really understand Muslims in Britain unless we understand how it is situated in a linguistically mediated, historical culture. Therefore, we need to engage with the discourse. Interpretations of something reflects our 'prejudices', and as we engage further, our understandings lead to a 'fusion of horizons'. Here our 'prejudices' engage with new information in the production of a more encompassing context of meaning. We gain a deeper understanding of the object we seek to understand, as well as ourselves. However, in order to obtain this fusion of horizons it requires us to engage in an open and productive way. But freedom in a liberal

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[686] Couldry, N., "Mediatization or Mediation? Alternative Understandings of the Emergent Space of Digital Storytelling," *New Media & Society* 10/3 (2008): 380.

[687] Krippendorff, K., "Information," in *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Donsbach, W. (Malden, MA - Oxford, UK - Carlton, Australia: Blackwell, 2008), 2213.& Jensen, K. B., *Media Convergence: The Three Degrees of Network, Mass, and Interpersonal Communication*, 41.

[688] Mitchell, J. P., "Narrative," in *Keywords in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. David, M. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 134-35.

[689] Jensen, K. B., *The Social Semiotics of Mass Communication* (London, UK - Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 61.

[690] Ramberg, B. and Gjesdal, K., "Hermeneutics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Zalta, E. N. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[691] Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*.

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democracy entails that one can choose to be closed and potentially unproductive; this may have a variety of reasons or causes, and could even be a mode or characteristic of resistance. Or as can be seen from the focus group data, a subject may be willing to understand and inform themselves about Islam and Muslims, but the material they are using to constitute their understandings (media reports) are deficient.
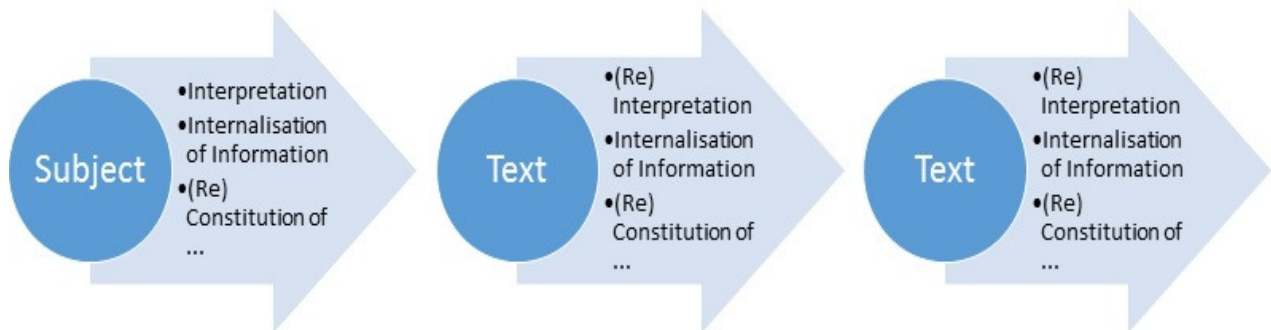

Figure 19: The Never Ending Process of Interpretation

Gadamer developed a method involving a hermeneutic circle where the circularity of all understanding is linked to the presence of flawed (pre) knowledge that enables us to interact with a text, for example, in a way that the reading of the text is always more than can be anticipated. In the process of gaining knowledge, it is forever linked with knowing ourselves, and both are on-going acts of human nature. This process will continue for a lifetime and be an everlasting requirement of the human condition. With a subject being historically conditioned, he is always living in a permanently evolving context. It is in this situation that the subject creates meaning from the world around him. A word does not have a fixed meaning; it is largely dependent on the context. But by approaching an object for interpretation we start by looking at a specific object. This is interpreted in light of the pre-knowledge one has. In turn this definition is placed within the context of all the other elements one has collected. This in turn leads to a personal understanding as the interpretation starts to take shape and form in relation to other items. This process is repeated infinitely, always with additional foreknowledge and new elements to include in the process of interpretation, as Figure 19 illustrates. Gadamer[692] and Heidegger[693] state that the hermeneutical circle has ontological significance, in that it tells us something about the structure of reality as it is. Thus, with the historical nature of humankind and Gadamer's understanding of the hermeneutical circle, it is crucial that our temporal existence is taken into account. No interpretation is the finished article. Interpretation is a never-ending requirement of life and whilst the interpretation might change, the act of interpreting is something humans will do, and are required to do for all time, in order to construct meaning into their existence. However, as Charles Taylor adds:

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[692] Ibid.

[693] Heidegger, M., *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (Bloomington, ID: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Ultimately good explanation is one which makes sense of the behaviour; but then to appreciate a good explanation, one has to agree what makes good sense; what makes good sense is a function of one's readings; and these in turn are based on the kind of sense one understands.[694]

In contemporary Britain, what seems to be a good explanation of things or what makes sense is often a spoon-fed reproduction of mediacratic values. This raises questions about the ability and or willingness of people to be critical, and agents of their own norms and values. Subjective meanings are constructed personally, socially and increasingly mediacratically. This is constituted by what Rosenberg describes as three forms of affective experience: affective traits, moods, and emotions.[695] Rosenberg defined *affective traits* as a stable predisposition towards certain types of emotional responses.[696] In turn, these predispositions determine the threshold for particular emotional states. For example, the pre-disposition of hostility is thought to lower one's threshold for experiencing anger.[697]

Emotions on the other hand, are "acute, intense, and typically brief psychophysiological changes that result from a response to a meaningful situation in one's environment"[698] For example: Researcher: "So can someone describe what prompt #4 is about?"

> Roger, 43, Luton: "Terror suspects arrested."
> Kirsty, 28, Luton: "They were jailed for planning attacks like 9/11 and 7/7 and boasting about it."
> Researcher: "Why did you remember they were boasting about it?"
> Kirsty: "I remember thinking why would they boast about that? It is just so horrible. They have no conscience or shame!"

Emotions typically motivate a particular course of action.[699] In the words of Emmons, emotions are:

> Discrete states that involve the appraisal of the personal meaning of a circumstance in a person's environment. Both the type of emotion experienced and its intensity depend on cognitive interpretation or appraisal of the situation. Such appraisal involves not only assessing the nature of the external situation or event that might cause the emotional response, but also the responses of other people exposed to that same situation or event. [700]

This is important to consider with regards to the 'social' element of media reception and the place where reception is conducted. Rosenberg described *moods*, as fluctuations of subtle emotions. Despite being less

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[694] Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," 9.

[695] Rosenberg, E. L., "Levels of Analysis and the Organization of Affect," *Review of General Psychology* 2 (1998).

[696] Ibid.

[697] Emmons, R. A., "Emotion and Religion," in *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, ed. Paloutzian, R. F. and Park, C. L. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2005), 236.

[698] Rosenberg, E. L., "Levels of Analysis and the Organization of Affect," 250.

[699] Fredrickson, B. L., "The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: The Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions," *American Psychologist* 56 (2001).

[700] Emmons, R. A., "Emotion and Religion," 236.

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likely to be part of one's conscious awareness, moods are important because they define the parameters of consciousness in a way that emotions cannot because of their relatively short duration.[701]

This is important for the analysis for three reasons: Firstly, as media reports influence the predisposition towards Muslims and Islam, this will result in defining the threshold for certain types of (emotional) responses towards them. Secondly, when emotional responses are elicited by media reports, as their logic entails) then those emotions will typically motivate a particular course of action. Thirdly, the mentioning of moods is important because media is in a position to set the mood through its pervasiveness in contemporary society. As Davies argues, "the way a particular society or group names its feelings offers an important means of understanding how it views the world and directs its members in their approach to their environment."[702] Therefore, the way that media informs individuals or groups in their descriptions of one another, offers an important means of understanding how the world is viewed in a given society, and how media directs its audience members in their approach to society as a whole or for a particular group in their immediate environment. The overuse of shpcking images facilitates emotional responses. According to Gabriele Marranci it does so for two reasons: (1) emotional responses are *"translated in feelings of frustration, oppression, and anger"* and (2) individuals are *"exposed to processes of systematic desensitization to suffering and compassion"*.[703] As *"every morning, millions of us wake up waiting for the next suicide bomber, war, extradition, kidnapping, Guantanemo bay, Abu Ghraib torture, shoot-to-kill (the wrong man) policies, unjustified arrests, Islamophobic attitudes and terrorist threats.* [The issues that are] *inflaming our cities and countries are beyond Islam but part of one of the many 'circles of panic' into which people are sucked."*[704] This in turn affects people's responses to media reports. For example: Researcher: "Do you think Muslim when you see or hear terrorism or do you think terrorism when you hear or see a Muslim?"

> All: "Both."
>
> Kevin, 36, Luton: "Islam is violent, trains violence."
>
> Gary, 33, Luton: "Right! From what I've read it contains violence. We should Bomb the bastards back to Baghdad!"
>
> Matt, 55, Luton: "bomb or fight the terrorists. Too late to do anything about it."
>
> Joe, 52, Luton: "It seems they are either violent or not. There is no middle ground."
>
> Gary, Luton: "No, they are all extremists."

Interpretation is personal, i.e., a valid interpretation for a specific agent in a particular context. A person is built up by internalised knowledge as stated before, and this knowledge influences interpretations. J. Grondin

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[701] Rosenberg, E. L., "Levels of Analysis and the Organization of Affect."
[702] Davies, D. J., *Emotion, Identity, and Religion: Hope, Reciprocity, and Otherness*, 16.
[703] Marranci, G., *Jihad Beyond Islam* (Berg Publishers, 2006), 94.
[704] Ibid., 159.

points out in the following quote that for Gadamer we have to try to understand and find meaning in a way that relates to us and is understandable within existing discourses.

> What I seek to translate (understand, apply) is always something that is at first foreign to me, but that is in some way binding for my interpretation. … I cannot say whatever I want, but I can only unfold my understanding in terms that I can follow and hope to communicate. … Even the sheer otherness of the foreign meaning I am striving to understand must be rendered in terms that are present and give me a sense of this otherness.[705]

Interpretations taken from media reports are constituted by their context, and also by their subsequent interpretations. The original interpretation, the occasion where the object that is the focus of the agent is unknown, is constituted by the nebulous construct that is the identity of the agent and his context, and it is founded in the agent that is constructing the meaning of the object. As a consequence, the hermeneutical circle that is formed in such a way that every future interpretation of the object is constituted by the previous interpretation. This circle is grounded in the context that surrounds the agent and the object of his or her focus. This is what can be seen as the all-encompassing function of discourse.

For example, as a participant of this study, an individual makes an interpretation of an object, a media report on Islam and Muslims. The individual seeks understanding, tries to make sense and to construct the meaning of the object for herself or himself, and does so only in the manner by which it relates to himself. "*Our interpretation of ourselves and our experience is constitutive of what we are, and therefore cannot be considered as merely a view on reality, separable from reality, nor as an epiphenomenon, which can be by-passed in our understanding of reality.*"[706] Whereas an object may be available to others, it is only ever interpreted in relation to the agent that is doing the interpreting. The presence of others during the process can affect the interpretation, much in the same way as observed behaviour can be elicited purely because the behaviour is observed, rather than a natural occurring process. Charles Taylor describes this process as follows:

> We have to think of man as a self–interpreting animal. He is necessarily so, for there is no such thing as the structure of meanings for him independently of his interpretation of them; for one is woven into the other. But then the text of our interpretation is not that of heterogeneous from what is interpreted; for what is interpreted is itself an interpretation; a self-interpretation which is embedded in a stream of action. It is an interpretation of experiential meaning which contributes

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[705] Grondin, J., "Gadamer's Basic Understanding of Understanding," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. Dostal, R. J. (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[706] Taylor, C., *Philosophical Papers: Volume 1, Human Agency and Language* (Cambridge, UK - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 47.

to the constitution of this meaning. Or to put it in another way; that of which we are trying to find the coherence is itself partly constituted by self-interpretation.[707]

The originally elusive object is no longer unclear, our understanding of that which is expressed has become clear in the language in which it is rooted, not in the universal, but in the particular paradigm which seems relevant to us. This means that reports on Muslims and Islam in need of interpretation, are understood in the context in which it is received. The agent has constructed a relationship between himself or herself and Islam and Muslims. This relationship relies upon a context that will allow for this construction, i.e. (media) discourse. The interpretation is governed by the meaning the agent constructs out of the media report in need of interpretation. The meaning is located in the relationship, i.e., between the report and his or her interpreter. This interpretation takes place according to a set of rules constituted by the agent.[708] One can see the construction of an interpretation as taking place within a context that is determined by the language used in or by the object in need of interpretation, and the way in which the agent understands it. Thus, the originally unclear has become clear within the context (c.f. language game) that it is situated in.[709] *"Truth does not consist in the correspondence between propositions and things. Even when we speak of correspondence, we have in mind propositions verified in the context of paradigms, the truth of which consists above all in their being shared by a community."*[710] This truth is defined within the parameters set by 'media' discourse and is shared by the majority and enforced upon minorities and subaltern groups. As a result, we can discern a difference in treatment regarding a statement in two different contexts. Not only does the agent affect the interpretation of an object, but the context in which the object in need of interpretation is situated also affects the interpretation. Hermeneutics, as such, is oriented towards the world, and allows for meaning to be deduced and interpreted from it, through the language that constitutes the experiences and offers them significance.[711]

In Britain's mediacratic society, political engagement is carried out via mediating technological tools. This is apparent when governance is heavily involved in media and utilises mass communication mechanisms as a strategic element in its political activity. One can see that in the struggle for power, policymaking, and public debate, media is increasingly used by the public in order to be part of that political activity. *"But reading and writing texts are never neutral activities: there are interests, powers, passions, pleasures entailed no matter how aesthetic or entertaining the work. Media, political economy, mass institutions – in fine, the tracings of*

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[707] Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," 11.

[708] Many of such rules are routinized through social protocols or convention. The agent is positioned as a member of certain communities or traditions. The agent lives in a certain culture and time, belongs to a certain institutional setting. All these aspects govern the agent's relationship with the object of his focus in need of interpretation.

[709] One can see the construction of an interpretation as taking place within a context that is determined by the language used in/by the object in need of interpretation. This is similar to the concept of language games offered up in Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. Anscombe, G. E. M. (Malden, MA - Oxford, UK - Carlton, Australia: Blackwell, 1953), 1-10.

[710] Vattimo, G., "The Age of Interpretation," in *The Future of Religion*, ed. Zabala, S. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 51.

[711] Grondin, J., *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. Weinsheimer, J. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 15.

secular power and the influence of the state."[712] Furthermore, when individuals react to the perceptions they garner from the media within their social context, they take their understandings and interpretations into the realm of human action and inter-action. An example can be found in the discussion of the BBC in C. Flood et al:

> [The BBC is] a guardian of the public's democratic right to accurate information concerning major issues, and being bound by a duty to sustain a range of liberal values, it would have been a betrayal of the BBC's remit if it had not dealt with the many events which could not be represented as consistent with successful application of those values in British foreign policy or in British national life where Muslims minorities were concerned. The BBC made an evident effort to fulfil that difficult role without *undue* partiality.[713]

Whilst the aim of the BBC's remit is to remain as impartial as possible, the remit also suggests that the BBC must present things in conjunction with its liberal values. As a consequence, what is discussed and considered newsworthy is a product of those liberal values. These values are then shared or opposed by people in society (as reflected in the focus group discussions), but shape the way that stories are selected, presented, and broadcast. In turn, as the media plays an active part in shaping the discussion points of people in society, who in turn act upon the views held by them, that have been constructed in relation to the media they have accessed, the BBC's remit shapes the parameters of public discourse, actions, and interactions, based on those liberal values.

The conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims in turn is built upon the kinds and quality of information a person holds. This suggests that people with little or no *direct* contact with Islam or Muslims have an understanding of Islam and Muslims that relies largely on education, media reports and social conventions.[714] However, from the data, it can be seen that without direct contact with Muslims, assumptions supported by media reports are uncontested and continue to ground uncritical beliefs about them. The education process and social conventions are not a source for alternative perspectives or critical[715] beliefs about Muslims for people with no interpersonal contact with Muslims. Therefore, if the media product that is received by audiences, contains inherent assumptions (in this case the BBC's liberal values), then that will be reflected in the report. In practice, this further entrenches the 'us' vs. 'them' narrative surrounding Muslims because of the reports that position the BBC's liberal values against Muslims and Islam as object of the report.

S. Fish states, *"the thoughts an individual can think and the mental operations he can perform have their source in some or other interpretive community; he is as much a product of that community (acting as an*

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[712] Said, E. W., *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1994), 385.

[713] Flood, C. et al., *Islam, Security and Television News* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 77-78.

[714] A finding that is similar to what was found in Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 236-39.

[715] Critical thinking is skilled and active interpretation and evaluation of observations and communications, information and argumentation. Fisher, A. and Scriven, M., *Critical Thinking. Its Definition and Assessment* (Inverness, CA: Edgepress, 1997), 21.

extension of it) as the meanings it enables him to produce."[716] Therefore, with media acting as a means of spreading frames of meaning within and throughout a community, it re-enforces and in turn reflects the meanings a person is able to construct for him-or her-self. This process is extended when a person expresses his understanding to those around him, as that understanding is produced within the community he belongs to, and coded in such a way that it is understandable within that specific context. This is one-way specific news items affect a person's understanding of Islam and Muslims, as a consequence of their conditioning by socio-cultural factors that enable him or her to produce meaning, as well as code and decode media reports to make sense to him or her. This follows on from the work done by H.G. Gadamer in *Wahrheit und Methode* and his work on the process of textual interpretation. As H.G. Gadamer points out,

> A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again some initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is true.[717]

What is noticeable in the responses of participants is this act of projecting: Participants project meaning for the prompt. This is made possible due to the pre-existing information and values a person holds which are used to make sense of the information while engaging the text. The text is engaged through the person's particular expectations in regard to the meaning of the text. Therefore, by continuing to engage the text, the consumer gathers what he or she understands as the meaning of the text, and in turn penetrates into the text and defines its meaning and his or her understanding of the information broadcast.

> A wholesale challenge would be impossible because there would be no terms in which it could be made; that is, in order to be wholesale, it would have to be made in terms wholly outside the institution [discourse]; but if that were the case, it would be unintelligible because it is only within the institution [discourse] that the facts of literary study – texts, authors, periods, genres – become available. In short, the price intelligibility exacts … is implication in the very structure of assumptions and goals from which one desires to be free.[718]

It is important to note that, it is impossible to interpret media reports beyond the meaning that they produce for a given individual. The meaning of a report would have to be made in terms wholly outside the realm of possible interpretations and if that were the case, it would be unintelligible to the individual in question because it is only within their own hermeneutical circle – consisting of texts, experiences, memories, etc. – that the report(s) become intelligible. The meaning a consumer takes from the text is reliant on the very

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[716] Fish, S. E., *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, 14.
[717] Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*, 267.
[718] Fish, S. E., *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, 354-55.

structure of their personal assumptions and goals, the product of the discourses that surround an individual. Whether one desires to be free from these structures or alter them in some way is irrelevant. These structures influence media consumption and are the only way in which a report can make sense to an individual.

Language itself plays an important role in the production of meaning. A good example of this is found in the work of Elizabeth F. Loftus who conducted experiments in the mid to late seventies on the reconstruction of car accidents. Her findings led her to conclude that there is direct link between the way a witness is questioned and the response he or she gave.[719] In this case it was geared at certain types of verbs describing the collision and at what speed the respondents thought the collision took place. This suggests that when an event is reported in a news item, a similar transfer of values can take place between the audience and the report. What is important here is that there is a correlation between language and the transfer of meaning. As Hall points out, the media are the sources of both 'primary' and 'secondary' definitions and 'both have a bearing on how the problem will be seen and understood by the public'.[720] Therefore, we can state that the language and discourse used, as well as the issues chosen for discussion, influences the interpretation and understanding by the receivers of that media report. In contemporary Britain, a significant percentage of the population rely on media as their source for information and meaning about Muslims and Islam. For example:

> Researcher in Birmingham Focus Group: "What do these images make you think of when you see them [referring to prompts #7, #8, and #9]?"
>
> William, 37: "The pictures bring terror to mind."
>
> Frederick: "They look like angry and threatening people."
>
> Researcher: "Do you think that terrorism is integral to Islam? Or a part of a Muslim's Identity?"
>
> Steve: "I don't think it is part of their identity. But Islam is violent. It [The Quran] requires them to kill unbelievers."
>
> Tony: "How can you not be violent if you believe that?"
>
> Tim: "I don't think Muslims are any more violent than anyone else, but there is violence in all religion. Look at the crusades and the Christians and romans. What has happened here is we have evolved and become secular. Most Muslims don't want to do that and they are violent because they want us to be like them and we don't want that."
>
> Researcher: "Do you think it's not more likely the other way round? That we want them to be like us and they don't want that and so they become violent as a result?"
>
> Tim: "They should become like us, this is England and we should be able to tell people coming here that they should be like us or fuck off."

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[719] Loftus, E. F., "Leading Questions and the Eyewitness Report."
[720] Hall, S., "The Treatment of Football Hooliganism in the Press," 16.

This is a big contrast to what those with an entirely different context and education understood from media reports. Researcher to army veterans: "Can you look at prompt #10 & #11? What does it make you think of?"

> Noel, 29: "Blinkering. Think of perceptions of plane crashes versus car crashes. More people die in car crashes than plane crashes in a year. But we think of flying as more dangerous. It's all about perception and focus."
>
> Emma, 32: "But army training is drilling into you a particular way to look at things"
>
> Researcher: "But does that not make it difficult to work with Muslims or to see them in any other way than a threat?"
>
> Georgina, 32: "In training, it's all about everyone is 'out to get you'. It takes a few weeks to months to get to see that 99% of people are normal."
>
> Harry, 30: "Soldiers get trained to kill, but must keep a difficult and complex moral code. And teaching only goes so far. Seeing Muslims kill your friends does affect you."
>
> Oliver, 25: "Muslims in Afghanistan are friendly but in London no one is friendly let alone Muslims."
>
> Noel: "Muslims in London are just trying to get by in an oppressive environment. In Afghanistan for many they see you as a friendly group trying to help them create a better environment for them and the future."

In Charles Taylor's work, meaning and interpretation are seen as a continuation of language. Grammar (the rules of the language involved, cf. *meaning,* universals, and formulas) cannot understand *for* us. One must have an ear for it, developing experience in the relevant discourse, relating to what Gadamer called practical knowledge.[721] This skill is the ability to designate meaning onto reality appropriately, choosing the correct interpretation dependent on the context in which the agent is situated. Taylor continues and develops a theory of understanding favouring the particular over the universal. He uses a pragmatic approach that situates meaning in the construction of accurate representations. The designation of meaning takes place by linking the words to the concepts or ideas they represent. Therefore, meaning is intrinsically linked to the identity of the agent and the relation they form to reality, for it is the agent that designates concept *a,* and links it to meaning *a*.[722]

But what if someone, in their own paradigm, does not agree with our interpretation? The agent has attributed meaning *a* to concept *a,* but for an alternative agent it will be meaning a' that represents concept *a.* In this instance, we argue the case for our paradigm view, claiming that it satisfies our needs more than an alternative cultural view. But for him to truly understand, he must read the original language as we do; however, this is not realistically possible. And even if it were, where is the authority? Why should he convert to your view? Why not the opposite? Assuming that there is a pattern of coherence and that this pattern has

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[721] Gadamer, H.-G., *Truth and Method*.
[722] Taylor, C., *Philosophical Papers: Volume 1, Human Agency and Language*, 249-50.

meaning for the performer or subject, they are evaluated using our own hermeneutic circle. But in order to come to some understanding concerning their behaviour, we must seek to enter their hermeneutic circle or to be temporarily and partially initiated into the paradigm that produced the behaviour.

Cognitive dissonance[723] can offer an explanation. Cognitive dissonance refers to the discomfort experienced by an individual when confronted by new information that conflicts with his or her existing ideas or values; it can be exacerbated by the mood or predisposition of that individual which might increase the emotional experience of that person. As humans strive for internal consistency, an individual who experiences that dissonance tends to feel uncomfortable in those situations. In turn, he or she is motivated to try to reduce this dissonance, as well as actively avoid situations and information likely to increase it. This feeling would likely increase if the existing status quo is challenged by Muslims. Even if their claim for freedom, from discrimination is legitimate, that would still be perceived as an intrusion on the domain of the majority; as a consequence, this could increase feelings of cognitive dissonance amongst non-Muslims living in Britain.

One can speak of the act of 'making sense of things' here which combines both the rational-cognitive-philosophic-doctrinal way of making sense and the more emotional-affective 'sensing' of things. *"Meaning is taken primarily as a condition under which a person's life, or significant events in it, 'make sense' (i.e., have worth and relate to the subject's feelings of integrity, wholeness, and self-mastery)"*[724] Making sense of an environment requires both thought and feeling because they do affect each other in deep and profound ways. A constitutional element of humanity is the capability to make meaning.[725] The entire organization, both at the level of personal psychology and society, seems to require making some sense of the world in order to survive. This could be both the result of humans adapting to the world or by adjusting it to fit our needs. A baby and infant strive to make sense of their environment but their social environment enters into that process. This is most visible through the language and relationships that our social environment gives to its new members. A new-born is not a blank slate when entering this world, it comes with built-in systems capable of learning and already geared to the development of language and relationships; this is all in conjunction with the capacity to perceive an active and ever-changing environment.

The media might be the only access to Muslims and Islam for some people, and this access is only made possible by the media outputs being received. Any report under consideration for the interpretation of Muslims and Islam, is not only an interpretation made by the receiving agent, but also how the concepts shared relate to the receiving agent and his overall environment.

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[723] Festinger, L., *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962).
[724] Wuthnow, R., *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 35.
[725] Weber, M., Gerth, H. H., and Mills, C. W., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Routledge, 2009), 26-27.

As Susan Haack explains, there are things we humans hold as true that in actual fact are not truths at all.[726] We therefore must reason to determine what is true (making it temporal and particular), removing its a priori universal character.[727] We can only hold true what is accepted as a consensus at this moment in time. As times change, we hold different values as True. This marks evolution in thought and the changing of self-understanding. It is also possible that in interacting with other agents, frames of meaning are exchanged and partially understood by the agents involved. Charles Taylor suggests that if the interpretation has meaning for the receiving subject, then the subject would alter in some way its behaviour if it became internalised.[728]

The temporal nature of interpretation coincides with the media logic of episodic news. It requires constant viewing in order to (re)constitute the everyday experiences. This increases the power and responsibility of media reports from a content aspect. Simultaneously it challenges the institutional logic, its role in society, and the social contract on which media functions, because its interpretations are flawed and temporary. Therefore, it demands the foregrounding of the rationale of media reports, as well as a curtailing of its authority.

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[726] *"The rhetoric of truth, moreover, can be used in nefarious ways. Hence an important source of the idea that truth is a merely rhetorical or political concept: the seductive but crashingly invalid argument I call the "Passes-for Fallacy." What passes for truth, the argument goes, is often no such thing, but only what the powerful have managed to get accepted as such; therefore, the concept of truth is nothing but ideological humbug. Stated plainly, this is not only obviously invalid, but also in obvious danger of self-undermining. If, however, you don't distinguish truth from scare-quotes "truth," or truths from scare-quotes "truths," it can seem irresistible."* Haack, S., "Truth, Truths, "Truth", and "Truths" in the Law," *The Journal of Philosophy, Science and Law* 3 (2003), http://www6.miami.edu/ethics/jpsl/archives/papers/truth.html, [Accessed 26-01-2017]. *"The effect of scare quotes is to turn an expression meaning "X" into an expression meaning "so-called 'X'." So scare-quotes "truth," as distinct from truth, is what is taken to be truth; and scare-quotes "truths," as distinct from truths, are claims, propositions, beliefs, etc., which are taken to be truths -- many of which are not really truths at all. We humans, after all, are thoroughly fallible creatures: even with the best will in the world, finding out the truth can be hard work; and we are often willing, even eager, to take pains to avoid discovering, or to cover up, unpalatable truths."*
Ibid.

[727] *"Commitments are capable of strict and literal truth; they describe the world; they answer to or represent (independent) facts of a particular kind; there is a way in which the world is that makes them true or false. These facts are discovered, not created, and they have their own 'ontological' and 'metaphysical' natures, about which reflection can inform us."* Blackburn, S., *Truth, a Guide for the Perplexed* (London, UK: Penguin books, 2006), 117.

[728] Taylor, C., "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," 12.

Section III. <u>Current portrayals of Islam and Muslims</u>

In the current findings, a high score in the analysis of frames shows that the most common frame present in news stories is one of conflict between Muslims and British actors, institutions or groups. This further suggests that the British press deem Muslims to be the problem. The legitimacy of the concerns of Muslims is often not discussed and it is implicit in the reporting that Muslims should be grateful for being in Britain and accept what they are provided with. This further echoes statements that link the discussion of Muslims to ones of white hegemony, nationalism, imperialism and the place of minorities in Britain as one that should be defined by the pre-existing population and not by the minorities themselves.

Edward Said stated in 1987 that there were a number of essential themes associated with Muslims.[729] We can conclude that when it comes to Muslims in the British media today some of those same tropes are still currently used. I will discuss the ones most common in my research here.

Even though Arab Islam, and Wahhabism in particular, is not the most prevalent form of Islam in Britain or globally, there exists in the media a pervasive presence of Arab Islam as they are portrayed in their struggle for dominance in the Middle East in order to ensure the hegemony of their version of Islam. In turn the descriptions of Islam that have become normative in the British press are reflective of power struggles in the larger Middle East, and Britain's involvement in them. This greatly reduces the agency and vibrancy of Muslims in Britain, as the Muslims living in Britain are perceived as not having their own distinct practices, ideals and heritages from those in the Muslim majority countries. The fact that the majority of Muslims in Britain are South Asian should act as a resistor to this process; however, the fact that it is hard to resist this process shows the asymmetry in power between the actors involved. The mediacratic regime in this case, defines proper Muslim practice for audiences, and challenging this view to include diversity is very difficult.

In the media, the most prevalent reporting on the Middle East focusses on terrorism, related groups (Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, etc.) and their origins, and their links with Middle Eastern nation states. This tendency of reporting ignores and underappreciates the agency and independence of such groups, as well as the local contests of power that incite terroristic atrocities. The strategic agendas of these groups are linked to the strategic agendas of nation states in the dominance of regions and struggle for power in those contexts. Yet when people exhibit certain characteristics in their act of terror the press links it to other acts with the same characteristics in order to define the actor in that case. For example, "shouting Allah Akbar' - God is Great - the battle-cry of Muslim jihadists around the world"[730] or "Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian student who flew from the Yemen to the Netherlands to the US to attempt to down a plane over

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[729] Said, E. W., "The Mesa Debate: The Scholars, the Media, and the Middle East," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 16/2 (1987).
[730] Greenwood, C. and Martin, A., "Crazed Animals?.?.?. How News of the Savage Attack Ex-Ploded on Twitter", (*The Daily mail*, 23 May).

Detroit with a bomb in his underpants. But, as elsewhere, most were locals, so-called 'home growns'."[731] This suggests an increase in the definitions of 'Muslim terrorism', such as a Shi'a based terrorism, Al-Qaida, ISIS or Hezbollah based terrorism, for example. Their acts of terrorism or the organisations themselves are then linked to nation state interests (generally either Iranian or Saudi Arabian) and it is implied that the terrorists are proxy puppets for those states. This again overlooks the agency of the people involved in those local contexts and the reactionary nature of these groups. An example of this is the tendency in the current media reporting of ISIS: it is deemed a proxy organisation in the war in Syria that has gone rogue and needs to be countered by more proxy organisations supported by Western Powers and Iran.

The earlier mentioned cases are also the result of a dominance of the Middle East as a region in the news. This overlooks the acts of 75% of Muslims who do not live there, such as Muslims who are from West Africa (Senegal, Mali, etc.), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.) or South East Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia, etc.). The ideological forces at play in the news are dominated by implicit discussions of 'civilised' Britain as the example and definer of what is considered acceptable behaviour. The Charlie Hebdo coverage of 2015 exemplifies the interpreting of events to suit a particular ideological framing, namely free Speech and Secular Liberalism vs. Islam, Muslims and the uncivilised, ancient, tribal rituals. For example, "The umma was under constant attack by the Americans, the British and French, the Russians and even the Chinese. He had been told this was true at a meeting of Al-Muhajiroun, an organisation the cowardly West had banned."[732]

What the reporting has done is to reduce every act a Muslim undertakes to a ritual expression of their (religious) identity. This excludes Muslims from undertaking non-religious actions or making decisions based on other things. In addition to this, the news prescribes normative religious practices to Muslims, and informs non-Muslims of standard religious practices. This ignores the fact that many Muslims in Britain and abroad have a diversity of practice and therefore do not undertake such practices in the way as is stereotypically portrayed. For example, **"**He performed wudhu, the ritual cleansing before the last prayers of the night, washing the right and then the left hand three times. Then he rolled out his rug and bent himself towards Mecca."[733] Whilst this is prescribed by the Quran, not all Muslims perform this ritual regularly.

As McQuail had noted, "*It is notable that the groups receiving this form of polarising treatment tend to be small, rather powerless and already subject to social disapproval. They are relatively 'safe' targets, but the process of hitting them tends to reaffirm the boundaries around what is acceptable in a free society.*"[734] On British television, Muslims are generally excluded, as the world of the everyday representations bypass Muslims and only addresses 'them' as a problem. One recent exception to this narrative has been the

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[731] Burke, J., "The New Domestic Front: Was the Boston Bombing 'Home-Grown' or Driven by an International Network? Or Does the Distinction No Longer Apply When Terrorism Is at Once Global and Local?", (*The Guardian*, 23 April).
[732] Burleigh, M., "Inside the Twisted Mind of a Jihadist", (*The Daily Mail*, 24 May).
[733] Ibid.
[734] Mcquail, D., "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," 78.

discussion surrounding the woman who won the 'Great British Bake Off'.[735] However, even this 'positive' story was unable to escape the us-them binary and was unable to avoid the exoticising and potentially othering narrative that surrounds Muslims in the British press. 'They' only appear as a problem or an object of concern, and are therefore constructed as such for the audience. Even when they are not portrayed negatively, it is still a construction within this context that renders any alternative narrative an exception and therefore also not a reflection of the so-called 'mainstream' or 'moderate' Muslims. The pervasive nature of British media renders it capable of excluding or stereotyping any group or community it might label as 'other'. In turn, media representations suggest that Muslims who live in this country are representatives of a perfect Muslim authority, speaking exclusively as agents of their faith, and that they are the living expressions of Islamic ideals (and that was why it's problematic). This has greatly narrowed the spectrum of what it means to be Muslim, not to mention reducing the 'problem' to a religious issue. Muslims are portrayed as the problem because of Islam, rather than because of inadequate housing, education or healthcare. Muslims and Islam become a scapegoat to draw attention away from the circumstances in which humans have the tendency to become violent because of their powerlessness. If it was not a 'Muslim' problem, then it suggests that all people are susceptible to violent outbursts and 'irrational' behaviour given the right circumstances. This is incommensurable with the notion of the civilised westerner that is ever-present in the narratives about Islam and Muslims. It also avoids needing to address the situations, or individuals responsible for creating those circumstances.

We can analyse the debate about the British citizenship, identity, and a sense of belonging using what Ricoeur calls collective memory. *"Collective memory simply consists of the set of traces left by events that have shaped the course of history of those social groups that, in later times, have the capacity to stage these shared recollections through holidays, rituals, and public celebrations."[736]* What is interesting is that the current dominant social group, not only defines their identity based on their collective memories, but demands that minority groups share their values based on collective memories that they do not share. This is important, because as Jelin points out: *"Identities and memories are not things we think about, but things we think with. As such they have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations, and our histories. "[737]* Therefore if media shapes identity, experiences, and then in turn memories, then it is not surprising that those resources are used to constitute interactions with Muslims and Islam, both in real and digital engagements.

Media reports about Islam and Muslims often demand that Muslims bear witness to their faith. This demand on Muslims and Islam to form a public relations narrative, is pre-defined according to the terms of non-

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[735] Aly, R., "How the Hijab – and H&M – Are Reshaping Mainstream British Culture", (*The Guardian*, 28 September), http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/28/hijab-h-and-m-mainstream-culture-great-british-bake-off-diversity?CMP=EMCNEWEML6619I2, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

[736] Ricoeur, P., *La Lectura Del Tiempo Pasado: Memoria Y Olvido* (Madrid, Spain: Arrecife Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, 1999), 19.

[737] Jelin, E., Rein, J., and Godoy-Anativia, M., *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 14.

Muslim media producers; it denies Muslims the ability to engage Britain as a result of their own agency. The demand from the press to discuss Muslims outside of its human content removes lived experiences from the narrative. Therefore, the media (and especially news media) must chronicle the lives of Muslims beyond the exclusive lens of piety in order to do any justice to the real lived experiences of these individuals and give true insight into what it means to be Muslim in England today. The idea that there is more to Muslims than their faith is something that is seen as a leading principle of liberal secularism. This principle is something that the media corporations are all too happy to provoke Muslims with but not willing to apply to the Muslims they parade on television and in newspapers. Although not every stereotype that is in existence today can be corrected by a celebration of Muslim diversity, there must be at least an improvement in the future. Whilst representative bodies who denounce negative Muslim groups and acts are doing important work, it is naïve to assume that positive images of Islam alone are the remedy for Islamophobia, and that the solution to all the problems lies in the diversity of Muslim religious practice. As Nietzsche said, *"There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective 'knowing', and the more affects we allow to speak of this thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity', be."*[738]

Stories that reflect the complexities of Muslim lives really are a good place to start since Muslim lives are not stable, one-dimensional or perfectly harmonious. Like everyone else's, Muslim identities are dynamic and complex. Presenting the lives of Muslims as anything other than that is misleading. The role and importance of faith differs greatly among Muslims, yet the fact is that news media projects a single defined value for Islam in Muslims lives around the world. Simultaneously, it demands that Muslims should spend time condemning horrific acts committed in the name of Islam or Islamic States, yet other religious groups such as Christians, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists are not asked to condemn violent acts committed in the name of their religion or by Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist states.

However, we can correlate a situation described by Cornel West in his discussion of coloured people in the United States, to the situation facing Muslims in Britain. Namely, the idea that Muslims are uniting against a hostile white power, in order to reinforce Muslim male power. This power is then exercised over Muslim women (i.e., to protect, regulate, subordinate, and in some cases, use and abuse women) in order to preserve Muslim socio-religious order under circumstances that threaten physical violence or discursively attack their heritage, icons, symbols and institutions.[739] What is also evident in the orientalist discourse, is that orientalism is the product of a particular state-citizen construction. This has a strong identification with nationalist politics to the detriment of alternative political identities.[740] This is mostly aimed at people perceived with transnational ties but has historically also been used against people of Celtic (Welsh and

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[738] Nietzsche, F., *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Kaufmann, W. and Hollingdale, R. J. (New York, NY: Random House, 1967), 119.
[739] West, C., *Race Matters* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1993), 37.
[740] Turner, B. S. and Nasir, K. M., *The Sociology of Islam: Collected Essays of Bryan S. Turner* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 143-44.

Scottish) heritage, for example. In addition, there is a sentiment within orientalist discourse that citizens are not only subjects of the state but rather servants of the state.[741]

This perspective is driven by an ignorant media audience seeking to be informed. Unfortunately, the media's priority is not to educate about Islam and Muslims, but rather to make money and increase viewership. The tendency of the media to ignore diversity is also partially formed by the desire of people to conceal their imperfections and to appear unified and harmonious in the public eye. But by ignoring or regulating lived diversities, the values, joy and elements of connection with reality are reduced and removed of all nuanced and real content by the mediacratic practices of society. Diversity when mentioned is not celebrated; it may be used as the stick to beat Muslims with, because of their perceived fear of pluralism and diversity.

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[741] Ibid., 144.

Section IV. Examining the effect of media portrayals of Islam and Muslims

People consumed news media in such a way as to be compatible with their own personal outlook. Yet there is no mentioning, by participants, of media sources encouraging them to act in a criminal or violent manner. Following Shibutani's approach, what we can detect in participant responses is that when participants find themselves in a state of ambiguity due to a lack of information, their responses to that situation are often short lived. The news operates in such a way as to inform its audience, rather than increase the state of ambiguity by spreading disinformation (from a consumer perspective).[742]

This is certainly the case in that media reports have become a valuable source of information for people, and their authority is rarely questioned. Through the repeated iteration of a narrative, the narrative is preserved, revivified, and disseminated.[743] As O'Halloran states, *"it should not be lost sight of, ... that most dependable research so far available has not supported the thesis of a general association between any form of media use and crime, delinquency or violence."*[744] Cumberbatch goes even further in stating, *"Research which has examined audiences is rarely able to demonstrate clear effects to the mass media."*[745] This is also suggested by the participant responses.

However, as can be seen from the responses, people used a variety of tactics to negotiate the strategies that are arranged for them by organisations and institutions.[746] These responses confirm Garnham's following description:

> One can establish a clear, long-lasting and commonly held relation between a given media message and the interpretations made. The fact that it is long-lasting, that is to say a consistent interpretation can be reconstructed by audience members from memory, means that it is derived from a consistent interpretive framework and is not simply the random response to given media stimuli; the fact that it is shared by others means that it is likely to be motivated in the same way by the same message.[747]

Additionally, stories or events that play on emotions or are emotionally charged for the viewer are more memorable, and that affects the reception process, giving the stories an increased impact. This impact is intensified through the use of an amplifier, such as television. *"When an amplifier works well, the central*

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[742] Shibutani, T., *Improvised News* (London, UK - New York, NY: Ardent Media, 1966).

[743] Mitchell, J. P., "Repetition of Narratives, Amplification of Narratives, Elaboration of Narratives, Reverberations of Narratives," in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. Morgan, D. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 124-25.

[744] Halloran, J. D., *The Effects of Television* (London, UK: Paladin, 1970).

[745] Cumberbatch, G., "Overview of the Effects of the Mass Media," in *A Measure of Uncertainty: The Effects of Mass Media*, ed. Cumberbatch, G. and Howitt, D. (London, UK: J. Libbey, 1989), 1.

[746] De Certeau, M., *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Rendall, S. (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1984).

[747] Garnham, N., *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity : Arguments About the Media and Social Theory: Arguments About the Media and Social Theory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 124.

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story is not simply repeated but enlarged, isolated, clarified, or underscored. It is possible to hear or see the story more clearly as a result of effective amplification."[748] In addition to amplification, narratives are subject to elaborations. These elaborations give "greater significance by association"[749] and build upon the existing narrative. Narratives are often contested, however, as different actors try to define or strive to take control over the authentic narrative. This is also visible in the focus group data, when participants contest each other's views and debate the prompts or the validity of their own experiences. These experiences are always viewed in the light of the narratives that each individual has constructed with regards to Muslims and Islam. Narratives are "produced and elaborated where particular conjunctures of processes and relations, specific local contingencies and events in everyday practice, render them meaningful. In other words, collective histories flourish where they have a meaningful, signifying use in the present."[750] It also highlights *"their beliefs about media technology, their views and engagement with both media and secular culture"*[751], including their understanding of religion, media and culture.

The notion of the reverberation of narratives is *"the echoing or forming of stories that refer to the core narrative, serving both to draw meaning from it and to infuse it with thematic relevance. Reverberation is a very important cultural operation because it forms the new on the old but also refreshes the old, changing it however slightly or dramatically in the process"*[752] The validity of personal narratives rests upon the reverberation of the personal narrative with the core (public discourse) narrative. The core narrative is most commonly found within media discourse, hence its importance as a resource for the development of personal opinion and in meaning making.

The core narrative can be considered a core element of what Laclau calls discourse[753] or what Glynos and Howarth call social logic[754]. As a consequence, the core narrative, spread through mass media, triangulates the system of objects in society, i.e., acts as a grammar or cluster of rules, which allows for some combinations of objects to take shape and simultaneously excludes others. It acquires its meaning in conjuncture with and in relation to other narratives. Within this context their meaning and spread is limited by the 'other' contradicting narratives.[755] As we can see in the representation of Muslims and Islam in the British press, the spreading of this narrative is not limited because of the absence of alternative or

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[748] Mitchell, J. P., "Repetition of Narratives, Amplification of Narratives, Elaboration of Narratives, Reverberations of Narratives," 125-26.

[749] Ibid., 130.

[750] Malkki, L., "Context and Consciousness: Local Conditions for the Production of Historical and National Thought among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania," in *Nationalist Ideologies and the Production of National Cultures*, ed. Fox, R. G. (Arlington, VA: American Ethnological Society, 1990), 54.

[751] Campbell, H., *When Religion Meets New Media*, 40.

[752] Mitchell, J. P., "Repetition of Narratives, Amplification of Narratives, Elaboration of Narratives, Reverberations of Narratives," 133.

[753] Laclau, E., "Identity and Hegemony," in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, ed. Butler, J., Laclau, E., and Žižek, S. (London, UK: Verso, 2000).

[754] Glynos, J. and Howarth, D., *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 135.

[755] Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C., *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London, UK: Verso, 1985), 142.

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contradicting narratives. Rather, it is symptomatic of the British public's struggle for hegemony. But what do we do with contradicting or even mutually exclusive narratives?[756] Zizek suggests that the essence should be transposed into an unattainable beyond that we are unable to fully grasp.[757] By doing so, when we *"resume the fundamental principle of Gadamer's hermeneutics, there is more truth in the later efficacy of a text, in the series of its subsequent readings, than in its supposedly 'original' meaning."*[758]

C. Flood et al. found that whilst the BBC was trying to avoid making automatic assumptions of Muslim involvement in terrorist incidents by using more generalised terminology, members of the public still saw these incidences as examples of violent Muslim extremism.[759] This is further supports the conclusion that overall discourse influences reception. That the truth and content of a media report is only able to be understood by the context in which it is read and received. Therefore, even if the terminology is vague and generalised, the readers will see it as an example of Muslim behaviour because the discourse that surrounds Muslims and Islam constitute that reading.

This can be understood, in Foucauldian terms, when the media are perceived as authors of discursivity. Their texts are constitutive for all subsequent participants in the discourse. Foucault explains that founders of discursivity, *"are unique in that they are not just the founders of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules of the formation of other texts. In this sense, they are very different, for example, from a novelist, who is, in fact, nothing more than the author of his own text."*[760] Authors of discursivity establish *"an endless possibility of discourse"*[761]. This endless possibility of discourse is evident in contemporary discussions on Muslims and Islam as well as the production of policy and methods of engagement with Muslims and Islam. Jocelyne Cesari has described this as the logic of securitization. In her view,

> The European State views Muslim groups as a threat to its survival and takes measures to reassure citizens that it will not allow the incubation of terrorism. However, the politicisation of religion essentially impoverishes and threatens its survival, leading devout Muslims to feel resentful of the interference of non-religious actors. Thus, the measures intended to prevent radicalisation actually engender discontent and prompt a transformation of religious conservatism to fundamentalism.[762]

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[756] Manuel Castells argues that some identities will always be mutually exclusive because of their relationary and reactionary nature. Castells, M., *The Power of Identity*, 421-22.

[757] Žižek, S., *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London, UK: Verso, 1989), 242. And Laclau argues that heterogeneity is constitutive of contemporary society. Laclau, E., *On Populist Reason* (London, UK - New York, NY: Verso, 2005), 223.

[758] Žižek, S., *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 242.

[759] Flood, C. et al., *Islam, Security and Television News*, 244-45.

[760] Foucault, M., "What Is an Author?," 114.

[761] Ibid.

[762] Cesari, J., "The Securitisation of Islam in Europe," (2009), http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.177.9774&rep=rep1&type=pdf, [Accessed 26-01-2017].

How should people respond to media reports about Muslims and Islam? Especially when media reports are the product of such negative logic. Muslim and non-Muslim activists, journalists, and scholars have added a perspective to the debate. The overarching view seems to be that the negative acts of a few 'bad' Muslims can be countered by the acts of 'good' Muslims. This view needs to be transcended, or at the very least supplemented, by alternative readings or narratives. It is inadequate to foster a perception (that leads to a demand) that 'good' Muslims need to promote Islam as a religion of peace and that the Qur'an is no script for violence, whilst simultaneously purging their community of the 'bad eggs'. It is far more urgent to see Muslims do other things besides talking about religion. It is necessary to expose non-Muslim audiences to critical examinations of the positive and the negative aspects of the Islamic tradition, because you can't have one without the other and any essentialist and narrow reading of religion is by definition deficient and removed from the reality lived by Muslims.[763]

This demand for change and recognition is often a source of conflict and in some cases leads to violence. John Richardson found that many portrayals of British Muslims *"are based on a 'White fantasy' regarding the rights and abilities of 'White' society to regulate the parameters of British society– to include or exclude"*.[764] This view of Muslim-non-Muslim relations is fundamentally incongruent with Muslims having personal agency. The betterment and development of Muslims in Britain is a threat to this paradigm. Elizabeth Poole has argued that the response to the resulting crisis of national identity is a construction of national culture that provides stability and certainty. Yet this is constructed in such a way as to exclude Muslims from Britishness.[765] Pnina Werbner suggests that this is closely linked to the increase in violence against Muslims. The increase in violence is the consequence of an increase in the saturation of the *"atavistic nature of the differential social imaginaries and deep-seated psychological fears of difference and sameness that constitute contemporary racisms and their historical mutations."*[766] In other words, the outdated way of thinking about, or conceiving the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims, underpins the perception of Muslims and Islam. The increasing acceptability of that way of thinking legitimates the use of violence against Muslims, increasing the occasions that such attacks take place.

This thesis continues by interrogating if and how the media in Britain contributes to this state of affairs, because as has been shown Muslims are subjected to a body of policies and regulations that is symptomatic of how Muslim people are perceived and treated. As a result, they are assumed to be criminal, deemed less intelligent, and through practices of systemic discrimination Muslims are at a disadvantage in education, housing and economic agency. Their lives are somehow less worthy unless they assimilate. This however is a

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[763] For some Islam bashing has become so mundane and ridiculous that a group of Muslims on Reddit have retorted with a mocking campaign called, "As a Muslim, I condemn Ebola." "News Framing: Theory and Typology."

[764] Richardson, J. E., *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers*, 152-53.

[765] Poole, E., *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, 22.

[766] Werbner, P., "Folk Devils and Racist Imaginaries in a Global Prism: Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism in the Twenty-First Century," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36/3 (2013): 450.

priori impossible because in the dominant discourse that Richardson and Poole describe, Britishness is Englishness[767] and true Englishness requires whiteness.

The Islamophobic-tinted output that is present in the mainstream press is alarming, especially in light of the findings of this present research project, which found that non-Muslim audiences who were not ethnically or culturally south Asian shared similar 'cultures of ignorance'[768]. Contact alone is not sufficient to mitigate negative beliefs and assumptions. This is because interaction and engagement can be negative experiences. Not all contact is positive and therefore it depends on the presence of other conditions.[769] For those who do not have regular contact with Muslims the media appear to act as an important information resource for knowledge of Islam and Muslims. But the media severely hampers the way Muslims are known as agents and beings in Britain today. This leaves us with an illusion of causality in the belief: 'Islam causes terrorism.'

Fish describes the process of persuading people to hold other opinions as follows: *"We try to persuade others to our beliefs because if they believe what we believe, they will, as a consequence of those beliefs, see what we see; and the facts to which we point in order to support our interpretations will be as obvious to them as they are to us."*[770] However, much evidence suggests that erroneous beliefs are not easily overturned, and when they are tinged with emotion, this becomes even more difficult. Yet, explaining the context and helping people understand are the first steps in turning erroneous beliefs around. If you want someone to accept information that contradicts what he or she already knows, you have to find a story they can accept and buy into. That requires bridging the narrative they have already constructed to a new one that is both true and allows them to remain the kind of person they believe themselves to be, negotiating and recreating the information from the perspective of their personal and cultural identities.[771] This reinforces the sense of independence and power in creating meaning for themselves from a text.[772]

The persistence of narratives describing Islam and Muslims as a threat or as deviants from acceptable norms and values legitimises the systematic use of surveillance and security procedures among the public in Britain. In doing so the media contributes to *"training their [Muslim] bodies, coding their continuous behaviour, maintaining them in perfect visibility, forming around them an apparatus of observation, registration and recording, constituting on them a body of knowledge that is accumulated and centralised."*[773] Following this course would render Muslims (and other minorities perceived as deviant) subject to investigation, suspicion and potential punishment until such time as they are considered reformed to fit the image of the 'good' Muslim. As the responses from the focus groups indicate, some individuals do consider this not only acceptable but a necessary course of action and they feel the media does its best to inform the public and demonstrate its necessity. This supports Foucault's argument that

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[767] Sales, R., "Britain and Britishness," in *Muslims in Britain: Making Social and Political Space*, ed. Ahmad, W. and Sardar, Z. (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 33-34.

[768] Karim, K. H. and Eid, M., "Clash of Ignorance."

[769] For example see: Allport, G. W., *The Nature of Prejudice*, 537. & Pettigrew, T. F., "Intergroup Contact Theory."

[770] Fish, S. E., *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, 365.

[771] White, R. A., "Religion and Media in the Construction of Cultures," 49.

[772] Fiske, J., *Television Culture* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 1987), 95-99.

[773] Foucault, M., *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 231.

certain forms of delinquency are specified and then produced in order to satisfy political and economic aims.[774]

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[774] Ibid., 277.

Chapter 5.   Discursive Discussions

In summation, how do depictions of Muslims and Islam in the News inform the thoughts and actions of non-Muslims in England? The way that non-Muslims use the news to inform themselves about Islam and Muslims is based on a triangulation of three things: (1) the role that the news and media take in an individual's life; (2) the opinion a person has of Muslims and Islam based on their pre-existent knowledge; and (3) the experiences and contact a person has with Muslims. But all this is framed with a personal narrative of the self. i.e. the discourse a person holds about the type of person they are and want to be. The narratives we tell about ourselves define our identity. People place new information taken from news reports about Muslims and Islam, into their body of knowledge by negotiating these three elements and their discourses. If one is to change the way Muslims and Islam are perceived in contemporary British society, then not only will the portrayals have to change, the role those portrayals play in a person's life will have to change, and the knowledge and experience a person has will have to change too. In order to facilitate this one has to change the perception of self, one reason alternative lifestyles are deemed threatening is because they challenge existing narratives of self.

The secondary research questions have supported this by revealing that, the images, narratives, and representations of Muslims and Islam that participants find memorable and authoritative, are based on the way a person is able to engage with the information about Muslims and Islam, that the media provide. Therefore, someone who finds their personal experiences and ideological outlook reflected in the images, will considered them authoritative, and more likely to act upon them. Someone with a different ideological outlook, who doesn't find their personal experiences reflected in the media depictions, is more likely to question those depictions and not see them as a source of information. The way that the images, narratives, and representations of Muslims and Islam evoke a response is what makes them memorable and authoritative. Whilst that is part of the logic of media, the fact that news should be informative rather than argumentative, raises questions about the manner by which news is able to engage the audience. The role of news media as an information source differs depending on, the immediate strategic goals, and the role that news media plays for that particular participant. Therefore, the way those images, narratives, and representations of Muslims and Islam are utilised by the participants differs as well depending on those strategic goals and personal ideological outlook.

The views and outlooks held by people are a product and reflection of a systemic discourse, the only way to change the current state of affairs, the system of discourse will have to change, and this will require more than simply a change in media portrayals. This will require an amendment of the content of media as an information source, informing the public beyond media discourse, and creating an environment for

engagement with Muslims that is on a more equal footing, and less the result of orientalist narratives and systematic discriminatory practices.

The systemic discourse(s) broadcast by media engages with the societal consequences of globalisation, loss of empire, changing social values, to name a few. In doing so, it combines two processes. (1) Offering an explanation of the current situation, and (2) highlighting a cause. Thus, as shown in chapter 2, these processes are affected by systematic constraints on media. In chapter 3 it was shown that the reporting and reception is affected by historical events and social dynamics involving Muslims living in Britain. Chapter 4 highlights the socio-psychological processes involved in the reception of news reports about Muslims and Islam.

Therefore, in the analysis of the discursive effect of media representations of Islam and Muslims, the modes of production, context of reception, and process of reception, have been analysed. In doing so, the highlighting of conflict as a media frame, is not seen necessarily as the result of a bias against Muslims (although this might be in some cases), but rather as a product of systemic workings of media, historical inequalities facing Muslims, and the narratives that surround and define the subjects involved.

Another example could be the exclusion of positive images of Islam and Muslims, because news values demand controversy and a break from the norms, positive stories of any kind are often not exceptional enough to warrant coverage. This has to do with the discourse of news, what is considered good/bad behaviour is part of a larger social discourse, therefore what is reported are exceptional acts of charity or risking one's life to save another. The treatment of Muslims and Islam in news coverage can be considered measuring with two measures. As everyday religious practices are often highlighted as unusual, yet then when Muslims conform or act in ways similar to the majority population this is not reported, yet according to some discourses this would be equally unusual. Particularly in the frame of (cultural) conflict. This further highlights the ability or inability of minorities to shape these discourses, and their attempts often met with resistance. In this regard, Muslims are often seen as people with guest status in Britain. This leads to a process of integration that does not allow for Muslims to become co-owners of British society. Instead the assimilationist project is pursued and policies are enforced with the aim of creating better guests.

Therefore, the way non-Muslims in Britain engage with media reports about Islam and Muslims, is a product of different discursive formations. However, it is reliant upon the three basic elements: (1) the role that the news and media take in an individual's life; (2) the opinion a person has of Muslims and Islam based on their pre-existent knowledge; and (3) the experiences and contact a person has with Muslims.

The role news media takes in the participant's lives is different, and it has to do with their financial concerns, their ability to access the material, as well as their evaluation of the source or institution itself. If one is to believe that the Daily Mail provides the news in the best way possible for you then you will engage it differently to someone who thinks it's a disgrace to journalism. This is again the subject of discursive

formation, exposure, education, upbringing, social networks, can all influence the choice and evaluation of the source.

The personal opinion of Muslims and Islam by an individual affects the reception of the material discussed in the press. If one were to hold a racist opinion about Muslims, you would be more likely to agree or interpret material that supported that perspective, than if you were positive about Muslims. However, this is again subject to discursive formation, the narratives that surround Muslims are shared in a variety of social contexts, not just media. Therefore, education, social networks, community engagement, etc. all have a role to play. One example of this is how sporting organisations are trying to develop more inclusive practices to promote equality among genders, sexual orientations, and ethnicities. It has been noted that these environments promote a type of engagement with equals (being one of the lads for example), but also shapes engagement with wider society. By doing so, the opinions, stereotypes, experiences, etc. that are shared go beyond media broadcasts, but simultaneously do influence the reception of those broadcasts. As subjects, issues, and examples, are taken from media reports in order to further support those opinions, stereotypes, experiences, etc.

The direct experiences an individual has with Muslims or Islam inevitably shape the way an individual is to receive news reports about Islam and Muslims. Having positive experiences may shape the interpretation in such a way that one is critical of the way news reports on a certain subject. It may also lead to a questioning of the way that person may be. For example, if individual A has a friend who is a Muslim male, who has a wife who wears the hijab. The repeated negative mentioning of the hijab as being forced upon women in some way or another may lead to questions about the practice, leading to greater understanding or to tension and conflict in the relationship between individual A and their friend. However, the possibility for negative experiences are also there. For the participants in Luton, the threat of Muslims coming to steal their jobs is real. A city with relatively high unemployment, industrial or manufacturing labour opportunities, increased migration of Muslims to the city has meant that for them this is an experience that is real. Rather than an abstract notion for some other individuals around the country. People who live in areas with high Muslim populations are more likely to meet, engage, work, etc. with Muslims, yet this doesn't necessarily have to be positive, not all people engage with each other positively regardless of identity. But this can affect the engagement with media materials, as well as be reinforced by the media materials as the reason why. For example, a conflict with a Muslim co-worker may lead to someone holding a negative opinion of that individual, but some may see it as a larger trend. This can lead the individual to use it as an example to support an interpretation from a news segment, but at the same time those news segments could have influenced the earlier engagement with the co-worker, but will also continue to shape those relations going forward.

As these three aspects combine in an individual they influence the interpretation one has of a media report. As shown above, these three elements are subject to discursive formation. But the way they intersect is also subject to discursive formation, the narrative one has of oneself will shape the way these join together. In

highlighting these aspects this thesis has shown that a complicated relationship exists between the discursive power of media institutions, historical antecedents, and individual agency. It is therefore important to consider that as no person lives in a vacuum, and is shaped by their past experiences, social engagements, ideology, etc., media institutions also are subject to these influences. Therefore, the products they disseminate are subject to influences such as: past experiences of journalists, ideology of the outlet, economic constraints, and a tradition of journalism. However, as has been shown, in order to understand the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain, the discourse of Orientalism needs to be accounted for. [775] This discourse has formed into a system, a structure that constitutes the way non-Muslims engage with Muslims and news-reports about Muslims and Islam. This means that Muslims and Islam as an object of news reporting, are transformed, based on the corpus of knowledge that precedes them. The way of looking at this object is reliant on a system of knowledge that has produced Muslims politically, sociologically, ideologically, commercially, and imaginatively for a non-Muslim audience.

This is achieved through the use of discourses that do not present the complexity of the issue in an open and critical manner, and utilise predictable narratives. The reasons for doing so are described in chapters 2 and 3 and the consequences make up chapter 4. In doing so, these discourses assert specific notions about Asians, Muslims in particular, and suggest further implementation of policies by the largely white community in order to manage non-white communities. These discourses are shaped by the current paradigm and simultaneously restrict change. Leading Talal Asad to argue that *"Muslims are included within and excluded from Europe at one and the same time in a special way, and that this has less to do with the "absolutist Faith" of Muslims living in a secular environment and more with European notions of "culture" and "civilization" and "the secular state", "majority", and "minority"."*[776]

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[775] Said, E. W., *Orientalism*, 3.

[776] Asad, T., *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, 159.
Douglas Davies, in personal correspondence, has mentioned that this is not necessarily unlike non-Muslims living under certain interpretations of Sharia law. For a work on that issue one could look at: Al-Aayed, S. H., *The Rights of Non-Muslims in the Islamic World*.

Conclusion

Despite ethnic and religious differences and varieties in social status, the presence of others has raised doubts about Britain's value system. In this context, what is the role of the media? How do non-Muslims understand and interpret news reports about Muslims and Islam and how does that underpin their actions and conceptualisations?

As described in this thesis the media discourses that engage Muslims and Islam form a system, consisting of objects, types of statements, concepts, themes. This structure is used to bring order to the statements made in media domains. This is done using the correlations and functioning's of these statements, in historical and contemporary contexts. In turn, these statements have constituted how non-Muslims, based on the corpus of knowledge that underpins the way they look at Muslims and Islam, engage with media discourses about Islam and Muslims. In doing so, the media is one method for managing and producing the image of Muslims, in a political, sociological, ideological and imaginative manner. Therefore, the way that Muslims and Islam are discussed in the news is through a collection of statements formed by a system, through the ordering of those statements, according to the rules that categorise those statements. The discourse of Muslims in the British Press is the result of political, sociological, military, ideological, scientific and imaginative orientations. In turn, these are produced and re-produced by the dominant group(s) in British society. In the British context, media should be considered a disseminator and facilitator of public discussion. The presence of Muslims in Britain challenges the existing paradigm of what British society is, and their demands for recognition and equality challenges the hegemony of the dominant group(s).

The manner by which Muslims and Islam are portrayed in the media, affects the way they are perceived and understood by those receiving the media. This is because the media creates, reflects and enforces social representations. English newspapers and television news networks address Islam and Muslims in a number of ways. This is informed by media discourse. Therefore, by looking at the way people understand and construct meaning from media this thesis shows how people's conceptualisation of Islam and Muslims is being shaped by the media. Therefore, the way non-Muslims in Britain engage with media reports about Islam and Muslims, is reliant upon the three basic elements: (1) the role that the news and media take in an individual's life; (2) the opinion a person has of Muslims and Islam based on their pre-existent knowledge; and (3) the experiences and contact a person has with Muslims.

Implications, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The significance of the current work is that it offers an analysis of how the media affects the understanding and interpretation of Islam and Muslims in non-Muslim people in Britain, by looking at the influences that form their personal beliefs in a social context. This should in turn be able to help the narrative of society create a more understanding situation, for Islam and for Muslims. Whilst consumerism may be the predominant factor in news production and consumption, it does not have to be the only characteristic. What is necessary is for news to inform individuals without pandering to the audience. As Eid suggests, *"Balance and fairness are sought to diminish isolation and alienation and to encourage social cohesion."*[778]

An immediate and wholesale change of the current situation of media production would be impossible because there would be no terms by which it could be made; that is, in order to be wholesale, it would have to be made in terms wholly outside of the current media sphere; but that would then be unintelligible to the consumers because it is only within the media institution(s) that – reports, texts, producers etc. – become consumable and understandable. The implication is that because the very structure of assumptions and goals of media make it understandable, creating a radical alternative is not possible, no matter how great the desire to be free from orientalist discourse, biased reporting and negative stereotypes. Therefore, any steps taken to improve the situation will need to be made within the current media paradigm. Therefore, it is imperative that a fostering of critical media literacy among the general public is pursued. This must start with the development of a critical media pedagogy that takes into account the hermeneutical necessity of everyday media practices, how to decode media messages in such a way that their complex effects are understood, and the ability to distinguish the implicit and explicit ideologies present in media. This is important because it helps in distinguishing between "hegemonic ideologies and those images, discourses, and texts that subvert the dominant ideologies."[779] It also encourages the audiences to consume better quality products. Whilst current and future generations might be media natives, that does not guarantee critical media-literacy, because being familiar with the technology does not guarantee a person truly understands it and is then able to master it.[780]

One of the main limitations of this research is the result of its methodology. Due to the interpretive nature of this thesis, an account of my positionality as a researcher of media, Islam and religion in general is an important tool for understanding some of the choices I made during this research. As J.D. Chow points out,

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[778] Eid, M., "Perceptions About Muslims in Western Societies," 111.
[779] Kellner, D., *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Post-Modern* (London, UK - New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 335.
[780] Ibid., 335-36.

the conclusions gathered must be a response that is congruent with the data gathered.[781] I am aware that this positionality has worked alongside my theoretical frameworks to influence the organization and interpretation of my data. First and foremost, it is important to note that I am not, nor have ever been involved in the media industry. I am not in the position to acquire exclusive information and experiences related to the day-to-day production process of news media. On the other hand, I live the life of a non-Muslim and therefore it is also important to note that I have approached the study of this subject from a middle class, white, educated, heterosexual male standpoint. These points of cultural capital may have limited my ability to connect and establish rapport with study participants who identify differently and or belong to various classes, races or ethnicities outside of my own. To reduce this risk, I have developed knowledge of communities outside my own and this has helped with the development of follow-up questions and establishing rapport. I drew on the literature of a variety of fields such as cultural theory, black theology, and sociology in order to frame my questions intelligently and ethically.

The condemning of racist ideas that exist in society may simply make participants less likely to discuss their views in the focus groups. As the aim was not to actually change their perceptions, but rather to document what their perceptions are, my position in the focus groups as a consequence was that discriminatory language or images that I feel are abhorrent would not be condemned. This follows the reasoning put forth in anti-racism education literature, namely, that by condemning racist ideas, the participants may simply choose not to discuss their views in public. Such condemning of discriminatory statements was therefore avoided, as it would have effectively stopped the focus groups from functioning freely.[782]

Other limitations present in this methodology are primarily the result of access: many people were either unable to participate or simply not interested in participating, and attempts to contact representatives for Muslims on the political, economic or social level were sometimes ignored or turned down, as well as some of my attempts to contact gatekeepers regarding focus group participation. The number of ethnic minorities that participated in the focus groups was disappointing. However, these challenges were considered during the design of this research project. Limitations in time and money affected focus group participation. Due to such constraints, rural and suburban areas were not really represented in this study unless people commuted from them. In addition, the limitations in time affected the study in that only 3 newspapers and 3 terrestrial television networks could be selected for analysis. It also meant that a cross-section of news material needed to be taken and it was not possible to do a longitudinal study over the course of a year or longer. Future studies using the current research design could examine the variables of race, age, educational level and the geographic and socio-economic backgrounds of the participants more broadly and closely.

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[781] Chow, J. D., "Interruption to Research Design: Substance Driven Research," *Advances in nursing science* 22/2 (1999): 39.
[782] For an example of such literature see: Bryan, A., "'You've Got to Teach People That Racism Is Wrong and Then They Won't Be Racist': Curricular Representations and Young People's Understandings of 'Race'and Racism," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44/5 (2012).

Finally, my stance on Muslim representations in media as well as the reception of media reports has changed since I began this research project. My first introduction to the intersection of religion and media came during an early meeting with Joanildo Burity and then a subsequent weekend seminar given by Jolyon Mitchell at Durham University. Much to my surprise I found this a fascinating and interesting avenue of intellectual exploration. I discovered that there were many issues surrounding minorities in the media, issues I was kept blissfully unaware of as part of my everyday media consumption, so that my understanding of the problems of minorities were limited to second-hand accounts or to what I read in mainstream media.

I decided to write my PhD thesis on the non-Muslim interpretation of Muslims in news Media as a direct result of the material presented to me during my early time at Durham University; a lateral move from my Master's thesis which looked at Islam in Europe and the works of Tariq Ramadan and Bassam Tibi. As I progressed through my doctoral work and research projects, my stance has been inspired by personal connections that grew out of my research fellowships at Duke in the Islamic Studies Department and at the University of Colorado where I spent time at the Centre for the Study of Religion, Media and Culture. My work at Duke and Colorado opened my eyes to debates and issues I was simply unaware of before, and this has greatly enhanced my understanding and improved the work I have done since. This was also accompanied by my continuing pursuit of knowledge in the fields of critical theory, social studies, media studies and postmodern frameworks. I have since developed a scholarly outlook that marks a shift from ignorance to a more postmodern and critical framework and resulted in the development and reorientation of my own personal politics. In the end, then, my approach to this thesis has been informed by my personal interest in researching the dynamics of ideology in media, the representation of religion in media and the structural and social problems facing minority religious groups in Britain and Europe. This has led me to work towards a better understanding of how non-Muslims understand and conceive Muslims in relation to their media representation.

Further research needs to be conducted in order to look at the effects of media beyond news coverage. It has been suggested that news media does have an agenda-setting effect as well as an effect on the boundaries of discourse, but what about the effect of other media genres? Further research needs to be done into this aspect in other domains, because if media is the sole reason for people holding certain opinions, then it would mean that all other social factors are secondary. If true, this would suggest that socialisation processes such as education and politics are secondary to media when it comes to defining public debate. More specifically, research could examine the question: how does the 'Prevent'-agenda as it is taught in schools affect the conceptualisations of Muslims and Islam? These questions and others need to be researched further. The current study has shown that the field of hermeneutics and methods using focus groups can offer valuable contributions to the study of religion and the media. I trust that future research will continue to shed light on Islam and Muslims in the media and explore how consumers can best be presented with more diversified and representative information. In addition, it would be worthwhile to

examine why the media seems to be such an influential source. It does not supplement other avenues for information dissemination (namely education), but rather acts as the sole source of information for a great number of people. [783] An example may serve for clarification as to why this is problematic: if the television programme 'The Big Bang Theory' is your only source for information on science that is problematic, not because of the media, though, because that does what it is meant to do - reach the consumer and entertain. The bigger problem is the fact that sources outside the media would not inform the consumer about science. Research has shown that particularly the media is a large source of information for people out of education (not attending schools or universities). Therefore, not only are conceptualisations of Islam and Muslims from the media of greater importance, but the reason why this information seems to be the only information that is reaching people needs to be researched further.

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[783] Allen, C., *Islamophobia*, 96.

Appendices

Appendix 1.   Basic Background Questionnaire

TITLE OF PROJECT: The interpretation of Islam and Muslims in the News by a non-Muslim audience

(The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself)

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………

Please tick box or circle as necessary

Age: …………   What is your gender?

☐   Male
☐   Female
☐   Other

If other, please state how you would describe yourself: ……………………………………………….

What is your marital status?

☐   Single
☐   Married
☐   Divorced
☐   Separated
☐   In a relationship
☐   Other

If other, please state how you would describe yourself: ……………………………………………….

What is your educational background?

☐   Secondary School or equivalent
☐   Undergraduate or equivalent
☐   Postgraduate or equivalent
☐   Doctoral or equivalent
☐   Other

If other, please state: ………………………………………………………………………….

How often do you read a newspaper?

☐   Daily
☐   3-5 Days a week
☐   1-3 Days a week
☐   Monthly
☐   Never

How often do you watch the news?

☐ Daily
☐ 3-5 Days a week
☐ 1-3 Days a week
☐ Monthly
☐ Never

Do you ever read British newspapers online or in paper form?   YES / NO

If yes, which ones do you read?

☐ The Times
☐ The Financial Times
☐ The Guardian
☐ The Independent
☐ The Telegraph
☐ The Sun
☐ The Daily Mail
☐ BBC News Website
☐ Other

If other, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you ever watch British news live via satellite/cable or online?   YES / NO

If yes, which ones do you watch?

☐ BBC 1
☐ BBC News
☐ BBC World
☐ ITV
☐ Channel 4
☐ Sky News
☐ Other

If other, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you watch or read news produced in Britain as part of your
normal media usage?   YES / NO

Do you consult any other British sources for news?   YES / NO

If yes, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you consult any other foreign news networks?   YES/NO

If yes, which ones do you consult?

☐ CNN
☐ NBC
☐ Bloomberg
☐ Press TV
☐ Al Jazeera (English)
☐ Al Jazeera (Arabic)
☐ RT
☐ CCTV
☐ NHK
☐ Other

If other, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you watch or read news produced abroad as part of your
normal media usage?   YES / NO

Do you have a social networking account?   YES / NO

If yes, which one(s)?

☐ Facebook
☐ Twitter
☐ Friendster
☐ Other

If other, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you follow news networks via social networking sites?   YES / NO

Do you follow links to news stories if provided the link
via friends/followers on social networking sites?   YES / NO

Do you have a blog or personal webpage?   YES / NO

Do you share news stories you have come across with others?   YES / NO

If yes, which method do you use?

☐ Word of mouth
☐ Social Networking
☐ Blog or personal webpage
☐ Email
☐ Other

If other, please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Do you feel that it is better to watch the news on television or read it in the newspaper?

Do you feel that the news that is broadcast or printed is accurate?   YES / NO

How many Muslims do you think there are in Britain? (Percentage of total population and in pure numbers)

please state: …………………………………………………………………………….

Signed ....………...............

Place and Date...

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) ....…………........................

Appendix 2.   Ethical Consent Form

TITLE OF PROJECT:

The interpretation of Islam and Muslims in the News by a non-Muslim audience

(The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself)

Please circle or underline where applicable

Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?   YES / NO

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study?   YES / NO

Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?   YES / NO

Have you received enough information about the study?   YES / NO

Who have you spoken to? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof. ....

Do you consent to participate in the study?   YES/NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:

* at any time and

* without having to give a reason for withdrawing and

* (if relevant) without affecting your position in the University?   YES / NO

Do you consent to the making of tape recordings?   YES / NO

Do you consent to the making of video recordings?   YES / NO

Do you consent to any use of the recordings after the end of the project?   YES / NO

Signed ....……................... Date ....

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS) ....……........................

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