

British Media's Coverage of Muslims and Islam (2018-2020)

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Author: Faisal Hanif



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Designed by Ken Wilson-Max

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About Us

The Centre for Media Monitoring (CfMM) is a project of the Muslim Council of Britain, designed to improve the quality of reporting of Islam and Muslims in the media through constructive engagement. In the period 2016-2018, a constant stream of inaccurate stories about Islam or Muslims were changed or retracted by national newspapers and broadcasters following discussions with editors or complaints to the print and broadcast regulators. This initial work created the foundations for the inception of CfMM in 2018.

CfMM monitors the media, creates an evidence base of inaccurate and misleading print and broadcast stories, produces reports and guidelines, holds roundtable discussions as well as one to one meetings with the media, regulators, politicians and other stakeholders. CfMM also trains community organisations to proactively engage with the media and help CfMM hold the media to account and improve the quality of coverage.



Miqdaad Versi
Founder & Lead Strategist

Miqdaad is a media spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain and the founder of the Centre for Media Monitoring. Prior to CfMM's launch, Miqdaad was called 'the man correcting stories about Muslims' by the BBC given his work correcting false stories about Islam and Muslims in mainstream media.



Rizwana Hamid
Director

Rizwana is responsible for overseeing CfMM's work and engaging with senior key stakeholders. She is an award-winning filmmaker and journalist with over 30 years' experience working in the British media. She has worked as a producer/director for BBC Television (News, Current Affairs, Religious, Documentary, World Service & Multicultural Programming) as well as for Channel 4 and other international broadcasters.



Faisal Hanif
Media Monitoring Analyst

Faisal is responsible for analysing and producing reports on the media's coverage of Muslims and Islam. He has worked as a news reporter at The Times and as a researcher at the BBC. He has also conducted field research for two national think tanks – Institute for Public Policy Research and The University of Oxford's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society.



Amanda Morris
Community Liaisons Officer

Amanda Morris is responsible for training communities on how to engage with the media in a more informed and proactive way. Before joining the MCB, Amanda worked for the Muslim Council of Wales as Administrative Executive and Media Liaison. She has an MA in Islam in Contemporary Britain from Cardiff University.

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Foreword



Alison Phillips
Editor-in-Chief, The Mirror

'An immense power for good lies in its grasp' the legendary editorial director of The Mirror Hugh Cudlipp once said about his paper. But, of course, the potential for such goodness goes way beyond the Mirror which, more than half a century later, I now edit. That opportunity to make the world a better place lies across our entire media. It may now be an industry unrecognisable to Hugh Cudlipp since the emergence of rolling TV news, the internet and the all pervasive influence of social media. But with so many more news outlets, TV stations, online sites and social platforms, with so much more news, information and opinion.. surely too there must be so many more avenues to grasp 'good'.

After all that is what drives so many to enter journalism; the desire to shine light in the darkest of corners, to hold power, in all its forms, to account and to give voice to those who are too often ignored. Yet all journalists who accept the responsibility of our work being a force for good must equally understand the damage we are capable of doing. Either wittingly or unwittingly journalism can - and has - caused real harm and pain.

Can this be prevented? Not always - there will always be cases of truthful, accurate and public interest reporting that causes pain for some. But there is more we can do to ensure our reporting is fair and accurate to avoid causing harm. How? By exploiting the natural curiosity which brought us into this job in the first place. The greatest journalists are questioning, challenging and open minded. The even greater journalists are those capable of turning these qualities inward - questioning and challenging themselves. This report by the Centre for Media Monitoring shows how much we as journalists must question ourselves and the work we are producing in relation to reporting of Muslims and Islam.

Challenging consensus through robust opinion and reporting are an essential part of journalism. Chasing clicks by being deliberately antagonistic and provocative does our profession a disservice. It is possible to craft an argument without resorting to lazy stereotypes or exploiting ungrounded fears about a particular community. A sensitivity towards others does not diminish your journalistic skills or somehow undermine the sacred idea of objectivity - it can only enhance the quality of your work. Everyone who works in the media has a duty to ensure the content they create is fair and responsible. That duty is even greater for those who work in reporting news which shapes the national debate. Yet this report records that the majority of media misrepresentation is still happening within news.

Of course news organisations do not exist to be standard bearers for any particular group, faith or interest. And of course all journalists must be free to report the world as they see it. But we must seek to do this without misrepresentation and generalisation. And with accuracy and fairness. Because yes, immense power to do good lies within our grasp through robust reporting which reveals wrongs and empathetic journalism which ensures the voiceless are heard. But we also have immense power to do good too... simply by not doing wrong.



Emma Tucker

Editor, The Sunday Times

Who is our audience? It's a fundamental question for every newspaper and broadcaster, and at The Sunday Times we have a simple answer: it's everyone who is interested in serious journalism. That's a large group and diverse group, and we aim to serve everyone in it, irrespective of their background.

That's why I welcome this report - in the full knowledge that it contains criticisms of the press, my own paper included. Some of those criticisms are valid. Some I would respectfully disagree with. All, though, are useful. To move forward in serving that broad readership we want to hear views from every part of it.

By its nature, a report like this must focus on the past. My job is to focus on the future. I want our news coverage to be fair but fearless, and our commentators to be robust but responsible. I want every part of The Sunday Times - and in a news-focused debate it should be remembered that papers like ours cover every aspect of life, from culture and business to sport and travel - to cater to that broad audience.

The best way to do that is to ensure that those who produce our journalism reflect our readers, and our company's diversity targets are intended to ensure that's exactly what happens. Anyone who takes note of the bylines on our articles will be aware that the days of newspapers being produced exclusively by men of white British heritage are already over. We still have a way to go but increasingly, the people making the decisions in the newsroom are a more accurate reflection of the public they serve.

That doesn't mean that future editions of this report won't be needed. Despite our best efforts, we won't always get it right; and of course, sometimes we will just see the issues differently. The price of honest journalism in a fractious age is that sometimes it will make the messenger unpopular. We won't always agree. But we should keep talking - and listening.

Introduction

In December 2019, the outgoing chair of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) said: 'I speak for myself, but I have a suspicion that [Muslims] are from time to time written about in a way that [newspapers] would simply not write about Jews or Roman Catholics'.¹ This, coupled with studies by Cambridge University² and Leicester University³ which respectively concluded that mainstream media's reporting about Muslims is contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility towards Muslims and fuelling hate crime in Britain, is sufficient evidence to acknowledge that there is a problem that needs addressing.

This report, which monitored both online and television broadcast media daily and analysed almost 48,000 articles and 5,500 plus broadcast clips between October 2018 and September 2019, is one of the most extensive pieces of quantitative and qualitative research to be carried out on the British media's coverage of Muslims and Islam during this period. Beyond the daily monitoring and analysis a more broad sweep of coverage during 2019-2020 including the COVID 19 pandemic was undertaken to illustrate the findings made during the statistical period.

Whilst some of the findings in this report may not seem alarming from a statistical perspective, the numbers do give a cause for concern in that almost every article and clip with an identifier of Muslims and/or Islam has been included in this study and therefore arguably give some leeway to publications. The methodology has not discriminated between those articles or broadcast clips which mention Muslims and/or Islam in a passing manner and those that discuss the subjects in more depth or where they are the primary focus of the story. What the number of keywords in an article and or clip show is that the more the mention of Muslims and/or Islam the

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/60d5bea6-1ff9-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b>

² University of Cambridge and Economic and Social Research Council Roundtable held at the House of Lords

³ 'Politicians and media fuel hate crime in Britain,' say University of Leicester experts, University of Leicester, June 2016

greater the likelihood of negative and antagonistic bias.

This report is evidenced based with extensive examples from both online and television which illustrate some of the most problematic themes and narratives. Since CfMM was set up in 2018, we have been working with journalists, editors, regulators and policy makers to ensure that journalistic standards of reporting accurately, consistently and responsibly are upheld when it comes to Muslims and Islam.

We have found that many journalists are willing to work with us in good faith. Yet there is a small minority with powerful voices in the media and elsewhere, who will seek to misrepresent our intentions by insinuating that we wish to censor and limit criticism of Islam and Muslims. As with previous reports published by us, we fully expect detractors to cherry-pick parts of our research out-of-context.

At the end of the day, all we ask for is fairness, not favours. Good faith actors will see past concerted efforts to discredit our research and understand what we intend as reflected upon our findings. We do not expect everyone to agree, but we hope that many will engage, leading to fairer and more responsible reporting about Islam and Muslims. Like other areas of life, the story of Islam and Muslims should not miss out on nuanced analysis.

There is no single way in which Muslims and Islam are reported on, and as this report shows, different publishers take different approaches based on the story and issue at hand. Yet, common themes persist mainly around the idea that Islam is something to be saved from or rebelled against as a faith and set of beliefs which are intrinsic to the lives of over a billion people, or which influences for the good. Even stories which report on a Muslim having achieved something noteworthy are framed by their supposed embrace of western liberal values whilst breaking free of the shackles of their own faith or tradition.

Moreover, there is a hierarchy in terms of which publishers most frequently pump out anti-Muslim and anti-Islam rhetoric. Those on the right of the political or ideological spectrum are increasingly regurgitating far right tropes on Islam and Muslims. In all the

categories in which articles were analysed, right leaning news websites and magazines were the most frequent offenders and sometimes by a large margin. Newspapers such as The Times, which has previously published the infamous false 'Christian Child Forced into Muslim Foster Care' story, has continued to repeatedly malign Muslims and Muslim institutions. In this report we highlight just four libel cases it has lost against individuals it has falsely accused of holding 'extremist views'⁴, or 'expressing views which excused or explained acts of terrorism'.⁵ Other publications like The Jewish Chronicle, The Telegraph and The Mail On Sunday have also paid out libel damages to Muslims and Muslim institutions during the period of analysis, whilst other commentators on the right continuously rail against Muslims as an existential threat to Britain and the wider world. Previous research has shown that the bulk of the reporting on Muslims is around the topic of terrorism which is found in one fifth of all articles mentioning a keyword that would identify Muslims and/or Islam.⁶ This disproportionate emphasis on attacks perpetrated by so-called Muslims has among other things exaggerated the threat posed by Muslims and terrorism.

We have not delved deeply into some of the major stories around terrorism that occurred during the period of analysis of this report as they have been dealt with in great detail in our previous report '[How The British Media Reports Terrorism.](#)'

The animosity which right leaning newspapers have for Muslims can be seen in their support for increasingly draconian measures against Muslims across Europe, particularly those anti-Muslim policies adopted by the French State. Yet, a cursory look at subjects not analysed during the time frame of this report but covered by the British media in 2021, shows that the embracing of anti-Muslim ideas and positions can also be found in left-leaning publications or those in the centre.

Given that journalism is seen as a first draft of history, material

⁴ <https://www.inpublishing.co.uk/articles/the-times-publishes-apology-to-sultan-choudhury-obe-15658>

⁵ <https://pressgazette.co.uk/times-apologises-and-pays-libel-damages-to-imam-who-appeared-on-bbc-debate/>

⁶ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07418825.2018.1524507>

cannot always be expected to be perfect. Mistakes can be made. Yet, it is not unreasonable to expect individual publications to learn from what has gone before and aim to correct it. However, as this report was being written, a familiar face (Anjem Choudhury) made a reappearance in right leaning newspapers who, once again, provided a national platform for those from the extreme fringes.

This also swings the other way. Unrepresentative figures are not just featured as bogeymen but those who give legitimacy to far right tropes with journalists and editors able to hide behind the fact that a Muslim is writing such things. The most recent example is the glowing reviews garnered by a book which derided Muslims for a lack of loyalty to Britain and opined how any Muslim, who the author believed was radical, should leave Britain. The widespread acceptance which the book received among publications on both the left and right, including a fawning interview in the *New Statesman* (a publication which overall is adjudged as being better than its competitors when reporting on Muslims) is problematic. The fact that a book reviewer of two decades called it **'by some distance, the worst book I have reviewed in nearly 20 years as a critic – at times laughable, at others frankly sinister'**, shows just how easy false information on Muslims is lapped up.⁷

This study and its methodology not only aims to highlight areas of concern with the ultimate goal of improving the comprehension and quality of reporting about Islam and Muslims, but also to commend good journalism. Thirty-four mainstream news and current affairs websites and 38 television channels (including all regional channels) were monitored in accordance with our methodology which was designed alongside academics in the fields of Corpus Linguistics. Articles were monitored by a team of researchers on a daily basis and measured against criteria designed to find the most problematic elements of articles, everything from omission of information to headlines and imagery.

However, as mentioned above the study also includes good

⁷ <https://twitter.com/sameerahim/status/1400756838564601860>

practice. An example of this is John Sudworth's BBC feature on **'China's Hidden Camps'** which exposed the systematic persecution of Uighur Muslims by the Chinese State.⁸ It also includes an article by Stephen Daisley in *The Spectator* (a publication which is mostly antagonistic towards Muslims and their beliefs) about Muslim parents protesting outside the gates of Parkfield school in Birmingham against what they considered the indoctrination of their children.⁹

No report can be perfect, and the limitations are outlined in the later section, but we hope that the evidence-based insights will prove valuable in informing and shaping decisions in the reporting of Islam and Muslims

⁸ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps

⁹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/in-defence-of-the-parkfield-community-school-parents>

Methodology

Our methodology was developed and validated by experienced media monitoring practitioners and academics who specialise in corpus linguistics and how Muslims and/or Islam are covered in the media. The process involves 2 key steps:

Monitoring

CfMM monitored 34 British media outlets via their online websites¹ and 38 television channels (including all regional broadcasts)² on a daily basis for one year using key words relating to Muslims and Islam (some in various forms of spelling) as well as their relevant plurals.³

Analysis

Each article is assessed as affirmative (Y), not affirmative (N) or don't know (DK) – neither yes or no) against the following five key metrics:

1. Association with negative aspects or behaviour
2. Misrepresentation of Muslim belief, behaviour or identity
3. Makes generalisations about Muslim belief or behaviour
4. Lack of due prominence to a Muslim voice, identity or perspective
5. Misleading or irrelevant imagery or headlines

1 A full list of the mainstream British news outlets, including print newspapers, online news websites and television broadcast channels that we have monitored can be found in Appendix A. These outlets were chosen in line with the Centre for Media Monitoring's ongoing work of monitoring the British media in its reporting of Islam and Muslims.

2 A full list of television broadcast channels can be found in Appendix B

3 A full list of keywords can be found in the Appendix C.



An overall rating is derived based on the responses to the above five metrics:

- **'Very Biased'** (at least 4 Yes's [Y] to the questions above; or a breach of IPSO regulation or a new site admitting to publishing incorrect or misleading information)
- **'Biased'** (at least 2 Ys to the questions above)
- **'Not Biased'** (5 No's to the questions above)
- **'Inconclusive'** (No more than one Yes's or at least 3 DK [don't know] answers to the questions above).

Each item (article or broadcast clip) is rated for bias with each individual segment of an article or clip including the headline, image and text rated respectively. Each item is then given an overall bias rating of **'Supportive Bias'**, **'Antagonistic Bias'**, **'Mixed'** or **'Inconclusive'** based on the following criteria;

The text/clip would be assessed as follows:

- **'Antagonistic Bias'**: if the majority of the piece or the core argument used in the piece is biased against Muslims or Islam e.g. shows only one side of an argument, refers to stereotypes, does not challenge controversial points (explanation would be provided with reference to specific part of article/clip).⁴
- **'Supportive Bias'**: as above, but the side of the argument chosen is one that portrays Muslims or Islam in a positive light.⁵
- **'Mixed'**: Elements of both supportive and antagonistic bias are present in the article.

⁴ Dominic Kennedy, 31/10/2017, Muslim lobby group Muslim Engagement and Development 'promotes extremism' The Times: This article targets a Muslim advocacy group on the research of a neo-conservative think tank which it refers to as conservative. There is no mention of MEND's wider work and the line of the group being extremist is the only one that is pursued.

⁵ Gwyneth Rees, 12/04/2018 Muslim scouts get prepared in Cardiff group BBC News: This online news piece focuses on one Muslim scouting group and how it has made a positive impact in the lives of the children who partake in it as well as its relevance to wider British society.

- **'Inconclusive'**: None of the above can be ascertained for sure.

Once this evidence base is built with each online article and broadcast clip documented and analysed for bias and accuracy the CfMM team develops insights and engages with senior stakeholders within the media to discuss the conclusions and enrich our understanding of the information gathered.

Limitations

Every study or research project has certain constraints by which its method of assessment is limited. Three key limitations are:

1. Data collation

Firstly, the data was collated using the Meltwater media monitoring tool. Any limitations of these systems would be limitations of our work. Furthermore, the methodology used was dependent on a key word search to determine if the article was suitable for assessment, this would ordinarily preclude any article which contained imagery of Muslims or Islamic objects without mentioning one or more of the keywords. There is the possibility that a Muslim figure is profiled in a positive manner by a publication yet is not represented in this study because he/she is not identified as through a keyword. The question for publishers would be why the beliefs or identity of the said character/s is not part of the narrative in such instances.

2. Timing

The statistical data in this study has been taken across 12 months Oct 2018 – Sept 2019. As such the data is reliant on the news cycle and impacted by the stories prioritised across this time period. The findings therefore may not be reflective of other years where Muslims and Islam are covered.

3. Subjectivity

There are a number of potential areas of subjectivity in the approach taken. Some of the subjectivity is inherent in the approach, and we believe it is valuable given our expertise in this work. Examples of

subjectivity include:

4. Inclusion of articles

Even though an article may contain a keyword, this keyword may not be of any substantial value for the purposes of establishing the bias' by which Muslim/s and/or Islam are reported. It might simply be a descriptive term in the article for example the listing Donald Trump's 'Muslim' ban alongside other alleged misdemeanours of the ex-President. For the purposes of this study the article would still be included in the data set. This is so the selection of articles which are assessed are less subjective than they otherwise may be.

5. Interpretations

CfMM acknowledges that the interpretations of whether an article or image or headline is deemed to have breached the 5 metrics is open to being subjective. In some cases, CfMM may come to a conclusion different to news websites. For example, news websites may argue that the inclusion of certain details identifying Muslims and/or Islam within a headline, image or article are necessary for detail or context. Equally news sites can preference their stories and how they are told according to the editorial position taken by the particular news site on a given issue or to reflect the views (and on occasion biases) of its readers. This subjective assessment by CfMM is core to this report.

Consistency

In order to ensure consistency in the assessment taken by different parts of CfMM, we undertake the following:

- All those who engage in analysis are trained by the main research analyst
- Each person is mentored by a trained CfMM analyst
- Problematic cases are discussed between different members of the CfMM team
- All 'Very Biased' cases are looked at to ensure the team agrees with the decision

This is not a perfect system, but we believe given the scale of the analysis being undertaken, it is a proportionate level of oversight. We hope that the evidence-based insights will prove valuable in informing and shaping decisions in the reporting of Islam and Muslims.

List of publications

CfMM has made every reasonable attempt to differentiate between individual editorial teams within one news organisation which publish their content on one single online platform. For instance, all articles from Mail Online, Daily Mail, Daily Mail Australia, Mail on Sunday and dailymail.com are published on Dailymail.co.uk even though all these publications are editorially independent of each other. This is also true for The Times and Sunday Times. However, this differentiation is not always transparent on every news platform. For example, material on Daily Mirror comes from at least four separate editorial teams (Daily Mirror, Mirror.co.uk, Sunday Mirror and The Sunday People) as does thesun.co.uk (The Sun, The Sun on Sunday and The Scottish Sun) and theguardian.com (The Guardian and The Observer). In such instances, articles from these publications can be indistinguishable and as such are monitored and analysed under their one online banner.

Section 1 Online

Key Findings

Bias

Articles assessed as 'Biased' or 'Very Biased' (14%)

Publications whose articles had the highest proportion of 'Very Biased' rating were: Christian Today (11.3%), The Spectator (10.9%) and Daily Mail Australia (10%)

21% of all articles assessed were categorised as 'Antagonistic' and only 3% were categorised as 'Supportive'

Publication with the highest proportion of 'Antagonistic' articles was The Spectator (37.3%), whilst New Statesman had the highest proportion of 'Supportive' articles (16.1%)

The themes which are the worst in terms of bias, are Religion, Terrorism and Extremism,

Misrepresentation

Almost 1 in 10 articles misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam

The majority of misrepresentation came via news reporting (82%)

Right-leaning and religious publications have the highest proportion of articles which misrepresent Muslim behaviours or beliefs

The Spectator magazine had the highest proportion of articles (1 in 4) which misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam. Daily Mail Australia and Christian Today followed with at least one in five articles

The worst cases of misrepresentation, all found in right leaning publications, led to libel cases by Muslims

Negative Aspects & Behaviours

Almost 60% of articles across all publications were identified as associating negative aspects and behaviour with Muslims or Islam.

Top 3 offenders were AFP, Reuters and Associated Press (AP).

Generalisations

7% per cent of all articles analysed included one or more generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam with the worst offenders being right-leaning or religious outlets

1 in 10 opinion pieces (10%) generalise about Muslims and/or Islam, despite the fact that only 6% of all articles were categorised under opinion

The percentage of generalisations are highest in the topics of Terrorism/Extremism (25%), Politics (18%), Middle East (17%) and Religion (15%)

Images & Headlines

Just over 2 per cent of headlines and images were misleading or inaccurate, whilst just under two per cent of all images were considered to be 'Biased'

71% of biased images were found in articles concerning international events

Right-leaning tabloids and religious publications have the greatest number of 'Irrelevant' and 'Misleading' headlines

Daily Mail Australia has the highest percentage of 'Irrelevant' and 'Misleading' headlines (14%), followed by The Sun (6%)

Bias

The importance of assessing bias in an article allows us to see how particular publications in the UK media report on Muslims and/or Islam and how their own biases influence their interpretations of religious concepts and the othering of Muslims.

Whilst it can be claimed that deciding what constitutes bias is subjective to a certain extent, this approach and analysis gives publications an insight into how a portion of their readers and the wider Muslim populace view their reporting. It also allows editors and journalists the opportunity to examine a body of evidence, assess their own biases and implement changes where necessary.

Publications with 'Very Biased' Articles

14% of all articles assessed were categorised as 'Biased' or 'Very Biased'. The top 16 publishers with the highest percentage of 'Very Biased' articles are all right-leaning and religious publications. Whilst less than 15% of all articles were rated as 'Biased' or 'Very Biased', over 20% were considered to have an 'Antagonistic Bias' towards Muslims and/or Islam almost seven times as many as those considered to have a 'Supportive Bias'.

Table 1 Overall number of 'Very Biased' articles and percentage per publication

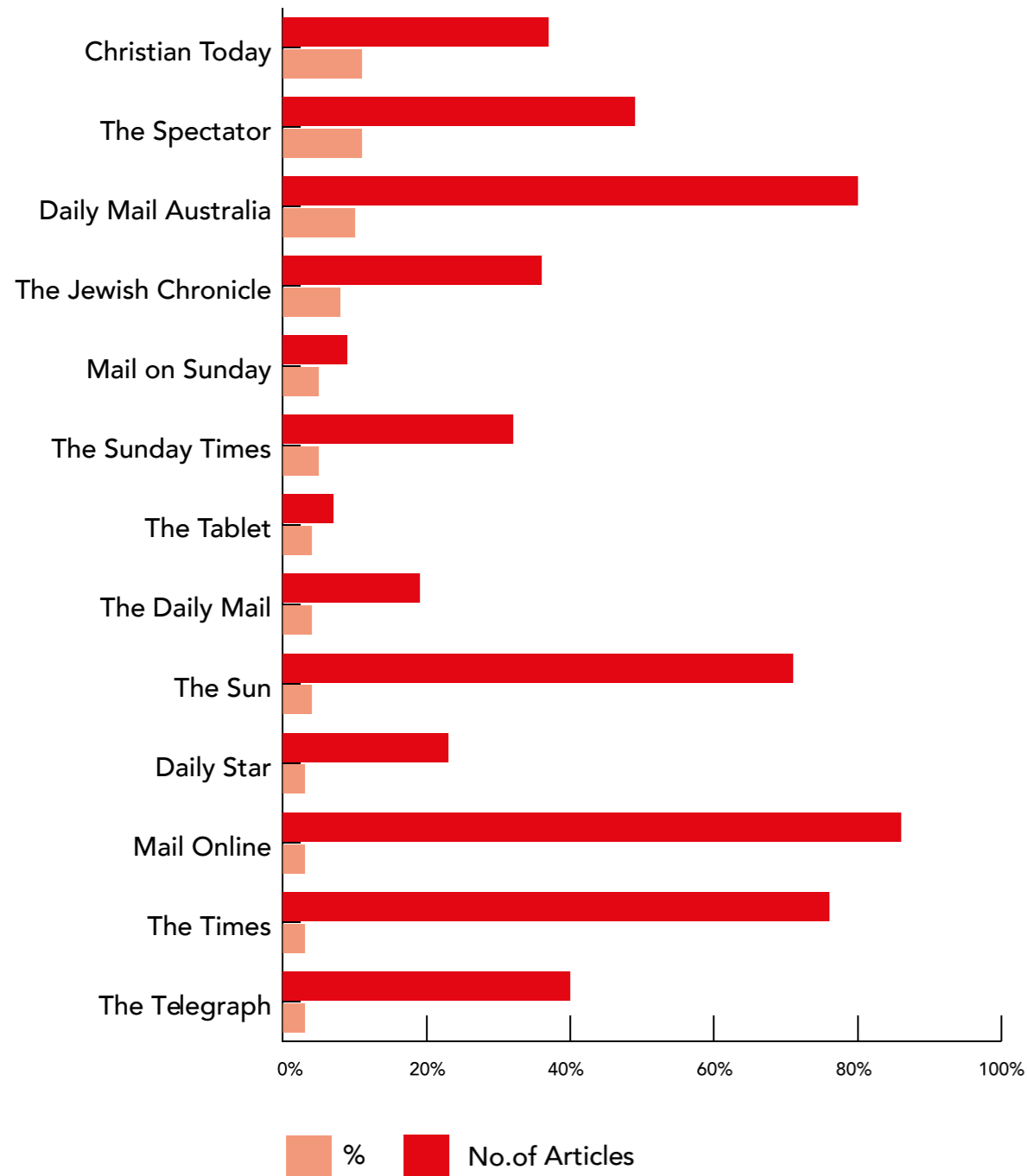
Rating	Count	Percentage
Inconclusive	22487	47
Not Biased	18425	39
Biased	5865	12
Very Biased	1041	2

Publications which have the highest percentage of 'Very Biased' articles according to the overall number of articles published by each outlet are Christian Today (11.3%), The Spectator (10.9%) and Daily Mail Australia (10%).¹

¹ D For List

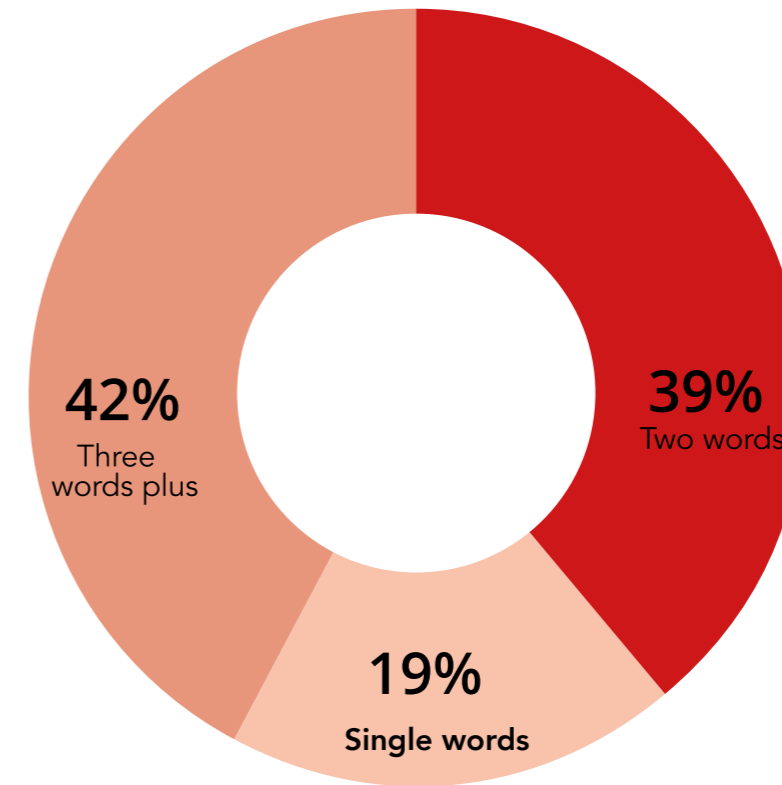


Percentage of 'Very Biased' by publication



When assessed against the frequency of keywords within an article, it can be seen that 4 out of 5 articles which contained at least two or more key words, ranked 'Very Biased' with 2 out of 5 such articles containing 3 or more keywords. The vast majority of 'Very Biased' articles appear to be discussing Muslims and/or Islam in detail.

Graphic 1: Number of key words in Very Biased Articles



80% of all 'Very Biased' articles had 2 or more 'key words' in them, suggesting that the vast majority of 'Very Biased' articles appear to be discussing Muslims and/or Islam in detail rather than just in passing



'Very Biased'

Publication	Article Headline	Summary of Rating
THE SPECTATOR	The Muslim leader who offers an example on how to tackle Islamism ²	<p>This article by John Jenkins promotes the views of a Muslim scholar from Indonesia whose article entitled: 'Don't weaponise the term Islamophobia' was published in the Telegraph following the Christchurch attacks. Jenkins references the Christchurch attacks four times in his copy yet omits mentioning the killer's name, his white supremacist ideology or the Muslims worshippers he targeted. Instead, the attack by Bretton Tarrant is described as a 'murderously self-justifying mindset analogous to that of the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda.'</p> <p>The copy is replete with associations of Muslims with negative aspects and behaviours. Ironically, when explaining why prejudice against Islam is not irrational, he goes on to reference '9/11, 7/7, the Bataclan massacre and the Islamic State', even though these attacks have nothing to do with the vast majority of Muslims.</p> <p>There is also a misleading charge that Muslim leaders were in effect calling for 'Blasphemy Laws' when asking for the official definition of Islamophobia to be adopted post Christchurch.</p>
Daily Mail Australia	REVEALED: The text message Islamic leaders sent to would-be terrorists before they were arrested over ISIS-inspired plot to blow up Melbourne landmarks on Christmas Day ³	<p>The headline for this article is misleading in that it tries to link the mosque to the plots when in fact the mosque did not collude with the men in question. On the contrary, the leaders of the mosque had received complaints from other worshippers who had overheard conversations by these men.</p> <p>The 'text messages' mentioned in the headline were not evidence of the mosque colluding but actually distancing themselves from these 'attackers' telling them to 'take their 'politics and personal opinions outside'.' These details, along with the leaders saying they would not stand for Islam 'being poisoned' or their leadership being 'disrespected under our very own roof' are only elaborated on in the body of the text.</p> <p>The mosque is there for wrongly implicated in the crime as a result of omission of facts in the headline. Had there in fact been any evidence of collusion, the leaders of the mosque would have also been arrested.</p>

² <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/03/the-muslim-leader-who-offers-an-example-on-how-to-tackle-islamism/>

³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6586657/Mosque-warned-terror-plotters-complaints-conversations-jihadist-activity.html>

Publication	Article Headline	Summary of Rating
CHRISTIAN TODAY	Fear and free speech: why defining Islamophobia could do more harm than good ⁴	<p>This polemical piece which attempts to explain why defining Islamophobia is a wrong approach, doubles up as an attack on Muslim countries and Islam whilst defending Israel and Jews.</p> <p>The article claims that Israel is a safe haven for Christians, yet, it omits the fact that Christian Palestinians are persecuted as much as their Muslim counterparts by Israel.⁵ This includes restricted freedom of movement as well as attacks by ultra-orthodox Jewish settlers in Palestine.⁶</p> <p>The article further makes the generalisation that 'Fear of offending Muslims has reached such heights in this country that self-censorship is becoming the norm...' without giving any evidence to back this claim. It then perpetuates the other trope about Islam receiving special treatment by the 'powers that be'.</p> <p>The claim that 'Islam has yet to show itself capable of being open to challenge and criticism from within' is ahistorical and a stereotype given the diverging sects of Muslims and intellectual rigour of Muslim scholarship in every era.</p> <p>Lastly, the choice of image showing two darkened Ottoman style minarets against a setting sun is strange given Islamophobia is mainly targeted against people (Muslims) and not objects or symbols. Also, Mosques and Minarets are more clear in the daylight so showing a darkened façade is deliberate in keeping with the article's claims of an Islam that is to be feared.</p>

⁴ <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/fear-and-free-speech-why-defining-islamophobia-could-do-more-harm-than-good/132452.htm>

⁵ <https://insidearabia.com/israels-relentless-war-on-christian-palestinians/>

⁶ <https://imemc.org/article/75889/>

Text Bias

Text Bias is a judgment on the overall slant of the published article in its attitude, approach or leaning towards Muslims and/or Islam. It is by definition subjective however it is evidence led in that it must demonstrate a clear anti-Muslim/Islam slant to be considered antagonistic whilst the opposite is required for it to be supportive. Similarly, when an article has elements of both anti and pro sentiments it is rated as mixed. For those articles which are neutral in approach or lack necessary information to make a judgement on, they are rated as 'Inconclusive'.

While less than 15% of all articles were rated as 'Biased' or 'Very Biased', over 20% were considered to have an 'Antagonistic Bias' towards Muslims and/or Islam, almost seven times as many as those considered to have a 'Supportive Bias'.

Table 2 Text Bias

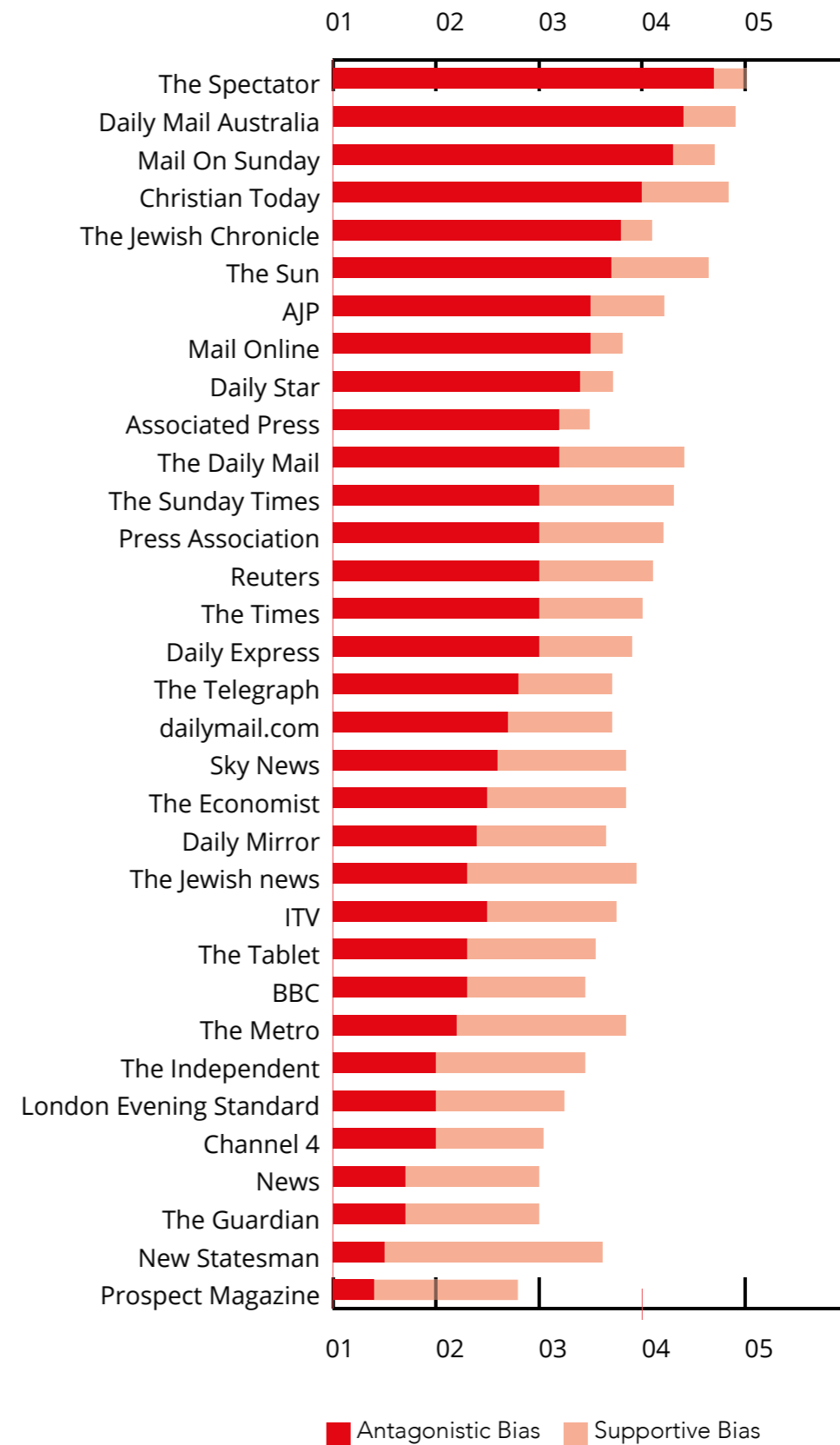
Text Bias	Count	Percentage
Inconclusive	35,475	74.2
Antagonistic Bias	9,796	20.5
Supportive Bias	1,572	3.3
Mixed	975	2.0

'Antagonistic Bias' & 'Supportive Bias'

21% of all articles assessed were categorised as 'Antagonistic' and only 3% were categorised as 'Supportive'. Eighteen publications had at least 1 in 5 articles which demonstrated an 'Antagonistic Bias' towards Muslims and/or Islam with five publications having a figure of 30% or more (The Spectator, Daily Mail Australia, Mail On Sunday, Christian Today and the Jewish Chronicle).⁷ Whilst The Spectator demonstrated the most antagonism towards Muslims and/or Islam (37.3%), The New Statesman (a direct competitor in the current affairs' magazine sector) had the highest percentage of articles

demonstrating 'Supportive Bias'. (16.1%) The New Statesman was also the only publication with a higher proportion of articles showing a 'Supportive Bias' as opposed to an 'Antagonistic Bias'.

Graphic 2 % of articles showing Antagonistic Bias vs Supportive Bias for each publication



⁷ E for full list of publications

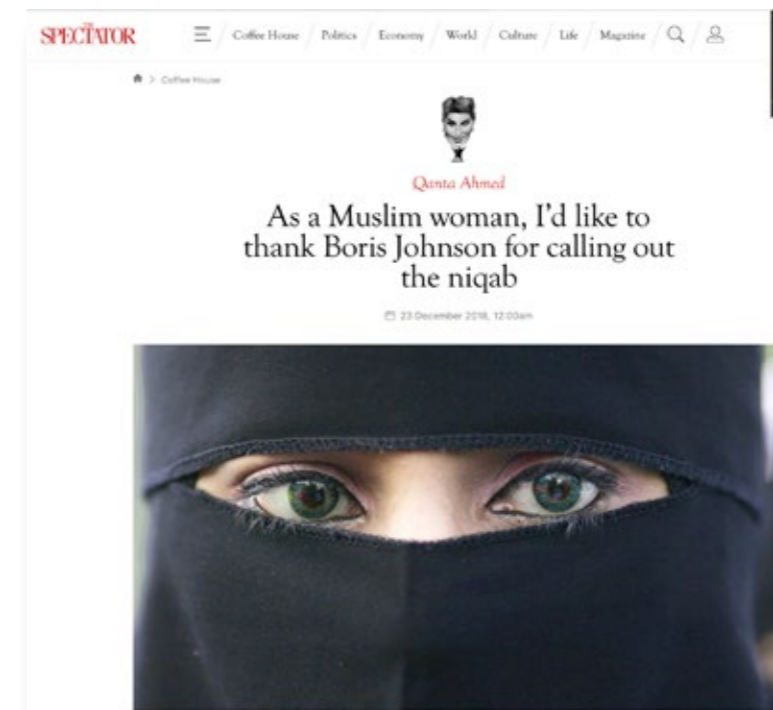
In the period under analysis, one of the leading stories across British news publications was the opinion piece in The Telegraph in which the Conservative MP Boris Johnson (now the Prime Minister) compared Muslim women wearing the niqab to letterboxes and bank robbers.⁸ The story prompted various reactions, some supportive and others critical. The different approaches and responses to the story can be seen clearly in the two magazines at the opposite ends of the bias spectrum. The Spectator published an op-ed written by a Muslim woman, Qanta Ahmed, who supported Boris Johnson's comments. Ahmed, who does not wear the hijab or the niqab, claimed that there is no basis for the niqab in Islam, and that Islamophobia is a 'false construct... which capitalises on a false victimhood.' She further accused liberals of 'enforcing gender segregation', 'gender apartheid' and empowering 'Islamism.'⁹

In contrast, The New Statesman's piece took a different approach, not arguing for or against the niqab, but giving a voice to Muslim women who wear a hijab or a niqab to discuss the impact of Boris' words on their lives. They presented statistics reflecting the spike in hate crimes against Muslim women in the week following Boris' article and questioned whether such a public figure was fit for office.¹⁰

⁸ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/05/denmark-has-got-wrong-yes-burka-oppressive-ridiculous-still/>

⁹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/as-a-muslim-woman-i-d-like-to-thank-boris-johnson-for-calling-out-the-niqab>

¹⁰ <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/06/we-should-be-fearful-muslim-women-prospect-boris-johnson-prime-minister>





'Antagonistic Bias'

Publication	Article	Antagonistic element	Trope/Problematic Issue
	'How was the 'pimping out' of an autistic girl allowed to happen?' ¹¹	'At worst it looks like council approved pimping, complicated by the possibility that this was not dealt with as a criminal offence because so many of the takers here appear to have been Muslim.'	Muslims get preferential treatment
	'Why No. 10 should be polling 'culture war' issues' ¹²	'Muslim gangs sexually abusing working class girls'	Affixing the religious identity of the perpetrators to the crime when religion has nothing to do with it.
	'Islamic centre where Bourke Street terrorist prayed was home to string of radical Muslims - but its leader says police and the PM are to blame for the attack' ¹³	'The Somali-born terrorist who stabbed three men in last week's Bourke Street attack was a regular at a Muslim youth centre previously attended by a string of Islamic extremists.'	Linking terrorism with an Islamic centre on the grounds that some 'extremists' prayed there.
	'This is black children killing black children: Former Equality Commission chairman TREVOR PHILLIPS says white liberals need to tell the truth about violence in UK semi-ghettos' ¹⁴	'Prison governors need fresh powers to ship out key gang members, whether black, white, Pakistani Muslim or godless Eastern European.'	Singling out and affixing the Muslim identity of the Pakistani prisoners to their criminal status. No other religion of any other prisoner is mentioned in the piece.
	'The liberal West has a blind spot for Islamism' ¹⁵	'As they continue to spin a totalitarian political agenda as normative Islamic belief, it is imperative that we overcome our discomfort and force the insidious Islamist threat to democracy out into the open for all to see.'	Entire article conflates grassroots Muslim activists and terror groups

11 <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/10/how-was-the-pimping-out-of-an-autistic-girl-allowed-to-happen/>

12 <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/09/why-no-10-should-be-polling-culture-war-issues/>

13 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6381775/Islamic-centre-Bourke-Street-terrorist-prayed-home-string-radical-Muslims.html>

14 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-6376287/Former-Equality-Commission-chairman-TREVOR-PHILLIPS-black-children-killing-black-children.html>

15 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/opinion/the-liberal-west-has-a-blind-spot-for-islamism-1.489303>



'Supportive Bias'

Publication	Article	Supportive Element
	'China's Hidden Camps' ¹⁶	John Sudworth's long form investigative piece exposed the plight and persecution of the Uighur Muslims.
	'Leicester fire deaths: Mosque project in memory of family' ¹⁷	This news piece reports on the charitable enterprise undertaken by a doctor whose wife and three children were killed in an arson attack. An £8.8 million mosque was built in their memory.
	'Trump's attacks on Ilhan Omar are an exercise in thinly-veiled political opportunism' ¹⁸	This article rightly argues that the attacks on congresswoman, Ilhan Omar by Trump and his supporters were rooted in their opposition to Islam and her as a Muslim.
	'Tory Islamophobia row: 15 suspended councillors quietly reinstated' ¹⁹	The Guardian featured exclusive stories on the failure of the Conservative Party to deal with Islamophobia within its ranks.

16 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps

17 <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-45863465>

18 <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/americas/north-america/2012/06/trump-s-attacks-ilhan-omar-are-exercise-thinly-veiled-political>

19 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/24/tory-islamophobia-row-15-suspended-councillors-quietly-reinstated>

'Mixed Bias'

Mixed Bias articles are those which had information or an argument which was considered 'Antagonistic' towards Muslims and/or Islam whilst also having a similar or equal weighting of 'Supportive' content. Two per cent of articles were assessed to be 'Mixed'. Current affairs magazines made up four of the top eight publications with mixed-bias articles, whilst religious publications accounted for three. The mixture of 'Supportive' and 'Antagonistic' content in religious and right leaning publications could be a result of similar religious interests which unites many Muslims with other Abrahamic faith adherents as well as shared values of moral conservatism. However, this commonality is also at times counter balanced by the perceived difference and othering of Muslims and/or Islam which results in 'Antagonistic' content.

Table 3 'Mixed bias'

Publication	Text Bias	No. of Articles	Percentage
The Spectator	Mixed	22	5
Christian Today	Mixed	13	4
New Statesman	Mixed	12	4
The Tablet	Mixed	7	4
The Jewish Chronicle	Mixed	17	4
The Daily Mail	Mixed	17	3
Prospect Magazine	Mixed	2	3
The Economist	Mixed	16	3



CASE STUDY

'Mixed Bias'

Publication	Headline	What the article is about	Key positive	Key negative
THE SPECTATOR	'The Islamic State will never die': their territory is gone but the jihadis are always with us' ²⁰	Paul Woods writes on the symbolism of certain Daesh beliefs, as well as the 'Salafi ideology' which he claims partly influences the terrorist group.	'Isis is not a throwback to the Prophet's time or any other time in Islamic history. It is modern, Leninist even, in its understanding of the creative use of violence to reshape society.'	'Isis is a marriage between western imaginations formed by videogames and horror films and a recurring stream in Salafi ideology that represents itself as a purer, more authentic version of Islam.' The majority of Salafis would disagree with the above statement and the Washington Institute is also sceptical of such a claim with Jacob Olidort writing that 'the project of raising a generation of Islamic State 'citizens' is driven by factors that have little relation to Salafi doctrines.' ²¹
The Economist	'The 30m Muslims living in Europe and America are gradually becoming integrated' ²²	Article explores the difference in class, background, culture and country of origin of Muslims in Europe and America. It analyses the historical links between Islam and Europe, the position of Muslims in America post 9/11 as well as how third generation Muslims are navigating their faith and identity in Europe.	'In some ways the 20th-century wave of Muslim arrivals in the West has done remarkably well.'	'Most of the piece was a balanced analysis but it mentions unrepresentative 'Jihadist' terrorist attacks in the West as well as generalisations about Islam coming to Europe 'by the sword.'

²⁰ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/-the-islamic-state-will-never-die-their-territory-is-gone-but-the-jihadis-are-always-with-us>

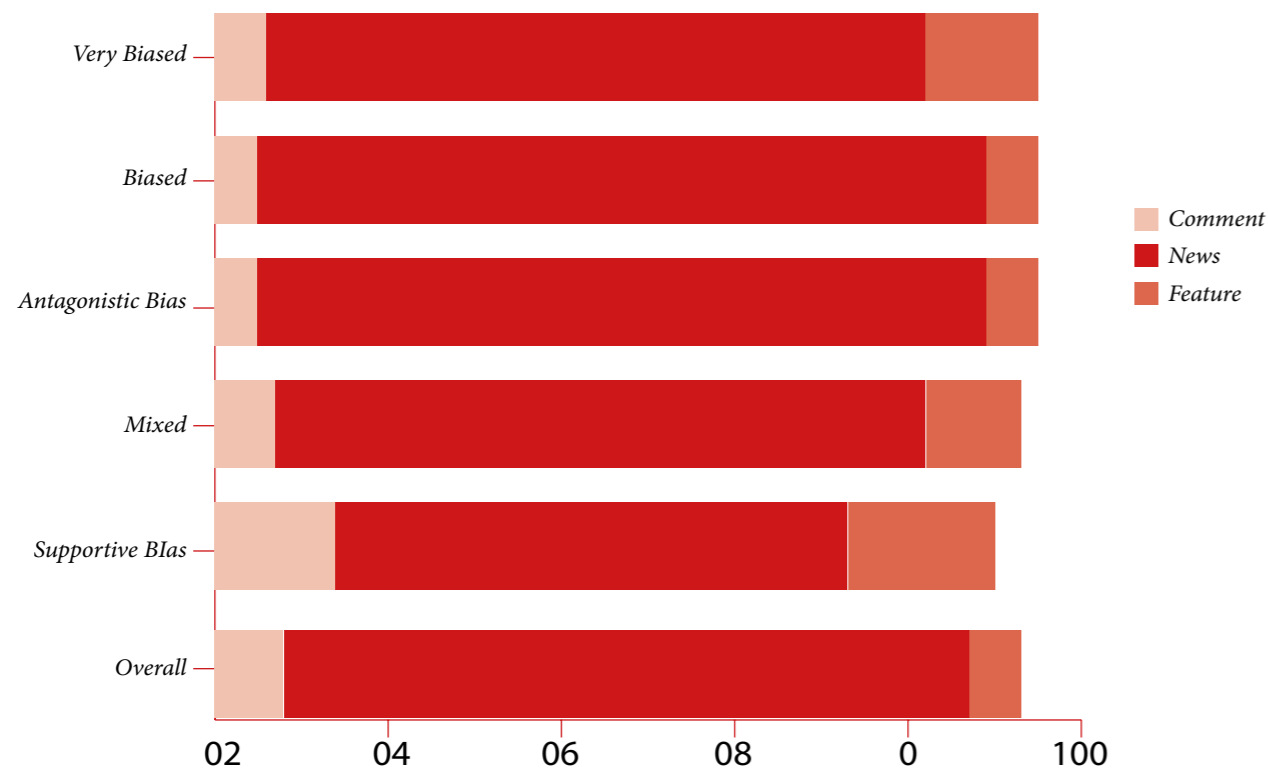
²¹ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/does-isis-really-follow-salafi-version-islamic-law-and-theology>

²² <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2019/02/14/the-30m-muslims-living-in-europe-and-america-are-gradually-becoming-integrated>

Ratings By Type Of Article

Opinion pieces make up 13% of all 'Very Biased' rated articles, which is over double the proportion of opinion pieces published (6%). Opinion pieces also exceeded the 6% figure in the 'Text Bias'²³ categories with 11% of the articles rated as 'Mixed' and 17% as 'Supportive Bias'. In feature articles, 14% were rated as 'Supportive Bias' - almost double the proportion of articles published (8%). News articles, which made up 79% of all articles published, had a 'Supportive Bias' of just 59%, whilst those rated with 'Antagonistic Bias' came to 84% showing how news reporting is generally problematic/negative about Muslims and/or Islam.

Graphic 4 Proportion of overall articles published by Type vs Bias of articles by type



²³ Text Bias is a subject analysis on the overall leaning of the article with four rating criteria available. A more detailed explanation can be seen in the methodology section.

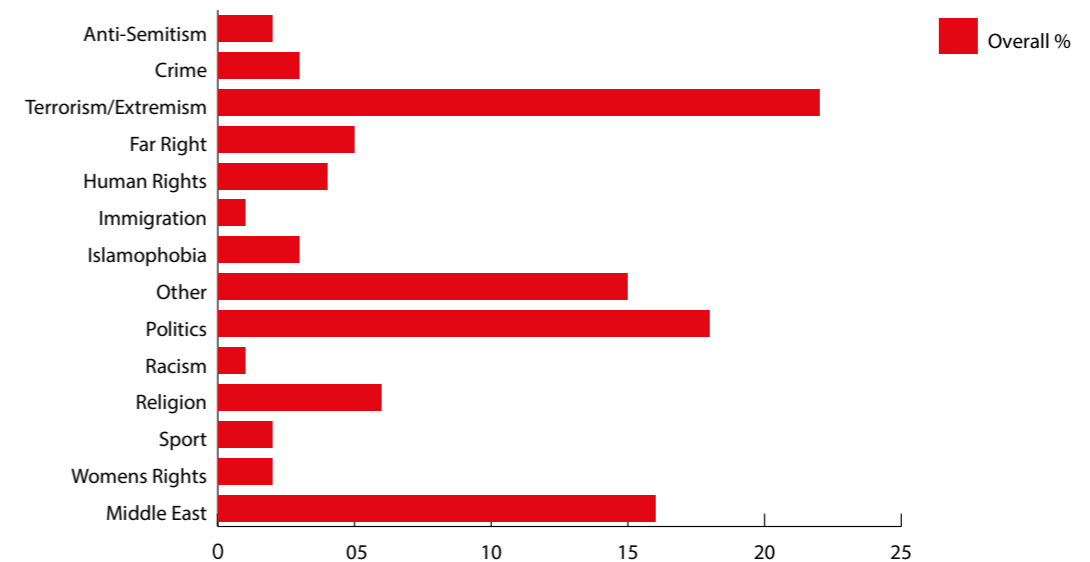
Ratings By Topic

When we analyse articles according to the topic being discussed, religion ranks as the most problematic. Whilst only six percent of all articles focus on religion, they account for almost a third of all 'Very Biased' rankings, mostly in articles about Islam and its tenets. As the table below shows, despite articles focusing on religion being significantly less than Terrorism/Extremism they are more 'Biased' overall by percentage. Women's rights and anti-Semitism are themes where the proportion of 'Very Biased' articles are more than double the overall proportion of articles published.

Table 4 Rating By Topic

Row Labels	Very Biased	Biased	Overall
Anti-Semitism	4%	2%	2%
Crime	5%	4%	3%
Terrorism/Extremism	23%	30%	22%
Far Right	1%	2%	5%
Human Rights	6%	5%	4%
Immigration	0%	1%	1%
Islamophobia	4%	2%	3%
Other	7%	9%	15%
Politics	9%	13%	18%
Racism	0%	0%	1%
Religion	29%	7%	6%
Sport	1%	1%	2%
Women's Rights	5%	3%	2%

Graphic 5 Overall percentage by topic



Religion As A Theme

Despite only 6% of all articles focused on religion almost 1/3 of all 'Very Biased' articles are predominantly focused on Islam and its tenants. Women's rights, anti-Semitism and crime are all themes where the proportion of 'Very Biased' articles are more than double the overall proportion of articles published.

Clash of Civilisations

Muslim beliefs and practices are often discussed and contrasted with Western norms of liberalism, secularism and Christianity (which is sometimes packaged as Judeo-Christendom). An example of this is when Muslim theology is assessed against contemporary gender neutrality discussions. In an article in The Guardian based on the singer Ariana Grande's suggestion that God is a woman, a blanket statement of fact is made about the issue: **'Islam is emphatic on the point, although because Arabic favours the male pronoun the Qur'an has its own gender neutrality issues.'**²⁴

Muslims who follow even the basic Islamic teachings are categorised as puritanical. In an article in The Times about the Senegalese Liverpool footballer, Sadio Mane, the natural fears of his parents and elders about him wanting to stop studying to go to a football academy are explained through their Muslim identities. Parents wanting their children to have stability and an education is not peculiar to Muslims or Islam, and yet, the article wrongly attributes these concerns to beliefs in Islam: **'They were the village imams and football was not compatible with their beliefs.'**²⁵

Being Muslim or having Islamic beliefs is also often used to explain a disconnect between generations. Muslim identity and beliefs are seen as threatening and non-compromising – something which young Muslims in the West need to be shielded from.²⁶ An example

²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2018/nov/21/not-in-his-name-god-is-gender-neutral-says-archbishop-of-canterbury>

²⁵ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sadio-mane-i-grew-up-using-a-grapefruit-to-play-football-now-im-dreaming-of-ballon-dor-zwks05zmj>

²⁶ <https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/04/02/why-more-indonesian-teens-are-giving-up-dating>

of this can be seen in a BBC article about a Muslim girl who became vegan. Her decision to give up meat is presented as an abnormality and a difficult choice and against her religion: **'This is partly because these two lifestyles aren't commonly associated, and partly because there can sometimes be a perceived conflict between these two sets of ideals...In Islam, eating meat is regarded as halal, which means Muslims are allowed to do it under the rules of their religion. Some Muslims believe that rejecting what has been allowed by the word of God is haram (the opposite of halal – against the wishes of God).'**²⁷ There is nothing in Islam which forbids anyone from becoming a vegan. Muslims are permitted to eat meat as well as vegetables. Instead of this article showing general attitudes towards veganism and how it is questioned by many people of all faiths and none, the article tries to exceptionalise Muslims and Islam.

Muslims receive special treatment

Another common theme when discussing religion can be found in an article in The Times talking about the decline of Christianity in the West and the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Contrary to the evidence, David Quinn claims that Muslims are **'often given special protection from criticism here in the West no matter what they do.'**²⁸ However, the experience of Muslims and the constant scrutiny, criticism and othering faced by them in mainstream media, social media and in other institutions, counters Quinn's claims.

Historical Revisionism

Revisionist interpretations of history are constantly favoured instead of more orthodox understandings in many media outlets in order to lay blame on Muslim communities or Islam in the modern context. This can be found in the reporting of the Israel and Palestine conflict where religion and historical battles are often referred to as motivating factors behind what is essentially

²⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/861ee752-c5ab-4c03-94ed-1fb7e8aab7e2>

²⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/david-quinn-persecution-rocks-the-cradle-of-christianity-k65f8skgk>

a struggle to reclaim Palestinian land occupied by Israel. In a comment piece in The Times, Mark Humphry's (a lecturer at Dublin University) is scathing about a book of condolences that was opened in Ireland to commemorate the killing of 100 Palestinian protesters by Israeli forces in March 2018. He says: 'We heard the claim that they were driven by 'despair'. What they were driven by is hatred, anti-Semitism, jihad and the excitement of a march on Israel to cleanse the land of the Jews.'²⁹ Singling out instances of Muslim aggression, this narrative ignores mainstream Islamic teachings, evidence of interreligious coexistence both past and present, and wrongs committed against Palestinians.

Muslims are inherently anti-Semitic

The trope that Muslims are inherently anti-Semitic and that Islamic scripture validates such anti-Semitism is found scattered across the media. We see Muslims and Islam being blamed for rising anti-Semitism in Europe even though the evidence points to the rise of the far right as the main cause. Domestically, allegations of anti-Semitism among the Labour party are partially attributed to the supposed influence Muslims and Labour's desires for Muslim votes.³⁰

Crime and Extremism attributed to Islam

Many actions which are common to peoples, cultures or societies across the globe are also often attributed to Islam (even when the actions are not Islamically acceptable) by simply prefixing the word Islamic. For example, so-called honour killings become 'Islamic honour killings'³¹; opposition to Israel is now 'Islamic anti-Semitism',³² gunmen become 'Islamic gunmen'³³, drug dealers torturing their victims are said to be forcing them to

²⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/solving-gaza-crisis-is-easy-focus-on-living-not-killing-b6qrm3psj>

³⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-46095808> & <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/07/the-problem-with-the-church-of-englands-social-media-guidelines/>

³¹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6625353/Muslim-man-left-wife-die-five-days-appeal-against-prison-sentence.html>

³² <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-6647353/Israel-leader-scorned-woeing-Holocaust-distorting-allies.html>

³³ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1220141/christian-persecution-christmas-attacks-nigeria-islamic-state>

chant 'Islamic death prayers'³⁴, and Daesh is referred to as an 'Islamic death cult'. Even bomb blasts are referred to as 'Islamic bomb blasts' and everything from regime/s, to provinces, school playgrounds, headteachers, clothing and feasts are designated as being Islamic.³⁵ The list is endless.³⁶

To exacerbate this narrative, demonstrably false religious proclamations made by terrorists are published without any clarification or note to acknowledge their falsehood. Right leaning tabloids in particular, report verbatim the proclamations and claims made by Daesh members, despite the fact that many have been proven to be religiously illiterate as alluded to in a report 'by Andrew Lebovich titled 'How 'religious' are ISIS fighters? The relationship between religious literacy and religious motivation.'³⁷ Referring to research done by the journalist Yassin Musharbash who had access to a collection of 3,000 internal memoranda documents from Daesh, Lebovich says: 'One of the elements that Musharbash noted in his initial distillation is that a large majority of ISIS recruits rank their own knowledge of the Shariah as 'weak', and relatively few of these fighters seem to have advanced training in the Shariah.'

Some of the examples below from right leaning tabloid newspapers (The Sun, Daily Express, Mail Online and Daily Mail Australia) quote the proclamations of terrorists allegedly justifying their rape of Yazidis as being acceptable under 'Islamic Law' or in 'the Quran.' Despite the actions being against Islamic belief and teachings, this

³⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7835625/Drug-dealer-Husseim-Dennaou-stabbed-Fadl-Rahal-fearing-police-informant.html>

³⁵ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1220141/christian-persecution-christmas-attacks-nigeria-islamic-state> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7835625/Drug-dealer-Husseim-Dennaou-stabbed-Fadl-Rahal-fearing-police-informant.html> & <https://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/wires/ap/article-7828555/Sudans-Christians-enjoy-holiday-amid-hope-new-freedoms.html> & <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/03/sudesh-amman-how-did-science-student-become-streatham-jihadist> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7860319/Islamic-head-teacher-DEFENDS-unlawful-segregation-boys-girls.html>

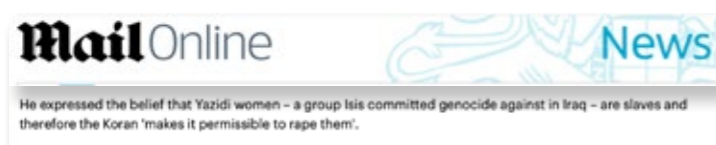
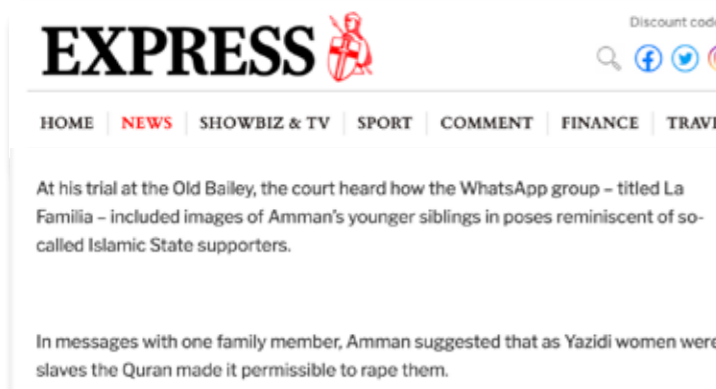
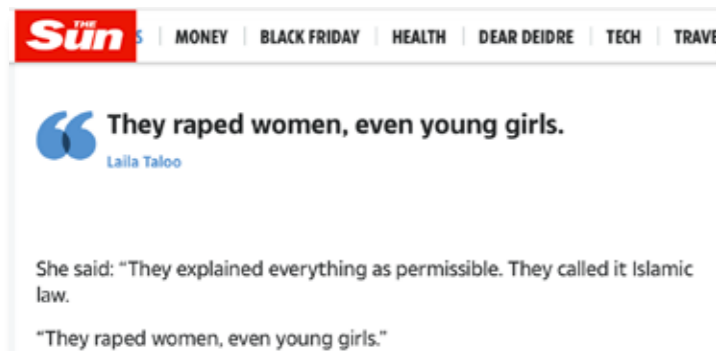
³⁶ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/stacey-dooleys-panorama-islamic-state-brides-should-shown-schools/> & <https://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/wires/ap/article-7828555/Sudans-Christians-enjoy-holiday-amid-hope-new-freedoms.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/03/sudesh-amman-how-did-science-student-become-streatham-jihadist>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7860319/Islamic-head-teacher-DEFENDS-unlawful-segregation-boys-girls.html>

³⁷ <https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-religious-are-isis-fighters-the-relationship-between-religious-literacy-and-religious-motivation/>

argument is not highlighted or elaborated on. Furthermore, Daily Mail Australia used the quote: 'They called it Islamic law. They raped women, even young girls' to promote their article on social media, further perpetuating falsehoods about Islam.



38 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11680875/yazidi-sex-slaves-reveal-harrowing-details-of-being-abducted/>

39 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1237318/streatham-terror-attack-who-is-sudesh-amman-terrorist-why-sudesh-amman-jailed>

40 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7961615/Streatham-terrorist-Sudesh-Amman-tailed-clock-release-prison.html>



CASE STUDY

Critical Discourse Analysis

By Khadijah Hasan

'EXCLUSIVE: Harrowing video shows 'abducted' British teenager being bundled into a car in Libya as her mother screams for help - and the UK police will not investigate' ⁴¹

Daily Mail, 7 July 2020

This article provides information on the case of two British teenagers taken to Libya by their father. The main discriminatory feature in this article is how it places religion in proximity to descriptions of violence. The ideas drawn upon in this article constitute wider discourses surrounding the nature of Islam as a religion, as well as the juxtaposition of the Middle East versus the West.

The association of the abduction with the perpetrator's religious identity is highlighted immediately after the headline. Understandably, the reporting of this event is emotive due to the disturbing nature of the situation. Using the phrase **'conservative Islamic family'** after words and phrases such as **'harrowing'** and **'screams for help'** in the headline creates associations in the reader's mind between these horrific actions and the religious identity of the perpetrator and his family. We have to question why religious identity is brought up in this manner and context: there is an obvious implication that their **'Islamic'** identity is linked to these actions.

The phrase **'conservative Islamic family'** is repeated a few lines later, this time used in the same sentence as the emotionally charged phrase **'snatched by their father.'** In isolation, the phrase **'conservative Islamic family'** would simply denote an observant Muslim family, although it is unusual to use the word **'Islamic'** in this way. The term usually refers to Islamic theology. Using the words **'conservative Islamic'** in this way

41 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8494899/Harrowing-video-shows-abducted-British-teenager-bundled-car-Libya.html>

has the effect of placing blame solely on the religion and its moral framework. There is no mention of extremism, making the presence of this phrase more charged as it presumes that violence is inherent to everyday Islamic practice. The use of this phrase in this manner reproduces and disseminates existing tropes which associate Islamic practice and violence in this way.

Moreover, the use of the word **'devout'** in the phrase **'his devout Muslim family'** is completely out of place. The word devout is typically used to connote positive spiritual action, yet, in the context of this article, it seems to aim to do the opposite. This raises questions of how a **'devout'** Muslim is constructed, and shows a high degree of othering of Muslim identity and belief. All this in an article which actually has little to do with religion at all.

Along with general references to the Islamic/Muslim identity, the hijab is also mentioned twice in this article: the first instance is from a quote where the mother relates that the children are being forced to wear hijab; the second instance is in an image caption where it is emphasised unnecessarily that she is the only girl wearing the hijab in the image. The wording used in the image caption focuses excessively on the presence of the hijab, tying into wider discourses where the hijab is constructed as a symbol of oppression. This is all contextualised by the phrase used at the beginning of the article where the reader is led to believe that these actions all result from a **'conservative Islamic'** identity.

The following passage specifically connects increased religiosity with the desire to control: *'As the children got older, Mr El Zubaidy became increasingly controlling and keen for them to live according to Islamic cultural traditions, Ms Borg said.'* Within the context of this article, a reference to becoming more practising is framed as the reason behind the perpetrator's actions. There is no need to make religion the focal point to this story, it only has the detrimental effect of criminalising an entire belief system as well as negatively influencing public discourse on Islam & Muslims. The actions of one man cannot be linked to an entire religion and belief system which in actual fact condemns such acts.

Recommendations

1

Avoid linking ordinary Muslim belief to crime, terrorism or extremism, unless there is a specific justifiable reason to do so.

2

Provide a platform to a broader range of Muslim perspectives, and avoid unrepresentative Muslim voices.

3

Increase representation of Muslims within editorial roles.

4

Encourage reporters to be aware and reflect on potential bias - unconscious or otherwise - and where appropriate, engage in relevant training.

Misrepresentation

Misrepresenting Muslims, misusing terminology or misinterpreting Islamic beliefs and practices are common occurrences in the media with almost one in ten articles analysed falling under this category. While the majority of the coverage did not misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam, a significant amount did either through misleading or irrelevant headlines, the use of unreliable sources or assigning inaccurate attributes or beliefs to individuals or institutions which were libellous. In all cases, the standards of journalism fell short of what would be expected of the British media. In order to assess articles in this category, we asked the following question.

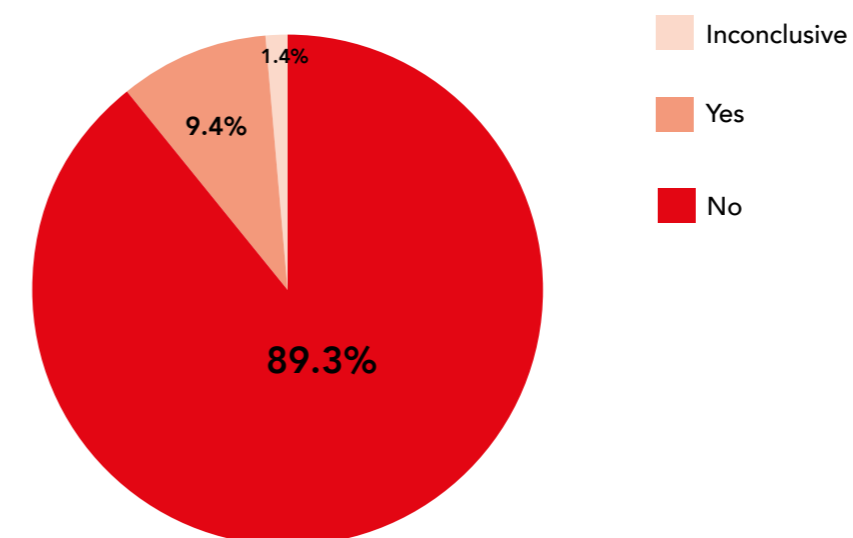
Does the article/broadcast misrepresent any aspect of Muslim behaviour, belief or identity?

Almost one in every ten articles misrepresented Muslims and/or Islam in some form.

Table 5 Articles which misrepresent any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief

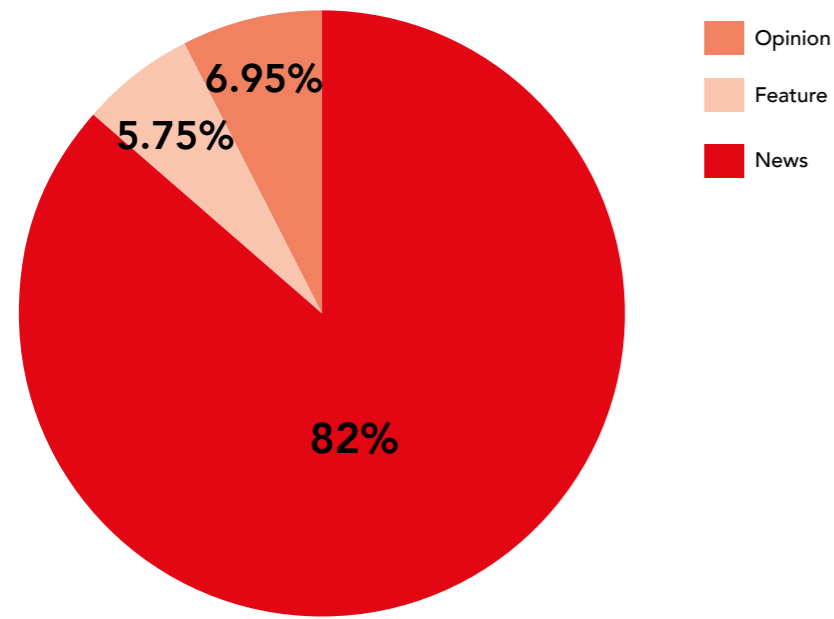
Misrepresent any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief	Count	Percentage
No	42,697	89.3
Yes	4,472	9.4
Inconclusive	649	1.4

Graphic 6 Articles which misrepresent any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief



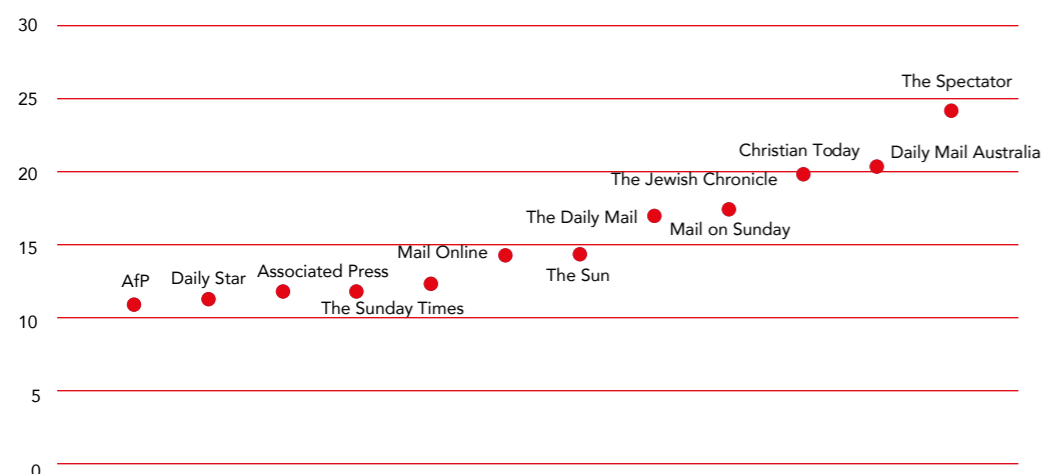
The majority of misrepresentation came in news reporting (82%) with opinions and features accounting for the majority of the remaining instances.⁴² This was mainly in line with the overall proportion of articles in the different types.

Graphic 7 Misrepresentation by type of article



The misrepresentation of any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief is mainly found in right leaning and religious publications which have the highest proportion of articles where this is found. Three publications have at least 1/5 articles where this was found with the Spectator magazine being the highest with almost 1/4 articles.

Graphic 3 All publications exceeding 10% of articles misrepresenting any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief



42 See Appendix F



Libel Of Muslim Figures And Organisations

The worst cases of misrepresentation, all found in right leaning publications, led to libel cases by Muslims. Below are a number of examples which highlight the falsehoods that are peddled out by mainstream establishment newspapers, how they contribute to perpetuating far right tropes and the impact of this on law abiding Muslims. Whilst there may be many more, 10 examples were chosen to highlight the scale of the issue.

1. **The Mail on Sunday** was forced to pay damages to council worker, Waj Iqbal after falsely accusing him of acting as a 'fixer' for cab drivers in Rochdale who were committing crimes against young girls. It took Mr Iqbal two and half years to win his libel case against after the Mail on Sunday which paid out £180,000 in damages. This gruelling experience impacted Mr Iqbal on all aspects of his life as he disclosed in his testimony to CfMM below. His is just one example of the real-life consequences such irresponsible and inaccurate reporting has on ordinary Muslim citizens.

Waj Iqbal Testimony

'In May 2017 my world crumbled. Not for the normal reasons ones life might be upturned; the death of a close family member or some other unfortunate happening, but because one of Britain's most established Sunday newspapers accused me of being a so-called fixer for paedophile taxi drivers in Rochdale.

The fact that the article came out in the same week as the BBC Drama 'Three Girls', which showed how young girls in Rochdale had been abused over a number of years by those in the taxi trade, was disturbing as well as revealing in how the media in our country operates. Now that so-called 'Muslim Groomers' were heavy in the public conscience through the power of TV, The Mail on Sunday had a hook and attempted to capitalise on it.

Ever since the story of so-called 'Grooming Gangs' of predominantly 'Asian/Pakistani/Muslim' men was first reported on in 2010 by The Times newspaper, the desire to attach the crimes of individuals to the wider diaspora and community has been insatiable.

As this report from CfMM shows, linking Muslims to any negative aspect or behaviour is a *raison d'être* of certain newspapers. This is what The Mail on Sunday did when suggesting that I, Wajed Iqbal, a junior taxi-licensing officer at South Ribble borough in Lancashire, gave badges and licenses to known criminals and predators in my previous job.

Despite other more senior staff and other departments making decisions as to who got the requisite license, the paper focused on me, a Pakistani-Muslim. As per the narrative I could now be linked to crimes by other Pakistani Muslims and the paper could claim a historic scoop in an ongoing crusade against British Muslims in every walk of life.

Except that what the paper was alleging was false, Islamophobic and race baiting. In the subsequent court action where Associated Newspapers agreed to pay £180,000 in damages to me, the paper has denied any racial motive for their false allegations. Yet, a major component of the story linked me with historical sex abuse cases by taxi drivers in Rochdale.

And let's not make any mistake about it, the original story of the decision to renew the licence of a local driver called John O'Sullivan, who had been found guilty of assaulting a profoundly autistic child by tying him up on a school run, involved several others more senior in the council. Yet, the one Muslim-Pakistani licensing officer was singled out became the focus, as handing out licenses to groomers was too juicy a fillet to turn down. Very quickly, two plus two equalled five as I was linked with cases that took place before my time at Rochdale Council.







Whilst those in newsrooms can backslap and high five on their apparent success, the lives of those they supposedly hold to account can easily unravel. In my case, I lost my job and another part time employment. My marriage ended and I couldn't see my kids. My son who was supposed to be enjoying some of the best years of his life at University was subjected to taunts about his Dad being dodgy and a groomer. Work dried up and the respect and reputation I took years to build within the community took a hit with many people scared to be associated with me in case they too were targeted.

It took three long years for me to get some justice and clear my name and yet the mud still sticks. The so-called Muslim groomer narrative is so etched into peoples' minds that many choose to believe it as fact as opposed to it being the manufactured monster created by the media as several studies and the recent home office report shows. Similarly, others who in their everyday lives or jobs have tried to better society are accused of extremism or terrorism simply because they're Muslim.

What my case and some of the others in this report show is there is a way to fight back. It can be a long road and mercifully my ordeal was only three years. And whilst the compensation is welcome in that it can help in trying to rebuild a life. the truth is more important for nothing but its own sake. It is the media which is supposed to be the vehicle for coming closer to this truth yet they have decided to punch down and not hold to account, but target individual Muslims because it serves a nefarious agenda. Harsher penalties from the press regulator IPSO would also be a welcome step and any reporter and editor found to have manipulated a story to falsely accuse an ordinary member of the public should face serious consequences. I have learned not to be a harsh bloke since my ordeal but I would suggest they should never work in journalism again. The British media would be better off and Muslims would live in a fairer and more just society if there were less unscrupulous journalists and editors with an agenda.'

Clarifications and corrections

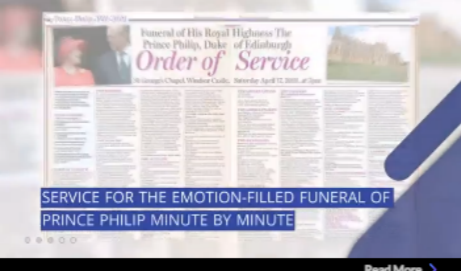
By MAIL ON SUNDAY
PUBLISHED: 23:58, 1 February 2020 | UPDATED: 00:02, 2 February 2020

Share       View comments

The Mail on Sunday has apologised to a council worker who it wrongly accused of acting as a 'fixer' for cab drivers in Rochdale who were committing crimes against young girls.

An article on May 14, 2017, published in this newspaper and on the MailOnline website, headlined 'Scandal of the mini-cab predators', caused 'huge and continuing distress' to Wajed Iqbal, a council licensing officer.

At the High Court in London, William Bennett QC, representing Mr Iqbal in his libel action against The Mail on Sunday, last week read out a statement agreed with lawyers for the newspaper's publishers, Associated Newspapers Limited, as part of a settlement.



Mr Bennett QC said: 'The article made a grave allegation that the claimant was a "fixer" for cab drivers in Rochdale who were committing crimes against young girls.

'The article also alleged that the claimant was given a warning by his employer, South Ribble Borough Council, for alleged deficiencies in his working practices as a licensing officer.

'These allegations were false. They have caused huge and continuing distress to Mr Iqbal.

'Nevertheless, Mr Iqbal is satisfied that the defendant has come to court to offer its sincere apologies to him for making the allegations complained of and to acknowledge that they were false.'

The court was told that Associated Newspapers had agreed to pay Mr Iqbal substantial damages.

2. **The Mail on Sunday** accused British Imam Qari Asim of supporting a protest led by the deceased Pakistani scholar, Khadim Rizvi, supporting the hanging of a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, as well as endorsing the murder of Asad Shah. On the contrary, he did not support either of the latter two and had in fact campaigned for Asia Bibi to be given asylum in Britain. The Mail on Sunday and MailOnline published full apologies and paid Mr Asim libel damages together with his legal costs.⁴³

⁴³ <https://www.carter-ruck.com/news/government-adviser-qari-asim-mbe-secures-full-apology-and-damages-after-mail-libel/>

dailymail.co.uk

By Mail on Sunday Reporter
00:01 23 Feb 2020, updated 00:15 23 Feb 2020

The Mail

ON SUNDAY

      0 shares

On 6 April 2019, we alleged that Mr Qari Asim MBE, through his support of a protest led by a number of individuals including an extremist cleric, Khadim Rizvi, supported the proposed hanging of a Christian woman (Asia Bibi) for blasphemy and endorsed the brutal murder of Asad Shah.

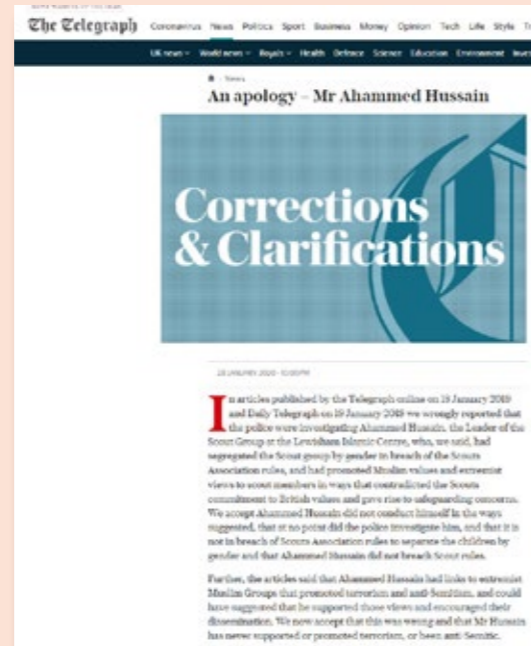
We now accept that Mr Asim does not support the hanging of Asia Bibi or the murder of Asad Shah. To the contrary, we accept that Mr Asim has publicly condemned both these crimes, and campaigned for Ms Bibi to be given asylum in the UK. We are happy to make the position clear, and apologise to Mr Asim for any distress caused.

44

3. **The Telegraph** published false allegations against a Scout Group leader Ahammed Hussain. These were regurgitated by three other newspapers (The Times, The Express and Mail Online).⁴⁵ The Telegraph claimed it acted in 'good faith' when falsely maligning the Muslim scout leader with almost every anti-Muslim trope currently in circulation alleging that he was: anti-Semitic, discriminatory against females, against 'British values', and a promoter of terrorism. The Times, Telegraph, Mail and Express paid libel damages and published apologies to Muslim Scout leader for false extremism allegations.

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1231561702665269248>

⁴⁵ <https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk/news/times-telegraph-mail-and-express-pay-libel-damages-and-publish-apologies-muslim-scout-leader>



46

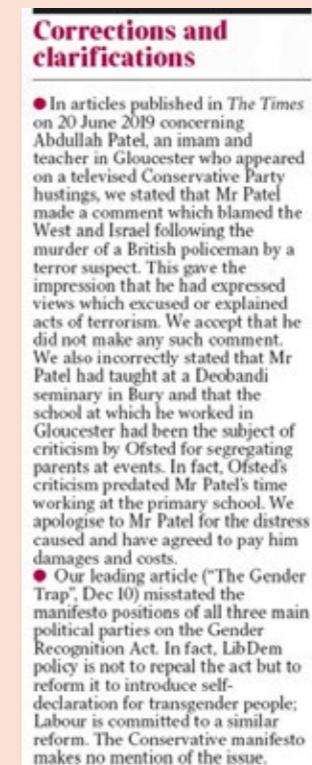
4. The Times, which has repeatedly maligned Muslims previously including the infamous false Muslim Foster Care story, was again responsible for maligning the former director of a Muslim institution for wrongly suggesting that he held extremist views.⁴⁷ The Times had to publish an apology, amend its article and agreed to pay libel damages and legal costs to the former CEO of Al Rayan Bank, Mr Sultan Choudhury OBE.



46 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/01/28/apology-mr-ahammed-hussain/>

47 <https://www.inpublishing.co.uk/articles/the-times-publishes-apology-to-sultan-choudhury-obe-15658>

5. The Times falsely accused Mr Abdullah Patel, who questioned the Conservative leadership candidates about Islamophobia during a televised BBC debate in June 2019, of 'expressing views which excused or explained acts of terrorism'. The claim is believed to have been based on posts by someone with the same name. The Times apologised to Mr Patel, and paid damages to him.⁴⁸



6. The Jewish Chronicle falsely reported on Mr Abdullah Patel, the imam and teacher from Gloucester who The Times had also maligned and paid damages to. The Jewish Chronicle falsely accused Mr Patel of having consulted the Muslim Council of Britain and advocacy group Mend, before he appeared on the BBC's conservative leadership debate.⁴⁹

48 <https://pressgazette.co.uk/times-apologises-and-pays-libel-damages-to-imam-who-appeared-on-bbc-debate/>

49 <https://twitter.com/miqdaad/status/1146872112038260736/photo/1>



7. The Times was forced to pay damages, to the former Guantanamo detainee, Moazzam Begg when it falsely linked him, and the advocacy organisation CAGE, to Kahairi Saadallah who stabbed three people to death in a park in Reading in 2020.⁵⁰



8. The Times also falsely accused Al-Khair Foundation of colluding

⁵⁰ <https://www.rllaw.co.uk/the-times-pays-30000-libel-damages-to-former-guantanamo-detainee-and-cage-and-issues-apology-for-linking-them-to-reading-suspected-terror-attack/>

with human traffickers who were assisting Somali migrants in reaching Europe. Damages were paid to both the Charity and its founding trustee Imam Qasim.⁵¹ This was a story which was repeated in the Mail Online with the headline focusing on a 'Muslim-aid charity'. Despite the false accusations by The Times, The Mail Online has still not corrected or redacted its version.⁵²



9. The Jewish Chronicle falsely linked the charity Interpal (which supports Palestinians in need) to terrorism. The Jewish Chronicle retracted its allegations saying: 'Interpal continues to operate fully lawfully under the aegis of the Charity Commission. We accept that neither Interpal, nor its Trustees, have ever been involved with or provided support for terrorist activity of any kind. We apologise unreservedly to the Trustees for any distress caused and have agreed to pay them damages for libel.'⁵³ Mr Ibrahim Hewitt, one of the trustees who also had false allegations laid against him, was then given space in The Jewish Chronicle to write an article entitled, 'Interpal provides humanitarian aid to people in desperate need; no more, no less.'⁵⁴

⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1377942037190864896>

⁵² <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9038091/London-charity-accused-funding-human-trafficking-gangs-smuggling-Somali-migrants-Europe.html>

⁵³ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/the-trustees-of-interpal-apology-1.487792>

⁵⁴ <https://www.thejc.com/comment/opinion/interpal-provides-humanitarian-aid-to-people-in-desperate-need-no-more-no-less-1.487800>

designation, and Interpal continues to operate fully lawfully under the aegis of the Charity Commission. We accept that neither Interpal, nor its Trustees, have ever been involved with or provided support for terrorist activity of any kind. We apologise unreservedly to the Trustees for any distress caused and have agreed to pay them damages for libel.

Our article also suggested that Ibrahim Hewitt, one of the Trustees and the Chairman of Interpal, has expressed extremist views concerning punishments for adulterers and gay people. In fact, the views attributed to Mr Hewitt arise out of a book he wrote some 25 years ago regarding the interpretation of the Koran. Mr Hewitt has asked us to make clear that he does not condone discrimination in any form, including against gay people or adulterers, and we are happy to do so.

10. **The Jewish Chronicle** over a number of articles falsely accused Nada al-Sanjari, a school teacher and local councillor, of

- Inviting an anti-Semitic activist to a Labour party event
- Turning a blind eye to anti-Semitic statements published by a fellow activist
- Launching a vicious protest against Luciana Berger MP in terms suggestive of anti-Semitism.⁵⁵

All the allegations were false and The Jewish Chronicle apologised to Nada al-Sanjari, agreed to pay her a substantial sum in libel damages and pay her legal costs.



⁵⁵ <https://www.carter-ruck.com/news/read/Jewish-Chronicle-apologises-and-pays-libel-damages-to-Nada-al-Sanjari>

Selected themes, terminology and stories under which misrepresentation occurs

Sectarianism

One way in which the British news websites try to make sense of the myriad of issues across the Muslim world is through the prism of sectarianism, namely the alleged conflict between the majority Sunni Muslims (approximately 90%) and the minority Shi'a.

An analysis of the collocates following the words 'Sunni Muslim(s)' which appeared a total of 709 times, shows how Sunnis are framed chiefly through political alliances, violence, extremism, and national identity.

Table 6 Top ten collocates following the words 'Sunni Muslim/s.'

Word	No. of Collocates
coalition	84
militant(s)	32
Arab	26
and	26
Saudi	24
alliance	23
extremist(s)	23
states	17
ally/allies	17
group(s)	15
representation	10

The Shia-Sunni dichotomy, employed to delineate happenings in the Middle East and across the Muslim world, is misleading when applied to conflicts and disagreements without giving a context. Sectarianism is used to explain and simplify events such as the bombardment of Yemen, the opposition of Gulf monarchies towards

Iran, the actions of Daesh across the Middle East, the conflict in Libya as well as Turkish involvement among others. The Syrian war is also often reported as a conflict between the ruling Alawites (Shia) against Sunni militants. Such reporting fails to mention that the stability of the Alawite regime has depended mainly on a Sunni support base made up of bureaucracy and civil society.⁵⁶

*'If you read Western media outlets, including War on the Rocks, you might think that most of the problems in the Middle East can be traced to Sunni disenfranchisement, especially in Syria and Iraq. The broader Western debate about the ongoing civil wars in the Middle East is plagued by a false understanding of sectarian identities. Washington elites imagine a broader Sunni sense of identity that does not exist outside the confines of Saudi Arabia and territories held by jihadist groups.'*⁵⁷

Dr Hussein Agha (senior associate of Oxford University's St Anthony's College) and Robert Malley (an American lawyer and political scientist) have written that the 'Western misreading', among other things, has 'led to a failure to anticipate how Iran, the most powerful Shi'ite state, and Turkey, the most powerful Sunni one, would agree not to allow their genuine differences to prevent understandings from being reached.'⁵⁸

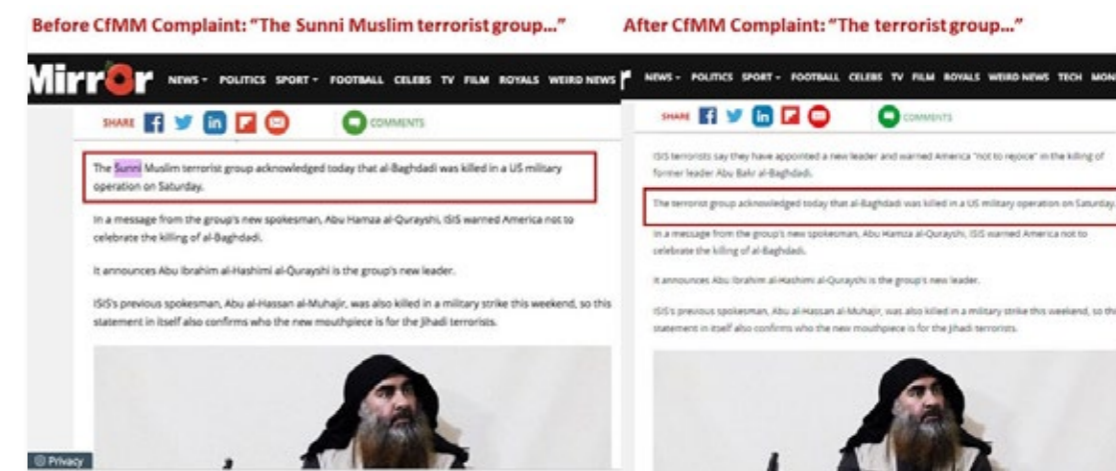
The description of Sunni Gulf monarchies being in opposition to the Shi'ite Iranians regurgitates the narrative that the issue between these rival nations is sectarian. Yet, this too does not fit with the realities of the intra-Shi'a conflicts in Iraq, the blockade of Qatar by other 'Sunni' Gulf nations, the disagreements between Saudi, Turkey and Pakistan (all predominantly Sunni states) and the hostility of the monarchies and dictators towards the Muslim Brotherhood, again both Sunni in their religious identities.

⁵⁶ <https://warontherocks.com/2016/08/washingtons-sunni-myth-and-the-middle-east-undone/>

⁵⁷ <https://warontherocks.com/2016/08/washingtons-sunni-myth-and-the-civil-wars-in-syria-and-iraq/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-middle-east-s-great-divide-is-not-sectarianism>

Despite the widespread destruction and the indiscriminate killing carried out by Daesh (Islamic State), the group judged by Muslim scholars to be outside of Islam and akin to the ancient Khawarij sect, are continually referred to as Islamic, Islamist, or Sunni. The Khawarij were believed to be the first Muslim group to practice the excommunication (takfir) of Muslims and to legitimise violence on those whom they deem infidels.⁵⁹ Therefore, we consider the labelling of Daesh as 'Sunni' is misleading, given that they target anyone they consider not-Muslim including Sunnis who comprise most of their victims.⁶⁰ A headline in The Mirror alluding to the group being Sunni was changed following a complaint from CfMM. When seen side by side, it is clear that the removal of the sectarian identity has little impact on the story, nor does it lose any essential information.



France's Response to Muslims

The terror attacks in France received widespread coverage among British news sites, and the fact that the majority of incidents have been Daesh-inspired has allowed misrepresentation of various incidents in France based on a lack of verification and to link Muslims with violence. The French President Emmanuel Macron published a letter in the FT that a significant proportion of France's Muslims 'live in lawless council estates where parents are poisoning the

⁵⁹ <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/co18063-labelling-is-fighters-khawarij-not-jihadi-salafis/#.YABtFOj7SUK>

⁶⁰ https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?next_url=https%3a%2f%2fwww.washingtonpost.com%2fsf%2fworld%2f2016%2f11%2f23%2fisis-a-catastrophe-for-sunnis%2f

minds of little girls while covering their bodies under burkas'. The Journalist Nabila Ramdani has brandished this as 'fake news' and writes that 'The problem was that hardly anything that Macron wrote was true. The president had simply reproduced despicable tropes with no facts to support them. We now know this for sure because, four months on, nobody has been able to provide any evidence to prove Macron's deceit – neither the French authorities, nor the FT.'⁶¹

One other way in which France's Muslims and their institutions are misrepresented is through the labelling of their identities, beliefs and practices as Islamism. The Economist for example labelled Muslim children requesting halal foods at school - a 'soft' sign of Islamism.⁶²

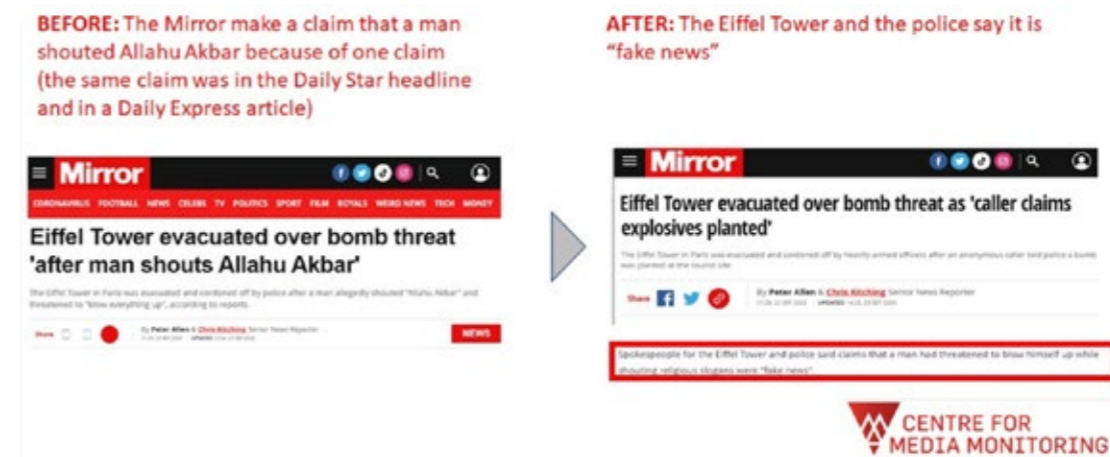
The misrepresentation of France's Muslims has been published in other British newspapers with two examples in particular showing how Muslims and Islam in particular, have been reported on in haste and without verification.

- The Mirror and the Daily Star headlined a French right-wing magazine journalist's claims that a man had shouted 'Allahu akbar' and threatened to blow himself up at the Eiffel Tower in September 2020. But, police and Tower spokespeople said this was untrue and 'fake news.' Yet the news sites were prepared to print the falsehoods without first verifying the facts and relying on a single source.⁶³

⁶¹ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/emmanuel-macron-fake-news-propaganda-muslims-ft-needs-urgent-correcting>

⁶² <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-british-media-are-enabling-macrons-anti-islam-campaign>

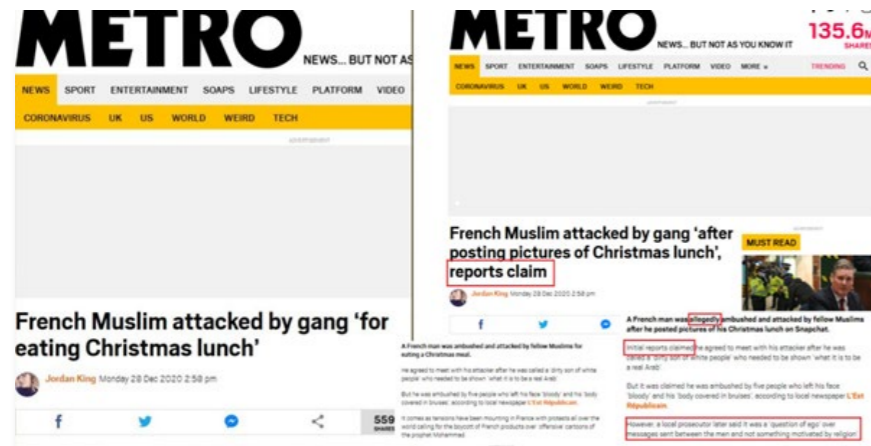
⁶³ <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1343923047884091400/photo/1> & <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/eiffel-tower-evacuated-over-bomb-22728746>



- In another story from France, where a social media argument between two Muslims ended with one attacking the other after they had agreed to meet to settle their differences, The Metro, the Times and Mail Online framed it as a Muslim being beaten for eating Christmas lunch. The public prosecutor in Belfort, France, where the alleged incident took place, deplored the circulation of 'inaccurate information' which was promoted by Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin, amongst others.⁶⁴ The Metro

⁶⁴ <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1343923034743336962/photo/1>

and Mail Online updated their copies when contacted by CfMM, but The Times did not.



65



66

65 <https://metro.co.uk/2020/12/28/french-muslim-attacked-by-gang-for-eating-christmas-lunch-13815859/>

66 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9092669/Son-police-officer-beat-gang-fellow-Muslims-enjoying-Christmas-dinner.html>

Use of Keywords

Terminology in journalism is important precisely because words written differently can convey different meanings as well as revealing the prejudices of a publication or an author. For example the use of the terms illegal or undocumented to describe migrants has prompted the United Nations to provide guidance on why the latter should be used instead of the former.⁶⁷ Amongst the reasons given by the UN are legal status of those without documents, dehumanisation of the term illegal and comparison of how the term illegal has been used against minorities in the past. An investigation by the Declassified UK showed how certain words were used by the UK media in 'labelling goodies and baddies'.⁶⁸

States favoured by the UK are mainly described in the press using the neutral term 'government' rather the more critical term 'regime'. In the past three years, for example, the term 'Saudi government' has been used in 790 articles while 'Saudi regime' is mentioned in 388. However, with Iran the number of instances is reversed: 'Iranian government' is used in 419 articles whereas 'Iranian regime' is mentioned in 456.⁶⁹

In this section we look at the most frequent keywords used in relation to Muslims and/or Islam and how they are used.

Over a two-year period from October 2018 to September 2020, the word 'Islamic' has been used as an affix to 1499 different terms within the British media, with the theme of 'Terrorism'/'Extremism' dominating the coverage and the so-called Islamic State getting over 17,000 mentions.⁷⁰

67 https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/09/TerminologyLeaflet_EN_PICUM.pdf

68 <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-11-how-the-uk-press-supports-the-british-military-and-intelligence-establishment/>

69 <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-11-how-the-uk-press-supports-the-british-military-and-intelligence-establishment/>

70 Search on Meltwater Media Monitoring Platform for 31 Sources as listed in appendix Jan 2018-Dec 2020

Table 7 Affixations of the Word Islamic (Jan Oct 2018 - Oct 2020)

Rank	Frequency	Word
1	17,501	State
2	3,887	Republic
3	929	Revolution
4	850	Revolutionary
5	751	Law
6	559	Jihad
7	553	Extremists
8	413	Extremism
9	367	Extremist
10	354	Centre

'Islamic' appears almost 4,000 times in coverage relating to the 'Islamic Republic of Iran', alongside 'Revolution' and 'Revolutionary'. Jihad, extremism and extremist are in the top 10 terms which have 'Islamic' prefixed to them in stories about 'Terrorism/Extremism'. Two more terms which feature in the top ten are 'Law' and 'centre'. 'Law' is the term most used in discussions about Islamic religious concepts, most notably jurisprudence, or what is commonly referred to as 'Sharia' or 'Shariah'. The latter two terms were mentioned 937 times during the period of analysis. The term 'Centre' appeared most frequently when referring to individual institutions such as the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand where fifty one Muslim worshippers were killed in a terror attack carried out by Brenton Tarrant in March 2019.

Sharia

Whilst the term 'Sharia' refers to Allah's divine law as contained in the Quran and the Hadith, it is separate from 'Fiqh' or jurisprudence which refers to human interpretations of the law, and therefore does not hold divine authority. However, 'Sharia' is used interchangeably with Islamic Law, and is commonly used to refer to jurisprudential interpretations and on some occasions an entire canon of law within a particular country or institution. CfMM recorded at least 110 problematic descriptions of 'Sharia' which were not always

entirely misleading, but were partial in their description of what exactly constitutes Sharia Law. In a comment piece in The Times, Clare Foges quotes a previous report in The Times likening kangaroo courts in prison to Sharia courts: 'While Ziamani resided at HMP Woodhill he ran Sharia courts, dominated a small group of extremist inmates and patrolled his block to make sure that no Muslims were breaking the Ramadan fast.'⁷¹



The Sun also claims that 'Sharia trials' are being held in prison.⁷² No attempt is made to speak to scholars or experts to ascertain whether these so called courts have legitimacy or can be labelled as 'Sharia'. A Mail Online article refers to a self-appointed vigilante group in Germany as 'Sharia police'.⁷³

71 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/prisons-must-not-tiptoe-around-extremism-f6lrs2vml> & Jailed terrorist leads attack on prison officer | News | The Times
 72 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/uknews/10607704/islamist-extremists-holding-sharia-trials-grooming-muslim-inmates-prison/>
 73 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-7075019/Court-fines-Sharia-police-group-Germany.html>

As Dr Afshin Shahi, Director of the Centre for the Study of Political Islam says, *'Being literate about religion is critical if journalists are to write intelligently about crucial issues. We live in a world that is very diverse on issues to do with religion and unless our journalists understand the issues, then all they will talk will be the versions they know.'*⁷⁴

In the period under assessment the word **'Sharia'** appeared alongside Muslim and Islamic almost equally, which suggests it is used as a marker of identity as well as ideology. The next most associated terms, **'Islam'** and **'Islamist'**, show that ideology is the predominant focus when the term **'Sharia'** is used. The word is used in 79 headlines in stories on terrorism, crime, human rights, women's rights, and religion.⁷⁵ **'Sharia'** has been reduced to **'corporal punishment'** in Western media, shorthand for archaic, brutal practices. The term is also used to feed into a narrative of encroachment in line with far-right tropes which at times give the impression that Western values are at risk of being replaced and/or supplanted by an imported, and therefore fundamentally alien set of laws and systems of belief. There is a myth that Sharia councils operate a parallel legal system when in fact in Britain it is normally utilised in domestic family matters by consent and is subservient to civil as well as criminal law in the U.K. This myth is repeated by commentators on television and in newspaper columns and has gone unchallenged despite being false.⁷⁶

*Carole Malone: 'What my solution is that these people have to, you know we have to come down heavy on hate preachers and we don't do it. Sharia law operates in this country, we turn a blind eye to it. Things are happening in this faith and they are happening, they are not right. You can't have women being abused and being tried in a right. You can't have women being abused (inaudible) in this country. Why do we have Sharia law operating?'*⁷⁷

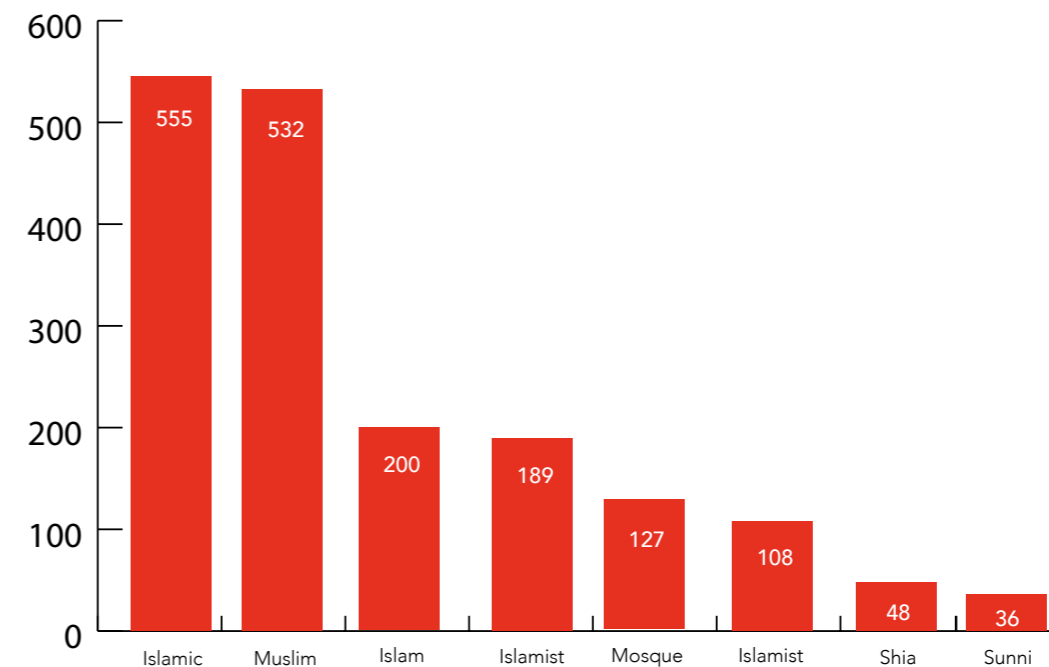
⁷⁴ Encouraging religious literacy in the media: Debate | The Diocese of Leeds, Church of England (anglican.org.uk)

⁷⁵ See Appendix G

⁷⁶ The UK's Sharia 'courts' - Full Fact

⁷⁷ Sky News at Ten, (2019), Sky News (SKYN), 17 Mar 2019 [TV programme]

Graphic 7 Words most frequently associated with Sharia or Shariah



The evoking of **'Sharia'** in headlines and stories is given undue prominence, particularly in tandem with crime or **'Extremism/Terrorism'**. The stabbing and murder of a woman and her mother in Birmingham was headlined as **'Man, 21, accused of stabbing woman, 22, and her mother, 49, to death is her SHARIA LAW HUSBAND as he appears in court on murder charges after victims were heard 'screaming like animals.'**⁷⁸ Following complaints by the Centre for Media Monitoring, the headline was changed.



The Mail Online was determined to keep the irrelevant reference to Sharia in what is seemingly a tactic to link any aspect of Muslim or Islamic identity to violent or criminal behaviour.

⁷⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6121227/Man-accused-murdering-mother-daughter-death-Solihull-arrives-court.html>



The importance of such information, including how they were married, in a headline is questionable. It is reasonable to assume that such prominence is only given to link the aspect of Islam in the story with the horrific violence that has taken place. Another way in which Sharia is mentioned within the context of marriage is when coercion is involved. A Sun article about 'grooming gangs' reports on a 15-year-old girl allegedly being forced 'into three sharia marriages.'⁷⁹ Forced marriage is not permitted in Islam, and so would be considered invalid within Sharia law, but this has not been clarified. When it comes to international stories the term is used to refer mainly to 'harsh' physical punishments such as flogging or capital punishment. Sharia Law has even been defined as 'the Islamic legal system that imposes strict corporal punishments.'⁸⁰ Adjectives such as barbaric, medieval, discriminatory, extreme, strict and hard-line are all affixed to describe it.⁸¹

Furthermore, it is linked with practices such as 'Child Marriage', 'Stoning gay people' and death by shooting among other

79 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7600584/grooming-gang-victim-baby-secret-court/>

80 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/29/george-clooney-calls-hotel-boycott-over-brunei-lgbt-laws>

81 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1109022/Brunei-news-sharia-stoning-law-latest-update-George-Clooney-Elton-john-boycott-brunei> & https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50258727?ns_mchannel=social&ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbcnews&ocid=socialflow_twitter & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-7384413/Kim-Kardashian-enjoys-coffee-Beverly-Hills-Hotel.html> & <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8778598/gay-people-stoned-to-death-brunei-sharia-laws/> & <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/26/indonesias-criminal-code-what-is-it-why-does-it-matter-and-will-it-be-passed> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7273899/Ilhan-Omars-second-husband-soaks-sun-Kenyan-beach.html> & <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-algeria-slow-coup-g7hwr689h> & <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-algeria-slow-coup-g7hwr689h>

punishments.⁸² This has led to the use of terms such as 'sharia law-style'⁸³, 'sharia shield'⁸⁴, or 'Sharia repression'⁸⁵ when describing certain laws and policies of terror groups in certain countries. as 'Sharia repression'.⁸⁶ When a clash between civil law and what is commonly described as 'Sharia law' is found, it is framed as an issue of incompatibility, despite the evidence suggesting otherwise. The Council of Europe's resolution that contractual marriages between Muslims (known as the nikah) should also be accompanied with marriages registered under civil law was presented in a way that suggested that the rights and obligations of a husband and wife are completely different and incompatible with civil marriages.⁸⁷

Example of how Islamic concepts can be explained

One example of how stories concerning so-called 'Sharia law' can be contextualised and the concept explained more accurately is found on The Sun's website in the form of an explanatory Blue box which gives both the etymology of the term as well as the practical aspects of what Sharia entails and how it compares with Western understandings of law.

82 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6682085/Two-paedophiles-28-31-publicly-executed-Yemen-rape-murdering-12-year-old-boy.html>

83 <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/george-clooney-brunei-hotels-boycott-lgbt-laws-dorchester-death-penalty-a8844901.htm>

84 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6494809/Secular-Party-Australia-fears-Religious-Discrimination-Act-embolden-hardline-Muslims.html> & <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7600584/grooming-gang-victim-baby-secret-court/>

85 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/shamima-doesn-t-look-like-anyone-s-victim-whk9qln>

86 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6494809/Secular-Party-Australia-fears-Religious-Discrimination-Act-embolden-hardline-Muslims.html> & <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7600584/grooming-gang-victim-baby-secret-court/> & <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/shamima-doesn-t-look-like-anyone-s-victim-whk9qln> & <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/brunei-lgbt-whipping-stoning-gay-people-sharia-law-a8841706.html> & <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/george-clooney-brunei-hotels-boycott-lgbt-laws-dorchester-death-penalty-a8844901.html>

87 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6632581/Council-Europe-warns-Britain-sharia-law-conflicts-universal-human-rights.html>

What is Sharia law?

Sharia law is a set of religious principles which aim to help Muslims understand how to lead their daily lives as part of Islamic tradition.

The legal system of Islam, it was derived from both the Koran - the central religious text of Islam - and fatwas - the rulings of Islamic scholars.

The Arabic word Sharia originally meant "way" or "path" and refers to the revealed law of God.

It informs every aspect of the daily life of a Muslim, covering much more than Western laws

do, and don't necessarily refer to "law" in the usual sense.

There are two main branches of Sharia - ibadat, which means rituals or acts of worship, and mu'amalat, meaning human interactions and social relations.

These break down into smaller branches which include things like finances, marriage, diet, prayers, fasting and pilgrimage.

Indonesian province Aceh adopted Sharia law and introduced traditional punishments - such as caning - in 2006. ■

How 'Islamist' and 'Islamism' is used to misrepresent Muslims

The terms 'Islamist', 'Islamism' and 'Islamic' are often used interchangeably and inaccurately in the media. Journalists sometimes use the term Islamism to mean the furtherance of Political Islam, or terrorism perpetrated by Muslims in the name of Islam or even as a synonym for Islam. This has meant that journalists have had to rely on adjectives and qualifications in order to make themselves understood.

One feature of media usage of the term Islamist is a broad-brush approach where any, and all entities, are labelled as Islamist whether they are groups or individuals, irrespective of who they are or the context in which they operate. For example the term Islamist appeared in a local press article in Colchester. The Daily Gazette headlined the conversion of a former pub into an Islamic Centre as '**Islamist centre's pub conversion set for approval.**'⁸⁸ It is unclear

why the term Islamist is used here. Perhaps the headline writer sees the conversion of the abandoned building into an Islamic centre as a political project yet there is no evidence in the article to evidence this. The Colchester Daily Gazette which amended the error after a complaint by a reader (Shoomi Chowdhury) to IPSO who opposed its use given the word is largely used in reference to '**militancy and fundamentalism.**'⁸⁹ Given the association of the word Islamist with militancy and fundamentalism the word is also used (wittingly or unwittingly) to legitimise far-right movements such as the English Defence League and Football Lads Alliance, who are described as '**anti-Islamist**' despite evidence showing their animosity towards Muslims and Islam in general.⁹⁰

The word '**Islamist**' is a heavily contested term. The word has no agreed standard definition. The Washington Institute offers certain characteristics of what it says constitutes an Islamist, namely those who would adhere to '**Islamism**', a '**dystopian ideology**' as anti-capitalist, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, anti-American and anti-Communism.⁹¹ Standard dictionary definitions are mostly descriptive in labelling an Islamist as political or social activists, with the Collins dictionary referring to '**someone who believes strongly in Islamic ideals or laws.**'⁹² Meanwhile, The Oxford dictionary of Islam sees Islamists as more active characters who '**are committed to implementation of their ideological vision of Islam in the state and/or society.**'⁹³

The latest offering on the subject from Policy Exchange (Understanding Islamism) asks the question who are the Islamists?⁹⁴ The response was to name a list of British based Muslim umbrella groups who allegedly '**originate from two major revivalist networks that emerged in the early twentieth century: the Muslim Brotherhood, which started in Egypt; and the Jamaat-e-Islami,**

⁸⁹ <https://www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk/2020/news/daily-says-sorry-over-islamist-community-centre-headline/>

⁹⁰ <https://news.sky.com/story/menace-and-aggression-dfla-is-new-edl-11500806> & <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dfla-nother-new-uk-far-right-movement/>

⁹¹ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/muslims-vs.-islamists>

⁹² <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/islamist>

⁹³ <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1128>

⁹⁴ <https://policyexchange.org.uk/understanding-islamism/>, pp.8

⁸⁸ <https://www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk/2020/news/daily-says-sorry-over-islamist-community-centre-headline/> & <https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=09551-19>

whose origins lie in colonial India.⁹⁵ Ahmed Khanani of Indiana University suggests that among the major problems with the use of the words Islamist is that 'it conceals important heterogeneity among its referents' and so allows for a broad-sweep of everyone from Daesh to democratically elected leaders and political parties to be designated as Islamist.⁹⁶ Similarly Islamism is also used as a catch all term as Andreas Krieg of Kings College, London writes

'Those who hawk the idea of 'Islamism' as a rubric for understanding political divisions are taking us all for a ride. They place the Islamic State (IS or ISIS) on the same political spectrum as groups like the Sahwa tribal movement or the Popular Mobilisation Forces in Iraq, who sacrificed everything in order to halt the march of the head-chopping fanatics. They want to claim that the multipolar, non-unitary Muslim Brotherhood, which won a majority in Egypt's only free and fair elections in 2012, is of a piece with al-Qaeda. Bullard's bogeyman was the Sanusiyya, a North African Sufi order resisting colonial oppression, which he professed was a 'great secret order' engaged in 'idiotic mysticism' and 'war against the infidel'. For today's Arab tyrants and their Islamophobic allies in Europe and the U.S., those who take inspiration from their faith occupy the same position, simultaneously derided and treated as a threat.'⁹⁷

Use Of 'Islamist' By British Media

The manner in which the term 'Islamist' is used in the media goes beyond the descriptive, and frequently seeks to delegitimise the actions or claims of the antagonist in the article. This scattergun approach to applying the term Islamist is found among the British media when referring to a variety of actors both in the UK and internationally. These include school governors and parents in the UK,⁹⁸ street protestors in various countries (Indonesia, Pakistan)⁹⁹,

⁹⁵ *ibid*;pp.8

⁹⁶ <https://pomeps.org/what-i-talk-about-when-i-talk-about-islamists>

⁹⁷ <https://lobelog.com/laying-the-islamist-bogeyman-to-rest/>

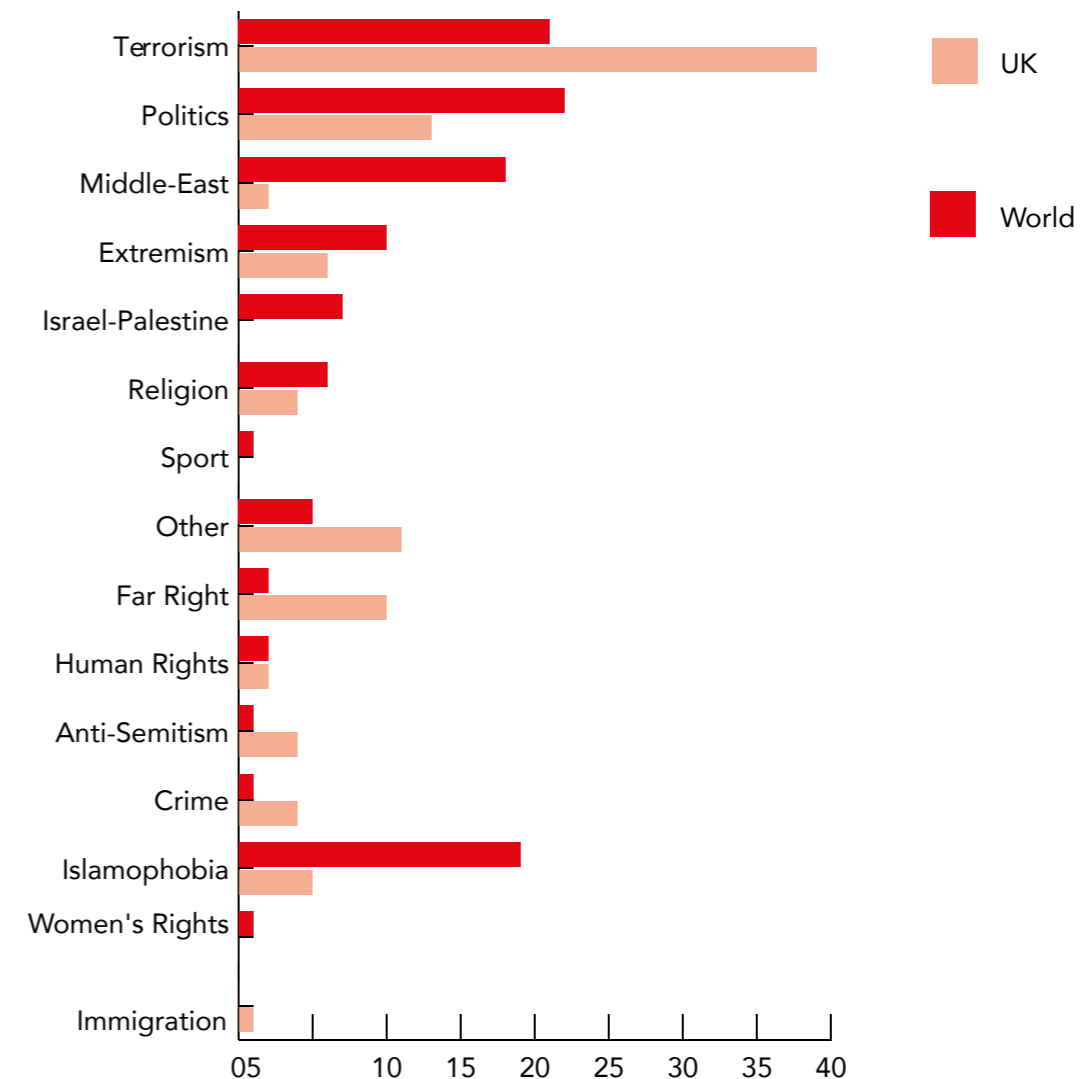
⁹⁸ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/lgbt-lesson-birmingham-parents-protest-muslims-trojan-horse-a8846616.html>

⁹⁹ <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/10939/asia-bibi-death-sentence-overturned-in-pakistan>

elected political leaders¹⁰⁰ and democratic parties¹⁰¹, entire nations (Iran)¹⁰², and violent terror groups such as Daesh - all are described as 'Islamists'.¹⁰³

This section looks at how the term is used within the media. In the period under analysis, there were 6,012 mentions of the word Islamist. The graph illustrates the various topics under which the word 'Islamist' has been used.

Graphic 8 Topic of article in which the word 'Islamist' is used



The use of the term 'Islamist' is found in stories on the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict mainly when describing Mohamed Morsi in Egypt and Hamas in Gaza.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-mursi-death-idUSKCN1T12C3>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/what-happened-to-the-arab-spring>

¹⁰² <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7067737/Trump-deploys-extra-1-500-troops-Middle-East-tensions-grow-Iran.html>

¹⁰³ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10038678/us-demands-britain-isis-refugee/>

On 204 recorded occasions, the late President was referred to as the **'Islamist President'** or **'Islamist Morsi.'** Just 37 of these pieces referenced the fact that he was **'democratically elected.'** The focus on Morsi's supposed ideological outlook through a heavily polemicised term, often used by those with a secular bias to delegitimise certain groups or individuals, is problematic. One explanation as to why it is favoured despite the fact that Morsi was freely elected, is to blur the distinction between his legitimacy and that of the forces who later deposed him using extrajudicial means. In the Times newspaper, Morsi's obituary referred to him as having a **'radical Islamist agenda'** without any clarification as to what this means. It further described him as a **'hardcore Islamist'** for his **'references to the Prophet Muhammad.'**¹⁰⁴

The reporting on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza during the period 2018-2019 found 182 occasions where the descriptions of harsh living conditions were almost exclusively bookended by reference to the area being ruled by the **'Islamist'** Hamas group, also described as **'Islamist Militant'** or **'Islamic Militant.'** Wire services AFP, Reuters, and Associated Press accounted for 143 of these articles. Whilst in most cases space, or the lack thereof, would not allow for the larger context behind the conflict to be reported, most articles failed to reference the Israeli and Egyptian blockades of Gaza that have turned the territory into what some have called **'an open-air prison.'**

Other references to **'Islamist'** and conflict involve reporting of Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, and Libya facing threats or insurgencies from **'Islamist'** groups. References to Somalia-based Al-Shaba(a)b as an **'Islamic Extremist'** group is mentioned a total of 71 times during the period under analysis, whilst the term **'Islamist Extremist'** is used ten times. Similarly, Nigerian based Boko Haram are referred to as an **'Islamist Extremist'** group a total of 3 times, and 17 times as **'Islamic Extremist.'** Already this demonstrates an arbitrary use of the term **'Islamist'** or indeed **'Islamic'** in relation to conflict and terrorism.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mohamed-morsi-obituary-n3cg538qp>

This is somewhat ironic. Academic Salman Al Azami notes why. **'The term Islamist has meant different things at different times to different people. Today, when used in English it usually conjures up terrifying images of masked gunmen on the streets of European capitals killing innocent civilians in the name of Islam. Ironically, the term first began to take hold amongst Western academics and policymakers so that they could talk about largely non-violent Islamic activism in the Muslim world without resorting to the derogatory label of 'Islamic fundamentalism.'**¹⁰⁵

This shift to using the word to describe terrorist groups is evidenced by the fact that 25% of all uses of the term are found in articles related to the theme of terrorism. The other topic that includes the term frequently is politics (21%). Al Azami uses the conflict in Libya as a reference point to discuss the word **'Islamist.'** He finds that it is used to describe everything from **'designated terrorist groups'**, **'democratically-oriented groups'**, as well as by Field Marshal Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, the self-styled leader of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) to label all of his opponents, including the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli.¹⁰⁶ A similar trend is found in the reporting on Syria where the term **'Islamist'** has been applied in the past to describe the political ideology of groups in the Syrian Resistance. One study claimed that 60 Percent Of Syrian Rebels are Islamist Extremists holding the same ideology as Daesh and Al Qaeda.¹⁰⁷

The Georgetown Professor Jonathan A.C. Brown has declared that the European discourse on **'Islamism'** and Political Islam no longer means anything more than that it **'manifests Muslim identity in a public space'** and/or **'interacts with the political sphere.'**¹⁰⁸ Whilst over half (59%) of UK based stories containing the word **'Islamist'** were under the topics of **'Terrorism'**, **'Crime'**, **'Extremism'**, and

¹⁰⁵ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eeb7ecb8c133f2d5ead8f9c/t/5fbb5dc55ec8a1059795eff3/1606114759827/Why+Words+Matter+-+The+Problem+with+the+Term+Islamist+.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eeb7ecb8c133f2d5ead8f9c/t/5fbb5dc55ec8a1059795eff3/1606114759827/Why+Words+Matter+-+The+Problem+with+the+Term+Islamist+.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/12/20/460463173/60-percent-of-syrian-rebels-share-islamic-state-ideology-think-tank-finds>

¹⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/JonathanACBrown/status/1338230950229061637>

the 'Far-Right', 'Muslims' acting in the civil space or having a 'conservative' outlook on moral issues were also described as 'Islamist' or engaging in 'Islamism', as shown in the below examples.

1. Jamal Khashoggi

Reports of the brutal murder and dismemberment of the Saudi journalist and Washington Post columnist, Jamal Khashoggi, in the Saudi Embassy in Turkey in 2018, were often accompanied with claims of him being an 'Islamist' by both the media and Saudi authorities. The Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, described him as a 'dangerous Islamist' just days after he went missing.^{109,110} And examples of a similar campaign amongst the UK media were found. John R. Bradley, writing for The Spectator, says Khashoggi's reputation 'sugar-coated his Islamist beliefs with constant references to freedom and democracy'.¹¹¹

In another article for The Spectator, following TIME magazine's cover story tribute to Khashoggi, Bradley again refers to him as a '**Muslim Brotherhood extremist**'.¹¹² Owen Jones, writing for The Guardian, references an article by The Telegraph's defence correspondent, Con Coughlin, who questioned whether Khashoggi was '**a liberal or a Muslim Brotherhood lackey who reviled the west?**'¹¹³ Jones has documented examples of Coughlin where he claims Coughlin has seemed to act as a propagandist for Gulf regimes and American conservatives in his '**journalism**'.¹¹⁴ One example where the word Islamist is applied to describe antagonists is in Coughlin's interview with the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, which Owen describes as a '**fawning**' interview.¹¹⁵

Coughlin writes; '**Crown Prince Mohammed believes that, by**

109 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/saudi-crown-prince-described-slain-journalist-as-a-dangerous-islamist-in-call-with-white-house/2018/11/01/b4513e05-2d8e-4533-9cc8-2cabf8bb2d0a_story.html

110 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-conservative-whisper-campaign-khashoggi-20181018-story.html>

111 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/death-of-a-dissident>

112 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/jamal-khashoggi-is-the-right-time-person-of-the-year-for-all-the-wrong-reasons>

113 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/24/britain-house-of-saud-jamal-khashoggi-murder>

114 <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1050762279787089920>

115 <https://twitter.com/OwenJones84/status/1050762297206075392>

promoting a more moderate Islamic outlook in his own country, Saudi Arabia can play a prominent role in defeating Islamist-inspired extremism.'¹¹⁶ What this example shows is how the term is used as a propaganda tool by authoritarian regimes in the Gulf as well as anti-Muslim democrats in the West such as France. There is no counterpoint to this in Coughlin's copy and the Crown Prince's words are left unchallenged. This is dangerous as Andreas Krieg writes when describing how the invention of an Islamist bogeyman has been weaponised by authoritarian regimes; '**It serves as justification for Sisi's violent repression of dissent and opposition in Egypt. And it provides a justification for the torture camps set up in Yemen by the UAE's local proxy, the Southern Transitional Council (STC).**'¹¹⁷

2. Muslim children and Islamism

Education and Muslim children are topics under which online news sites have described or quoted alarmist claims of the dangers of Islamists, without defining who exactly is being spoken about.

- One story that exemplifies this is Bear Grylls' claims in The Telegraph that, '**Scouts can save Muslim children from Islamist extremism.**'¹¹⁸ As the chief ambassador for the global scout movement, the ex-SAS soldier claims, that the rise in mosques reaching out to set up scouts groups to save Muslim children from Islamists and radicalisation, even though the article provides no evidence of any mosque having given this justification for setting up a scout group.

'It's what I was saying about the young, Muslim kids in this country. If you don't give them something good, they go to the bad.'

- Allegations towards parents protesting outside Birmingham schools, against the promotion of same-sex relationships in

116 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/03/05/exclusive-interview-british-saudi-people-will-much-safer-have/>

117 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-uae-tries-compromise-islamic-scholarship>

118 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/12/08/bear-grylls-interview-scouts-can-save-muslim-children-islamist/>

the curriculum, is another case where this narrative is found. A reference to how the parents, who came from the school's local neighbourhood, were allegedly trying to implement an 'Islamist ethos' is one example of how those with morally 'conservative' norms can be implicated or judged to be under the influence of 'Islamist' ideas or people, but again without any evidence.¹¹⁹

- Similarly, normative practices among Muslims, such as school children in France not wanting to contravene Islamic dietary requirements, was written about as a 'soft sign of Islamism..... which may in fact mask a more sinister political project, which can supply recruits to violence.'¹²⁰
- Furthermore, Marks and Spencer selling hijabs for school children was quoted as 'extremist Islamism.'¹²¹ Ironically, a 2015 article published in The Telegraph quoting Scotland Yard commander Mak Chishty, stated that Muslims who suddenly stop shopping at Marks & Spencer were potential victims of extremist ideologies.¹²²
- In a similar vein, The Financial Times chose to publish a letter written by French President Emmanuel Macron with unsubstantiated allegations about 3-year-old girls in the country being forced to wear full-face veils and being 'raised in hatred of France's values'.¹²³ Mr Macron's letter was in response to an opinion piece written by a female Muslim journalist, Mehreen Khan, accusing him of spreading hatred against Muslims. Nadia Henni-Moulai, a prominent French writer, said: 'Mr Macron is using a British outlet to spread fake news about Muslims in France. In an already extremely volatile context, this is highly inappropriate for a head of state.'¹²⁴

119 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jan/31/school-defends-lgbt-lessons-after-religious-parents-complain>

120 <https://www.economist.com/europe/2020/10/18/the-beheading-of-a-teacher-will-harden-frances-belief-in-secularism>

121 <https://inews.co.uk/news/marks-spencer-criticised-selling-hijabs-young-schoolgirls-208548>

122 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11627620/Muslims-who-stop-shopping-at-Marks-and-Spencer-could-be-radicals-warns-top-cop.html>

123 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-france-muslim-islam-girls-b1621006.html>

124 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-france-muslim-islam-girls-b1621006.html>

- The maligning of Muslims by news publishers under the banner of 'Islamism' in the context of childrens' education is found most notably in a false story published in both The Times and Express newspapers, when a husband and wife were wrongly accused of being involved in an a 'Trojan Horse' plot at a primary school.¹²⁵ Both newspapers had to settle libel claims against Nasim Ashraf and Hafizan Zaman who also won separate defamation and data protection claims against four other news groups: News Group Newspapers who publish The Sun, Telegraph Media Group, Mirror Group Newspapers and Associated Newspapers, publisher of Mail Online.¹²⁶ The articles, published in 2017, accused the couple of having issues about their children's education at Clarksfield School in Oldham and targeting the head teacher with death threats, even though their children stopped attending that school in 2013. Mr Ashraf addressing a school assembly about the Hajj Pilgrimage, at the deputy head's request, was reported in The Sunday Times as he 'hosted Islamic teaching sessions.' Similar reporting patterns were found in the story about parents' objections to same sex education at Parkfield Community School in Birmingham where teachers were allowed to make unsubstantiated claims about fears for their safety and death threats with reports containing no evidence as to who had made these threats or what they amounted to. (See section on Due Prominence).

3. Smearing politically active Muslims as Islamists

A report on Islamism (Understanding Islamism) by Policy Exchange, a neo-conservative orientated think-tank, stated that 'Most Islamist movements are not terrorist in nature—although some clearly do support the use of violence in certain contexts (frequently, for instance, as part of 'resistance' to perceived occupation).'¹²⁷

125 <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/times-and-express-settle-libel-claims-after-wrongly-suggesting-married-couple-ran-islamist-trojan-horse-plot-at-primary-school/>

126 <https://pressgazette.co.uk/the-sun-pays-out-substantial-damages-after-wrongly-claiming-couple-part-of-islamic-trojan-horse-plot-to-take-over-primary-school/> & <https://pressgazette.co.uk/telegraph-apologises-over-unfounded-claims-married-couple-plotted-islamist-trojan-horse-takeover-of-primary-school/>

127 <https://policyexchange.org.uk/understanding-islamism/>, pp.7

One such ‘perceived occupation’ which many Muslim individuals and organisations have chosen to protest against is the Israeli occupation and annexation of Palestinian land since 1948. Over 50 articles suggest that Muslims who oppose the state of Israel, or political Zionism, and its acts against Palestinians, are influenced or actively engaged in ‘Islamist’ behaviour.

- Writing in The Guardian, Nick Cohen claims ‘Although it is false to say all Muslims are anti-Semites, it is true to point out that antisemitism is endemic among the political Islamists who back Corbyn.’¹²⁸

4. Islamists targeting women

So-called Islamists or the ideology of Islamism has also been referenced on several occasions as an oppressive or inhabiting factor on women. This example shows how the term Islamist is applied to an ordinary Muslim scholar giving a religious opinion (fatwa).

The Sun headlined ‘Islamist Indian cleric threatens to target Muslim women who wear NAIL POLISH and trim their fingernails’, even though there was no evidence in the article about the threat. In fact, the article was based on a story about an Islamic jurist advising Muslim women that they should ‘completely remove the (nail) varnish before offering Namaz – ritual prayers prescribed by Islam to be observed five times a day.’¹²⁹ This is an example where the term Islamist has been used synonymously with Islam, where the unspectacular occasion of a qualified jurist issuing a religious opinion (fatwa) has been equated to him being an ‘Islamist.’

¹²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/07/labour-antisemitism-jeremy-corbyn>

¹²⁹ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7664734/islamist-indian-cleric-threatens-to-target-muslim-women-who-wear-nail-polish-and-trim-their-fingernails-in-fatwa-against-un-islamic-grooming/>

Recommendations

1

Ensure corrections and apologies (for inaccurate, misleading or misrepresentative reporting) are equal and proportionate (in size and position) to the original report

2

Take extreme care in the terminology used, especially when using the term ‘Islamism’, to avoid misleading readers

3

Religious terminology should be cross referenced with authentic Muslim and Islamic sources for accurate use.

4

Report crackdowns on Muslim populations with objectivity, ensuring appropriate levels of scepticism and challenge to the rationale provided by those in positions of power and accused of unfair treatment.

Negative Aspects and Behaviours

Negativity can be a subjective concept, and yet, within news reporting it is generally clear when a particular article is reporting or stating an event or characteristic negatively. The reporting of Islam and Muslims fits in with an overall propensity for news to be negative, and some research suggests that as humans we have an inbuilt negativity bias which correlates to a 'collective hunger to hear, and remember bad news.'¹³⁰

Newspapers can simply argue that they respond to this very demand and report what is going on in the world. Yet, this does not take into account the choices that editors and journalists have in what they report or write about.

An infinite number of things happen in the world that go unreported. What makes it onto the page or screen is at the discretion of what the editor considers to be newsworthy or of interest to their audiences. So, when 65 plus people died in a train fire in Pakistan, this incident was deemed less important on BBC Radio's news bulletins than wildfires in California where there were zero fatalities.¹³¹ Why this should be the case is a matter of opinion, but that it was deemed less important is difficult to argue against. Had the 65 plus deaths on the train in Pakistan been caused by a terror attack committed by a Muslim, it is likely that the story would become more newsworthy.

When assessing articles or reports in this category, we ask:

Does the article/broadcast associate Muslims or Islam with negative aspects or behaviour?

We do not judge whether the information is correct nor if it should have been reported on or not.

¹³⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20140728-why-is-all-the-news-bad>

¹³¹ <https://twitter.com/SkyScottBeasley/status/118982645455877344>

Our analysis found that across all publications almost 60% of articles were identified as associating Muslims or Islam with negative aspects and behaviour.

Table 8 Articles associating Muslims with negative aspects or behaviour

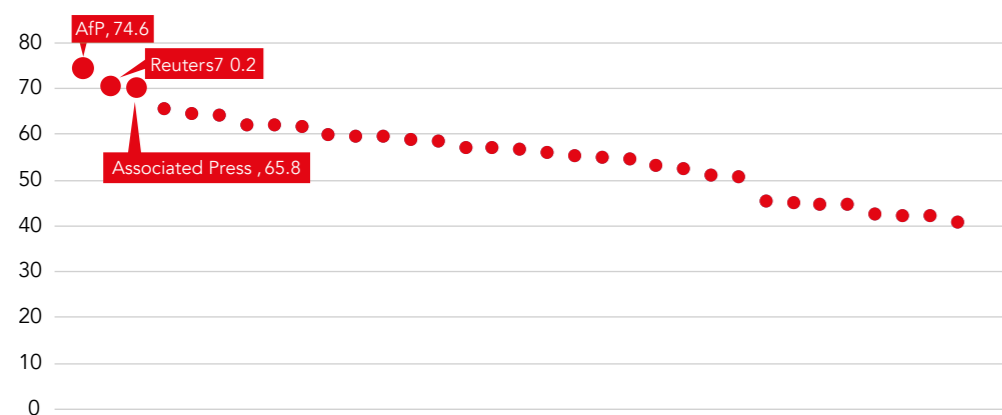
Negative Aspects or Behaviour	Count	Percentage
Yes	28,295	59
No	19,374	41
Inconclusive	149	0.3

Twelve publications (predominantly right-leaning newspapers and wire services) exceeded the average percentage of articles (59%) containing negative aspects and behaviours. The wire services published the most number of articles overall and three of the top four offenders were Reuters, Agence France-Presse (AFP) and Associated Press (AP).

Table 9 Percentage of wire service's articles containing negative aspects or behaviour

Rank	Publication	Overall Count	Overall Percentage
1	Reuters	5,589	12
2	AFP	4,891	10
3	Associated Press	4,082	9

Graphic 7 Percentage of articles which show negative aspects or behaviours

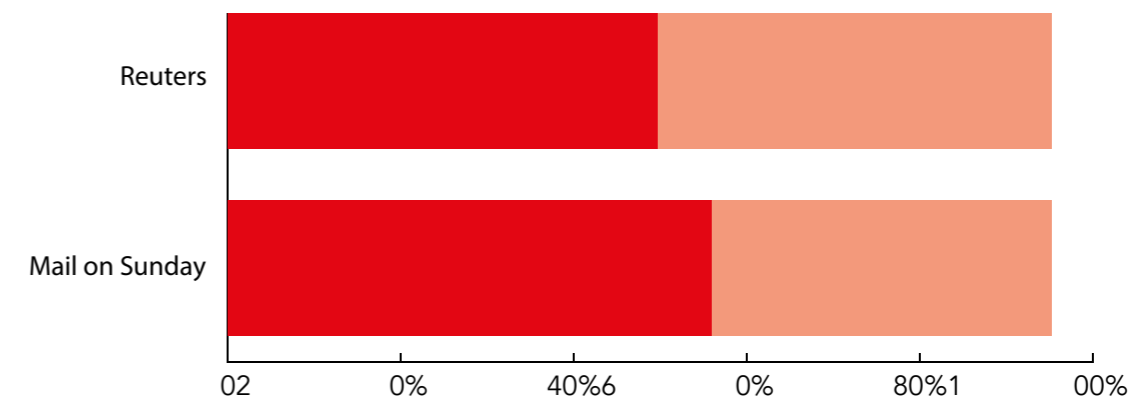


The Mail on Sunday and Reuters had an equal proportion of their articles (just over 70%) showing negative aspects or behaviours even though Reuters published almost 40 times as many articles. Left-leaning publications all came under the 59% average with The Guardian, iNews and New Statesman scoring under 50%.¹³²

Table 10 Comparison between Reuters and Mail on Sunday

Publication	Total Articles Published	Articles showing negative aspect or behaviour	Percentage
Reuters	5,589	3,923	70
Mail on Sunday	166	117	71

Graphic 8 Comparison between Reuters and Mail on Sunday



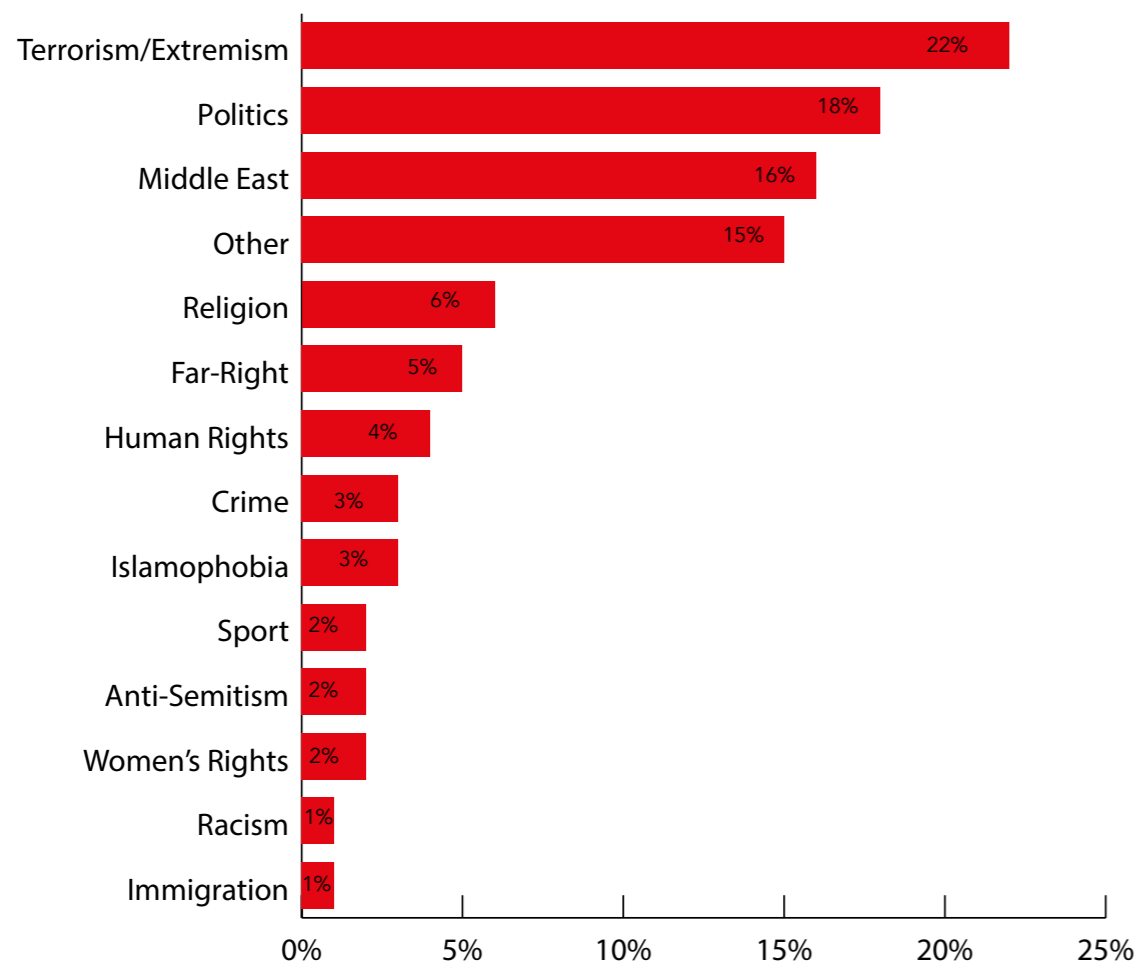
When viewed thematically, over one in every five articles has a primary focus on 'Terrorism/Extremism' with 'Politics' and the 'Middle East' (a region perpetually reported on via the lens of conflict) following close behind.

132 See Appendix H

Table 11 Total articles by theme

Topic	Count	Percentage
Terrorism/Extremism	10,323	22%
Politics	8,737	18%
Middle East	7,872	16%
Other	6,962	15%
Religion	2,647	6%
Far-Right	2,556	5%
Human Rights	2,105	4%
Crime	1,546	3%
Islamophobia	1,269	3%
Sport	1,031	2%
Anti-Semitism	807	2%
Women's Rights	750	2%
Racism	611	1%
Immigration	602	1%

Graphic 9 Total articles by percentage



Wire Agencies As Incubators Of Negative Aspect And Behaviours

The top three offending wire services (AFP, Reuters and AP) all individually exceed the overall 22% figure for all articles focused primarily on 'Terrorism/Extremism'. They also exceeded the overall percentages of articles mainly focused on 'politics' (18%), the 'Middle East' (16%) and 'Human Rights' (4%). Given that the top three themes make up over half of all news agency articles and these are then picked up by other media outlets, it can be safely argued that the wire services set the framing of Muslims and Islam particularly in the category of 'News' (which accounts for 98% of all articles they publish).

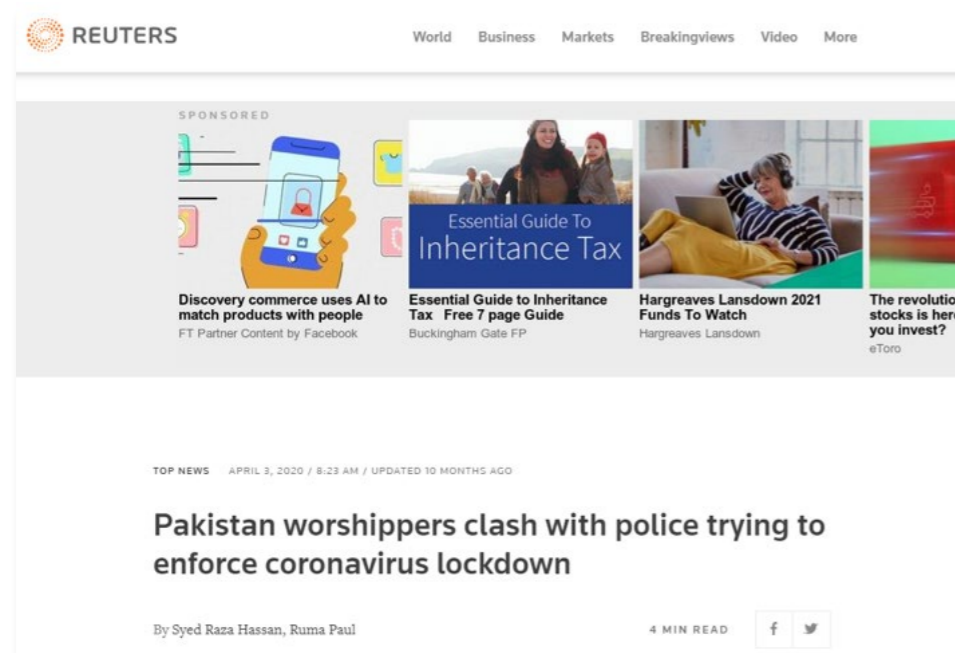
Table 12 Overall articles published by theme

Theme	Overall articles published by AFP by theme	Overall articles published by Associated Press by theme	Overall articles published by Reuters by theme	Overall articles containing negative aspect and behaviour by theme
Terrorism	24%	29%	22%	32%
Politics	20%	17%	20%	16%
Middle East	31%	22%	31%	19%

The impact of the wire services on mainstream news publications can be seen in the example below where copy is taken from the original Reuters report and given The Mail Online treatment of headlining Muslims and making them the subject of the report as opposed to the police.

It reads: 'Muslims clash with baton-wielding police outside a mosque as they try to enforce Pakistan's new Coronavirus lockdown during Friday prayers.'¹³³

¹³³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8186199/Muslims-clash-police-outside-mosque-try-enforce-Pakistans-coronavirus-lockdown.html> & <https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-southasia/pakistan-worshippers-clash-with-police-trying-to-enforce-coronavirus-lockdown-idINKBN21LOVN>



Muslims clash with baton-wielding police outside a mosque as they try to enforce Pakistan's new coronavirus lockdown during Friday prayers

- Muslims clashed with police outside Karachi mosque during Friday prayers
- Officials were seeking to enforce Pakistan's new coronavirus lockdown
- Video emerges as health experts warn an epidemic in South Asia could overwhelm already-weak public health systems in the region

By JACK WRIGHT FOR MAILONLINE

PUBLISHED: 22:38, 3 April 2020 | UPDATED: 09:11, 4 April 2020



Use of Islamic symbols and Muslim identity

Another way negative aspects and behaviours are promoted is by associating Islamic symbols and Muslim identity with undesirable acts or particular tropes.

1. In a story in the Mail on Sunday, a fraudster is described as 'a Christian who converted from Islam.' Normally when the conversion is the other way round, it is mostly described as 'Muslim convert' with no mention of Christianity or any other

previous religion.¹³⁴

2. The Guardian, reporting on the Streatham terror attack of February 2020, chose to quote the detail that Sudesh Amman went to the Mosque [Wearing traditional Islamic dress].¹³⁵ This example and the next show how irrelevant details of what a person is wearing are included especially when the subject is Muslim and when the story is negative.
3. An article about a 'British Asian Tory campaigner' being abused by a man, mentions in the headline that he was wearing 'Islamic dress' when he hurled the abuse.¹³⁶ It's difficult to argue what the relevance of his attire is to the story.
4. Common tropes by interest groups are often given license without any evidence to substantiate their claims. In a review of the documentary called 'Honour', about the Londoner Banaz Mahmood who was murdered by her father and uncle, the reviewer Andrew Billen allowed a representative of Southall Black Sisters to claim that 'family patriarchs may have grown fiercer with the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.'¹³⁷ No evidence was provided to back this claim.
5. In a story about a Turkish belly dancer murdered by her father, The Daily Star chose to report how her body was dumped 'in a forest near a local mosque', despite the mosque having no recognisable structural aspects that would link it to being a mosque, had nothing to do with the incident and was therefore irrelevant to the story. Yet, it was deemed important to mention

¹³⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8560805/Nigerian-fraudster-flown-UK-deportation-ruled-unlawful-judge.html>

¹³⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/03/sudesh-amman-how-did-science-student-become-streatham-jihadist>

¹³⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7722231/Moment-man-tells-Tory-activist-white-f-ing-country.html>

¹³⁷ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/i-still-live-in-fear-for-my-life-every-day-zmflbgfjm>



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Inclusion of extraneous details

Certain articles are embellished with extraneous details to the story and don't provide any further context to the incident being reported on. The purpose of their inclusion seems to be targeted at portraying Muslims and/or Islam in a negative manner.

1. A story about the ongoing violence between Fulani herders and farmers in Nigeria is rounded off with the following sentence. **'It comes a year after hundreds of men and boys were freed from a 'house of torture' Islamic school where they were kept in chains, sexually abused and beaten in Kaduna.'** There is no relevance or link between the two incidents but by including the latter information, there is clearly an attempt to portray what is primarily a feud over resources and link it to Islam and extremism.¹³⁹

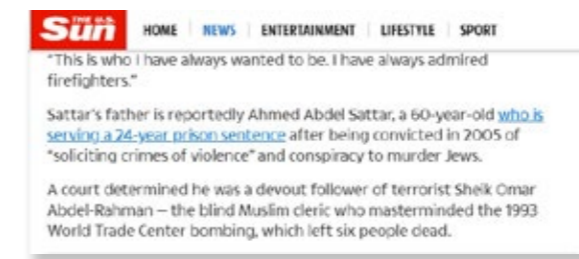
¹³⁸ <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/doner-kebab-chef-sliced-belly-22768489>

¹³⁹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8543891/Wedding-day-massacre-gunmen-kill-18-guests-wound-30-Nigerian-region.html>

2. In a story in the DailyMail.com and The Sun US about a Muslim firefighter contracting coronavirus after a Jewish teenager deliberately sneezed in his face, the new sites choose to report on the convictions of the firefighters' father for **'soliciting crimes of violence against Jews in 2005.'** Once again, an irrelevant piece of information but a clear attempt to vilify and tarnish the image of the Muslim victim.



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In two stories about China in the Daily Star (the first about the abduction of a 4-year-old girl in China and the second about the marriage of a 14-year-old girl and 17-year-old boy) the newspaper chooses to contextualise both articles with the following story; **'Back in October, a 13-year-old Christian girl was kidnapped by a 44-year-old Muslim man in Pakistan who forced her to convert to Islam and marry him.'** This story, which has no relevance to the two stories in China and doesn't warrant the space it was given, took up over half of the copy in both articles.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8190985/Muslim-New-York-firefighter-contracts-coronavirus-days-Jewish-teenager-sneezed-face.html>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.the-sun.com/news/644042/coronavirus-new-york-fdny-firefighter-muslim-hasidic-jew-teens/>

¹⁴² <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/girl-4-abducted-raped-ditch-23106439> & <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/girl-14-student-17-ditch-23099763>

Whilst negative aspects and behaviour can sometimes be established through the theme of the article; individual examples are copious. Some of the examples below illustrate how wire services report and frame Muslims and/or Islam. The articles feature negative aspects and behaviour such as murder, torture, rape, terrorism, female genital mutilation, intolerance, subjugation of women, human rights violations and grooming of children amongst others.

Table 13 Examples of negative aspect and behaviours from wire copy

Date	Headline	Publication	UK/World	Type	Topic	Negative aspect and behaviours
27-Nov-2018 06:39	As Singapore enters twilight of Lee era, ruling party prepares for change	Reuters	World	Feature	Politics	'surrounded by large, mostly Muslim, and politically less predictable neighbours.'
13-Dec-2018 07:02	Suspected jihadists kill 42 in Mali's nomadic Tuareg camps	Associated Press	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'Islamic-inspired militants.'
14-Dec-2018 01:27	Germany: Cologne hostage-taking wasn't terror incident	Associated Press	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'Islamic extremist motive.'
15-Dec-2018 02:15	War on jihadists won't end unless West tackles root causes: experts	AfP	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'the Sunnis- the branch of Islam that gave rise to Al-Qaeda and IS', West vs. Rest narrative'
22-Dec-2018 11:50	'Radical' young men key suspects in Morocco tourist murders	AfP	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'enjoyed drinking alcohol before embracing radical Islam, Morocco has long been considered among the most liberal of nations in the Arab world, although Islam is the state religion.'
22-Jan-2019 01:14	13 killed in run-up to latest C.Africa peace bid	AfP	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'Muslim militias against Christian communities'
16-Jan-2019 08:14	Anger at Malaysia textbook telling girls to 'protect sex organs'	AfP	World	News	Other	'not first time Muslim-majority Malaysia have been accused of taking a poor approach to issues of gender or sexuality' (relevance of 'Muslim-majority' to this sentence?)'
08-Jul-2019 09:24	Attacks on Big Tech likely at White House social media 'summit'	AfP	World	News	Other	'Islamic violence'.
27-Sep-2019 08:47	Austrian election winds up as favorite Kurz keeps coalition options open	Reuters	World	News	Politics	'Islam is a system of subjugation and intolerance'

10-Mar-2019 04:59	Bangladesh make inroads before rain returns in New Zealand	Reuters	World	News	Child Abuse	'Muslim child sex groomers'
27-Sep-2019 13:43	Hundreds of 'abused' captives freed from Nigeria Islamic school	AfP	World	News	Child Abuse	'more than 300 male students being held at an Islamic school where many had been tortured and sexually abused'
20-Jun-2019 09:34	Pakistan says it will create gender-based violence courts	AfP	World	News	Crime	'Women have long fought for their rights in deeply conservative Muslim Pakistan, where activists say men commit 'pervasive' violence against them, often with impunity.'
14-Sep-2019 07:56	Teen Egyptian girl's case puts legal system under spotlight	Associated Press	World	News	Middle East	'Sexual harassment, mostly ranging from catcalls to occasional pinching or grabbing, is rampant in Egypt. Polls have found that most men and women in the conservative Muslim country believe it is justified if women dress 'provocatively' in public.'
01-Jan-2019 12:17	The Latest: Manchester stabbing treated as terrorism	Associated Press	UK	Live Blog	Terrorism/Extremism	'knife-wielding man yelling Islamic slogans'
28-May-2019 08:38	Three killed in Ramadan violence in restive Thai south	AfP	World	News	Terrorism/Extremism	'Ramadan violence'.
21-May-2019 01:28	Trial opens in Moroccan teen gang rape case	AfP	World	News	Child Abuse	'Rape victims in Morocco are often subject to a double trauma as its conservative Muslim society blames them for their ordeal.'
15-Jun-2019 09:49	Trump calls London mayor a 'disaster' after a spate of killings	Reuters	UK	News	Politics	'This is Khan's Londonistan, a phrase used to describe the city's failure to tackle Muslim extremists.'
05-Jul-2019 8:38 AM	Wahhabism confronted: Sri Lanka curbs Saudi influence after bombings	Reuters	World	Feature	Middle East	'IS 'follows an extreme interpretation of Islam's Salafi branch' is not only a generalisation but misleading/inaccurate'

Recommendations

1

Avoid reference to Muslims or Islam unless genuinely relevant to the story.

2

For news wire agencies in particular, take particular care in the terms used (given they are often copied wholesale in other print media), and reliance on singular witness reports especially related to terrorism given how unreliable they have been proven to be in many cases

3

Assess overall coverage (in terms of negativity towards Muslims), and reflect on whether this is appropriate.

Generalisations

Generalisations are classified as tropes or blanket statements/observations which are applied against Muslims and/or Islam either unevidenced or evidenced by specific, individual cases. Whilst generalisations can be neutral or indeed positive on occasions they are most frequently negative, taking a distinctly anti-Muslim or anti-Islam stance.

The question asked for each article was:

Does the article/broadcast make generalising claims about Muslims or Islam?

Seven per cent of all articles analysed were judged to have included one or more generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam

Table 14 Generalising claims

Generalising Claims	Count	Percentage
No	44,431	93
Yes	3,316	7
Inconclusive	71	0

The publications with the greatest number of generalisations was The Spectator which was assessed to have one in four articles which generalised about Muslims and/or Islam. The Mail on Sunday and Christian Today came second and third with almost one in five articles making generalisations. The top 11 publications with the highest percentage of generalisations were all either right leaning or religious.

Table 15 Percentage of articles containing generalisations

Publication	Percentage of articles containing generalisations	Leaning
Spectator	26	Right
Mail on Sunday	20	Right
Christian Today	19	Religious
Daily Mail Australia	16	Right
Jewish Chronicle	13	Religious
The Sunday Times	13	Right
The Daily Mail	11	Right
The Sun	10	Right
Mail Online	9	Right
Daily Star	9	Right
The Telegraph	9	Right
The Tablet	8	Religious
The Times	8	Right

Furthermore, seventeen publications exceeded this average of seven per cent with all four religious publications and 11 right leaning publications assessed falling within this group.¹⁴³ Two wire agencies (Agence France Presse & and Associated Press) also exceeded this figure.

Table 16 Categories of publications which published generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam

Religious	Right-Leaning	Wires	Left-Leaning	Centrist	Average
12%	10.0%	7%	5%	4%	7%

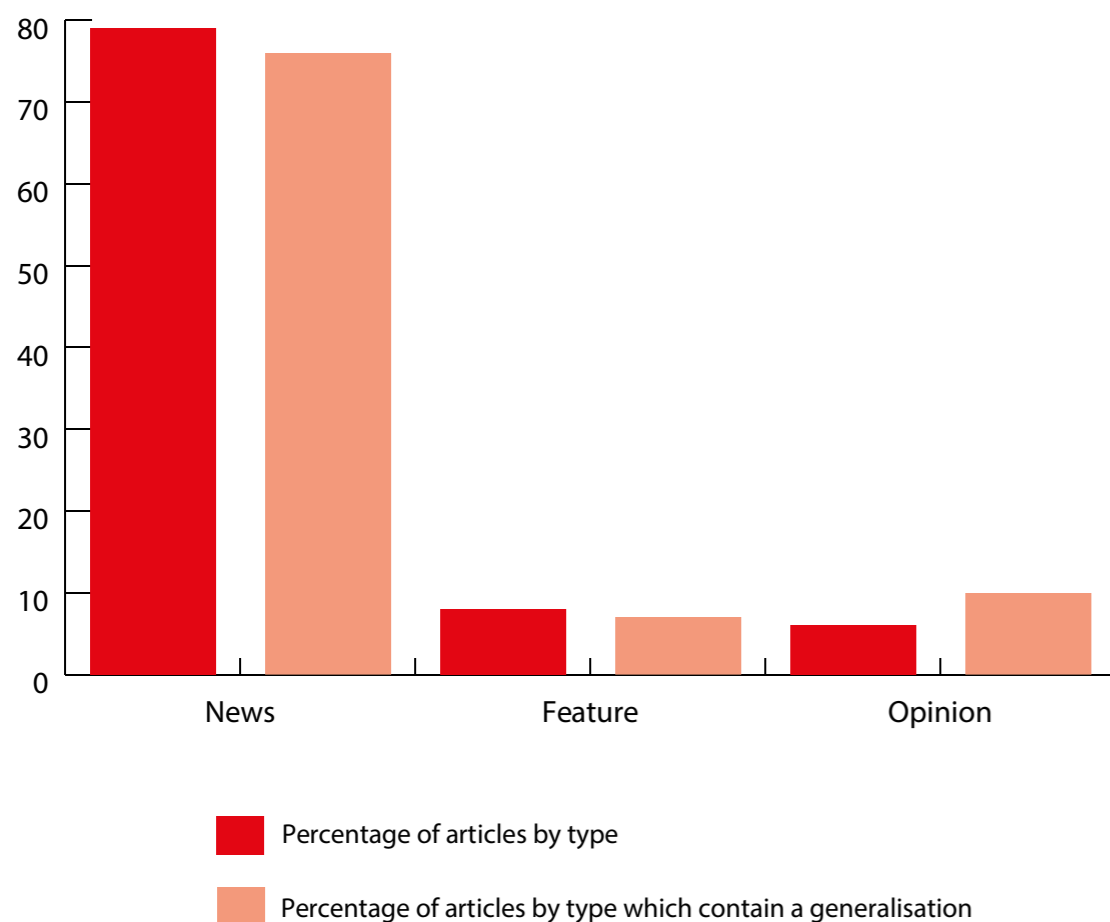
Opinion pieces which make up a total of six per cent of all articles analysed account for 10 per cent of those which contain a generalisation. All other types are either in line with or below the overall percentage proportions.

143 See Appendix I

Table 17 Percentage of article by type which contain a generalisation

Type	Percentage of articles by type	Percentage of articles by type which contain a generalisation
News	79%	76%
Feature	8%	7%
Opinion	6%	10%
Review	1%	1%
Analysis	1%	1%
NIB	1%	1%

Graphic 10 Generalisations by type of article



Opinion pieces

Opinion pieces which make up a total of six per cent of all articles analysed account for 10 per cent of those which contain a generalisation. All other types are either in line with or below the overall percentage proportions. One possible reason for this is the greater freedom allowed for opinion pieces under the IPSO Editors Code. Under Clause 1 Accuracy, IPSO effectively allows for conjecture in opinion pieces, as long as it is clearly distinguished from 'fact.'¹⁴⁴ One externality of this is the freedom for columnists to write about Muslims and Islam and affix to them mistruths, tropes, and prejudicial information that is more aligned with Orientalist myths and interests than the reality of Muslim life or the authentic Islamic corpus or ideas.

This does not mean that all prejudicial information or bias should be regulated against. Generalisations can open the space for open debate on pertinent issues and even those disliked by Muslims or other readers. There cannot and should not be any blanket regulation against such a thing.

However, blatantly false information or tropes that allege collective responsibility or a conspiracy among Muslims when commenting on the crimes of individuals are dangerous. The reference to 'Rotherham' on the gun used by Brenton Tarrant, the white supremacist terrorist who murdered 51 worshippers in Christchurch, as well as Anders Breivik's referencing British newspaper columnists in his manifesto are examples of the dangers of irresponsible opinion pieces.

James Marriott wrote in *The Times* how the New Atheists had an, 'inflated sense of their own importance' where they 'were overly fond of imagining themselves the defenders of Western secular liberal values in a grand battle against the barbarism of religion, especially Islam.'¹⁴⁵ Marriott's observation is just one way in which anti Muslim antagonists can use the the platform of opinion to position Islam, one way in which columnists position Islam as a

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.ipso.co.uk/editors-code-of-practice/#Accuracy>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-need-to-take-the-arrogance-out-ofatheism-zpr98rj98>

uniquely violent religion and Muslims as particularly threatening.

These threats can be somewhat benign as Dan Jones' claim of being 'hissed at for stepping too close to the portico of al-Aqsa Mosque', or Trevor Kavanagh asking, 'could a vicar recite The Lord's Prayer in a mosque and escape in one piece?'¹⁴⁶

Another example of how Islam is viewed among the commentariat can be seen in the reaction to a storyline in the BBC's EastEnders' soap when the character of Bobby converts to Islam. Bobby justified his decision, saying; 'It helps me see the good in people.' Ally Ross writing in The Sun was less than convinced, instead lamenting why the show decided not to feature terror attacks or terrorists. 'The show says it is to counter negative representations of Islam. No word on why these representations might be negative, of course, just as EastEnders never had any dramatic response or even a mention of Islamist terror attacks in London or three East End schoolgirls running away to join IS.'¹⁴⁷

Generalisations By Topic

In our analysis we further broke down how generalisations appear in the media according to the topic under which the article is listed. Our results showed that the percentage of generalisations are highest in the topics of 'Terrorism/Extremism' (25%), Politics (18%), Middle East (17%) and Religion (15%).

By and large the generalisations by topic are in line with the total percentage of articles under each topic. Only Religion and Women's Rights had over twice as many articles generalising about Muslims and or/Islam than the total number of articles published under the two topics.

Table 18 Percentage of articles with a generalisation

Topic	Percentage of articles with a generalisation	Overall % of published articles
Anti-Semitism	3%	2%
Crime	4%	3%
Far Right	2%	5%
Human Rights	5%	4%
Immigration	1%	1%
Islamophobia	2%	3%
Middle East	13%	17%
Other	10%	15%
Politics	12%	18%
Racism	0%	1%
Religion	15%	6%
Sport	1%	2%
Terrorism/ Extremism	25%	21%
Womens' Rights	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%

Religion

When Muslims and/or Islam are reported on under the topic of Religion, a higher proportion are problematic when it comes to generalisations. Below are a couple of examples which appeared under this topic.

The Tablet carried the words of the African Cardinal Robert Sarah who it says blames Europe for the spiritual crisis that currently blights 'the whole world', because Europe has rejected God. He also points to the so-called 'threat posed by Islamism'. He says that 'Muslims despise the atheistic West. They take refuge in Islamism as a rejection of the consumer society that is offered to them as a religion.'¹⁴⁸ Given that there are over a billion Muslims from many different countries, walks of life, cultures and socio-political-economic backgrounds, not only are his comments about Muslims grossly generalised but so too is his warning about the threat posed by Islam.

- Peter Hitchens writing in the Mail on Sunday wrote that 'Islam

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7772323/dominic-raab-kick-starts-leadership-battle/>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/opinion/9988712/ally-ross-eastenders-right-on-agenda/>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/11591/cardinal-sarah-says-world-blighted-europe-s-sickness>

is a set of political opinions.¹⁴⁹ This generalisation according to Shahid Hamid, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and the author of *'Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle Over Islam Is Reshaping the World'*, is centred around a distinctly Christian, and especially Protestant way of thinking about the nature of religion.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the major proponents of this idea in recent times have been notoriously anti-Islam activists such as David Yerushalmi and Frank Gaffney in the U.S. according to an article in *The Washington Post*.¹⁵¹

Female Genital Mutilation

One topic in which the contention between Muslims and liberal values is emphasised is when it comes to Muslim women's rights. Despite only 2% of the overall coverage analysed touching on this topic, twice as many of these articles (4%) made one or more generalisations about Muslim women.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a mainly cultural practice that is most common in certain parts of Africa, including Christian and Muslim areas. Yet, FGM is predominantly discussed under the banner of it being a Muslim practice, despite the fact that Islam does not advocate this.

Sarah Baxter, a former columnist in the *Sunday Times* made a sweeping statement claiming, **'Here in Britain, Muslim girls' sexual organs are being cut'**,¹⁵² *The Economist* described FGM as a great dividing line among the Democratic party voters **'which pits people who are anxious to be friendly to Muslim immigrants against feminists.'**¹⁵³

When reporting on **'liberal reforms'** in Sudan, *The Telegraph* hailed

149 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-6713189/PETER-HITCHENS-Cigarettes-healthy-believe-youll-fall-Big-Dopes-propaganda.html>

150 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/02/03/why-do-so-many-americans-believe-that-islam-is-a-political-ideology-not-a-religion/>

151 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/02/03/why-do-so-many-americans-believe-that-islam-is-a-political-ideology-not-a-religion/>

152 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/under-our-eye-the-real-warning-in-margaret-atwoods-novel-the-handmaids-tale-goes-unheard-f5xwr38tx>

153 <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2019/05/30/seven-american-states-have-criminalised-fgm-this-year>

the banning of FGM as **'an important step in the country's struggle with Islamic Fundamentalism.'**¹⁵⁴

However, there are examples of news outlets getting it right. When a Swiss court upheld a sentence against a Somali woman who had circumcised her two daughters in their homeland in 2013 before immigrating to Switzerland in 2015, Reuters rightly said **'While some believe the rite is an important tradition and a religious obligation, FGM is not mentioned in the Koran.'**¹⁵⁵

Common Tropes

Muslims and Islam as different and a threat to Britain and the West

Islam and Muslims are constantly depicted in the media as being an existential threat to the West, through ideas such as the conspiracist **'replacement theory'**, which appropriates and exaggerates the visibility of Muslim practice in society and its embodiment in Sharia courts, mosques, and garments, etc., to envision an impending invasion and cultural takeover. The distinguishing trait of such illusions is their dependence on half-truths, which are often more dangerous than lies in that they are less susceptible to scrutiny. The so-called **'Islamisation'** of Europe is a theme which repeatedly appears, mainly in religious publications. In a *Christian Today* article on the supposed invasion of Muslims, an African Bishop in Rome, Andrew Nkea Fuanya speaks of Christianity crumbling under an **'Islamic Europe'**.¹⁵⁶ This gives credence to the myth of **'Eurabia'**; a conspiracy theory whose adherents claim, among other things, that Europe is heading towards **'a total change... which will be more and more Islamicised and will become a political satellite of the Arab and Muslim world.'**¹⁵⁷

154 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/13/sudan-bans-fgm-amid-host-liberals-reforms/>

155 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-6733883/Swiss-court-upholds-sentence-genital-mutilation-case.html>

156 <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/the-european-church-is-sleeping-while-islam-is-creeping-in-says-african-bishop/130784.htm>

157 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/the-myth-of-eurabia-how-a-far-right-conspiracy-theory-went-mainstream>



This narrative of a clandestine plot to take over Europe adds to the suspicion around British Muslim citizens and their loyalties toward Britain. Questioning this loyalty (as well as that of other migrants) is not new. In 1990, Conservative MP Norman Tebbit most famously claimed that South Asians and Caribbean's failed the cricket test (a euphemism for British loyalty) by not supporting England in international cricket matches. Tebbit told the British politician, writer and journalist, Woodrow Wyatt that he didn't think certain immigrants would assimilate 'because some of them insist on sticking to their own culture, like the Muslims in Bradford and so forth, and they are extremely dangerous.'¹⁵⁸

More recently, Ed Husain brought up this faith first argument in an article which was paying tribute to the late Conservative philosopher Roger Scruton. Ed Husain claims that Scruton was justified in asking 'tough questions' such as 'can Muslims learn to put country before faith community?'¹⁵⁹

When reporting or commenting on Islam, publications often portray it as a distinct entity set apart from other religions and Muslims are portrayed as a breed apart from other believers, particularly in their relationship with modern liberal democracies and culture.

Trevor Phillips, the former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, has previously claimed the idea that Muslims in Britain are fundamentally different from Westerners, and politicians should accept that they will never fit in with mainstream British society.¹⁶⁰ This alleged difference of Muslims and Islam extends into the reporting of the 2020 COVID pandemic where Trevor Philips claimed that areas with large Muslim communities were less affected by COVID than expected given that poverty and economic deprivation was thought to be among the main factors of determining where the virus was most prevalent.¹⁶¹ Philips uses the example of the much maligned area of Tower Hamlets in East London as a case study of sorts where more than a third of the population is Muslim yet appeared cocooned from the widespread effects of the virus. Puru Miah, a Labour Councillor from the area, counteracted this reasoning is 'through the use of tropes, emphasising the otherness of the Muslim community: the ritual practice of washing five times a day for prayers; economic inactivity; and keeping women at home.'¹⁶²

The Economist aimed to represent how different Muslims beliefs and the values of liberal democracy were via the tropes that 'a Muslim family in the West forces their daughter to marry someone she doesn't want to or doesn't let her work.'¹⁶³

Muslims and Free Speech

Muslims are often accused by journalists, politicians and the far right of curtailing free speech especially when it comes to calling out Islamophobia. Muslims and their beliefs are often misrepresented, singled out as being intolerant and wholly against free speech. The left is often accused of colluding with Muslims.

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/my-sons-living-hell-j72t7fppc>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-need-to-solve-ethnic-puzzle-of-covid-19-gdxw93q0j>

¹⁶² <https://www.chartist.org.uk/the-muslims-are-immune/>

¹⁶³ <https://www.economist.com/open-future/2018/09/30/can-liberal-democracies-survive-identity-politics>

¹⁵⁸ Woodrow Wyatt, *The Journals of Woodrow Wyatt*. Volume Two (Pan, 2000), pp. 530.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/roger-scruton-is-a-friend-not-a-foe-of-islam>

According to a claim made in Christian Today by Irene Lancaster **'Fear of offending Muslims has reached such heights in this country (UK) that self-censorship is becoming the norm.'**¹⁶⁴ On the contrary, the evidence in this report demonstrates not just a widespread willingness to criticise Muslims and their beliefs, but also outright hostility to the point where said beliefs are wholly misrepresented. Ironically, claims of Muslims curtailing free speech or Islam being beyond criticism are made most frequently in right leaning publications which are the most critical of Muslims and/or Islam.

In a Guardian article headlined: **'Can't talk about Muslims? It seems we do little else in the UK'**, the writer and columnist, Nesrine Malik says **'we're told criticism of the religion is censored – but in reality it's the right, not the left, that tries to gag any debate.'**¹⁶⁵ Malik was commenting following a week's coverage of three major stories in 2017 about Muslims and migrants which have since become notorious for being factually incorrect and/or misleading: The Times **'Christian child forced into Muslim foster care'** by Andrew Norfolk¹⁶⁶, his interview for The Times with Labour MP Jane Champion¹⁶⁷ following a comment piece she wrote in The Sun claiming Britain has a problem with Pakistani men raping and exploiting white girls,¹⁶⁸ and The Sunday Times piece by Sian Griffiths about young girls wearing hijabs as part of their school uniform.¹⁶⁹

Muslims receiving special treatment

The allegation that a special privilege is afforded to Muslims and Islam (particularly at the expense of Christianity) is a recurring theme, and among the most favoured tropes of columnists, particularly those from right and religious leaning publications. Columnists for

The Spectator are particularly guilty of this. Rod Liddle, who has a regular column in the magazine, often repeats far right tropes about Muslims and/or Islam and has in the past used racist language, referring to Muslims as **'savages'**¹⁷⁰ with **'stunted IQ's'**¹⁷¹, and refers to **'moderate Islam'** as **'repulsive'**.¹⁷²

In an article about dyslexia headlined: **'Is there anything that can't be put down to a 'condition''**, Liddle first gives us his take on what he calls the **'dyslexia industry'**, but then weaves in Muslims and Islam and dedicates the rest of the piece effectively arguing that the religion and its followers receive special privileges and are not open to criticism – which is astonishing given that Liddle spends much of his time doing just that. He quotes a fellow journalist, Brendan O'Neil, who says that Islamophobia is **'holding us all to account should we ever venture to say anything which might be construed as critical.'** Liddle goes on to claim that **'Hideous atrocities carried out by right-wing extremists are quickly identified as such and the ideology behind the atrocities rightly eviscerated. When atrocities are carried out by Islamic terrorists the ideology is never mentioned and instead it is usually assumed that the perpetrators are suffering from a kind of "condition" which made them do the stuff they did.'**¹⁷³

On the contrary, CfMM's own research shows the opposite to be true. An analysis of **'How the British Media Reports Terrorism'** shows that the media is consistently inconsistent in how it reports terrorism depending on who the perpetrator is.¹⁷⁴ Between 2015 to 2019, over half (51%) of individual online news pieces in 31 of the mainstream British news websites, magazines and newswires which mention the term terror, terrorism, or terrorist(s) one or more times, also mention Muslim(s) and/or Islam, Islamic, Islamism or Islamist in the same piece. The equivalent total for terrorist attacks carried out by far-right, white supremacist, right-wing

164 <https://www.christiantoday.com/article/fear-and-free-speech-why-defining-islamophobia-could-do-more-harm-than-good/132452.htm>

165 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/05/muslims-criticism-religion-right-left-gag-debate>

166 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/christian-child-forced-into-muslim-foster-care-by-tower-hamlets-council-3gcp6l8cs>

167 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sarah-champion-mp-i-d-rather-be-called-a-racist-than-turn-a-blind-eye-to-child-abuse-96s0fbm22>

168 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4218648/british-pakistani-men-raping-exploiting-white-girls/>

169 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/5-year-olds-wear-hijab-as-school-uniform-nkzcgfhd8>

170 R. Liddle (2009), 'Somali Savage Update', (The Spectator) available online at: <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2009/11/somali-savages-update/>

171 R. Liddle (2010), 'I refuse to buy meat from supermarkets until they ban halal slaughter' (The Spectator) available online at: <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2010/10/i-refuse-to-buy-meat-from-supermarkets-until-they-ban-halal-slaughter/>

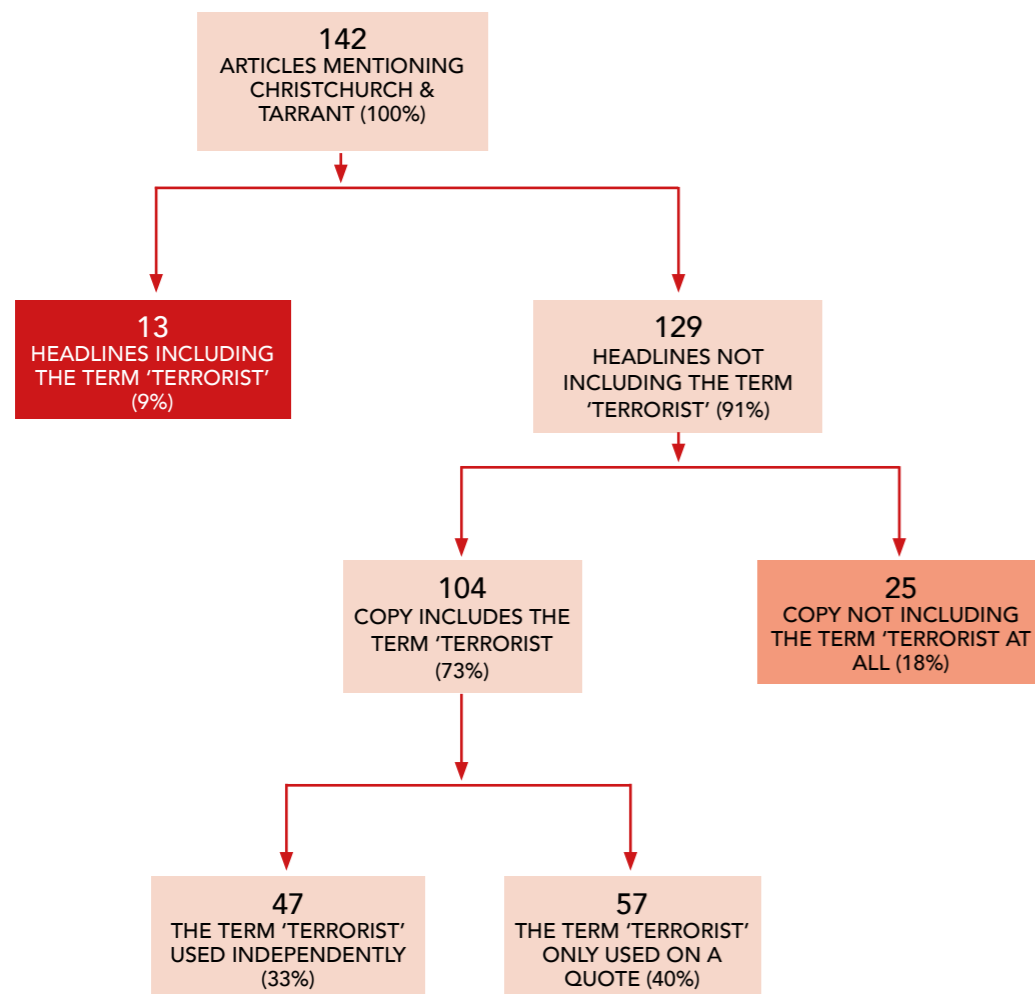
172 R. Liddle (2010), 'Against Manicheism', (The Spectator) available online at: <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2010/03/against-manicheism/>

173 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/is-there-anything-that-can-t-be-put-down-to-a-condition->

174 <https://cfmm.org.uk/resources/publication/cfmm-special-report-how-british-media-reports-terrorism/>

and neo-Nazi terrorist(s) is only six per cent, showing a reluctance on the part of the media to label attacks by non-Muslims as terrorist attacks. Online news coverage of terrorism in 2019 still referred to so-called 'Islamist' terror over three times more frequently in online news articles. During the sentencing of the Christchurch terrorist in August 2020, CfMM found that despite being charged with terrorism, the majority (91%) of the coverage failed to call Brenton Tarrant a terrorist in the headlines or acknowledge his ideology. Eighteen per cent didn't mention it anywhere in the body of the article either.

Graphic 12 Analysis of articles about the sentencing of the Christchurch terrorist



Headlines of articles about the sentencing of the Christchurch terrorist use the term "terrorist" less than 10% of the time

Term used in headline	Frequency
Mosque Gunman	56
Shooter or Mosque Shooter	29
Terrorist	13
Killer or Mosque Killer	12
Tarrant or Brenton Tarrant	8
Terror	4
Mosque Monster	1
Mosque Murderer	1
Extremist	1
No mention of perpetrator in headline	17
Total	142

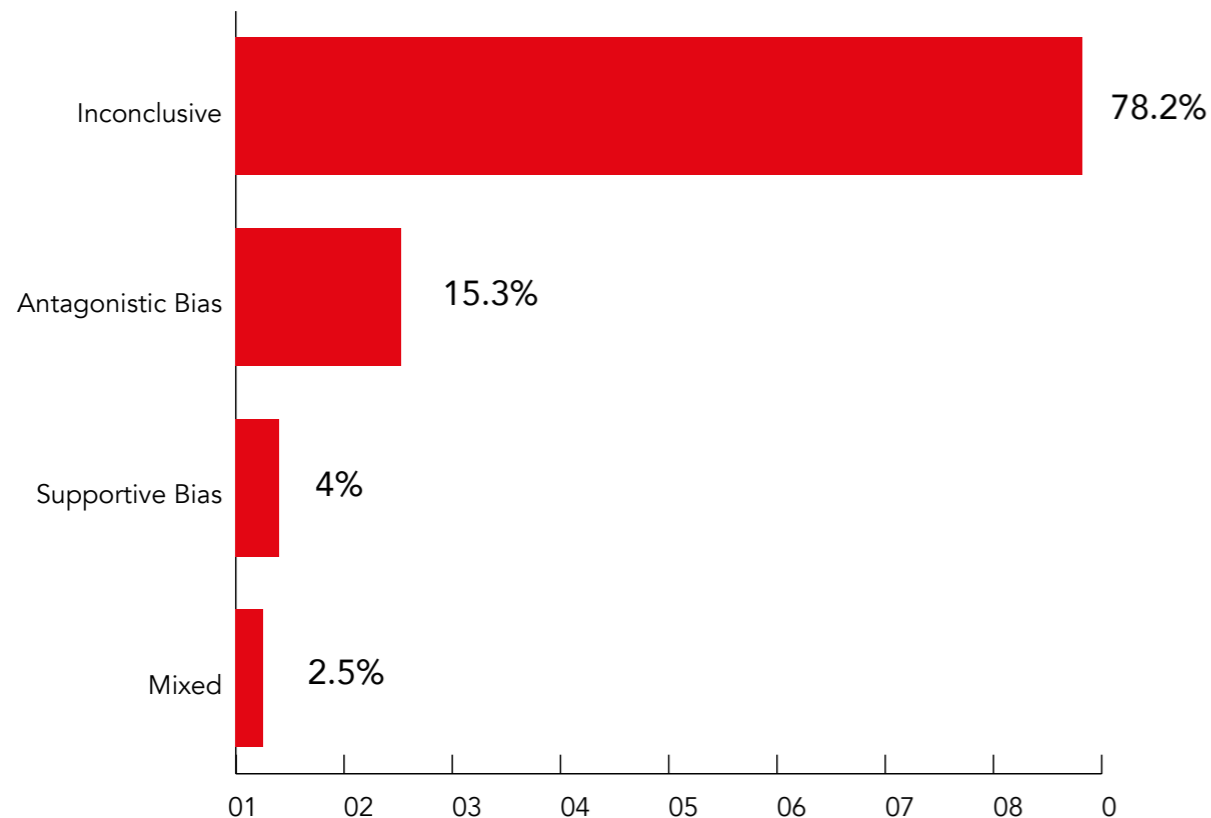
Headlines analysed as of 12pm, 27 August 2020, across 31 British media outlets



The theme of Islam and its followers getting special treatment, particularly at the expense of Christianity, can also be seen in an article by Trevor Kavanagh for The Sun. In it he accuses the BBC as having a left wing agenda and says 'The BBC beats the drum for human rights, one of the features of which is, Islam is great! Christianity is a joke.'¹⁷⁵ This blanket statement is made with no evidence about when and where the BBC has supported the notion that 'Islam is great'. On the contrary, our findings during the period under analysis show almost four times more BBC online articles being antagonistic towards Muslims and/or Islam than supportive.

175 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/opinion/8088403/bbcs-new-saggy-boobs-campaign-radio-4-lefties/>

Graphic 11 BBC Text Bias Ratings



The argument that Muslims enjoy special privileges extends to what has been described as political correctness on the part of those in authority, effectively allowing Muslims to play by different rules. This has been illustrated mainly via the issue of child abuse, packaged as the distinct and specialised crime of **'grooming gangs'** (which does not exist in law) and applied by the British media in the main to one group of people who are referred to in multiple ways; **'Muslim'**, **'Pakistani Muslim'** or **'Asian.'**

The idea that **'grooming gangs'** have benefited from political correctness has been described by researchers as a **'misapprehension.'**¹⁷⁶ The work of Ella Cockbain and Waqas Tufail has dispelled myths and called into question the shoddy science underpinning the **'grooming gangs'** narrative which is favoured by the media. The argument made by some media commentators and news reports is the claim that Muslims are given some special privileges from law enforcement agencies when they commit crimes.

176 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0306396819895727#bibr26-0306396819895727>

The authors of the report, which challenges the harms of the **'Muslim grooming gangs'** narrative, write how **'decrying political correctness (usually in the context of racialised minorities) is common among right-wing and far-right commentators but detracts from broader systemic issues that require attention.'**¹⁷⁷

- Melanie McDonagh writing in *The Spectator* states that the **'pimping out'** of an autistic girl was **'not dealt with as a criminal offence because so many of the takers here appear to have been Muslim,'**¹⁷⁸ a claim she repeated in the *Mail on Sunday* where she writes that the Huddersfield grooming gang incidents **'were more worried about Islamophobia accusations than protecting girls.'**¹⁷⁹
- The argument of special privileges rooted in **'political correctness'** was found in news reports in the *Sun Online* and *Mail Online* alleging how Sexual exploitation of British Sikh girls by Muslim men had also been **'ignored'** by police.¹⁸⁰ These allegations were made in a report by Sikh Youth UK, an organisation that has propagated anti-Muslim hatred and collaborated with **'Tommy Robinson'** (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon). Cockbain and Tufail describe the report as **'shoddy'**, saying:

'Effectively a diatribe against Pakistani Muslims, this empirically and analytically weak publication makes inflammatory yet poorly substantiated claims of a 'grave, longstanding and targeted threat of sexual abuse and exploitation' and the attendant 'failures of law enforcement agencies and local authorities.'¹⁸¹

177 Ibid

178 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/how-was-the-pimping-out-of-an-autistic-girl-allowed-to-happen->

179 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6299143/MELANIE-McDONAGH-Making-gender-identity-issue-creates-confusion-self-doubt-worry.html>

180 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7825480/sexual-exploitation-sikh-girls-ignored-police/> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6428197/Sexual-exploitation-British-Sikh-girls-grooming-gangs-ignored-claims-report.html>

181 Cockbain E, Tufail W. Failing victims, fuelling hate: challenging the harms of the **'Muslim grooming gangs'** narrative. *Race & Class*. 2020;61(3):3-32. doi:10.1177/0306396819895727

Recommendations

1

Train journalists and editors to ensure they are aware of racist tropes and conspiracy theories about Muslims

2

Avoid framing articles in line with such tropes or conspiracy theories, and ensure sufficient context is provided so as not to mislead the reader.

3

Stop framing FGM as a Muslim practice.

Imagery &
Headlines

Imagery and headlines are two of the most important components of an article when it comes to attracting the readers' attention and conveying a message quickly and succinctly. Unfortunately, headlines cannot always incorporate the entire story and often have to be abridged. But, they shape a story and often change the way the reader thinks¹⁸² and therefore may mislead the reader when read in isolation.

Although the Editors' Code requires any claim in the headline to be supported by the text of the article, often newspapers sell stories through sensationalist and sometimes misleading or inaccurate headlines and/or imagery. They are often seen in passing on websites, in supermarkets, or on forecourts by people who will not go on to read the whole article, but who may remember the headline or image. Social media also plays an increasingly important role in the consumption of news.¹⁸³ Uncontextualized and misleading headlines are often shared on social media without the rest of the article to give the background or context to the story.

In our monitoring and analysis we ask the following questions when assessing articles.

- *Does the imagery/and or headline used depict Muslims and/or Islam in an unfair/incorrect manner in accordance with the story being portrayed or topic being discussed?*
- *Can the imagery within an article be considered biased from the point of view of how it represented Muslims and/or Islam when assessed individually without taking into consideration any other element of the story.*

While only two per cent of headlines and images were unfair or incorrect, their impact is significant especially if they are prominent, misleading or playing into a pre-existing narrative. The majority of these were in reference to international stories.

Table 19 Number of unfair or incorrect images and/or headlines

Image and/or Headline	Count	Percentage
No	46,646	98
Yes	1,098	2
Inconclusive	74	0

¹⁸² [How Headlines Change the Way We Think | The New Yorker](#)

¹⁸³ [Social media 'outstrips TV' as news source for young people - BBC News](#)

Images

The use of an image to sell or promote a story is well established in newsrooms and other sectors, such as advertising, which sell products. The more dramatic the image, the more space it is generally afforded on a page or as the lead picture on a website. Images can be justified, no matter how gruesome or dramatic, as long as they relay the actuality of a particular event or situation.

Many news stories, opinion pieces, features and other types of articles don't always have an image captured in real time of a single event. In the absence of this, often stories are illustrated by more generic images of the subject or location being covered. The use of generic images in particular to illustrate sensitive and evocative subjects has been described as a 'misleading practice that contributes to the public/audience mistrust of the media.'¹⁸⁴

It can also serve to highlight the prejudices of a particular publication towards a subject. In the case of Muslims and/or Islam, both of these observations have some truth to them. Whilst the use of images relevant to the story often portray Muslim characters or symbols in an unflattering light, the use of generic images and particularly the fully veiled Muslim woman to illustrate negative stories is a troubling feature.

Images were assessed individually without taking into consideration any other element of the story. When judged against whether imagery within an article could be considered biased from the point of view of how it represented Muslims and/or Islam just under two per cent of all images were considered to be 'biased.'

Table 20 Proportion of Biased imagery

Image	Count	Percentage
Not Biased	40,628	84.96
Biased	918	1.92
Inconclusive	62,72	13.12

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2013/use-of-generic-photos-to-illustrate-news-stories-can-be-dangerous/>

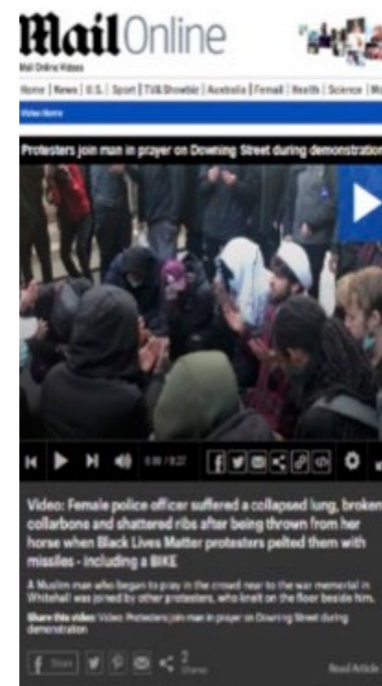
Seventy one per cent of biased images were found in articles concerning international events.

Table 21 Percentage of images in UK or world coverage

	Biased Images	Percentage
UK	268	29
World	650	71
Total	918	

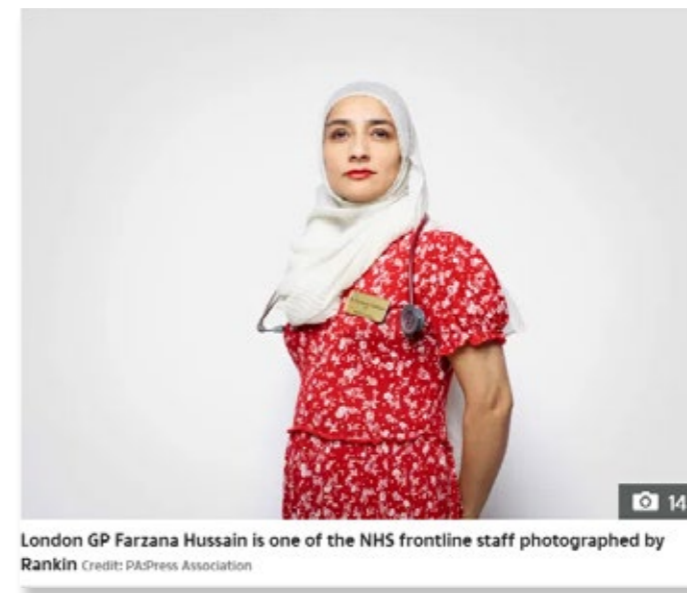
Images can humanise people or groups who are routinely othered or ostracised. With the majority of stories on Muslims showing negative aspects and behaviours (59.17%) as well as falling under the themes of 'Terrorism/Extremism' and conflict, images can likewise be negative, misleading, offensive or unflattering.

Whilst most images can be justified within a story, there are others which are less clear in their link to the story, especially when given undue prominence. A story in the Mail Online about a police officer being seriously injured when she was thrown from her horse during a Black Lives Matter protest is a good example. The article is accompanied by an image and video of a Muslim man sitting on the floor praying with other men. The image bears no relevance to the story being reported, yet it is the only image which accompanies the story somehow linking the protest and the injured police officer to these men.



'Supportive' Imagery

Whilst many images of Muslims pander to stereotypes, there have been examples of Muslims featured in online news content or in campaigns as ordinary everyday people, and sometimes as extraordinary people, particularly during the coronavirus epidemic. The image of London GP, Farzana Hussain from John Rankin Waddell's 'inspirational' hospital staff collection is an example of 'Supportive' imagery and shows how images can both inspire and elevate the perception of an individual and a collective in the public eye.¹⁸⁵



186



The Times Print Newspaper 29 June 2020

185 <https://twitter.com/afsarkodlipet/status/1280022619564019718>

186 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11977537/rankin-photographs-nhs-frontline-staff/>

Similarly, images captured in the aftermath of a disaster can also aid in elevating a worthy cause and highlighting positive work. The campaign by the then Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle to support women at the Hubb Community Kitchen in the Al Manaar Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre near the scene of the Grenfell fire in West London, is one such example.



Meghan Markle has made several visits to Al Manaar Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre (Image: GETTY)

187

Even in the aftermath of some of the most extreme events such as terror attacks where the perpetrator is a so-called Muslim, images, as well as the prominence they are given, can balance the narrative. An image of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab comforting those who were attacked on New Year's Eve at Manchester Victoria train station in 2018 is a good example.



Daily Mail Front Page, Jan 1 2019



Metro, pg.7, Jan 2 2019

Prominence

The prominence of an image is crucial in how Muslims are seen among the readership of a particular newspaper or news site. Whilst undue prominence featuring visible Muslim characters to illustrate stories focusing on negative aspects and behaviours can play to stereotypes, images featuring a visibly Muslim character front and centre for a positive reason do the opposite.

187 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/1020024/meghan-markle-grenfell-cookbook-royal-news-hubb-community-kitchen>

In a front-page story, The Sun advises the British public to wear a mask during the COVID pandemic. An image of a Muslim woman wearing a mask and representing a responsible citizen is positive.



The Sun, front page, 23 Apr 2020

Prominence of Muslim characters clapping for the NHS alongside their work colleagues on the front page of The Daily Telegraph allows Muslims to be represented as part of mainstream Britain and national campaigns.



The Daily Telegraph, front page, 6 July 2020

Another way in which newspapers can feature supportive images is through campaigns which give everyday members of the public a chance to be featured as role models, or in this example in The Sun as 'heroes.' Mum of two, Asma Shuweikh was featured in The Sun after she confronted a man on the London underground as he hurled anti-Semitic abuse at a Jewish father and son. This story and image also plays against the generalisation, often found in media content, that Muslims are inherently anti-Semitic.



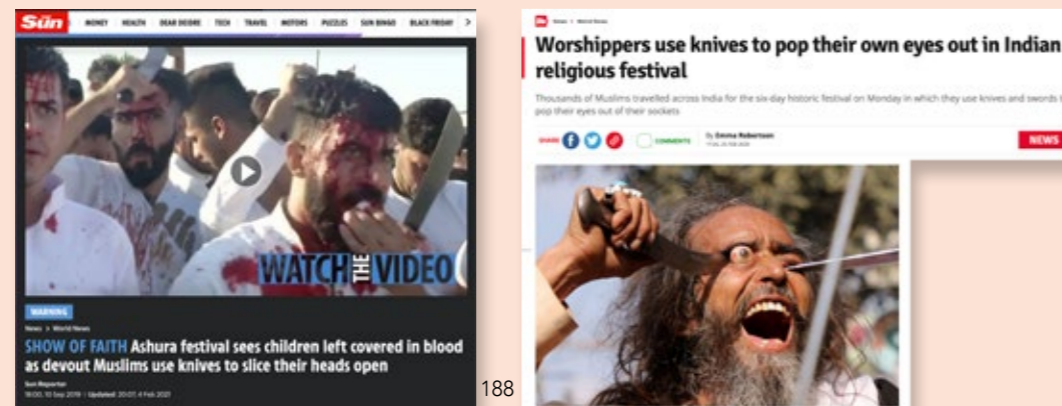
The Sun, pg.36, Nov 30 2019



'Biased' imagery

Over-dramatisation of religious acts of sacrifice

Some of these images centred around significant major Muslim religious occasions such as Ashura (the tenth day of the first month in the Muslim calendar) and Eid ul Adha (the Muslim holiday marking the culmination of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca). Despite the many ways in which Muslims celebrate and commemorate Ashura, much of the coverage focused on some of the more marginal, eccentric and extreme acts of individual or collective worships. Images of knives, swords or blood played centre stage. Whilst it could be argued that these images are dramatic and therefore newsworthy, they are not representative and therefore sensational and misleading – used to provoke a reaction from the reader.



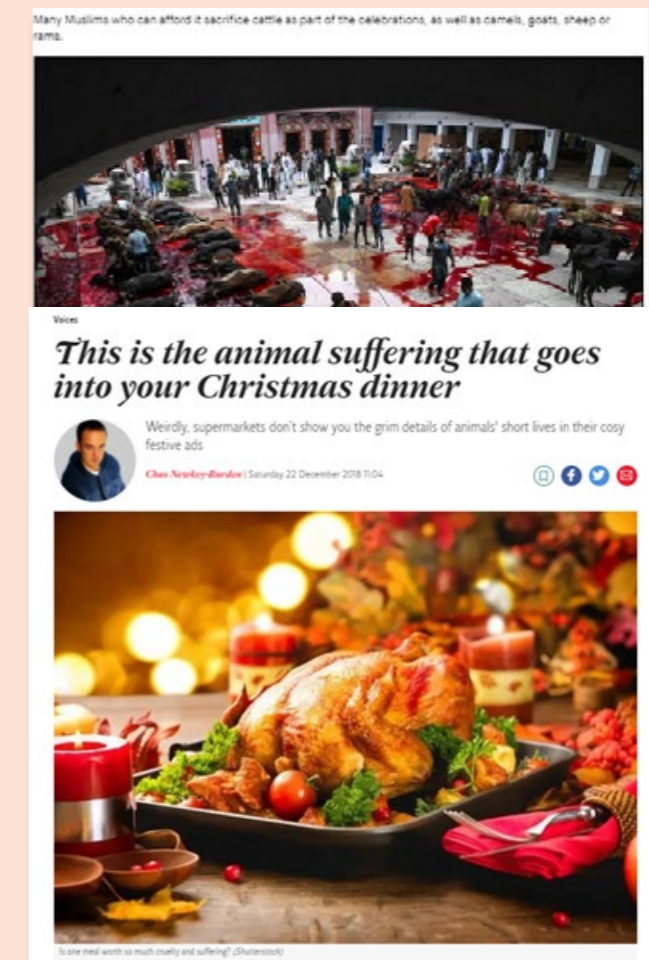
189

This is also true in the coverage of Eid ul Adha, particularly the act of slaughtering sheep and cattle normally carried out by trained people in abattoirs. It commemorates the symbolic sacrifice of a sheep by Abraham as an act of obedience to God. It is also a collective obligation for Muslims to distribute the sacrificial meat to family, neighbours and the poor. Yet, this aspect of Eid ul Adha is either absent from the coverage or is overshadowed by imagery of dead animals and blood-soaked floors. Even though tens of millions

188 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9898973/ashura-festival-blood-devout-muslims-knives-heads/>

189 <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/weird-news/worshippers-use-knives-pop-eyes-21575158?>

of turkeys are slaughtered for Christmas or Thanksgiving, little or no images of the slaughter, let alone images of dead turkeys or blood are found on these occasions.¹⁹⁰ Again, the most reasonable interpretation of why such graphic images are routinely featured when it comes to Muslims and Islam is to link them to the trope of both the religion and its followers being inherently violent and by extension cruel to animals.



192

Halal meat is often a focus of images to illustrate a practice considered the antithesis of the more 'humane' secular slaughter of animals, known as stunning, which includes firing a metal bolt into the animal's brain or using tongs to electrocute the animal's

190 <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-food/factory-farming/turkeys/#:~:text=More%20than%2046%20million%20of,22%20million%20die%20at%20Christmas.> More than 46 million of them are killed each year at Thanksgiving alone, and more than 22 million die at Christmas.

191 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8583423/Muslims-sacrifice-animals-celebrate-Eid-al-Adha-scaled-festivities.html>

192 <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/christmas-dinner-turkey-chicken-geese-dairy-vegan-animal-cruelty-a8694211.html>

brain, heart, or gassing them before the slaughter. Headlines such as the one found in The Economist in an article on animal slaughter, religion and Brexit, uses the harsher sounding verb 'butchering beasts' to refer to religious slaughter whilst complimenting it with a shop front advertising Halal meat. Even though the issue being discussed relates to Muslims and Jews alike, only images relating to Muslims are used as a way to single them out as the problem.¹⁹³

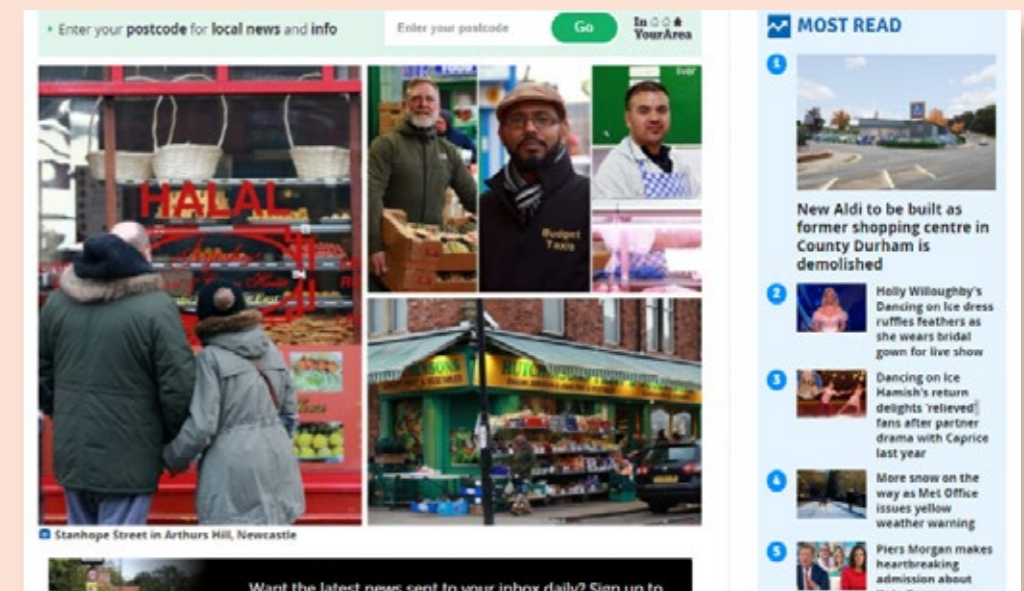


The use of the term halal to evoke negativity is not only found in the national press but also in local and regional papers. The Newcastle Chronicle website places an image of a shop front window with a halal sign on it in an article which about a so-called 'problem' street in which many white residents speak of it having become run down and crime ridden.¹⁹⁵ Interestingly, other residents are proud of street and speak of its diversity and vibrancy. Responding to the article on social media, one reader, Chris Jackson sums up the problem with the imagery well. He calls the article blatantly racist and says: 'The chronicle is trying to do it subtly as ever, so the morons will see the word 'Halal' and blame the immigrants.'

¹⁹³ <https://www.economist.com/erasmus/2018/11/26/why-religious-rules-on-butchering-beasts-make-many-people-see-red>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.economist.com/erasmus/2018/11/26/why-religious-rules-on-butchering-beasts-make-many-people-see-red>

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/stanhope-street-arthurs-hill-newcastle-17293557>



196



Terrorism And Extreme Behaviour

Irrelevant Images

The link between Muslims and terrorism is a major focus of news stories, and despite the growing number of white supremacist or neo-Nazi terrorists, images are still predominantly made up of Muslim actors. In one article about a suspected neo-Nazi terrorist 'Scots man' who proclaimed 'all Muslims must die', The Sun's copy had an unrelated video of Salman Abedi the Manchester Arena terrorist and his brother.¹⁹⁷



198



This is not a unique problem in reporting on Muslims and/or Islam. Other minorities are also subject to undue prominence in images. One recent example of this was a story in The Times showing that 93.6% of cocaine users in Europe were white, yet the image was of a group of black men.



199

This trend of linking Muslim religious belief and practice with extreme behaviour or practices can also be found in the following two images which appeared in The Times. The first story is about terrorist prisoners but the image used is that of a man praying linking a normative ritual practiced by millions of Muslims at least five times a day globally to terrorism. The other article is about the head of a school (with mainly Muslim pupils) criticising the chief of OFSTED for claiming that pupils face the threat of 'indoctrination' by extremists. Yet, the image chosen is of someone studying religious texts, once again trying to link Islam to extremism. Both images were changed after complaints from CfMM. However, they highlight the problem of using stock images of Muslim practices or symbols to illustrate stories on terrorism or extremism.

197 <https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/6435374/scots-man-muslims-die-claim-accused-terror-acts/>

198 <https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/6435374/scots-man-muslims-die-claim-accused-terror-acts/>

199 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/britain-is-cocaine-capital-of-europe-s0k5zcf5d>

Terrorists fool prison staff into believing they have changed



Terrorist prisoners are progressing to de-radicalise during rehabilitation programmes and the vulnerability makes them more of a risk when they are released, a report says.

The use of "false compliance" seems to have become more widespread, especially among jihadist prisoners, according to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, at King's College London.

Its report says that some extremists see prison as a test of their commitment to the cause and look to give their "new" religious outlook or opposing the requirements of the authorities. "This can be a major issue in relation to risk assessment and release arrangements," the report says.

200

Head hits back at Ofsted chief over extremism claims



Head of the Islamic Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, at King's College London, has hit back at Ofsted chief over extremism claims.

201

Images feeding the angry Muslims' narrative

Muslim Protestors are another critical ingredient for picture desks who routinely publish the most extreme elements of a protest, particularly in relation to protestors across Muslim majority countries. Although justified in their usage, the images often present one moment of an event or protest, yet feed into the stereotype of angry, vengeful, violent and uncivilised Muslims.



203



202

This trend can be seen in the more recent protests over the French governments backing and promotion of blasphemous caricatures of the Prophet in the aftermath of the murder of the teacher Samuel Paty. Sometimes when several images are used for the same story,

200 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/terrorists-fool-prison-staff-into-believing-they-have-changed-rb6tt0s66>
 201 <https://cfmm.org.uk/corrections/the-times-swaps-image-of-religious-texts/>
 202 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7939049/Palestinians-demonstrate-against-Donald-Trump-s-Middle-East-peace-deal.html>
 203 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1040895/Iran-news-Donald-Trump-sanctions-US-latest-protests-tehran-oil>

as in the case of the Daily Mail Online, images of terrorist leaders are shown along-side street protestors, effectively placing ordinary Muslims in the same camp as terrorists.

#noapology: Muslims stage angry protests over Charlie Hebdo's Mohammed cartoon as Boko Haram terror leader hails Paris massacre

By Simon Tomlinson for MailOnline
 17:35 14 Jan 2015, updated 16:20 15 Jan 2015



204



1 day ago



205

Muslims hold anti-Macron rallies worldwide

206

204 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2910126/Muslims-stage-angry-protests-Charlie-Hebdo-s-Mohammed-cartoon-Boko-Haram-terror-leader-hails-Paris-massacre.html>
 205 <https://apnews.com/article/pakistan-dubai-boycotts-united-arab-emirates-emmanuel-macron-d99c9ef807297c31d9dff5e81b4c1d3d>
 206 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54751920>



Images of Muslims in Covid-19 Stories

Muslim women as the focus

The Muslim woman has been the focus of images in many stories regarding specific events or more general issues around Covid 19. Not all images can be said to be offensive or biased given that Muslim women are a visible part of the UK population. However, when they appear and become the focus of negative stories, then they become problematic – a trend we found during the pandemic.



The UK faces a testing future
telegraph.co.uk

207

Often, Muslim women are singled out or focused on in stories that have nothing to do with her identity. One such example can be found in The Sun. In an almost full-page image portraying hundreds of people in airport cues, there is a circled, zoomed in close up of a woman in traditional Muslim dress raising the question why such

207 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/09/23/key-moments-shaped-first-six-months-coronavirus-pandemic/>

prominence is to a Muslim woman in this feature.



The Sun Newspaper, pg.5, May 25 2021

Another example can be found in an article in the Mail Online about panic buying. Reporting on 'chaotic' scenes outside a supermarket, the publication's image has a Muslim woman in a hijab as its focal point.²⁰⁸

208 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8134241/stophoarding-Thousands-furious-Britons-attack-selfish-panic-buyers-emptying-shelves.html>



209

On occasions, the effect of the pandemic on different parts of the country as well as rising cases leading to lockdown also used images of Muslim women. While Muslim women may be from the town in question, they certainly do not represent the majority of the demographic, and yet, they are still used to illustrate the problem, subliminally linking the threat of the virus to Muslims.



210

209 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8134241/stophoarding-Thousands-furious-Britons-attack-selfish-panic-buyers-emptying-shelves.html>

210 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-53859865>

This example from The Guardian print edition hints where the newspaper feels the problem lies in Blackburn, Lancashire. The image shows a white woman in the foreground wearing a mask, with a Muslim woman in the background without a mask. The caption reads: 'A mixed response to facemask advice among shoppers in Blackburn.' The clear implication here being that there are different categories of citizens, those who follow the rules, like the white woman, and those who don't.

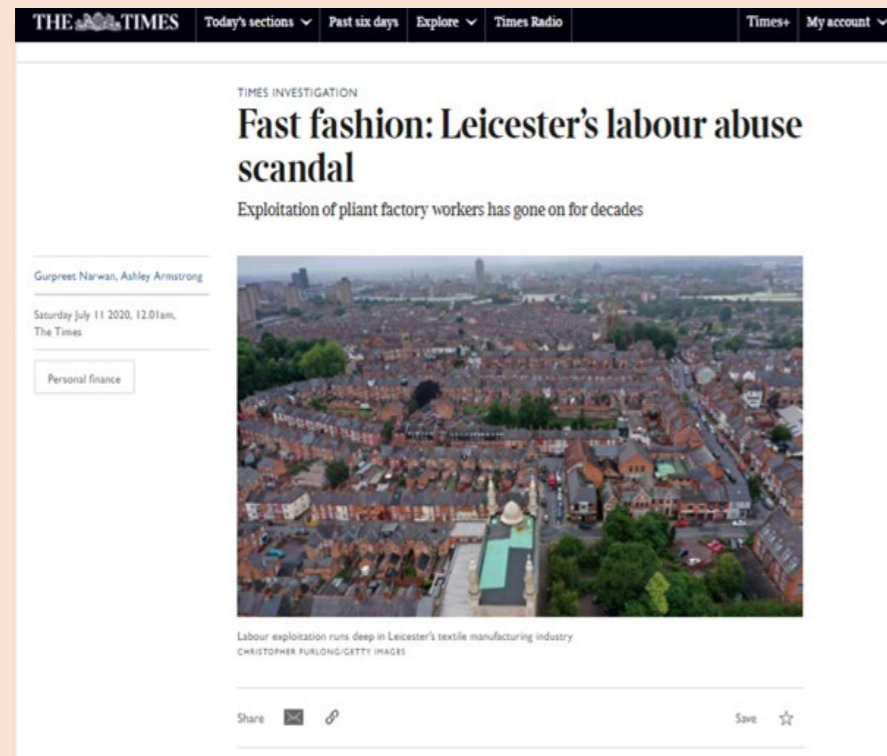


The Guardian

Muslim beliefs and symbols

In a story about sweat shops in Leicester at the height of the pandemic, despite the article mentioning the workforce being drawn from people who speak English, Urdu, Hindi and Slavic languages, and despite there being many landmarks in Leicester, the most prominent building in the photograph is that of a mosque. In a similar vein, an ITV story on high COVID rates in Blackburn has an image which places the mosque's dome and minaret centre stage. Such images are legitimate in that they show the location of the city in question but there are more iconic shots of Leicester

and Blackburn that could have been used that do not hone in on one particular religion or a minority population within a broader community. The negative slant of the stories and the subjects they address makes the use of such imagery even more problematic.



211



212

211 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fast-fashion-leicester-s-labour-abuse-scandal-lhrd7xfz>

212 <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2020-07-10/blackburn-council-warn-of-leicester-style-lockdown-as-infection-rate-rises>

Irrelevant images

This disconnect between the story, as advertised in the headline, and the image that accompanies it can be found in a lot of the coverage of Covid 19. The usage of visibly Muslim individuals or religious symbols, when irrelevant to the story, when irrelevant often creates a subconscious link between the virus and Muslims.

The Guardian homepage reports on New Zealand's postponed elections and Italian nightclub closures depicted by a Muslim woman being subjected to a temperature test from what looks like a South Asian location. However, it should be acknowledged that the disconnect sometimes found between images and headlines, like in this case, has as much to do with breaking news where stories are constantly updated from various locations, with images published in the context of the overall Covid pandemic.



213

Yet, this can't be said to be the case for standalone news stories published online which have very focused headlines which contradict the image choice. In a story focusing on irresponsible people -namely 'partygoers' in Oldham - putting their fellow residents at risk, the image is of a woman in a hijab alongside a friend - an atypical example of the partygoers being discussed.

213 TheGuardian.com homepage, Aug 16 2020



214

Muslim Women

Burqa or Niqab threat to Western values

Estimates in several European countries found that Muslim women who wear the Burka and Niqab range between a minimum of 0.003% and a maximum of 0.01% of the Muslim population, quite an insignificant amount statistically.²¹⁵ Yet, the Burka clad woman is an image frequently used to depict Muslims and Islam mostly in a negative way, even in stories which have nothing to do with the garment or Muslim women. With a significant number of Western journalists associating the burka, niqab and hijab with oppression or then a threat to Western values, images of women wearing any one of these garments are often used to reinforce this perception.

In 2017, The Times newspaper published a false and what has been described as a **'grossly racist'** story of a **'Christian child forced into Muslim foster care'**.²¹⁶ A full expose of the series of articles written by award winning journalist Andrew Norfolk have been critiqued

214 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tighter-lockdown-feared-in-manchester-area-as-rule-breaches-rise-q7dxdwl6j>

215 <https://inews.co.uk/opinion/comment/what-is-the-burqa-and-how-many-muslim-women-actually-wear-it-184927>

216 <https://twitter.com/tomgara/status/903682484533170177>

in a report called **'Unmasked'** by Brian Cathcart and Paddy French.²¹⁷ In it, they conclude that: **'Norfolk's methods indicate that important facts were omitted or marginalised, untrustworthy or inadequate witnesses were relied on, quotations were taken out of context, expert testimony was ignored – and there were clearly shortcomings in verification.'**

Apart from the **'distorted'** coverage of the case itself which presented Muslims as posing a threat to Christians and society at large, The Metro and Mail Online also used a stock image of a family in Dubai which had been tampered with digitally to add a niqab to the featured woman's face.²¹⁸ Apart from this being totally unethical, the message being disseminated is clear - the niqabi woman is used to represent the conservative and undesirable **'strict Muslim'** who is denying the rights of the innocent Christian child.



219

Another image in The Times of a woman in niqab being used to literally dehumanise the Muslim woman and present her as the embodiment of a recessive and backward culture, appeared in a story about Neanderthals and how common genes that double the risk of severe Covid are a result of Neanderthal interbreeding. An image of a primate would have been more apt for this story. Instead, The Times chose an image of a woman in a niqab.

217 https://hackinginquiry.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Norfolk_Report_Unmasked.pdf

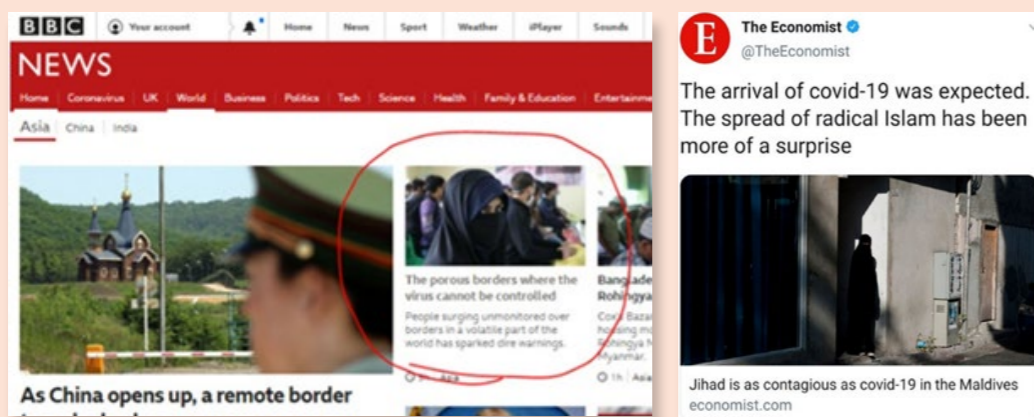
218 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/mail-online-metro_uk_59aabb63e4b0dfaafcf0b8b1

219 <https://evolvepolitics.com/daily-mail-use-photoshopped-picture-muslim-foster-carer-adding-fake-veil/>



220

Images that symbolise Muslim women in niqabs as a threat can be seen in The Economist article as well as the BBC report below where the women featured represent both an abstract threat (the Covid virus) as well embodying the physical threat of jihad.



BBC Homepage, Apr 09 2020

221

Women's Rights

Stories relating to the rights, or lack of rights, for Muslim women are often linked to Islam even when the issue being discussed goes beyond the religion or has nothing to do with it at all. The

220 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/neanderthal-interbreeding-raised-risk-of-severe-covid-p6k0wd5d5>

221 <https://twitter.com/miqdaad/status/1242363218728833025>

same goes for images and is clearly exemplified on stories around Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Despite it being a cultural practice amongst communities in different parts of the world and despite there being no basis for FGM in Islam, images of Muslim women are routinely used to try and link the practice to Islam as can be seen in the Daily Mail Online article below.



222

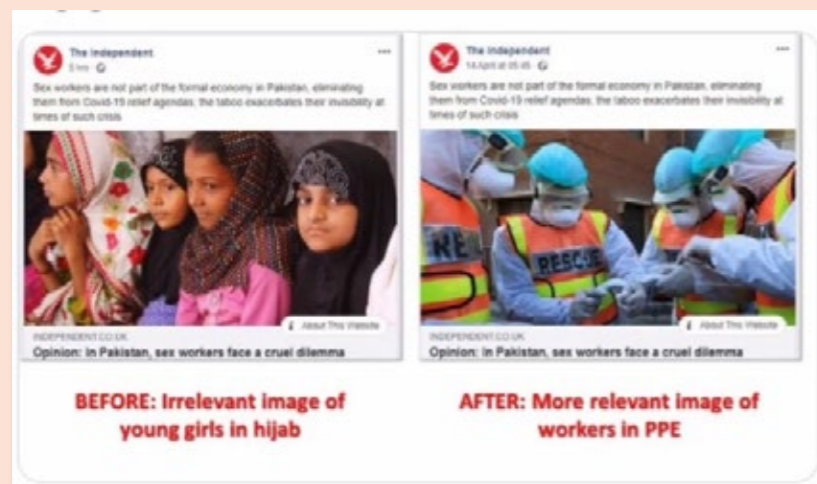
Similarly, victims of 'forced marriage' – again a cultural practice rather than a religious one - are illustrated through the veiled Muslim woman, as can be seen in an iNews article. This, despite marriage being consensual in Islam.



iNews, Page 15, 3 Jan 2019

222 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-8291193/Women-hail-victory-Sudan-moves-ban-genital-cutting.html>

The generic use of images from particular regions and countries to illustrate what are often legitimate stories can also be problematic. The Independent featured a generic image of juvenile Muslim girls in a story about sex workers in Pakistan. The image was not only irrelevant but totally inappropriate. Nevertheless, The Independent used the image to promote its article on social media. According to new Ofcom research²²³, 26% of social media users ‘don’t check the truth of articles they see on social media.’ Given this, the use of imagery of young girls in a story about sex workers is not only misleading but also harmful in perpetuating false narratives. Following a complaint by CfMM, the image was changed.



224

Captions

Captions can also play a role in perpetuating negative stereotypes, especially when those details are not relevant to the story being told. In an article about ‘slave monkeys’ being used in Southern Thailand to harvest coconuts for the ever growing global demand for coconut products, the caption reads: ‘A monkey on a leash climbs a coconut tree to collect coconuts for his owner in Thailand’s largely Muslim Narathiwat province.’ It is not clear what relevance the religion of the population has given that the article also talks about the palm oil industry and its impact on the environment. Both

223 <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/quarter-of-people-dont-check-truth-of-articles-they-see-on-social-media-ofcom-finds/>

224 <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1252624660019249155>

products are grown in different parts of the world, but no mention is made of any other religion. It can only be assumed that including this information is part of an attempt to link the treatment meted out to the monkeys with the religion or identity of the population – something which cannot be substantiated.



225

Images with captions quoting terrorists verbatim are also problematic. An example of this can be seen in an article about the kidnapping of boys by Boko Haram in Nigeria. The caption reads ‘what happened in Katsina was done to promote Islam’. Not only are the terrorists given the oxygen of publicity but newspapers give them more credence than the vast majority of Muslim scholars who say that the acts and claims of these terrorists have nothing to do with Islam and therefore are illegitimate.



226

225 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8503765/Macaques-snatched-mothers-chained-forced-harvest-1-000-coconuts-day.html>

226 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13517600/boko-haram-leader-abubakar-shekau-kidnap-children-sexual-slavery/>

Recommendations

1

Avoid using generic images of Muslims when they risk reinforcing stereotypes of Muslims and/or Islam

2

Ensure context is provided when illustrating dramatic incidents (e.g. this is the practice of a minority)

3

Avoid using an image of Muslim women in hijab/burqa to illustrate oppression of women, unless specifically relevant to the story

4

Avoid images of terrorist propaganda, especially in the immediate aftermath of a terror attack.

Headlines

A headline is the selling point of any story or article. It is what grabs the reader's attention and explains what the story is about. In the age of clicks and social media it may be the only part of the story that a consumer reads. The fact that 60 per cent of readers will share an article without reading beyond the headline arguably makes it more than a summary.²²⁷

Whilst newspapers and editors may write headlines to drum interest in their story or article, the use of headlines by nefarious groups or individuals to promote anti-Muslim agendas means headline writers have an extra responsibility. In the battle for clicks and revenue accuracy sometimes gives way to sensationalism and headlines are purposely written to entice and even shock readers. And, as this study shows, some news sites and news groups may well have a specific agenda against particular groups or beliefs and reflect this in their headline writing.

Muslims and Islam are strong selling points for headline writers, and sometimes greater prominence is given to identifiably Muslim and/or Islamic terms, practices, symbols, or characteristics within the headline. The editor of the Daily Express Gary Jones admitted as much when he castigated the past coverage of his newspaper as 'anti-immigrant' and 'Islamophobic.'²²⁸ The prominence given to Muslim identity in headlines is often unwarranted or what we have called 'irrelevant' to the actual story at hand. At other times the headline is deliberately misleading in its claims or structured to make ambiguous the identity of victims and perpetrators in a dispute.

Just over 2% of headlines were found to be either misleading or irrelevant. 'Misleading' headlines are those which misconstrue the content of the story being presented in the article's text. An 'Irrelevant' headline contains detail that is extraneous to the content of the story.

Table 22 'Misleading' or 'Irrelevant' headlines

Headline Accuracy	Count	Percentage
Not Misleading	46,699	98
Misleading	812	2
Irrelevant	307	0

Right-leaning tabloids and religious papers dominate the list of publications with the greatest number of 'Irrelevant' and 'Misleading' headlines. One publication (Daily Mail's Australian arm) was more problematic in its headlines than all others, but it was not alone in its misdemeanours. It had more than double the percentage (14%) of the next most offending publication (The Sun 6%).

Comparison across news outlets

Publications with the greatest number of 'Irrelevant' and 'Misleading' headlines by percentage: Only publications which published a minimum of 150 articles were considered.

²²⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/06/16/six-in-10-of-you-will-share-this-link-without-reading-it-according-to-a-new-and-depressing-study/>

²²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2019/apr/28/gary-jones-on-taking-over-daily-express-it-was-anti-immigrant-i-couldnt-sleep>

Table 23 Publications with greatest number of 'Irrelevant' & 'Misleading' headlines by percentage

Publication	The proportion of headlines that are 'Misleading' or 'Irrelevant'
Daily Mail Australia	14%
The Sun	6%
Mail on Sunday	5%
Jewish Chronicle	5%
Christain Today	5%
Mail Online	5%
Daily Star	4%
Channel 4	4%
Daily Express	4%
dailymail.com	3%
The Daily Mail	3%
The Telegraph	3%
The Jewish News	3%
Daily Mirror	3%
The Metro	2%
The Tablet	2%
The Times	2%
The Sunday Times	2%
The Spectator	2%
AfP	2%
Press Association	2%
Associated Press	2%
ITV	2%
BBC	1%
Reuters	1%
London Evening Standard	1%
Sky News	1%
The Independent	1%
NewStatesman	1%
INews	1%
Guardian	0%
Daily Mail	0%
Economist	0%



CASE STUDY

Daily Mail Australia

Lack of regulatory oversight

One possible reason for Daily Mail Australia's higher rating in this category is the lack of regulatory oversight in the UK. Even though articles from the Daily Mail Australia are often featured on the main page of the Mail Online website, it is not regulated by IPSO (the UK's Independent Press Standards Organisation). Furthermore, The Australian Press Council, which oversees and regulates the news site, receives between 1 and 10 per cent of its funding from Daily Mail Australia – putting the Press Council's independence into question.²²⁹

In the Australian Press Council's 2018-2019 annual report, one complaint upheld against Daily Mail Australia centred on its reporting of a story headlined as: **'EXCLUSIVE: Transgender sister, 31, of a football star, is charged with manslaughter over the death of her boyfriend, 51, after 'domestic violence' incident at a house in Sydney's south.'**²³⁰ The Council found that the publication breached General Principle 6 of its rules which says **'Avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.'**²³¹ The council further considered that, **'given the woman's transgender status was not relevant to the alleged criminality, identifying her as such in the first sentence of the article could lead some readers to conclude that this characteristic was either the cause of, or a factor in, the alleged crime and could contribute to substantial prejudice against transgender people. It was not relevant to the alleged criminal acts reported to identify the woman as being transgender.'**²³²

²²⁹ https://www.presscouncil.org.au/uploads/52321/ufiles/8215_AnnualReport_2018-2019-R16-LORES1.pdf, pp.25

²³⁰ *Ibid*; pp.47

²³¹ <https://www.presscouncil.org.au/statements-of-principles/>

²³² https://www.presscouncil.org.au/uploads/52321/ufiles/8215_AnnualReport_2018-2019-R16-LORES1.pdf pp.48

CfMM has found many similar examples concerning Muslims and/or Islam which have gone under the radar of the Council even when they mention irrelevant details, or the religious identity and practice of Muslims. We found 181 headlines where Daily Mail Australia mentioned the 'Muslim' identity of the subject/s being reported between Oct 2018-September 2019.²³³ Below are a number of examples:

Irrelevant mention of Muslim identity

A Muslim man who left his wife to die for five days appeals his sentence after an attack described as an 'Islamic honour killing' appeals his eight-year jail sentence.²³⁴ It is not clear why the defendant's religious identity is necessary or relevant. Furthermore, the news site relies on the victim's estranged mother (who admits to 'knowing nothing about the Muslim religion') to call and frame the crime as an 'Islamic honour killing' – even though there is nothing Islamic about the case. Subsequent articles reporting on the appeal being lost and the man having to serve his full sentence are also framed around this unproven and false claim of it being an 'Islamic honour killing'.^{235,236}

Omission of identity for non-Muslim perpetrator

When Muslims are the victims of an attack, the perpetrator's identity or the religious identity of the victims is less of a concern as can be seen in this example involving 14 people who were injured after a man smashed his van into a hijab store.

²³³ See Appendix J

²³⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6625353/Muslim-man-left-wife-die-five-days-appeal-against-prison-sentence.html>

²³⁵ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8080791/Muslim-husband-Mohamed-Naddaf-left-wife-25-slowly-die-loses-appeal.html>

²³⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7990093/Muslim-man-left-convert-wife-die-five-days-appeals-eight-year-jail-sentence.html>

SUV driver, 51, 'who smashed his van into the front of a crowded Hijab House store injuring 14' is charged

- A man, 51, has been charged after allegedly driving his car through Sydney shop
- Emergency services called to the Hijab House store in Greenacre on Thursday
- 14 people were injured with police saying there were 'grateful' no one was killed

By [BRETT LACKEY](#) and [DANIEL PIOTROWSKI](#) FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 16:09, 22 May 2020 | UPDATED: 22:26, 22 May 2020



A driver who allegedly smashed his car through the front of a Muslim fashion store injuring more than a dozen people has been charged.

A 51-year-old man was charged with seven offences on Friday after the crash in which a Mitsubishi SUV ploughed into the crowded Hijab House store in Greenacre, in Sydney's south-west.

Emergency services arrived at the scene just before 3.15pm on Thursday and found 14 inside the store had been injured.

237

In a more blatant example of omission, the attack on a heavily pregnant Muslim woman at a Sydney café doesn't mention her identity nor that of the anti-Muslim comments made by the violent Islamophobe.

Sickening moment nine-months pregnant woman, 31, is repeatedly punched in the head and stomped on by a stranger at a Sydney café - before a heroic citizen's arrest

- Pregnant woman, 31, has been allegedly assaulted by a stranger at a Sydney cafe
- The woman, who is 38 weeks pregnant, was with friends at the Parramatta eatery
- CCTV shows her being punched in the head and stomped on repeatedly by man
- A man, 43, will face court charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- Woman's family claims the alleged attack was 'racially motivated'
- Do you know more? Email: tips@dailymail.com

By [JOSH HANRAHAN](#) and [KELSEY WILKIE](#) FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 01:04, 21 November 2019 | UPDATED: 07:20, 21 November 2019

238

²³⁷ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8348157/Driver-smashed-van-Hijab-House-shop-injuring-14-charged.html>

²³⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7708847/Heavily-pregnant-woman-31-repeatedly-punched-head-brutal-attack-Sydney-caf.html>

Daily Mail Australia may argue that the reporting here is strictly factual, yet, when the publication routinely publishes headlines which emphasise the Muslim identity of perpetrators and their shouting of slogans, its omission of the Muslim identity of the victim is questionable. The following two examples illustrate how the identity of the perpetrator when Muslim is included in the headline.

'This is Australia, not a Muslim country': 'Middle Eastern' security who ordered bikini-clad sunbaker to cover up at her apartment complex's private pool have targeted MORE women - leaving them 'beyond mortified'

- Debate is raging over a swimwear ban at an upmarket Sydney apartment block
- Kristy Miller was ordered to leave the pool and put shorts on at Emerald Park
- She recalled the 'humiliating and intimidating' ordeal on a breakfast radio show
- More women have shared their experiences which they call 'beyond mortifying'
- One said it made her feel ashamed and another was so embarrassed she left

By ALICE MURPHY and KYLIE STEVENS FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 01:13, 8 October 2020 | UPDATED: 04:39, 8 October 2020

494 shares 30 comments

239

'We don't want to shoot you mate': How police begged a white Muslim convert to stand down but were forced to shoot him after he ran at them with a hatchet

- A Victorian court has been shown footage of the two men being shot by officers
- The brothers were Islamic extremists and wanted by counter terrorism police
- The pair goaded and threatened the police officers with a knife and hatchet

By AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS and LEVI PARSONS FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA

240

239 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-8813443/Outrage-bikini-ban-upmarket-Sydney-apartment-complex.html>

240 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8342865/We-dont-want-shoot-mate-Victorian-Police-tell-armed-Muslim-converts.html>

Turning Muslim victims into aggressors

The Daily Mail Australia's headline practice can also turn the Muslim victims of a story into aggressors. When a man 'stormed' a mosque and verbally abused Muslim worshippers and threatened them physically with a golf club, Daily Mail Australia chose to lead with the Muslim worshippers' response to the attack as opposed to the perpetrator's initial actions. As can be seen, the focus is shifted from the perpetrator to the Muslim. CfMM alerted the publication and the wording in the headline was altered. However, the Muslim remained as the subject focus of the headline.

MailOnline

Home News U.S. Sport THIS SHOWS Australia Femail Health Science Money

Latest Headlines Travel Events News World News Arts Environment Finance Politics World Mail

Muslim worshippers attack golf club-wielding man who stormed their mosque and started hurling insults and threats at them

- Attacker allegedly threatened Muslims with a golf club while yelling abuse
- The worshippers then allegedly tackled him, injuring and ejecting him
- Police have appealed for help to find the man whose whereabouts are unknown

By ALISON BEVISE FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 05:17, 6 November 2019 | UPDATED: 05:59, 6 November 2019

8 shares 3 comments

A man who allegedly threatened worshippers at a mosque with a golf club and yelled obscenities at them was injured and ejected by the enraged Muslims.

The man walked into a Burwood Rd mosque in the western Sydney suburb of Balmore on Friday afternoon and allegedly threatened those inside with a golf club.

241

Undue prominence

The following examples show how Daily Mail Australia's headlines are sometimes structured in ways where blatantly false statements or soundbites are given prominence, followed by a clarification such as 'but it was all a hoax'. Despite the claims in many headlines being patently absurd and factually incorrect, their positioning at the front of the headline is misleading and is either an editorial instruction or a tactic to shock.

241 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6356955/Muslim-worshippers-beat-golf-club-wielding-man-hurled-obscenities-praying.html>

- **'Terrorist is another word for Muslim'**²⁴²
- **Muslims shouldn't wish Christians a Merry Xmas and wives can NEVER refuse sex**²⁴³
- **All Muslims are terrorists': Islamophobe wearing a Donald Trump t-shirt who abused people praying at Christchurch massacre mosque weeks after the attack is sentenced.**²⁴⁴
- **Chilling viral WhatsApp message about a Muslim girl warning of a terrorist attack at Chadstone shopping centre circulated just days before car park explosion – but it was all a hoax**²⁴⁵

Alarming Headlines

Daily Mail Australia has similarly produced alarming headlines about the supposed danger posed by Muslims to Australia's citizens with themes of cultural encroachment and even threats to physical wellbeing hinted at.

- **The fast-food chains sell Muslim-friendly food - and there are more than you think**²⁴⁶
- **Wannabe politician attempting to be the Liberal MP in Sydney's Muslim heartland of Lakemba hits a hurdle as it's revealed his halal supermarket has been fined for using dodgy packaging**²⁴⁷
- **'It's Christmas, and always will be Christmas': Muslim Greens senator is blasted for wishing her followers' happy holidays' while sharing her pavlova recipe**²⁴⁸

²⁴² <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6379325/Bourke-Street-killers-chilling-Facebook-rants.html>

²⁴³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6344981/How-fundamentalist-Sharia-law-Muslim-groups-danger-Australian-society-professor-says.htm>

²⁴⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7303699/Islamophobe-abused-people-praying-Christchurch-massacre-mosque-sentenced.html>

²⁴⁵ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6518213/Viral-hoax-message-warning-terror-Chadstone-circulated-days-car-exploded.html>

²⁴⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6293215/How-fast-food-chains-McDonalds-KFC-Red-Rooster-offering-halal-food-Muslim-customers.html>

²⁴⁷ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7008893/Muslim-Liberal-candidates-Mohammad-Zamans-store-fined-880-breaching-food-standards.html>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6525815/Muslim-senator-Mehreen-Faruqi-blasted-wishing-followers-happy-holidays-pavlova-video.html>

- **Aussie tourists beware: Indonesian Muslim leaders place a 'fatwa' on vaccines for measles and rubella in a move that could see infection rates skyrocket**²⁴⁹

Misleading Headlines

Some headlines were manufactured to be deliberately misleading, such as suggesting that Muslim leaders had boycotted a meeting with Australia's Prime Minister because he had asked them for their help in tracking down terrorists. The statement on which the story was based was clear in its condemnation of Scott Morrison for the suggestion that 'the community is collectively culpable for the criminal actions of individuals.'²⁵⁰

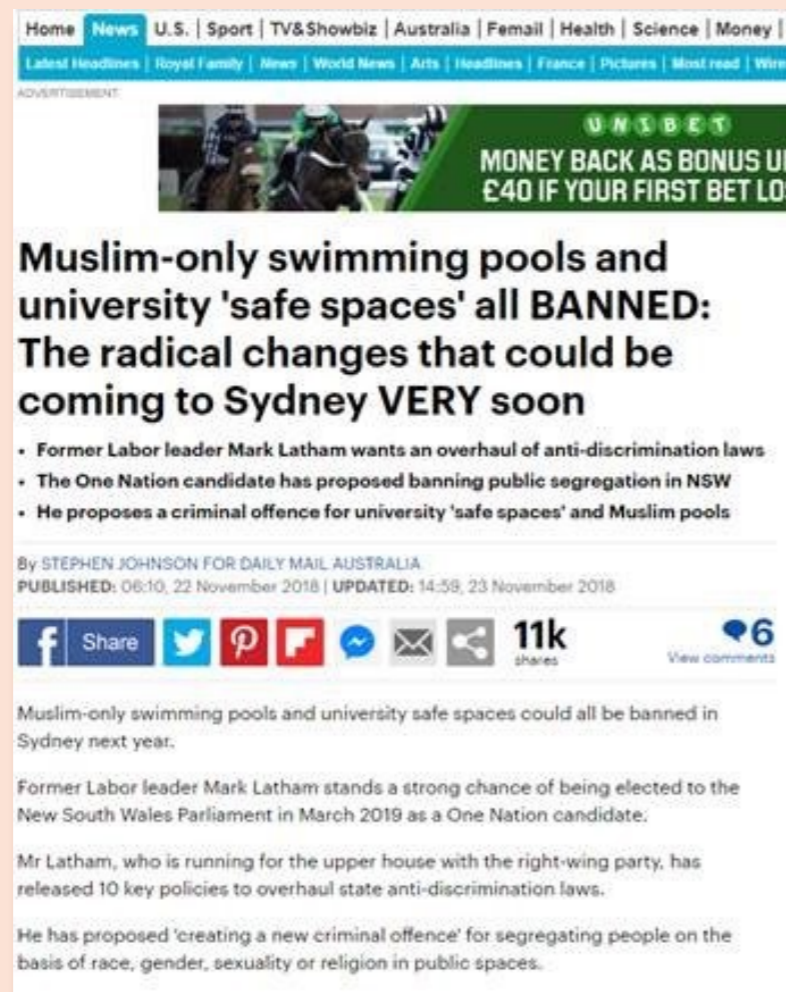
- **Muslim leaders BOYCOTT meeting with Scott Morrison over his comments on Bourke Street terror attack - just after the PM asked them to help track down extremists**²⁵¹
- **Muslim-only swimming pools and university' safe spaces' all BANNED: The radical changes that could be coming to Sydney VERY soon**

²⁴⁹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6379575/Australians-warned-think-twice-travelling-Bali-fatwa-issued-against-vaccine.html>

²⁵⁰ <https://www.anic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PRESS-RELEASE-ANIC-Condemns-the-Recent-Crime-Perpetrated-in-Melbourne-and-Outraged-by-the-PMs-Recent-Comments.pdf>

²⁵¹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6412375/Muslim-leaders-boycott-Prime-Minister-Scott-Morrison-proposed-round-table-discuss-extremism.html>

Not only is the latter headline incorrect, but the accompanying image is also misleading. Nowhere in the article is evidence provided of 'Muslim only' pools. Even though the council says that the privacy curtain was installed 'following significant 'community' demand, and not just from Muslim women', the article claims that it was installed 'to shield Muslim women'. Following a complaint by CfMM, the headline and article were amended but the accompanying image was not removed.²⁵²



²⁵² <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6416753/One-Nation-candidate-Mark-Latham-wants-ban-Muslim-swimming-pools-university-safe-spaces.html>

Themes Demonstrating Poor Practice

The affixing of the term Muslim or Islamic to any concept serves to criminalise an entire faith and faith community as well as being misleading. Torture is prohibited in Islam is this following hadith points out clearly: 'Allah tortures those who torture in this world (or tortures people)'.²⁵³ Despite this, The Express chooses to use this term 'Islamic torture' to describe penal codes introduced in Brunei to preserve traditional family values. Following a complaint by CfMM, the headline was changed.

The BRITISH hotels owned by Sultan of Brunei – Celebs call for mass boycott

CELEBRITIES such as George Clooney, Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres are calling for a mass boycott of three luxury British hotels owned by a Brunei royal, as its profits "help fund the murder of innocent citizens".

By EMILY FERGUSON
PUBLISHED: 14:11, Thu, Apr 4, 2019 | UPDATED: 21:30, Wed, Apr 17, 2019

The BRITISH hotels propped-up by Islamic torture - Celebs call for mass boycott

CELEBRITIES such as George Clooney, Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres are calling for a mass boycott of three luxury British hotels owned by a Brunei royal, as its profits "help fund the murder of innocent citizens".

By EMILY FERGUSON
PUBLISHED: 14:11, Thu, Apr 4, 2019 | UPDATED: 14:53, Thu, Apr 4, 2019

254

Similarly, in a story about Stefan Sylvester (the man who threw acid in Katie Pipers face) getting married to another woman whilst in jail, the headline references 'Islamic ceremony'. How he got married is irrelevant. The story, if there is one, is that he got re-married in jail. The only reason 'Islamic ceremony' is used is to feed into the false trope of Shariah law being a parallel legal system in Britain when it isn't.

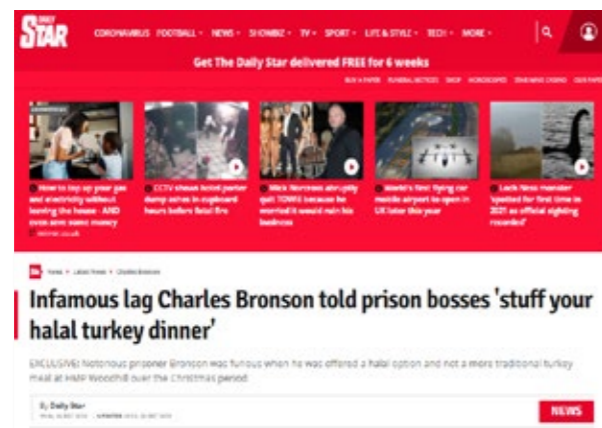
²⁵³ <https://f.hubspotusercontent10.net/hubfs/4713562/40HadithLectureNotes/40onSocialJustice-Week-19.pdf>

²⁵⁴ <https://cfmm.org.uk/corrections/express-co-uk-headline-amended-to-remove-islamic-torture/>



255

The use of Islamic terms or practices are also given prominence when uttered by the infamous serial criminal Charles Bronson. He is given a platform to preach on the ethics on how an animal is killed before it is eaten and he is quoted in the headline telling prison officers to: 'stuff your halal turkey dinner'.



256

A story in The Sun headlined as 'NAILED DOWN: Islamist Indian cleric threatens to target Muslim women who wear nail polish' is also misleading and inaccurate. Nowhere in the actual body of the article is there any mention of him threatening to target women nor any indication as to how the headline has been interpreted like

255 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6281045/Single-mother-Katie-Pipers-acid-attacker-whisked-away-hotel-weekend-freedom.html>

256 <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/infamous-lag-charles-bronson-told-23223744>

this. In fact, the article references the legal opinion of a Muslim Imam in India who says that women can wear nail polish but not when they are offering the ritual prayers as it prevents the ritual water purification from being effective. He advises them to use henna instead. No coercion or threat is mentioned. Furthermore, the Imam is labelled an Islamist - a term applied in many articles with abandon to everyone ranging from Daesh terrorists to democratically elected leaders, peaceful protesters and Muslim scholars, therefore a redundant all encapsulating term.



257

A headline in The Times' website (emphasising the Muslim identity of the parents of Tafida Raqeeb, a girl from east London who suffered brain-damage) was not found in the headlines of other news websites. On the surface, the headline 'Muslim parents win right to take child abroad for treatment' is harmless in that it reports on a landmark victory for desperate parents wanting the best for their severely ill daughter. Yet, them being Muslim was not a significant factor in the victory. A reading of the judgment of the case states that 'the gold standard against which cases of this nature are measured and determined remains that of the child's best interest...'²⁵⁸ A headline like this has the potential to feed into the trope of Muslims enjoying special privileges.

257 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7664734/islamist-indian-cleric-threatens-to-target-muslim-women-who-wear-nail-polish-and-trim-their-fingernails-in-fatwa-against-un-islamic-grooming/>

258 <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Raqeeb-Judgment-Final-03.10.2019-pdf-Publication-Copy-1.pdf> 191

THE  TIMES

Muslim parents win right to take child abroad for treatment

259

Tabloid headlines are known for being short, snappy and polemical. Yet, they also allow for a newspaper to place concepts together and promote the paper's views on certain people or ideas. A headline in the Daily Express print newspaper: 'Police foil 24 Islam and 'Nazi' terrorist plots in just 2 years' links the religion of Islam with Nazism. This continues a post 9/11 trend of propagandising the false concept of 'Islamofascism' with the aim of conflating Islam and fascism as one and the same.²⁶⁰ Interestingly the term 'Nazi' is in quotation marks where as the term Islam is not - possibly indicating that the publication is less willing to accept the charge of Nazi terrorists whilst more assured of the supposed link of Islam to terrorists.



Meanwhile, a Sun headline cites the term 'Muslims' below the term 'Bombers' following claims by Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary's that terrorists 'will generally be males of a Muslim persuasion'. The story is placed alongside those of two imprisoned terrorist suspects with the possible aim of lending credence to this claim and O'Leary's proposition that Muslim males should be subjected to extra checks at airports.



Another aspect of headlines which were found to be misleading is the willingness to report claims as facts when the crime involves an alleged Muslim. An example from the Mail Online is about an altercation between a former cage fighter and a taxi driver. The headline 'British former cage fighter was left for dead in pool of blood when he was battered by crowbar-wielding Muslim taxi driver after they rowed over religion in Australia' is reported as fact, even though this was an allegation in an alleged incident.

259 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tafida-raqueeb-girl-given-no-chance-of-recovery-can-go-abroad-for-treatment-09qjhhwz8> (Headline has been altered)

260 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41722010?seq=1>



261

Emphasis of the Muslimness of individuals in incidents not related to their faith

IPSO clause 12 under Discrimination states that 'details of an individual's race, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.' Yet, references to an individual's religious identity are frequently made by the Mail Online and are potentially in breach of the clause as the following headlines show.

In an article about a 'British Asian Tory campaigner' being abused by a man, the headline mentions that he was wearing 'Islamic dress' when he hurled the abuse. How the attire of the alleged perpetrator is of any relevance or consequence is hard to fathom.



262

In another article headlined 'Strict Muslim father 'inflicted a campaign of controlling psychological abuse on his family...' the Mail Online attributes his controlling behaviour and abuse to be motivated by his faith. His actions have also been described as an 'Islamic regime' despite there being no evidence nor any religious dictate that allows such behaviour or abuse.



263

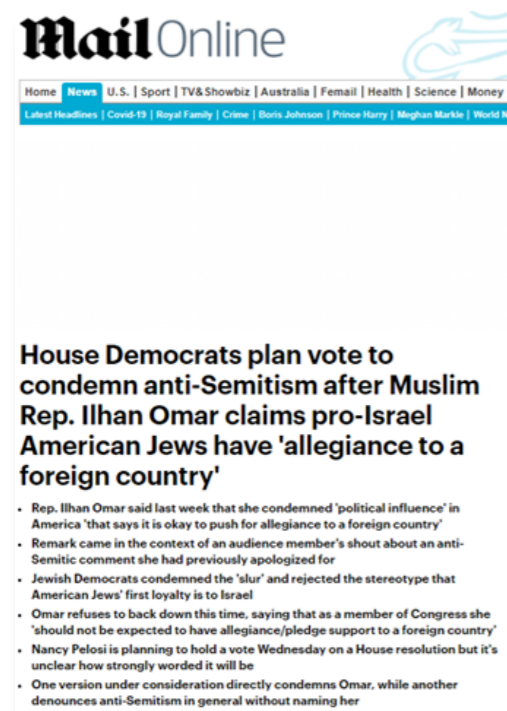
261 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6329517/British-ex-cage-fighter-left-dead-pool-blood-taxi-driver-Melbourne-Australia.html>

262 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7722231/Moment-man-tells-Tory-activist-white-f-ing-country.html>

263 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7136415/Strict-Muslim-father-inflicted-campaign-controlling-psychological-abuse-wife-daughters.html> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7156375/Muslim-father-imposed-traditional-Islamic-regime-family-faces-jail-psychological-abuse.html>



Similarly, in an article about congresswoman Ilhan Omar and her claims that pro-Israel Jews have 'allegiance to another country', her Muslim identity is mentioned as the source of her alleged anti-Semitism.



264

264 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6770469/House-Democrats-plan-vote-condemn-anti-Semitism-Muslim-Rep-Ilhan-Omars-latest-slur.html>

The emphasis on the 'Muslimness' within a headline is not only found in the Mail Online news sites, but also in other tabloids and broadsheet news sites as the following examples show.



265

'ISLAMIC TAKEOVER' New National Union of Students leader once said she would like to 'oppress white people'

Zamzam Ibrahim, 24, previously said she wanted to 'oppress white people' and have an 'Islamic takeover' in social media posts

[Thomas Burrows](#)

11 Apr 2019, 0:55 | Updated: 11 Apr 2019, 0:58

THE new president of the National Union of Students once said she wanted to "oppress white people" and see an "Islamic takeover".

266

Inconsistency in inclusion of faith identity for terrorism-related stories

Sometimes the Muslim aspect is downplayed in a headline, especially when the victims or potential victims are Muslims themselves. An example from the York Press headlined 'Anti-Islam Facebook video will put man behind bars, court hears' inaccurately conflates

265 <https://metro.co.uk/2019/09/17/woman-in-hijab-launches-racist-attack-on-indian-bus-passenger-10758285/>

266 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8837586/new-national-union-of-students-leader-once-said-she-would-like-to-oppress-white-people/>

anti-Islam with anti-Muslim, a common mistake made in many newspapers. By using the term 'anti-Islam', the headline suggests that the perpetrator's posts were objecting to or disagreeing with the religion itself. Yet, his vitriol and threats were made against Muslim people as evidenced in one example where he states that Muslims 'need to be wiped off the face of this earth.'



267

Such reporting risks giving legitimacy to far-right groups who have actively targeted Muslims and Muslim communities both verbally and physically. An example in The Sun about the English Defence League (EDL) describes the organisation as being '**strongly opposed to Islamism**' despite its well-known reputation for targeting Muslim individuals and communities as well as the proclamations of myths by some of its prominent members such as '**Muslims are statistically on course to outnumber 'Europeans' this century.**'²⁶⁸

267 <https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/18046748.anti-islam-facebook-video-will-put-man-behind-bars-court-hears/>

268 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48942411>



269

As demonstrated previously, some headlines are structured to make them misleading, especially when Muslims are the victims of an attack. This example from the Mail Online is supposedly describing how two Muslim women were attacked and stabbed in an attack near the Eiffel Tower. However, the attack is referred to as '**Muslim Stabbings**', which can lead readers to think that the attack was perpetrated by Muslims, especially in the absence of the perpetrators' identity.

269 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/11856150/what-is-the-edl/>



Lack of emphasis of Muslimness on positive stories

Conversely, when a positive story about Muslims or Islam is reported, there is often a demonstrable lack of consistency in highlighting the Muslim or Islamic identity of the person or institution. The gesture by a Pakistani Muslim doctor in the US of writing off over half a million dollars worth of debts for his patients is a great human story of generosity. Yet, the Muslim identity of the main character, Dr Omar Atiq, is not mentioned.

Kind-hearted Arkansas doctor erases \$650,000 worth of debt for 200 of his cancer patients after realizing they were unable to pay when he closed his clinic

- Dr. Omar Atiq closed his cancer clinic in Arkansas in March due to staff shortage
- Had been trying to collect outstanding bills from former patients for months
- Decided to stop when he realized some will never be able to pay it back and instead wrote them Christmas card informing them he was wiping their debt

By LYDIA CATLING FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 17:03, 4 January 2021 | UPDATED: 17:05, 4 January 2021

271

Similarly, Reuters chooses to headline the generous act of 'Iraqi Religious bodies' without mentioning their religion. Whilst not incorrect, it is arguably less specific than referring to the Islamic, Muslim or Shi'ite identity of such institutions. The Islamic obligation of looking after the sick would lend weight to the argument that the Islamic identity of the institution be mentioned in the headline. Such inconsistencies give weight to the idea that the Muslimness or Islamic aspect of identity or beliefs are more frequently used as a motivating factor for negative or evil behaviour rather than for positive endeavours.

Iraqi religious bodies house patients instead of pilgrims to help fight COVID-19

By REUTERS
PUBLISHED: 15:35, 6 August 2020 | UPDATED: 15:35, 6 August 2020

272

270 <https://twitter.com/cfmmuk/status/1319291074649583617/photo/1>

271 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9111635/Kind-hearted-Arkansas-doctor-erases-650-000-worth-debt-200-cancer-patients.html>

272 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-8600613/Iraqi-religious-bodies-house-patients-instead-pilgrims-help-fight-COVID-19.html>



Critical Discourse Analysis

By Professor Paul Baker

Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University

'I lost my boyfriend to Islam',

*Daily Mail Australia, 20 January 2019*²⁷³

Perspectivisation involves how a story is told from a particular point of view and how that can influence how readers come to understand the story. The article 'I lost my boyfriend to Islam' uses perspectivisation to encourage a reading of the article which positions a male prisoner as being radicalised by Islam. It is told from the perspective of his female partner, and while it does feature an alternative viewpoint, this is downplayed.

The article is about a man who converted to Islam while serving a 12-year sentence for armed robbery. Maintaining a relationship while one partner is in prison is difficult. A study by Massoglia et al. (2011) in the journal *Social Forces*, found that every year of incarceration increases the odds of a marriage ending in divorce by an average of 32%. So this story would not be newsworthy except for the role that Islam is claimed to have played in the relationship breakdown.

The article's headline begins with a sentence in quotes 'I lost my boyfriend to Islam'. Headlines are the most important part of articles as they are designed to be both eye-catching and to summarise. They appear in a larger typeface than the rest of the article and at the start. This quote appears to have been made by the prisoner's partner, thus setting the tone of the article, which represents Islam as a problem, responsible for breaking up relationships.

The headline also refers to the prisoner's 'radicalisation behind bars'. However, while the article describes how the man converted to Islam while serving a 12-year sentence for armed robbery, it is difficult to see how his conversion constitutes radicalisation. Early

²⁷³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6611127/Womans-life-torn-apart-partner-turns-radical-Islam-jailplanning-marry-muslim.html>

in the article, the partner is described as fearing the worst is yet to come 'as he appears to be edging closer to radicalisation'. A few lines later it is said that she fears he 'is following extremist views'. But later on, the article contains the sentence 'It is understood Jennar is not seen as radical within the prison system'. This alternative viewpoint is backgrounded as it occurs towards the end of the article. It is not attributed to anybody – we don't know who gave it, so readers are likely to find it less convincing than the more personalised views of Jennar's partner whose perspective is given throughout the article.

As evidence that Jennar has become radicalised, his girlfriend describes him as 'transcribing Islamic teachings' and he 'even asked [her] to spend 30 minutes each night learning about the religion he described as 'beautiful'. The use of quotes around 'beautiful' has a distancing effect, implying this is a point of view that neither Jennar's girlfriend nor the newspaper agree with.

Additionally, Jennar's girlfriend describes him as 'leading the prayers and he had a lot of responsibility. That's what started freaking me out.' An implication here is that taking a leadership role in Islam is a sign of becoming radicalised.

In the last sentence of the article an expert on terrorism and radicalisation, Dr Clarke Jones is quoted as saying that 'the majority of Islamic conversions had a positive outcome' and that 'Research showed five cases of radicalisation in Australian jails'. In Australia, there were 42,855 people in prison in June 2018, so this is a very small number. Jones' perspective indicates that it is unlikely that Jennar's conversion to Islam will result in radicalisation and is actually likely to have a positive effect on him, is also backgrounded.

The perspective of the prisoner, Jennar, is not really given in the article. Accounts of his conversations with his girlfriend are given, but they are told from her viewpoint. Other perspectives, such as friends and members of Jennar's family, including his son, are not described. Nor are we given the perspective of the Muslim woman who Jennar is said to have left his girlfriend for. Thus, the article focuses on the view of the person who blames Jennar's

conversion to Islam as causing the end of her relationship. As a result, potential positive outcomes of Jennar's conversion (such as it having a rehabilitative effect or its role in helping him cope with incarceration) are barely considered.

The headline gives an unsubstantiated impression as there is no evidence that the partner has been radicalised. This is problematic as not everyone who reads a headline will read the rest of the article. The article also casts Islam in a negative light, focusing on its role in the breakdown of a relationship from one partner's perspective.

Recommendations

1

Avoid the religious identity of an individual or group unless it is genuinely relevant to the issue being reported.

2

Ensure headlines - when read alone - are not misleading and are substantiated by the article.

3

Avoid repeating speculative, false or offensive claims of anti-Muslim agitators in a headline, especially if they are disputed.

Due Prominence

Every article comes with a particular framing according to the editorial outlook of the publication or the writer's individual orientation. In light of this framing, a writer may choose to leave out certain details, certain voices, or may regard the wider context of a piece to be self-evident to the readership.

News reporting is frequently framed by the nature of some of the actors involved. Indeed, there is a 'hierarchy' in reporting in terms of whose voice is given prominence – powerful versus marginal, government versus interest groups, metropolitan versus regional. Also 'bad' news has precedence over 'good' news. For example, a story about successful community integration is less likely to be newsworthy than one about a supposed problem of integration, especially when the latter is reinforced by the publication of an official report or a public policy initiative.

This can give rise to a situation where negative reports about a group can outweigh positive reports and become the norm when framing any stories that involve that group. Arguably, this is what has happened to British Muslim communities, who find themselves subject to multiple instances of negative reporting and represented as both homogenous and 'known', such that their voices are taken as adequately represented by the frame in which they are placed.

Media organisations frequently have guidelines that purport to address these issues. These do not propose that journalists should not express their political views, but that they should do so in a context that distinguishes between facts, opinions, conjecture and values whilst providing a fair account of other views. This involves giving due prominence to those other views and it is the failure to provide these in the case of reporting on matters involving British Muslim communities that we will focus on in this section.

Whilst analysing coverage, we asked the following question:

Does the article omit due prominence to a relevant voice or perspective?

For any article to be given a 'Yes' rating, the article should demonstrate one of the following:

- The total omission or minimisation, suppression or downplaying disproportionate, viewpoint or description which would clarify the issue or provide a balanced representation.
- The disproportionate prominence of another actor or agency's voice or position of response to the issue at hand, at the expense of an equally legitimate narrative based on the available evidence.
- The exclusion of any relevant information or context pertaining to the stated issue.

What is Omitting Due Prominence?

Due prominence does not mean each article should have a 50/50 balance or equal space for the two or more sides of a story. The BBC editorial guidelines covering 'Due Weight' state just that: 'Impartiality does not necessarily require the range of perspectives or opinions to be covered in equal proportions either across our output as a whole, or within a single programme, webpage or item.'²⁷⁴ The guidelines at the Guardian²⁷⁵ are similar, as they are at other newspapers. The issue is also about how two different kinds of reporting within the same media organisation operate in conjunction with each other. Television, radio and print media all operate with a distinction between news reporting and commentary or opinion. In this context, news items are frequently the occasion for an accompanying opinion piece. The latter relies upon the former for its relevance, but also frequently amplifies the framing provided by the former.

We acknowledge that there will be some people who may differ with our analysis and approach. However, we hope that the evidence

we provide can help editors and journalists identify blind spots in their reporting and recognise how, sometimes, relevant details and perspectives are omitted when reporting on Muslims and Islam.

Seven per cent of all articles were adjudged to have omitted due prominence.

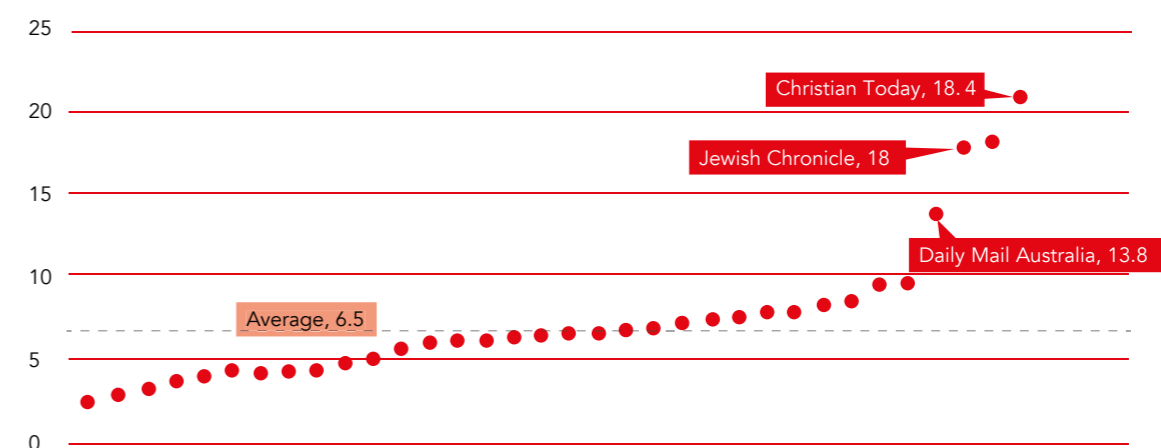
Table 24 Articles omitting Due Prominence

Omit Due Prominence	Count	Percentage
No	44,661	93
Yes	3,115	7
Inconclusive	42	0

Fourteen publications exceeded this average with all four religious publications assessed falling within this group.²⁷⁶ The remaining 10 publications are all right-leaning publications and one wire agency (AFP).

Four publications had a significantly higher percentage of articles which omitted due prominence in one form or another (The Spectator 21.1%, Christian Today 18.4%, The Jewish Chronicle 18% and Daily Mail Australia 13%)²⁷⁷.

Graphic 14: Percentage of articles which Omit Due Prominence



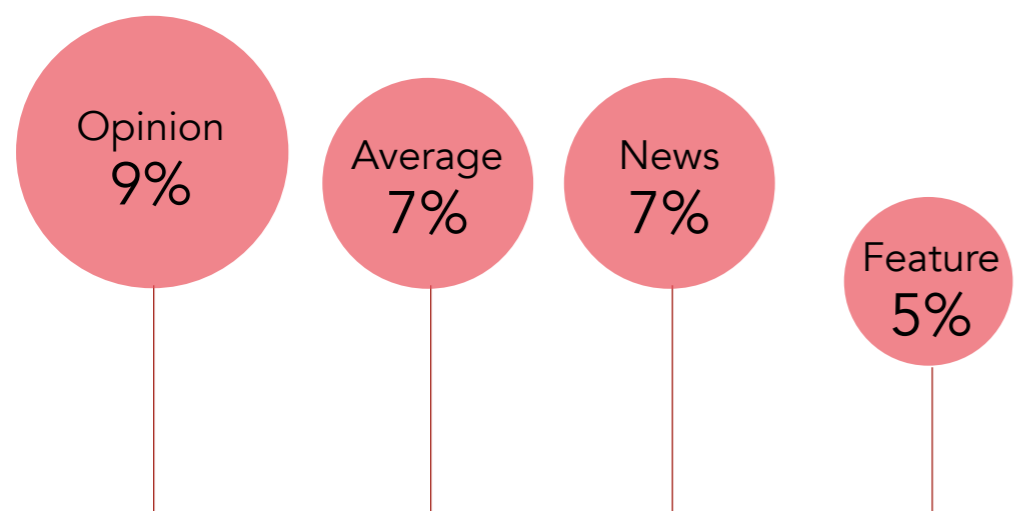
²⁷⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidelines/impartiality/guidelines>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/info/2015/aug/05/the-guardians-editorial-code>

²⁷⁶ For full list of publications, number of articles adjudged as having omitted due prominence and percentages see appendix K

²⁷⁷ For full list see Appendix L

Graphic 15: Top three categories for total number of articles omitting due prominence



The overall percentage of opinion articles omitting due prominence (9%) was higher than the overall proportion of opinion pieces published about Muslims and/or Islam (6%). One argument is that opinion pieces are predisposed to examine issues from a particular, polemical point of view and as such are at liberty to exclude inconvenient facts. However, opinion pieces (and more so news pieces) in any respectable publication should not fall outside of the facts. As Professor John Holmwood of Nottingham University and author of *Countering Extremism in British Schools*, told CfMM;

'The news reporting may appear unbiased, but it omits facts relevant to the opinion, which had they been in the news reporting would have made the opinion difficult to sustain. Usually the bias in reporting is omission, which is a passive bias turned active by the opinion writer.'

As can be seen from our analysis, *The Spectator* is one of the worst offenders when it comes to omitting due prominence. One in five published articles were assessed as having omitted due prominence. This can be partially explained by the fact that *The Spectator* is a largely opinion-based publication but also because the magazine's columnists frequently mention Muslims and/or Islam either in specifically focused pieces or in more general ones

in which Muslims and/or Islam are used as analogies to illustrate larger points. Despite the fact that *The Spectator* (and the other publications ranking highly in this particular analysis) promote conservative values against what they see as a prevailing anti-religious liberal orthodoxy, they tend not to do this when it comes to British Muslims or Islam.

Omission Of Due Prominence In World News

Journalism at its best should not be biased or inconsistent. It has a duty to be fair and balanced. However, as has been demonstrated, journalists sometimes pander to certain narratives and shared simplistic meanings to tell their stories. One factor that directs how that story is told is the sympathy or support a journalist or publication has for one or more of the protagonists in the saga. If the marrying of values between the publication, journalist and protagonist extends to a hatred of one or the other side, this allows for the cleanest narrative: good vs bad, light vs dark, us versus them. The main casualty of this approach is the fair representation of the facts. One way in which this situation arises is an absence of any reference to the wider context to explain why the situation is what it is now. Sometimes there is a disregard for information that is inconvenient for the narrative at hand, because if it were included, it would likely diminish the hero of the piece, and if not elevate, then at least give the other side a fair hearing.

An example of this is how Islamic ideals are presented as the new 'fascism', with Muslims being the 'baddies'. Any story featuring a dispute between a Western nation, or a nation backed by Western governments, and a Muslim state is one where the protagonist and publication's values align, and in doing so the Muslim nation or its values are not given a fair hearing or are actively discredited.

John Pilger, in his foreword to the book *Guardians of Power*, describes one way in which 'the other' is reported on:

'Societies are to be reported in terms of their threat or

*usefulness to 'us'. Official enemies are to be identified and pursued. Parallels are to be drawn with the 'good war' and the Cold War, while official friends are to be treated as one views one's own government: benign, regardless of compelling evidence to the contrary.*²⁷⁸

The recent reporting on the Chinese State crackdown on the Uighur Muslims of Xinxiang lends weight to this description. Peter Osborne has described how **'Muslims have often been portrayed in Western media as lawless, radical ideologues and an existential threat to the world.'**²⁷⁹ Yet, in a-Covid-19 world, where global geopolitics are reshaped, he positions China as the new **'existential enemy.'**²⁸⁰ However, Muslims are never far from being perceived as enemy no 1. The draconian laws introduced by the French government following the beheading of French schoolteacher Samuel Paty in October 2020, as well as the wider criminalising of Muslim individuals, institutions and beliefs by the French and other European Governments, under the guise of tackling **'Islamism'** or **'political Islam,'** suggests Osborne's prediction may be somewhat premature.

The U.K. media's response to the French state launching arbitrary arrests, shutting down Muslim human rights organisations, and bringing in draconian laws which are not just an impediment to freedom of speech, but also thought and belief, has been broadly supportive. One way in which both the pro-security Times newspaper and the pro-secular free speech Guardian have backed the French crackdown has been in echoing the Government line, comparing Muslims who object to caricatures of Prophet Muhammad with those individuals committing crimes of murder and terrorism.²⁸¹ Muslim voices which attempted to articulate this distinction were

278 Foreword by John Pilger in David Edwards & David Cromwell, *Guardians of Power: The Myth of the Liberal Media* (New York 2006)

279 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/west-has-now-found-itself-new-enemy>

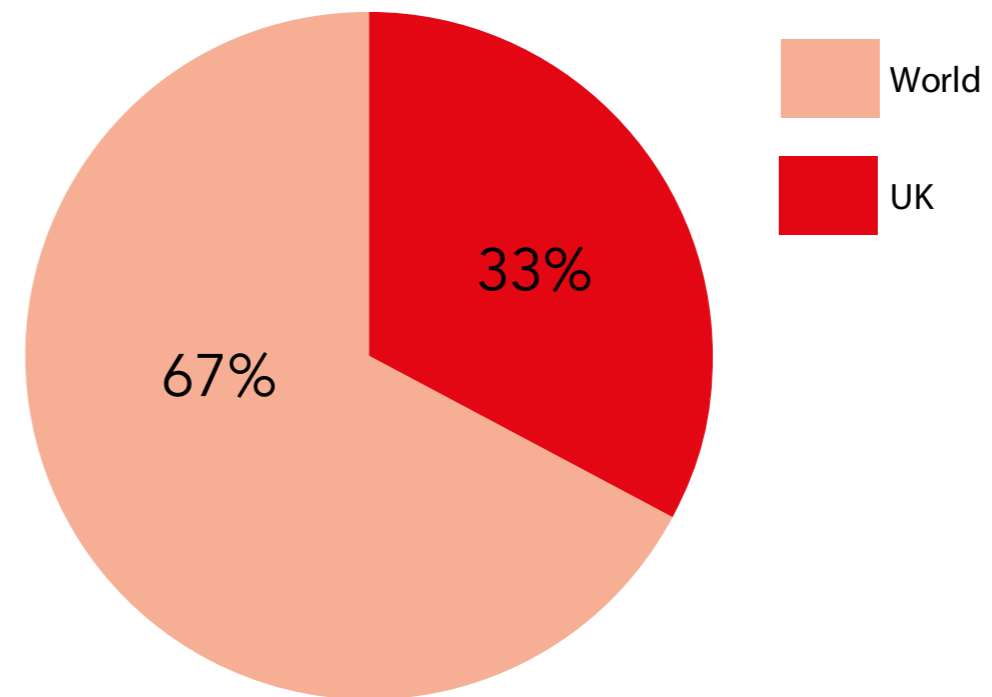
280 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/west-has-now-found-itself-new-enemy>

281 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-the-murder-of-samuel-paty-by-abdullakh-anzorov-nous-sommes-francais-6n3ltgbgm> & <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/19/the-guardian-view-on-samuel-paty-dont-let-the-death-cult-win>

effectively censored in both *The Financial Times* and *Politico* magazine, with articles removed after publication.²⁸²

This is reflective of international news stories, with CfMM analysis showing that 67% of all articles adjudged to have omitted due prominence in some form were World or non-UK based stories.

Articles omitting Due Prominence



Many of these articles were judged as such because of a failure to contextualise conflicts and a failure to describe individuals accurately.

Reporting on Mohammed Morsi

When reporting on the overthrow of the former President of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi, only 37 out of 241 articles referenced the fact that he was **'democratically elected.'**

- In *The Times* newspaper, Morsi's obituary referenced how in one incident, **'50 Morsi loyalists were shot dead in "clashes" with the Army.'** This vague depiction has been described in previous

282 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/freedom-speech-france-extends-macron-critics>

research as, 'a statement which suggests that both sides are equal in power and for the responsibility for this violence.'²⁸³ The 'clashes' referred to were largely described as peaceful sit-ins, and protestors were reportedly praying with their backs to security forces when they were gunned down.²⁸⁴ A more deadly pogrom with a much larger death toll of peaceful protestors is not mentioned. In August 2013, The Egyptian Army according to Human Rights Watch, killed at least 904 people at Rabaa Square and al-Nahda Square.²⁸⁵

- The Guardian similarly cast Morsi's 'stubborn Islamist policies' as the main reason for his downfall.²⁸⁶ Whilst both obituaries are centred around Morsi's failures and shortcomings as a President and leader, Abdullah Al-Arian points out how 'absent from many of the critiques of Morsi's ill-fated presidency was the role of countless other actors committed to ensuring the failure of Egypt's revolutionary moment.'²⁸⁷ None of the structural impediments in the Egyptian bureaucracy or other power centres is referred to in these reports.

Wire Agencies' narrative: Palestinians 'Kill' and Israel 'Defends'

The reporting from wire agencies on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza during the period 2018-2019 found 176 omissions of due prominence, with most articles failing to reference the Israeli and Egyptian blockades of Gaza that have turned the territory into what some have called 'an open-air prison.'²⁸⁸ The Israeli blockade which is ostensibly the reason for the malnutrition and economic deprivation of the Strip has led to protests.

- In 21 separate headlines from wire agencies where Israeli

soldiers had shot and killed Palestinian protestors, the role of the offensive actor (Israel) was diminished: shooting of protestors is described as 'Israeli fire,' dead protestors were said to have been 'killed in clashes', events are described as an 'Israel border flare-up,' or omitted with just the mention of 'Palestinian dies,' with no mention of who or what caused the death.²⁸⁹ Reprisals by Palestinians are more emphatically described: the Palestinian actor 'stabs' and 'kills.'²⁹⁰

The underplaying of Israeli crimes is continuous and examples can be seen outside of the statistical period of analysis such as this example from 2020.

- In one example, the AFP agency reported on Israeli soldiers killing a 14 year-old Palestinian who was standing on the side-lines of a protest against further Israeli appropriation of Palestinian lands. AFP described these as 'clashes,' and the focus of the story was Palestinians breaking the pandemic lockdown curfew to attend the funeral.²⁹¹
- In contrast to the above, Reuters news agency reported on the firebombing of a church by an Israeli terrorist without any reference to the suspect being a settler. The headline, plus the first paragraph of the story, offers no details about the perpetrator of the crime.²⁹²

CfMM's report on Media Reporting on Palestine 2021 contains more examples.²⁹³

283 http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/31176/1/ABOUALHUDA%2C%20Islam_Ph.D._2018.pdf

284 <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/world/middleeast/egypt.html?pagewanted=2&r=0&hp>; 'Army and police spokesmen said that one soldier and two policemen had also been killed. But according to witnesses and video footage, one of the policemen appeared to have been shot by soldiers, and the military provided little evidence to back its claim that the fighting had been instigated by the Islamists.'

285 <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/08/12/all-according-plan-0>

286 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/17/mohamed-morsi-obituary>

287 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/6/19/mohamed-morsi-an-egyptian-tragedy/>

288 <https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/april/gaza-the-worlds-largest-open-air-prison/>

289 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-6781471/Palestinian-killed-Israeli-fire-Gaza-border-clashes-Gaza-ministry.html> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-6325485/Palestinian-dies-wounds-Gaza-clashes.html> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-6321535/Five-Palestinians-killed-Israel-border-flareup-Gaza-ministry.html>

290 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-6302523/Palestinian-stabs-Israeli-soldier-shot-dead--military.html> & <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-6492009/Palestinian-gunman-kills-two-Israelis-West-Bank--Israeli-military.html>

291 <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201205-massive-palestinian-funeral-for-killed-teenager-despite-virus-curfew>

292 <https://www.reuters.com/article/israel-palestinians-church-fire-idUSKBN28E2PV>

293 <https://cfmm.org.uk/resources/publication/cfmm-media-palestine-2021/>

Describing pogroms against Indian Muslims as 'Riots'

Another area of the world where reporting has failed to acknowledge the imbalance of what was taking place on the ground is the violence in India, particularly Dehli in 2020. The violence almost exclusively perpetrated by Hindutva vigilantes against India's Muslim communities is by and large couched in the term 'religious' tensions or violence. This skews the extent of the power imbalance in India where it is mainly majority Hindu nationalists targeting Muslim minorities with the encouragement and sometimes aid of politicians and police forces. Pogroms against Muslim communities would be a more accurate description of the violence.

- A December 2018 story from Reuters which describes a Hindu mob throwing stones and blocking highways after rumours of Muslims slaughtering cows, was headlined as **'religious tensions.'** **'Religious tensions'** here implies a two way conflict where both sides are active instead of the violence exclusively coming from one party only. Further evidence from the body of the article showed how the violence and threats came exclusively from Hindu groups who held **'proactive processions'** as well as demanding and forcing the 400 Muslims from a village of 4000 to remove loudspeakers from a Mosque. Muslim girls described how they felt **'terrorised'**²⁹⁴ showing the intensity of the actions of the Hindutva mobs. The fact that these details were not summarised in the headline or first paragraphs risks the omission of due prominence given eight out of ten people only read headlines.²⁹⁵
- The omission of Muslims as targets is a feature of various articles and commentary in different contexts and stories. The use of factual yet partial descriptions leave open the question as to who the perpetrator or victim is, with terms identifying Muslims and/or Islam used alongside nouns describing negative or extreme incidents. Another example of this is Philip Collins writing on the

anti-Muslim pogroms launched by Hindutva nationalists against Muslim protestors in Dehli in 2020:

*'A few hours after my Indian family and I flew home from Delhi, the Muslim quarter of the capital exploded into violence. The pretext was a clash between supporters and critics of the government's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), but the riots rapidly took on a religious dimension. Thirty-five people have been killed so far and hundreds have been injured. Delhi 2020 is already being lined up with Delhi 1984, Bombay 1992 and Gujarat 2002 in the fatal litany of communal violence in India.'*²⁹⁶

There is no indication here that it is Muslims under attack by a joint force of Hindutva Nationalists and Delhi police officers. The Muslim quarter is the only identifiable religious element in this paragraph and as such the phrase **'riots rapidly took on religious dimension'** makes it seem as if it is the Muslims who are the cause of the violence given that they are the only religious community identified in the article.

- During the February 2020 attacks on Muslim protestors in Delhi, independent journalists and publications documented that the Hindu mob attacks on Muslim protestors were often accompanied by the Indian Police who either actively participated in or did nothing to prevent the attacks.²⁹⁷ Coverage from the publications analysed in this report showed 58 articles referring to the events as **'riots.'** Just six of these articles clearly referenced the attacks as being inspired by Hindu supremacists with the cooperation of the Indian police. This included slogans inspired by BJP politicians and shouted by Hindu supremacist demonstrators of **'shoot the traitors.'**²⁹⁸ Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Delhi Minorities Commission has documented evidence of violence against Delhi's Muslims including targeted shooting,

294 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-6474133/As-election-nears-religious-tensions-surge-Indian-village.html>

295 <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/eight-ten-people-read-headline/1374722>

296 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/modi-can-turn-indias-crisis-to-his-advantage-7w5vh3mwk>

297 <https://caravanmagazine.in/conflict/delhi-violence-cops-shouted-jai-shri-ram-with-armed-hindu-mob-charged-at-muslims?fbclid=IwAR3sLjUrBkqWyHk-vNgaTjxSBKYrbvOafyYolm7mK60DqEcTckgomBmr1hY>

298 https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/india0420_web_0.pdf

use of checkpoints to identify Muslims, petrol bombing Muslim property and businesses, looting, boycotts and mob-beatings.²⁹⁹

Once again, this shows an unwillingness to both delineate clearly between the victims and perpetrators of violence, and to show the wider context. Priyamvada Gopal has challenged the language of 'clashes', 'riots' and 'communal violence' used to describe Hindu nationalist attacks on Muslims. Gopal further comments on how the situation in these attacks is not one of a 'conflict between equal and opposite sides.'³⁰⁰ She says: 'drop the language of 'clashes,' and even 'riots' and 'communal violence' when describing Hindu nationalist attacks on Muslims in India.'³⁰¹

Selected Examples Of Where Due Prominence Is Omitted

3. A story published in the Times Newspaper on May 06 2019, alleged that a bus driver in Paris, France had refused to allow a woman on to the vehicle because of her short skirt.³⁰² The story was framed around the idea that the unnamed driver was 'motivated by the hard-line beliefs that increasingly hold sway among North African immigrants.' This was pitched against the quotes from the girls' father referencing the 'Enlightenment.' The driver's supposed beliefs (on the say so of one girl) were used to frame the narrative of a France being run on the whims of those with extremist beliefs. Speaking through his union and later his lawyer, the driver denied the version of events given by the girls' father Kamel Bencheikh (a French-Algerian poet and polemicist accused of Islamophobia). He alleged that despite stopping for the two girls, they continued to smoke in front of the doors of his bus at which point he drove off.³⁰³ Despite these

details being known at the time, there was no inclusion of this rebuttal in the piece nor was a follow-up story to clarify that the accusations against the driver, particularly him having 'hard-line beliefs', were unfounded.³⁰⁴

4. Another example of an omission of facts is found in the claims of a former Australian surfer, Carmen Greentree, who accused a Kashmiri Muslim boat owner of kidnapping and raping her for two months in 2003, with the apparent knowledge of his family. Among the details reported from her upcoming book which the alleged victim was publicising are stereotypes about dangerous Muslim men. She claims she was

- 'forced to wear traditional Kashmiri Muslim clothing',
- alleged that the perpetrator 'heavily encouraged me to pray five times a day and gave me a Koran with English translations to learn'
- and that 'his brothers and father knew [he was abusing me] but they thought it was normal, they just considered women to be property.'

The articles and their author/s made no attempt to put these accusations to the accused Rafiq Ahmad Dundoo, who was arrested but released when the alleged victim refused a medical examination and then refused to testify against him in Court. This story was published in January 2020 on three separate news sites (The Sun, Daily Mail Australia and The Daily Star). The only rebuttal to the accusations was seen on the Kashmir Monitor website by the journalist Nisar Dharma who interviewed the accused and saw police documents in relation to the case. The alleged victim was also accused of leaving the boat she was staying on without paying the bill for her stay; a sum equivalent to over £1000.

Another way in which due prominence is omitted is through excluding or including religion or religious elements as either the inspiration or driving force behind actions or identity.

299 <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Investigative-Briefing.pdf> & <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/17/minority-body-faults-police-role-in-anti-muslim-riots-in-delhi>

300 <https://arynews.tv/en/priya-gopal-cambridge-university-muslims-jews-pogrom-nazis-india/>

301 Ibid

302 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bus-driver-closes-door-to-woman-in-a-short-skirt-cdsjn6vzd>

303 <https://www.lejdd.fr/Societe/affaire-du-bus-60-et-de-la-jupe-trop-courte-les-deux-versions-qui-saffrontent-3897031>

304 <https://www.leparisien.fr/info-paris-ile-de-france-oise/transports/interdite-de-bus-a-cause-d-une-jupe-la-justice-devra-desormais-trancher-10-05-2019-8069637.php>

5. One example of this is a comment piece in The Jewish Chronicle, discussing how Mossad misread the Iranian Revolution, which references Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic credentials numerous times in a negative context.³⁰⁵ However, when it comes to citing historically significant Muslim scholar and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, no reference is made to his religion, even though he is predominantly known as a classical Muslim Sufi theologian and poet. He is instead only referred to as the **'great 'Persian' poet and mystic'** omitting his religious identity. This may be part of a wider trend to secularise historical figures to make them more palatable to Western audiences. Omid Safi, a Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies professor at Duke University, has described this as **'spiritual colonialism'** the uncoupling of mystical poetry from its Islamic roots, which started as far back as the Victorian period. **'These people are mystical not because of Islam but in spite of it.'**³⁰⁶

6. Another example of the omission of Muslims as victims is the BBC report on a Conservative Party candidate who was suspended for **'unacceptable comments.'** Ryan Houghton - a candidate in the Aberdeen North constituency, was reported to have made anti-Semitic comments, yet despite making comments centred around the conspiracy theory of **'Eurabia'** and saying one of Islam's core teachings was the goal of 'world domination' this was not mentioned in the initial piece, and were only included after a CfMM complaint. This hierarchy of racism where Islamophobia or anti-Muslim sentiment is seen as a less problematic form of racism has been argued by right-leaning commentators, as well as demonstrated by the unwillingness of news reporters to appropriately cover the allegations of Conservative Party Islamophobia.³⁰⁷



308



309

305 Colin Shindler, How Mossad misread the Iranian revolution, 27-Dec-2018, The Jewish Chronicle at www.thejc.com (Accessed 27-Dec-2018)

306 <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-erasure-of-islam-from-the-poetry-of-rumi>

307 In the period under analysis in this report, a total of 772 articles were published featuring the words 'Conservative' AND 'Islamophobia', while over 3300 articles were found in the same period for the words 'Labour' AND 'Anti-Semitism.'

308 <https://web.archive.org/web/20191119004422/https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-50468770>

309 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-50468770>



Muslim 'fundamentalist parents' attack teachers in Birmingham

In 2018, Muslims parents from Birmingham were under the national spotlight after they held protests against the lack of consultation over the introduction of LGBTQ classes to their children at the Anderton Park Primary and Parkfield Community School.

We offer a case study on the media reporting of this issue where 'due prominence', or the lack of due prominence given to Muslim voices. In over 250 articles primarily focused on the issue, 28% were assessed as having omitted due prominence. This is four times as many as the average of 7% of articles which omitted due prominence.

We take a further look at the issues raised, examining why media reporting failed to omit crucial facts, and why the activism of these Muslim parents, however wrong or right they were, were - in many cases - not represented fairly, and certainly differently to many of the gender critical feminist voices on transgender issues.

Framing

In the period under analysis 39 articles referenced another story which made the news five years previously - the so-called '**Trojan Horse Plot**' which has been described as an attempt 'Islamise' schools in Birmingham.³¹⁰ Most media reports at the time followed the lead of the official government reports which distinguished between publicly-funded faith-designated schools and publicly-funded '**secular**' schools, arguing that the '**plot**' had taken place within the latter, where practices appropriate to faith-designated schools were introduced inappropriately. Yet, all publicly funded schools in England are required to provide religious education and

³¹⁰ For a detailed treatment of the affair, see John Holmwood and Therese O'Toole (2018) Countering Extremism in British Schhols? The Truth about the Birmingham Trojan Horse affair (Bristol: Policy Press).

daily acts of collective worship. That worship is typically Christian, but may reflect other faiths where that is indicated by its pupil intake. Many non-faith schools do not bother with that legal requirement (less than half do), and that may be the experience of many teachers and journalists. Some journalists and opinion writers may believe that publicly-funded schools should be secular, but a school with a determination to provide Islamic collective worship is acting within the law.³¹¹ The greater religiosity of many Muslim parents and their support for collective worship in schools is also represented as potentially at odds with mainstream liberal values.³¹²

Since the Birmingham Trojan Horse affair, these mainstream liberal values are routinely called '**British**' values indicating the idea that they are mainstream for the 'majority' population and that other populations need to learn or be assimilated to them. Yet they are identified in terms of general commitments to democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance for religious belief and no belief. They have also been associated with the Equality Act 2010 and its nine protected characteristics. These describe requirements of non-discrimination that providers of services must meet and are not values enjoined upon the wider public. For example, not discriminating against those with religious commitments does not require individuals to accept that all are equally valid. These are all matters that should have emerged within the reporting of the Trojan Horse affair, but did not, notwithstanding that misconduct cases brought against teachers at the schools at the centre – Park View Educational Trust – collapsed in May 2017 as a consequence of serious misconduct on the part of lawyers acting for the Department for Education.³¹³ This outcome received much less coverage than the initial reporting of the affair, including reports that the cases had collapsed on a '**procedural**' and should not cause anyone to doubt the truth of earlier reports.³¹⁴

³¹¹ <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teachers-are-losing-their-religion-and-breaking-the-rules/>

³¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/21/muslims-british-national-identity-uk-report>

³¹³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/619386/PVL_Panel_decision_and_reasons_for_web.pdf

³¹⁴ <https://www.tes.com/news/trojan-horse-if-anyone-still-any-doubt-practices-uncovered-were-inappropriate-just-listen?platform=hootsuite>.

Framing operates as a shorthand. As this case study will show, reference to the Birmingham Trojan Horse affair – or to the area of Birmingham in which the schools at the centre were located, such as Alum Rock - function within media reports as an index for **'Extremism'** and **'religious intolerance'**.

During the period of our research, this binary framing of liberal values versus religious extremists and references to the so called **'Trojan Horse'** affair surfaced immediately to provide **'context'** to the current row over LGBT lessons in Anderton Park Primary (a local-authority school) and Parkfield Community School (an academy school and part of Excelsior Multi Academy Trust incorporating three other schools). The Daily Mail refers to the **'Trojan Horse'** as **'attempts to impose a hardline Islamic ethos on secular schools in Birmingham'**.³¹⁵ The headteacher at Anderton Park Primary, Sarah Hewitt Clarkson, a central figure in the row, compared the situation with the **'Trojan Horse'** affair, telling Sky News, **'Some of the behaviours are very similar so some of the hand slapping on the table - 'I demand that you will not teach children it's alright to have two mums' - those kind of behaviours are very, very similar if not identical to what happened five, six, seven years ago in Trojan Horse times.'**³¹⁶

Colin Diamond, appointed as Director of Education by Birmingham City Council after the Trojan Horse affair, was quoted by The Guardian as saying, **'These activists are seeking to undermine school leaders of whom they disapprove. No longer able to infiltrate governing bodies, they are now trying to influence policy 'from outside the school gates.'**³¹⁷ From this, we see that the protagonists and their supporters attempted to resurrect the stereotypes of the **'Trojan Horse'** story, casting their opponents as religious extremists. Out of 27 opinion pieces published on the issue just two leaned towards

315 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7089099/Across-country-fundamentalist-Muslims-protesting-LGBT-lessons-class.html>

316 <https://news.sky.com/story/lessons-about-gay-relationships-spark-protests-outside-birmingham-school-11674897>

317 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/26/birmingham-anderton-park-primary-muslim-protests-lgbt-teaching-rights>

explaining the parents' position³¹⁸; 19 articles demonstrated a total disregard for the parents' views with two prominent columns labelling their position as **'bigotry'** and **'Islamic bigotry'**.³¹⁹ An op-ed in The Times newspaper by Melanie Philips labelled both sides in the dispute as **'zealots'**. Phillips was very critical of the notion of parental rights being infringed upon if at Jewish and Christian schools, but less supportive of what she described as **'militant Muslims'**, protesting against the indoctrination of their children.³²⁰

The broad framing of the issue across the publications analysed was of a **'hard-line'**,³²¹ **'mob'**³²² of **'fundamentalist'**³²³ Muslim parents engaged in **'bigotry'**³²⁴ and **'homophobic'**³²⁵ and **'shameful'**³²⁶ protests against a gay schoolteacher and the headteachers who backed him. The protagonists felt **'threatened'**, **'targeted'**³²⁷ and were doing little more than educating children in inclusiveness and diversity.³²⁸ The Sun in its feature piece on the protests chose to note that some of the 50 protesters were dressed in **'black niqabs'**, with no mention of anyone else's dress, or why this detail was in any way relevant.³²⁹ The writer Jack Hutchinson described the reaction from most commentators as **'one that pits a barbarous past against an enlightened future'**.³³⁰ The Economist in several pieces framed the issue between **'conservative Islam and secular thinking on equality.'**³³¹ There was no discussion of how religion is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 and how that involves

318 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/amoral-sex-education-undermines-parents-hb926cz7f> & <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/03/in-defence-of-the-parkfield-community-school-parents/>

319 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/10/there-is-never-a-reason-for-bigotry-at-the-school-gates> & <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/islamic-bigotry-has-been-fuelled-by-the-left-fqtvhq9p>

320 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/schools-are-becoming-a-battle-of-the-zealots-n2vdx9gsr>

321 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-49187566>

322 <https://metro.co.uk/2019/02/11/mob-100-parents-gather-outside-school-protest-gay-teacher-8519344/>

323 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7089099/Across-country-fundamentalist-Muslims-protesting-LGBT-lessons-class.html>

324 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/10/there-is-never-a-reason-for-bigotry-at-the-school-gates>

325 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-48545247>

326 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/shameful-protests-against-lgbt-lessons-start-again-in-birmingham-5sxqz0sss>

327 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-48351401>

328 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-6775057/Birmingham-school-resume-LGBT-equality-lessons.html>

329 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8751787/muslim-protests-gay-lessons-birmingham-primary-school/>

330 <https://unherd.com/2019/07/parkfield-parents-arent-bigots/>

331 <https://www.economist.com/erasmus/2019/03/06/battles-over-lgbt-education-reach-a-messy-stalemate> & <https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/03/07/british-muslim-parents-oppose-lgbt-lessons-in-primary-school>

requirements on schools to accommodate the views of parents.

It is possible for journalists to report on this issue in a way that is critical of the protesting parents as long as sufficient evidence allows for this. However, this should not be done through the use of incendiary adjectives or a false equivalence with the so called 'Trojan Horse' plot. The correct context is vital to give both parties in the dispute a fair hearing.



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Background

At this point it might be helpful to explain some of the background to the protests at each school. CfMM consulted Professor John Holmwood extensively due to his expertise and investigation on the alleged Trojan Horse plot and his analysis of this particular story.³³⁴

³³² <https://metro.co.uk/2019/02/11/mob-100-parents-gather-outside-school-protest-gay-teacher-8519344/>

³³³ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8751787/muslim-protests-gay-lessons-birmingham-primary-school/>

³³⁴ CfMM is grateful to John Holmwood (Previously emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Nottingham) for his analysis of the context.

Parkfield Community School had introduced its curriculum on 'No Outsiders' as part of its approach to its duty to promote British values (introduced by the government in 2014 as part of its revised Prevent strategy to counter non-violent extremism in response to the Trojan Horse affair).³³⁵ The curriculum was a 'whole school' approach and was designed to permeate all its activities. It was a curriculum organised around the Equalities Act 2010, but did so from a LGBTQ perspective.³³⁶

The curriculum issues at Anderton Park Primary School were different. They centred on the introduction of LGBTQ teaching in Relationships and Health Education (sex education is reserved for secondary schools). This is also a statutory requirement on schools and the government had earlier flagged a revision to the guidelines to be introduced from September 2020 on which it had called for consultation and had elicited strong response from a number of religious groups, primarily Christian evangelical. The curriculum changes at Anderton Park Primary School were being introduced in advance of the new guidelines and in expectation of them. In most media reporting the two schools are seen as interchangeable, to the extent that 'No Outsiders' is frequently used generically to describe teaching about LGBTQ relationships at both schools.

The reason why the difference matters is that the existing guidelines (and, indeed, the guidelines from September 2020) strongly recommend that parents and faith groups within local communities should be consulted and that the teaching of relationships education should accommodate their views, including telling pupils about faith perspectives.³³⁷ This is reinforced in the guidelines by asking school leaders to pay attention to the Equality Act 2010

³³⁵ <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/parkfield-school-parents-drop-protests-16017064> & https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

³³⁶ It was based on an ESRC funded research project on approaches to sexualities equality in the primary school conducted by researchers at the University of Sunderland between 2006-9. <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FD00537X%2F1>

³³⁷ As also recommended by the leading educational charity providing curriculum material, Educate and Celebrate, whose slogans and logos were used by the school, although the headteacher denied following their curriculum. See the evaluation of the curriculum by Anna Carlile. <http://www.educateandcelebrate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ECFinal-report-24-June-16ACarlile.pdf>.

and the protected characteristic of religion. Paragraphs 19-21 of the guidance explicitly states that, ‘a good understanding of pupils’ faith backgrounds and positive relationships between the school and local faith communities help to create a constructive context for the teaching of these subjects. In all schools, when teaching these subjects, the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content in this guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010, under which religion or belief are amongst the protected characteristics. All schools may teach about faith perspectives.’³³⁸

The situation is quite different for the teaching of ‘fundamental British values’. There is no requirement for the curriculum to be discussed with parents. Indeed, under the Prevent strategy, Muslim parents are viewed with suspicion especially in relation to their religious commitments and seeking to have them accommodated.

The Equality Act 2010 was bandied about in many of the media stories, but with little clarification of how it applied. For example, with the exception of relationship and health education, parents have no rights under the act with regard to the content of a curriculum (say History, or English), their only rights are associated with its implementation (in the case of relationship and health education involving discussion). The Act applies to the delivery of a service which should be non-discriminatory. For most media sources it is clear how this applies to the delivery of education necessary to protect LGBTQ children from bullying and harrassment. Parents in Birmingham accepted that this was important. However, the requirement of non-discriminatory treatment also applies to religion. So, in the light of the teaching of fundamental British values in schools that are part of a Multi Academy Trust, the question that might be asked is whether the ‘No Outsiders’ curriculum was

³³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/introduction-to-requirements> & https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781150/Draft_guidance_Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education2.pdf.

taught in all four schools of Excelsior Trust. Two of the schools, Parkfield included, were Muslim majority schools (indeed with a very high proportion of Muslim pupils, two were majority white. ‘No Outsiders’ was only taught at the two Muslim schools.

Some publications did recognise that parental rights were central to the story. The Spectator magazine, for example, published an article ‘in defence of the Parkfield Community School Parents’, which looked at the much more pertinent issue of parental authority vis-à-vis state interference. The piece also explored religious belief as an important part of protected characteristics under which the teaching of ‘No Outsiders’ was repeatedly justified by its supporters. Stephen Daisley details the broader questions of consent and the longstanding convention of parents in shaping their children’s characters.

‘Freedom of conscience is being supplanted by coercive tolerance and the family edged out as the fundamental building block of society. Mothers and fathers increasingly find themselves co-parenting with the state. Once you’ve agreed that Andrew Moffat knows better than Fatima Shah what her ten-year-old daughter should be taught about sexual propriety, you have tacitly accepted these new arrangements.’³³⁹

Nonetheless, the Spectator failed to identify that the ‘No Outsiders’ curriculum was associated with the government’s Prevent strategy and the duty to promote fundamental British values which the magazine otherwise supports.

Analysis of omitted details

In our analysis, 254 published pieces were found to be directly focused on the parents’ protests, of which 72 (28%) demonstrated consistent issues with due prominence. This is four times the average over the course of the year, where a total of 7% of articles were found to omit due prominence overall. This indicates that when a news item associated with British Muslim communities comes into

³³⁹ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/in-defence-of-the-parkfield-community-school-parents>

prominence it rapidly polarises as a consequence of how opinion/comment pieces interact with news reporting.

We have provided a general background to the stories and the problem of conflating the two schools which was, nonetheless, common across all reporting. We now turn to details relevant to the story which were not mentioned in the majority of news or comment pieces. These included:

No explanation of the relation of the 'No Outsiders' curriculum to Prevent

- Hazel Pulley, the CEO of Parkfield Primary justified the teaching of the programme under the banner of the controversial Prevent programme, seen by many Muslims as a tool for spying.³⁴⁰ The presentation was posted on the school website (but has now been removed) and claimed that the 'No Outsiders' programme can 'reduce radicalisation.'³⁴¹ This was further compounded by the claim by Andrew Moffatt that his teaching and resource 'can help stop terror attacks.'³⁴² This use of the programme by its originator and supporters was again not scrutinised by most media outlets. It was mainly a secondary detail in just six published articles.



340 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/muslims-prevent-scheme-seen-spying-says-terrorism-law-watchdog-a7347751.html>

341 <http://discoversociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/hazelpulley.pdf>

342 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6841267/Teacher-centre-gay-rights-row-says-LGBT-classes-help-fight-terrorism.html>

No detailed examination of the 'No Outsiders' Curriculum

- 'No Outsiders' is a teaching programme for primary school children aged 4 to 11. Its supporters claim it is a resource to 'promote community cohesion', 'a pledge to ideas of tolerance' and that it 'inspires global citizenship.' The stated mission of the programme is that it 'prepares young people and adults for life as global citizens, reducing potential for terrorism and promoting community cohesion.' Many of the articles under analysis referred to it as 'LGBT equality' or 'LGBT inclusive' lessons. Very few of the articles probed the actual content of the curriculum or its origins and stated aims.

A BBC explainer featuring a timeline of the row suggests that the 'No Outsiders' was 'created' by Moffatt 'to teach children about the Equality Act 2010 and British values.' Yet, no examination of this claim or the curriculum is made in any of the media coverage. A more in-depth look can be found in the work of former BBC journalist Shelly Charlesworth. Writing for Transgender Trend from a 'gender critical perspective' she indicates concerns about the ideological orientation of the curriculum and its promotion of a particular approach to transgender issues.³⁴³ None of the media articles analysed in this research mentioned this aspect of the 'No Outsiders' programme. This despite it being one of the parents' central claims, namely that the curriculum purported to be about all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, yet was heavily focused on LGBTQ issues and transgender in particular at the expense of other characteristics including Religion and Belief.³⁴⁴

Charlesworth's research further found how over half of the books in the 'No Outsiders' scheme which could be grouped according to the protected characteristics were found to fit into just two of these, namely Gender Reassignment and Sexual Orientation.³⁴⁵

343 <https://www.transgendertrend.com/no-outsiders-queering-primary-classroom/>

344 <https://www.transgendertrend.com/no-outsiders-queering-primary-classroom/>

345 <https://www.transgendertrend.com/no-outsiders-queering-primary-classroom/>

*'parents have a point when they say the programme is weighted towards LGBT issues.'*³⁴⁶

Among Charlesworth's findings are that Moffat's teaching material should not be used. **'When he talks about 'transgender identity' or 'gender identity' he is in fact introducing into primary schools a contentious ideology.'**³⁴⁷

'Queer theory' is a prominent academic approach, but it is generally hostile to being used in defence of liberal norms.³⁴⁸ Indeed, a letter signed by over 75 pro-LGBT+ members and organisers in The Independent, described the implementation of **'No Outsiders'** as suggesting **'a colonial 'civilising' attitude towards Muslim communities, which contributes to a harmful and inaccurate stereotype of an uncivilised and intolerant Muslim culture.'**³⁴⁹ It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Muslim parents in Birmingham were drawn into a contested gender politics regardless of the fact that neither side in that politics – gender critical feminists or Queer theorists – approved of the way that a curriculum that ostensibly expressed their sensibilities was being promoted. In other words, Muslim parents were vilified as bigoted and extremist when their arguments were shared by others whose views are otherwise given due prominence by the media.

Initial complaints by parents were the spark for the protests, specifically two mothers who, in a regional press interview, stated that their children had come home and declared that it was okay for them to choose to be of the opposite gender.³⁵⁰ The evidence above would indicate that the makeup of the **'No Outsiders'** curriculum, alongside the founder's history and beliefs around sexual politics, warranted greater scrutiny.

346 Ibid

347 <https://www.transgendertrend.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RSE-Parliamentary-Briefing-No-Outsiders.pdf>

348 <https://discoversociety.org/2019/03/20/rapid-response-religion-british-values-and-equalities-teaching/>

349 <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/lgbt-no-outsiders-rse-birmingham-muslim-prevent-values-a9092781.html>

350 <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/muslim-mums-protest-outside-school-15729135>

Tolerance and Intolerance

The message of tolerance was only mentioned in relation to Muslim tolerance of the other and not the tolerance of others toward Muslims

- According to Professor John Holmwood: *'There was no address of other topics and lesson plans to consider how suitable the curriculum was to ethnic minority children. For example, the different family forms that were addressed included heterosexual, same sex and single parent families, but there were no examples of extended families and multi-generational households. The illustration of the need for religious tolerance was exemplified by lessons on anti-Semitism, and the need for tolerance of Christians by Muslims, but there were no lessons discussing Islamophobia. And, as has been suggested, these lessons were not considered important in schools with a white majority pupil intake. This implied that the issue of tolerance was specific to Muslims and not other groups.'*

Andrew Moffatt's previous history

Andrew Moffatt had been required to resign from a previous school in 2014 before the duty to promote British values was introduced after it was discovered that he had introduced materials on LGBTQ relationships without discussion with governors and parents. He used them anyway.

- The teacher at the centre of the row, Andrew Moffatt, was forced to resign from Chilwell Croft Academy in Birmingham in 2014. The reason for his resignation was his decision to go against the directive of school governors, and teach his **'Challenging Homophobia in Schools'** resource, despite parents at the school also being opposed to it³⁵¹ - an episode which Moffatt himself has described as **'a disaster.'**³⁵² Despite The Sunday Times, Daily Telegraph, Metro, Independent and Guardian all reporting the story in 2014, this detail was absent in the majority of the

351 <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/andrew-moffatt-assistant-head-parkfield-community-school/>

352 <http://www.innovatemyschool.com/ideas/no-outsiders-in-your-school-interview>

subsequent reporting.³⁵³ It was mentioned in 17 out of the 254 published pieces on the issue. When it was reported, there was no reference to Moffatt's own role in going against the school directives, with a Guardian news report describing the episode as the teacher having **'left his previous job because of a backlash over his sexuality.'**³⁵⁴

This detail is important because the parents at Parkfield accused Andrew Moffat of promoting **'his personal beliefs'** independent of the requirements of the directives to teach according to the 2010 Equalities Act.³⁵⁵ A teacher with a history of doing exactly this at a previous school is a relevant detail.³⁵⁶ Additionally, Andrew Moffatt's role at the time of the dispute was partly due to his own admission of choosing a school in an area that would invite a challenge to the work and ideas he was aiming to promote.³⁵⁷ In a 2017 interview with Schools-Week, Moffat acknowledged the sentiments of the school's community:

*'You're talking about thousands of years of religious belief. You can't just say 'tough'. You know the slogan, 'Some people are gay. Get over it'? That's no good for my parents. Instead you say, 'There are different people everywhere', and it's not about 'we are right' or 'you are right', but that we are helping prepare the children for all the different people they will meet. They can decide themselves.'*³⁵⁸

Mislabelling of characteristics in the Equalities Act

- The approach which Mr Moffatt and the school took when interpreting the Equalities Act was also not scrutinised. Six posters around the Anderton Park Primary school perimeter listed the nine characteristics in the Equalities Act renaming two of them: **'Sex'** is listed as **'Gender'**, and **'Gender Reassignment'**

353 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/gay-teacher-resigns-after-parent-protest-3tp2kxnf25n>

354 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/feb/21/teacher-targeted-over-lgbt-work-shortlisted-for-1m-global-award>

355 <https://5pillarsuk.com/2019/02/07/muslim-parents-protest-against-birmingham-schools-lgbt-promotion/>

356 <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/andrew-moffat-assistant-head-parkfield-community-school/>

357 <http://www.innovatemychool.com/ideas/no-outsiders-in-your-school-interview>

358 <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/andrew-moffat-assistant-head-parkfield-community-school/>

as **'Transgender Identity'**.³⁵⁹

According to John Holmwood: *'The approach which Mr Moffatt and the school took when interpreting the Equalities Act was also not scrutinised. Posters on the railings around the Anderton Park Primary school perimeter listed the nine characteristics in the Equalities Act rename two of them: 'Sex' is listed as 'Gender', and 'Gender Reassignment' as 'Transgender Identity'. Moreover, the placing of posters on the fence facing the parents as they brought their children to the school was regarded by them as provocative.*³⁶⁰ *The fact that the school had placards on the railing as part of its everyday presentation to parents bringing their children to school was not reported despite their own placards being perceived as provocative.*³⁶¹

This is an important detail which lends support to claimants' suspicions against the **'No Outsiders'** programme, particularly the allegation that Andrew Moffatt was pushing a personal and proselytising agenda through the programme. Current material being produced and sold by the **'No Outsiders'** charity replicates this misrepresentation found in the previous poster, suggesting this was not simply a mistake.³⁶²

Teachers' Claims

- A feature of the coverage of the row between teachers and parents is the lack of scrutiny around the claims made by the teachers at the centre of the row. One claim repeated across several publications by teachers was that the curriculum that was being implemented was strictly in line with the law.³⁶³ A Press Association report stated that **'No Outsiders'** teaches according to the Equalities Act' and reported the school's assistant

359 <https://www.transgendertrend.com/no-outsiders-queering-primary-classroom/>

360 As told to John Holmwood by parents

361 As told to John Holmwood by parents

362 <https://no-outsiders.com/shop-1>

363 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/07/dont-celebrate-gay-people-just-accept-us-says-teacher-at-centre-of-schools-row>

headteacher (Andrew Moffat) as saying, 'it could not pick and choose which elements of it to apply.'³⁶⁴

- However, John Holmwood states that: 'As we have seen, it teaches in relation to the Equalities Act, but the lesson plans associated with it do 'pick and choose'.'
- This is an important point centred around the complaints many parents had about the school's dismissal of their concerns with some alleging that they were told the law set out what the teachers must do. Sarah Hewett Clarkson, the headteacher at Anderton Park Primary, told the Mail Online 'The law is there as a mark in the sand and that's what we all have to promote and understand and aspire to.'³⁶⁵

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 include provisions such as, 'schemes of work do not undermine... tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' and 'encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equalities Act.'³⁶⁶

A reasonable interpretation of this would query whether what was being implemented in these schools was in fact an absolute legal requirement as repeatedly claimed by the protagonists. The rights of the parents as enshrined in the Equality Act can also be said to have been impeded. The headteacher of Anderton Park, Hewitt Clarkson, conceded this point in her 'damning' indictment of guidance notes on SRE legislation which states 'there is no requirement for them to teach' LGBT content.'³⁶⁷ This suggests that the row was not simply unreasonable opposition by parents, which was the primary focus of online news coverage, but also an issue of interpretation of the law and legislation and the implementation thereof.

In 2014 Hewitt Clarkson had openly admitted to not consulting

³⁶⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jul/15/lgbt-lessons-row-parkfield-school-birmingham-government-slow-response-protests>

³⁶⁵ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7069071/Head-teacher-school-centre-anti-LGBT-protests-hits-sinister-demonstrators.html>

³⁶⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made>

³⁶⁷ <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/sarah-hewitt-clarkson-headteacher-anderton-park-primary-school-birmingham/>

with parents about the implementation of the Challenging Homophobia in Primary Schools (CHiPs) curriculum.³⁶⁸ Similarly, Hewett Clarkson described the idea of having to 'consult' with the parents as mentioned in explicit guidance from Government as 'very inflammatory.'³⁶⁹

According to John Holmwood: 'This statement is made despite the fact that the guidance references religion as a protected characteristic.'

The fact that two senior teachers accused by parents of having a contemptuous attitude towards their concerns would openly admit to bypassing potential concerns of an entire faith community is again a central detail in the affair and worthy of greater mention throughout the coverage.

John Holmwood says: 'It is not simply the senior teachers that failed to consult with parents, but also the journalists who treated the fact of the protest as an indication of discriminatory attitudes toward LGBT individuals.'

Some articles focussed on the alleged 'threats' towards teachers, as well as 'intimidation' of parents not supportive of the protests. Thirty articles referred to parents or protests as 'angry', with The Sun headlining them as 'Angry Muslim Protests.'³⁷⁰ Teachers and supporters of the 'No Outsiders' curriculum were quoted as 'feeling scared'³⁷¹ and 'threatened', whilst these alleged threats were the focus of several news pieces including Sarah Hewitt Clarkson's claim that the protests were 'a threat to society.'³⁷²

The omission of relevant facts and details from reporting on the row in Birmingham schools was even exhibited on the letters pages in The Guardian, where a letter organised by pro-LGBT teaching

³⁶⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/nov/11/primary-school-headteacher-attacked-fighting-homophobia>

³⁶⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/26/birmingham-anderton-park-primary-muslim-protests-lgbt-teaching-rights>

³⁷⁰ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8751787/muslim-protests-gay-lessons-birmingham-primary-school/>

³⁷¹ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8751787/muslim-protests-gay-lessons-birmingham-primary-school/>

³⁷² <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8751787/muslim-protests-gay-lessons-birmingham-primary-school/> & <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/birmingham-school-protests-threaten-our-way-of-life-l9sft0wc7>

groups and including members of religion and belief groups was published alongside an article urging the Department for Education to not back down on LGBT guidance.³⁷³ An opposing letter of over 140 signatures from U.K. religious leaders, educators, professionals and school leaders from the Values Foundation, a group promoting **'traditional family values'** was not published despite its signatories stating they had sent it to the paper.³⁷⁴

We hope that the details and evidence provided in the Birmingham schools case study are food for thought and prompt journalists and editors to look back on their coverage and recognise the damage caused by stories that omit due prominence and report on complicated issues. It is very possible that similar perspectives could be covered, without missing key details, without using well-known tropes and without demonising Muslims. Many commentators were able to do this - but many articles failed to do so

373 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/11/dont-back-down-on-lgbt-guidance-faith-leaders-urge-dfe>
& <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/11/all-schools-should-encourage-respect-and-lgbt-acceptance>

374 <https://values.foundation/open-letter-to-the-secretary-of-state-for-education-damian-hinds/>

Section 2

Broadcast

Broadcast

Since 2006, academics observed how broadcast media coverage on a global level has represented Muslims as underdeveloped, illiterate, homeless and orchestrators of failed states.³⁷⁵ More recent examples of false information being published have led one mainstream commentator to declare that reporting on Muslims has gone from dog-whistling to fear-mongering, to complete fabrication without consequences.³⁷⁶ More recent studies have shown that media depictions of Muslims as terrorists have led to a widespread support for restrictive public policies as well as support for military action in Muslim countries.³⁷⁷

The majority of the British public say what they know about Muslims & Islam comes from the media.³⁷⁸ What is shown on our screens therefore contributes to how the public at large perceives those among them but also impacts on the lives of those being reported on and portrayed. Islamophobia is real and a major concern for British Muslims. Widespread falsehoods promoted by far-right individuals, organisations and political forces makes conditions harder for Muslims both at home and abroad. The amplification of these messages on mainstream British television channels, including on topical news and debate programmes, is a worrying trend. Commentators known for their entrenched hatred of Muslims as well as so-called experts who have made a career out of polemics against Islam are routinely given a platform on television and often go unchallenged when they make false claims about Muslim and/or Islam.

Fictionalised representations of Muslims are framed within conflict paradigms pitting 'austere' and 'intolerant' Muslim characters (played often by non-Muslims) against the more 'modern', 'liberal' Muslim. The actor Riz Khan has spoken extensively about the lack

³⁷⁵ Elizabeth Poole & John Richardson, *Muslims and the News Media* (New York 2006)

³⁷⁶ Dominic Abrams, Hannah Swift & Diane Houston, *Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain*, 11-Oct-2018 at www.equalityhumanrights.com

³⁷⁷ <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/news-media-affects-how-muslims-are-perceived-treated>

³⁷⁸ March 2018 'A Review of survey research on Muslims in Britain', Ipsos MORI, pp.80

of representation and the embedding of negative representations in films.³⁷⁹

Forty seven percent of broadcast clips in this study associated negative aspects and behaviours with Muslims and/or Islam.

This is not to say everything on British television is anti-Muslim. As this study shows regional channels particularly in news have a higher proportion of stories which show a supportive sentiment towards Muslims and their issues as opposed to antagonism. Yet, the reverse is true for national channels, suggesting that on a macro level the discussions around Muslims and Islam remain confrontational and negative.

The team monitored 38 channels including all regional broadcasters and analysed 5,512 broadcast clips relating to Islam and Muslims on a daily basis for one year, and used the same methodology used for online publications to analyse TV clips that contained one or more of our 58 keywords, including derivatives.³⁸⁰

Each unique clip is categorised by one of eight programme genres (News, News Investigation, Topical Debate, Religious Programming, Documentary, Drama, Entertainment and Sport) and assessed against five key metrics (see methodology).

Key Findings

379 <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2021/06/riz-ahmed-is-fed-up-with-lack-of-muslim-representation-in-hollywood>

380 See Appendix C

Bias

When assessed by genre, Drama had the highest percentage of 'Biased' and 'Very Biased' clips with 1/3rd of all Drama clips assessed being either 'Biased' (31%) or 'Very Biased' (3%).³⁸¹

Fictional works often portrayed Muslims and their beliefs as intolerant and in conflict with superior liberal values.

17% of clips had an 'Antagonistic Bias' (17%), almost twice the amount of 'Supportive Bias' clips (9%).

Regional channels (BBC and ITV) had the highest proportion of clips which showed 'Supportive Bias' (36%)

Negative Aspects & Behaviours

47% of all clips showed Muslims and/or Islam in a manner which presented negative aspects and/or behaviour.

Generalisations

9% of Broadcast clips made generalising claims about Muslims and/or Islam overall. All national TV stations either equalled or exceeded this figure with Channel 4 having double the proportion of generalised clips (18%).

Right-wing pundits were frequently left unchallenged when making generalisations against Muslims including falsehoods.

³⁸¹ See Table 2 in Appendix M: Only genres with total number of clips over 50 have been considered.

Due Prominence

11% of all broadcast clips analysed omitted due prominence to a relevant Muslim voice or perspective.

All national channels exceeded the average of 11 per cent of clips which omitted due prominence however there was no stand out offender with four national channels all showing 12 per cent of clips having omitted due prominence.

BBC and ITV regional channels had the lowest percentage of clips which omitted due prominence as well as a greater percentage of clips which showed 'Supportive Bias'. This could possibly suggest that the greater representation of Muslim voices and views contributes to a more positive as well as accurate picture of Muslims and/or Islam.

Misrepresentation

11 per cent of clips were rated as having misrepresented any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief

Religious programming and topical debate programmes have the highest percentage of clips which featured a misrepresentation.³⁸²

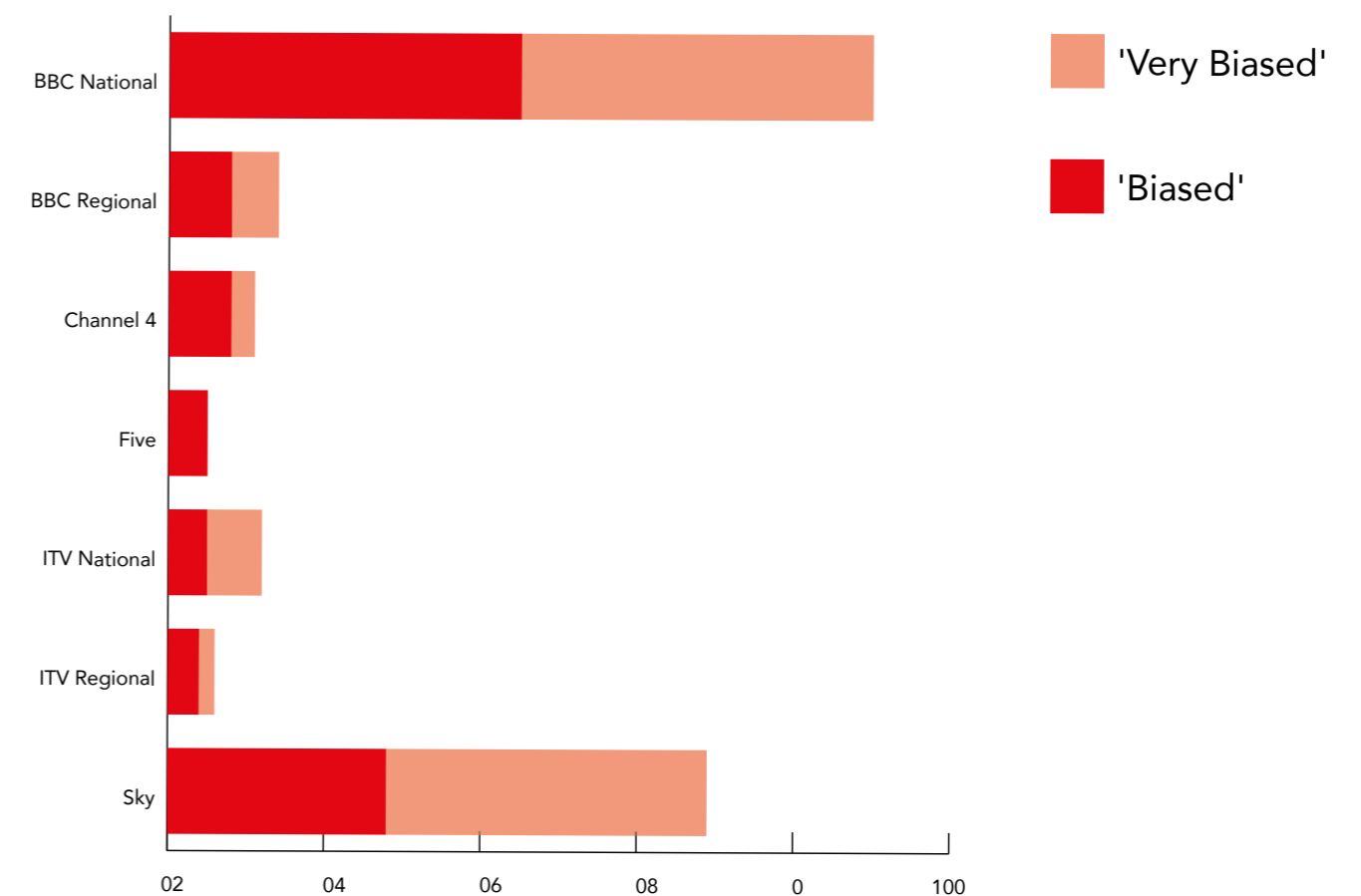
The third genre with the highest percentage of misrepresentation is documentaries suggesting that the long form programming which has scope for more careful and considered representation is often a medium for sensationalism and a misconstruing of narratives.

³⁸² For full table see Appendix M

Bias

45% of the clips rated as 'Biased' came from NNC national channels, that's almost twice as many as Sky (28%) whilst ITV accounted for 8%. For clips rated as 'Very Biased' BBC national channels were again the main offenders responsible for 45% of those rated as such. However, Sky News made up 40% of these clips despite broadcasting less than half the total number of clips as per BBC. There is an inherent danger in the level of bias of these channels given that they are often treated as accurate sources. An OFCOM report showed that 72% of people view the BBC as accurate whilst the figure for Sky news is 76%.³⁸³

Graphic 2: Proportion of clips rated as 'Biased' or 'Very Biased' in the 'News' genre by station



'Antagonistic' and 'Supportive Bias'

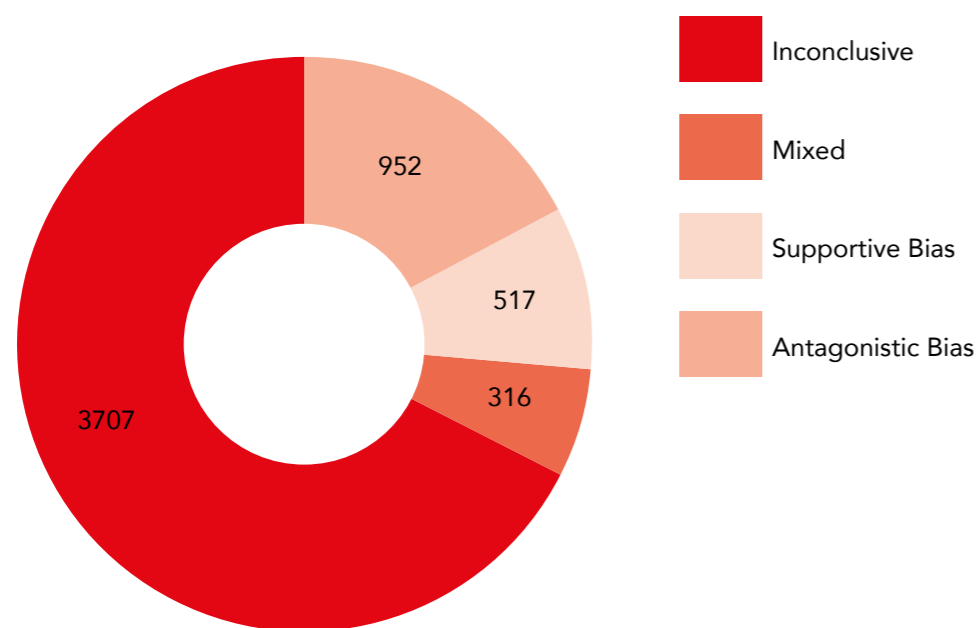
Clips were all rated for text/Speech Bias which is a judgment

³⁸³ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/207228/third-bbc-annual-report.pdf

on the overall slant of the broadcast in its attitude, approach or leaning towards Muslims and/or Islam. It is by definition subjective, however, it is evidence led in that it must demonstrate a clear anti-Muslim/anti-Islam slant to be considered **'Antagonistic'** whilst the opposite is required for it to be **'Supportive'**. Similarly, when a clip has elements of both pro and anti-sentiments, it is rated as **'Mixed'**. For clips which are neutral in approach or lack necessary information to make a judgement on their slant, these are rated as **'Inconclusive'**.

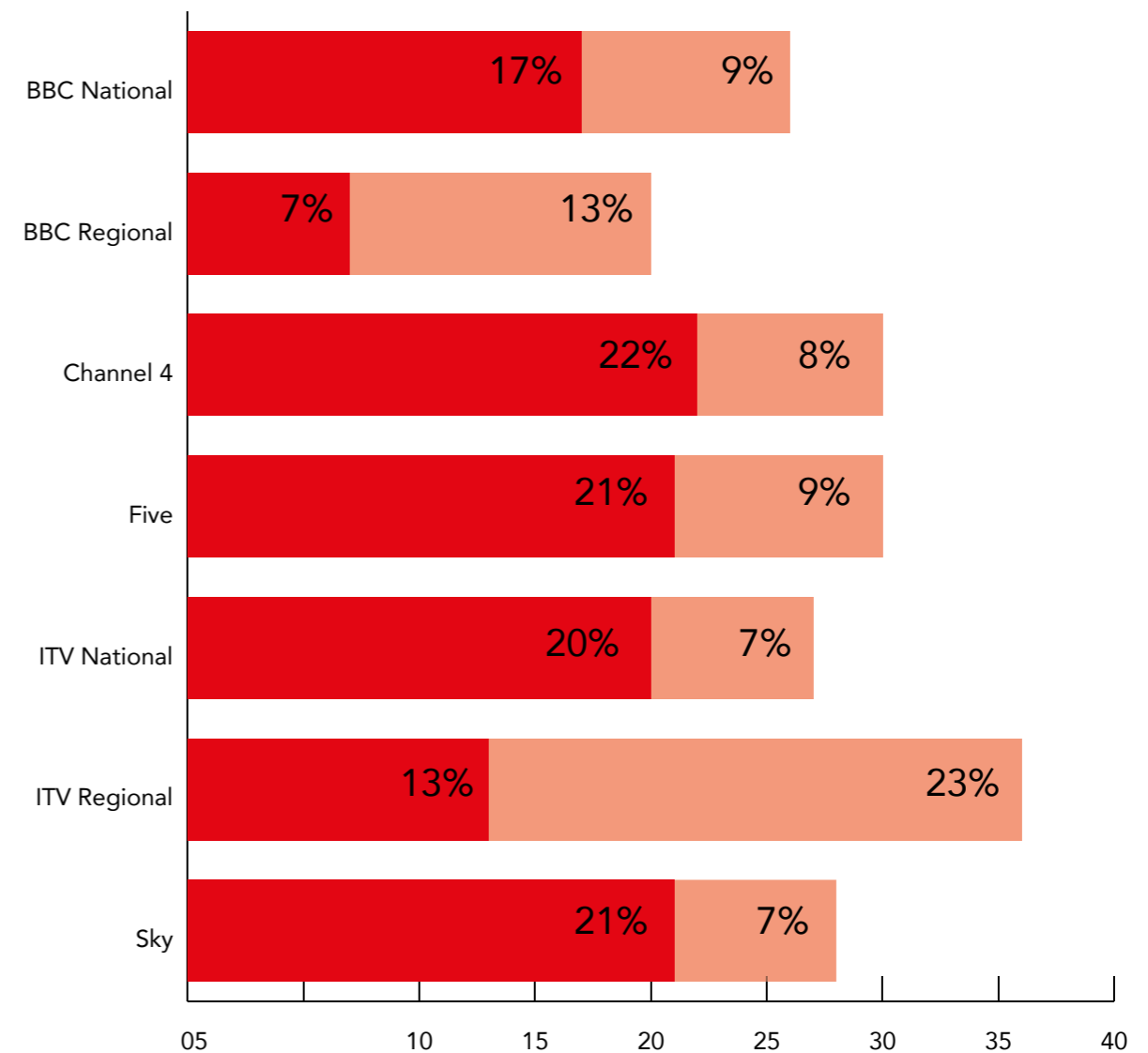
Whilst less than 9% of all clips were rated as having a **'Supportive Bias'** almost twice as many (17%) had an **'Antagonistic Bias'** against Muslims and/or Islam, with two thirds (67%) remaining inconclusive.

Graphic 4: Number of clips rated with one of four speech bias ratings



All national channels had a ratio of either 2:1 or 3:1 in favour of clips rated as having an **'Antagonistic Bias'** compared with those rated as **'Supportive'**. Regional channels showed the opposite where clips featuring **'Supportive Bias'** were more frequent than those showing antagonism.³⁸⁴

Graphic 5: Proportion of Clips rated as 'Supportive' or 'Antagonistic Bias' for Each Channel(s)



One of the reasons why BBC and ITV regional channels have a higher proportion of clips rated as exhibiting **'Supportive Bias'** is partly as a result of their choice and coverage of news stories vis a vis Muslims and Islam. Stories involving local initiatives by Muslim communities as well as the Islamophobic hate crimes targeted against Muslims and mosques find a place on regional bulletins far more than on the national channels where Muslims are still viewed through a security lens and frequently discussed vis a vis terrorism and in conflict with modern liberal values. Examples of such coverage can be found in later sections of this report.

384 See full set of numbers in Appendix M

Negative Aspects and Behaviours

Almost half the clips analysed (47%) showed Muslims and/or Islam in a negative manner with Muslim subjects engaging in negative behaviour.³⁸⁵ This in itself is not necessarily problematic given that overall, news coverage consists of negative themes. In particular, Muslim countries in the Middle East are often only the subject of news in times of war, terror or when there are sectarian divides (Shi'ite-Sunni) which inevitably involve conflict.

When reporting news, broadcasters can argue that they are responding to events as they occur, and as such, negative aspects and behaviours of people, communities or ideas are simply reflective of what is actually taking place in the world. However, on certain occasions the editorial choices of editors, producers and journalists also influences how Muslims and/or Islam are represented on the screen. As our Case Study below shows news packages can also be manufactured in a way which take sides and promote the views of one party as 'reasonable' in opposition to a more 'unreasonable' and 'fanatical' opposition. Other genres, such as documentaries and topical news programmes can be more flexible in the choice of how or what they portray and thus more open to manufacturing a particular situation or view point.

Provoking Muslims On The Street

In a documentary broadcast on the BBC 2 called 'The Satanic Verses: 30 Years On', the presenter seems to be trying to provoke a certain reaction from Muslims going about their daily lives in Bradford. He approaches Muslims in the city's main square with a copy of the Satanic Verses, quoting what some would consider offending passages in the book to them.³⁸⁶ One man grabs the book out of the presenter's hand before fleeing and allegedly burning it. The presenter, despite getting the reaction he most likely wanted, then portrays himself as the victim of the saga. It

³⁸⁵ See Appendix M for full set of data

³⁸⁶ The Satanic Verses, 30 Years On, BBC 2, Feb 27, 2019 09:54 PM BST

can be argued that if the aim of such an exercise was to gauge how Muslims felt about the work 30 years after the initial furore, this could have been achieved in a variety of less provocative ways. For example, a group discussion with genuinely interested parties or participants who could give a considered argument against the text. It also raises the question as to whether any other religious or ethnic group would have been confronted by journalist with a text, image or object which they find offensive or has been the cause of previous angst? This manufacturing of a situation also opens up questions of journalistic ethics and the true purpose of such an exercise.

Graphic 6: *The Satanic Verses, 30 Years On*, BBC 2, Feb 27, 2019



Making Protesting Muslim Parents Into A Security Threat

One of the major domestic stories of 2019 involved protests outside two Birmingham primary schools by the area's predominantly Muslim parents over what they perceived as the LGBT indoctrination of their children. The story was subject to feature length reports on news bulletins as well as a major topic for discussion on topical debate shows. The clear bias of the programme makers was noticeable in how the testimony and words of the teachers and their claims of intimidation were accepted in good faith. Titles of programmes included **'Enemy at the gates'** and the story was introduced and framed as **'a threat to democracy'** by Trevor Phillips on Sky News' *The Pledge*.³⁸⁷

Graphic 7: Screenshot from *the Pledge* describing Muslim parents as *'Enemy at the gates'*



A frequent claim against a prominent protester on the side of the parents was how he had no children of his own in the school. A similar caveat was not applied to a pro-LGBT advocate who was featured regularly across the various channels including the BBC and Sky News.

Another feature of this particular story was that news agenda

³⁸⁷ Trevor Phillips speaking on *The Pledge* on Sky News, SKY NEWS, May 30 2019, 08:33 PM BST

centred around the claims of contributors who corresponded with the liberal bias of the media, however much of a minority they may be in their own particular context or community. The good-Muslim bad-Muslim dichotomy is applied, with those considered as acceptable in accordance with liberal values given the role of commentators.

One particular example of this is the choice of the BBC to question and feature the Commissioner for countering Extremism, Sara Khan- a controversial figure among many British Muslims. The choice of featuring a Counter Extremism Tsar for a matter related to education effectively couches the Muslim actors in this story as a security threat, 'a mob' in the words of Ms Khan.³⁸⁸

Generalisations

³⁸⁸ BBC Breakfast, BBC 1, July 15 2019, 06:09AM BST interview with Sara Khan

Nine percent of Broadcast clips analysed were assessed to have made a generalising claim about Muslims and/or Islam overall. All national TV stations either equalled or exceeded this figure with Channel 4 having double the amount at 19%. One third of all clips contained one or more generalisation about Muslims or Islam.

One of the reasons for the very high percentage of generalised claims in Channel 4 clips (19%) was due to the 'Drama' genre which had the highest percentage of clips containing a generalisation (each genre assessed had to have a minimum 20 clips broadcast). One third of all 'Drama' clips contained one or more generalisation about Muslims or Islam. Fictional representations of Muslims allow for greater license to generalise a belief system, person or particular community. The Muslim characters in these dramas are shown as oppressed or only able to find happiness and freedom outside their religion. Muslims as a community are shown in a very stereotypical and even caricatured manner. Of note is also the fact that most of the actors portraying Muslim characters are themselves not Muslims.

Graphic 8: Generalised claims for each channel by percentage

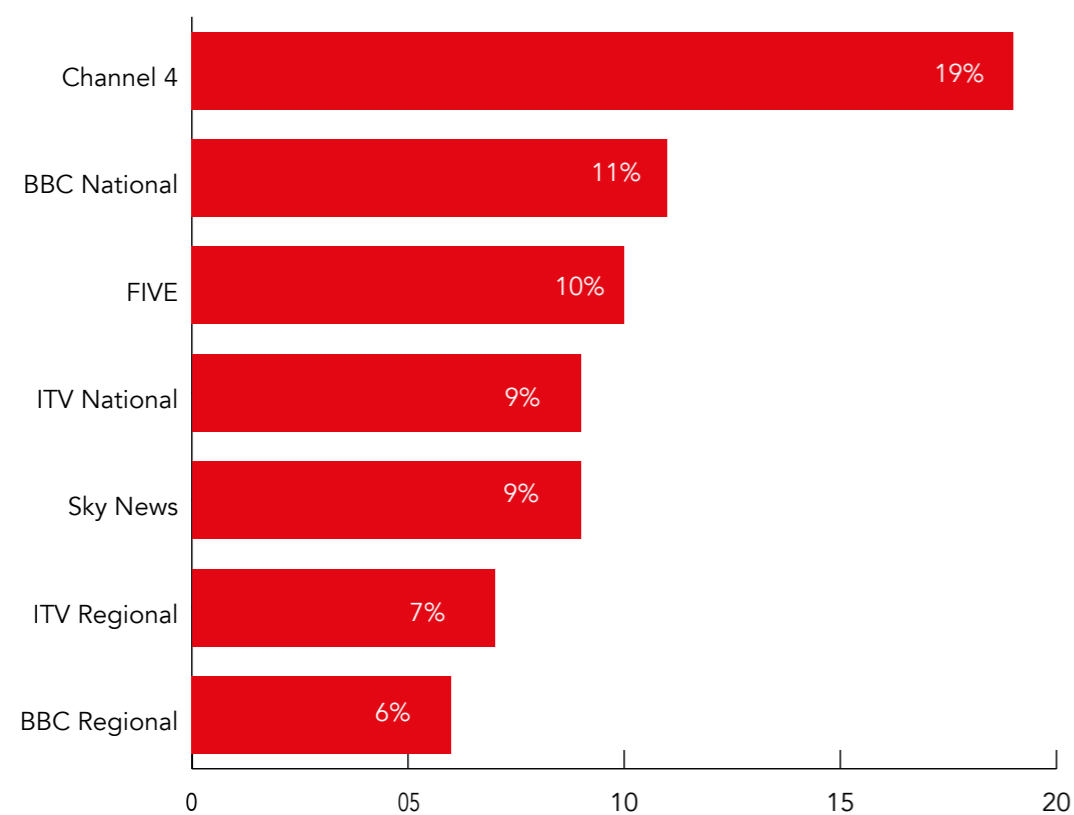


Table 1: Comparative breakdown of generalisations across genre

Genre	Rating (Y)	Total no. of clips	%
Debate	23	175	13%
Documentary	85	635	13%
Drama	48	140	34%
Entertainment	68	586	12%
News	290	3195	7%
News Investigation	0	19	0%
Religious Programming	4	11	36%
Sports	3	19	16%



Generalisations in Drama

One drama with a prominent representation of Muslim characters was *'Ackley Bridge'*, which aired on Channel 4 during the period under analysis.

Ackley Bridge

The drama centres on the merging of two comprehensive schools in a fictional Yorkshire mill town, bringing together Pakistani Muslims and White working class students and staff. The main Muslim character, student Nasreen Paracha, is a girl chafing against her family's **'traditional'** values, many of which are cultural but presented as Islamic. Paracha is faced with being subjected to an arranged marriage with a man from Pakistan (a cultural practice). She hates hijab (a normative Islamic practice) and is shown shoplifting and drinking alcohol while wearing it.

Paracha engages in several homosexual relationships, including one with a white supremacist and another with a former teacher. To hide her sexual preference, she contracts a sham marriage with another gay Muslim character, Naveed Haider. The supposed conflict of traditional and monotheistic based family values, including issues of personal morality, are among the main narratives in *Ackley Bridge*.

Whilst producers and researchers may well point to examples and incidents in justifying why such issues need to be tackled in drama, values based on an Islamic ethos are represented as repressive with the protagonists often railing against these and family structures in a bid for freedom. The homosexual Muslim character is the archetype of this battle between supposed oppressive family and traditions versus the freedom to do as one pleases. In drama, it has become an almost constant storyline for the last few years on British television.

Suggesting Muslim societies are primitive

- In one episode, one of the characters, science teacher Rashid Hyatt, is shown confronting a group of young men with the

intention of protecting the **'Honour'** of his fellow staff member and love interest, Kaneez Paracha who is depicted as feeling **'intimidated'** by the group. In the dialogue, the group mock an angry Hyatt, and accuse him of being a kaafir (active disbeliever against God's commands). It can be argued that Hyatt's response reinforces the stereotype of Islam as being backwards and primitive:

*'Cos I don't act like a thug? Cos I don't disrespect women? This is not some backwater village in Pakistan you know!' ... 'This is 21st Century Britain, you want to get used to it.'*³⁸⁹

- While the character of Rashid Hyatt is clearly the good guy in the scene (and defending his lover is portrayed as an admirable act) his reaction to the insults thrown at him perpetuates the trope of civilised West versus uncivilised Muslim world. In responding to the accusation of him being an active disbeliever in Islam, Hyatt's words can imply that violence and misogyny are part of Islam, or are characteristics of Muslims. Hyatt then suggests that the group's behaviour belongs to **'some backwater village in Pakistan.'** There is no indication that the antagonists in the scene come from anywhere other than Bradford, yet their behaviour is linked to Pakistan, a country with a majority Muslim population. In declaring that this is **'21st Century Britain'**, Hyatt completes the comparison.
- In another scene Rashid and the friends and family of Kaneez throw a surprise engagement party for her. The lovers are found outside at the rear of Kaneez's home where Rashid attempts to propose with a ring. In doing so, the excited Rashid has the wherewithal to declare that his romantic offering is **'not strictly in the Islamic tradition.'** This statement is factually incorrect as there is nothing within the **'Islamic tradition'** that prohibits such a gesture or offering. The likely message of such dialogue is to firstly portray Islam as a strict and austere tradition devoid of romantic gestures as on this occasion. Secondly, it portrays Islam

as alien to the way such things are done in modern Western or British culture which again places Islam as the other.³⁹⁰

Clash of cultures

The Channel 4 series **'Hollyoaks'**, set in a fictional suburb of Chester, also had a plot centred around a Muslim family, the Maaliks, whose children were consistently depicted being in conflict with their mother. One scene aired on 14 March 2019 shows the mother arranging a dinner party for who she believes to be her son's fiancé. The scene has four separate occasions of rebellious behaviour centred around the theme of a clash of cultures. These clashes, although minor, were said by the son (Azim Malik) to be a result of his Aunt wanting to **'define herself by her Indian heritage and... ..Islamic traditions.'**³⁹¹

The dinner party was part of what reviewers called **'special far-right episode'** where an impressionable young white man is introduced to a group who have an anti-Muslim agenda and are shown to attack an Asian man who comes into a pub. The conflict among the Maalik family whilst said to be a discussion about what being a British Muslim means to different members of the family, is again pitting a group of characters against traditional values which are presented as being restrictive or intolerant. Whilst the decision to feature a storyline around the very real threat posed to Muslims by the far-right is admirable, this is done simultaneously with the idea that traditional cultural or Islamic values are also an anathema for young British Muslims.

Intolerant Religious Beliefs

ITV's **'Coronation Street'** is Britain's longest running soap and has in recent years seen an influx of Muslim characters to the street.

- One storyline involved Rana Nazir who is married to Zeedan Nazir. Their union, described as a so-called **'love marriage'**, is threatened when Rana embarks on an affair with a female friend

³⁹⁰ Ackley Bridge, Channel 4, Jul 02, 2019 08:05 pm

³⁹¹ Hollyoaks, Channel 4 Mar 14, 2019 06:35 pm

(Kate O'Connor) and comes out as homosexual (against the traditions and beliefs of her family). Her affair with Kate, which is in actual fact an act of infidelity, turns into a saga featuring an **'intolerant'** Muslim family trying to save face in the community. It is implied that her oppressive family, culture and religion prevented her from **'coming out'** sooner. The family are shown, among other things, trying to kidnap Rana, with the help of her vengeful ex-husband, in a plot to send her to Pakistan. Her religious background is exceptionalised and portrayed as the only motivating factor in her parent's reaction to her coming out even though there are likely to have been many other factors.

- Another infamous portrayal of the intolerant Muslim family is found in an episode centred around the funeral of the now deceased character Rana Nazir. Her fictional brother Imran Nazir berates their mother Saira who is keen to organise Rana's funeral in line with the recommended Islamic guidance of burying the deceased within 24 hours.³⁹²

Mother (Saira Nazir): **'We need to plan the funeral, there's a lot to do before tomorrow.'**

Imran Nazir: **'She's having a western funeral, so there's no rush.'**

Mother: **'She's having a Muslim burial.'**

Imran Nazir: **'You are such a hypocrite. You're only doing this because that's what's expected of you.'**

Mother: **'What's that supposed to mean?'**

Imran Nazir: **'Why would you celebrate her life now? you hated who she was.'**

Mother: **'We need to wash her body and talk to the imam.'**

Imran Nazir: **'You are still trying to inflict your beliefs on her. I'm telling you now, there is no way she's having an Islamic funeral.'**

Once again, it can be argued that this dialogue is aimed at showing the mother to be intolerant whilst exposing her supposed hypocrisy

³⁹² Coronation Street, ITV1 Mar 24, 2019 08:36 pm

as well as accusing her of wanting to have an **'Islamic burial'** for her daughter to please others. Despite engaging in what would be considered sinful practice by the standards of Islamic teaching, the character (Rana) is never shown to have renounced her own religious beliefs and is even shown in earlier incarnations to have observed the fasting during Ramadan. In most interpretations among the major jurisprudential schools of Sunni Islam such an individual would still be considered Muslim, the funeral prayer over them would thus be obligatory and evidence from Hadith (reported sayings and practices of the Prophet) show that this was the case with individuals known to be engaged in sinful practices during the time of the Prophet.

Also, the claim from the now outraged brother (Imran) that the mother was trying to **'celebrate her life'** is again devoid of any meaning in the context of a funeral prayer and burial in accordance with Islamic tradition. The funeral prayer for the deceased is a collective obligation of a community where people ask for forgiveness from and for the deceased as well as pray for their good deeds to be accepted. The dialogue within this scene shows no respect, understanding or the obligations of Muslims to perform a funeral prayer and burial in accordance with Islamic custom. This raises the question of who is consulted in storylines involving Islamic beliefs and practices and why they are fictionalised and misrepresented in the way they are?

Muslim Extremists

Religious illiteracy is also an issue in dramas, with clichés and tropes often employed. The Drama **'MotherFatherSon'**, first broadcast in March 2019 on BBC2, centres around a fractured family at the heart of politics and power. One scene involves the main characters, owners of a media conglomerate, interviewing Britain's first Muslim Prime Minister (Jahan Zakari) who is both black and Muslim. Zakari's son is said to have **'started browsing fanatical websites'**. They also question the son, who admits to performing an internet search of the word **'kafir'** after a night of drinking. The dialogue continues

with the son mentioning a link found on the website about **'the downfall of democracy and the introduction of a caliphate.'**³⁹³

'And can you explain what a caliphate is?'

'Er...a state...governed in accordance with Islamic law.'

'Was there content calling for the death of non-Muslims?'

'Yes'

This dialogue shows an inherent bias in this area. While it could be seen as a fair question, given the material found on terrorist group websites, it risks the misrepresentation of Islamic beliefs, as it implies that the calling for the death of non-Muslims is a feature of Islamic law or Muslim belief. Furthermore, it stereotypes a major Muslim character with a problem (radicalisation) limited to a very tiny minority of British or global Muslims.

Once again, it is important to reiterate that drama does naturally sensationalise and take extreme positions with **'exciting'** storylines, and to have a Muslim family acting unreasonably and unfairly, is not problematic in and of itself. However, this may be the only depiction of Muslims some of the audience will have seen, and as such, there is a greater responsibility to consider the consequences of such portrayals. Whilst intending to be idiosyncratic and specific to this case, many audience members may assume such generalisations are the norm. Having to think about this actively becomes less important once Muslims are normalised in society, but in the absence of this, and in the context of negative attitudes towards Muslims across a wide cross-section of society, extra care is required.

Right-Wing Tropes In News Programmes

News review or preview programmes were one of the formats where generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam were found and right-wing anti-Muslim figures were given a platform. One particular generalisation, centred on an opinion mainly found among far-right figures and organisations, alleges that Muslims receive special treatment for fear of offending the religious sentiments of communities. The argument is often centred around the issue of 'free speech' and in particular the opposition of Muslims to having their sacred figures, beliefs or symbols mocked.

Muslims allegedly get special treatment from the media

One example of this was during a discussion on 'All Out Politics' on 22nd October 2020 following the murder of the French teacher, Samuel Paty. Presenter Adam Boulton asked the journalist Melanie Phillips if the response to the murder had been too muted, particularly in the UK. Phillips claims that **'the media for the last N decades has been censoring itself over Islamic and Islamist supremacism, jihadism and terrorism'** and that it **'understood that if you were to be deemed to have offended against Islam, you would die or your newspaper would be burnt to the ground'**.³⁹⁴

Her comments and gross generalisations were not challenged by Boulton, further reinforcing the idea that Muslims and/or Islam are inherently violent and enjoy some form of favouritism. Furthermore, they contradict our findings as well as those by academics and more importantly the experience of the former chairman of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), Sir Alan Moses, who said **'[Muslims] are from time to time written about in a way that [newspapers] would simply not write about Jews or Roman Catholics'**.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ All Out Politics, Sky News, 22nd October 2020, 11:32 AM BST

Muslims get special treatment from airport and government authorities

Another occasion on which this myth found air time was on Sky News' 'Press Preview' on 21st January 2020 following the argument put forward by Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary of racially profiling Muslim men and introducing special checks on them at airports. Alex Deane, a PR Consultant, argued that O'Leary had something **'worth listening to'** and **'may have a point'**. Deane then repeats the generalisation when he infers that: **'Our security services are doing precisely the reverse, are seeking to bend over backwards, and saying we're not paying particular attention to people based on the characteristics which may well mean that they pose the most threat.'**³⁹⁶

Deane's comments, which not only defend the idea of racial profiling (and in doing so attributing negative behaviour and characteristics to Muslims and/or Islam) but also perpetuate the stereotype of Muslim men being a threat to national security. Neither of these claims are challenged by the presenter, nor is the threat of white supremacy brought into the discussion to give a more balanced and accurate picture.³⁹⁷

Another topic on which right wing and liberal interventionist commentators allege that Muslims receive special treatment is in discussions around child sexual exploitation. On 28th February 2019 at 1:25pm, Trevor Phillips, the former head of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equality and Human Rights Commission, spoke on Sky's **'The Pledge'** on the topic of county lines and child criminal exploitation in which he not only made gross generalisations about Muslim men but also Black men. He stated that the reason child criminal exploitation is not being dealt with appropriately is because authorities are too afraid to say it is predominantly caused by young Black men. He compares this to the issue of grooming

³⁹⁶ Elizabeth Poole, Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims Before and After 9/11: The UK Context, Staffordshire University, United Kingdom (2011) & <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jul/09/most-uk-news-coverage-of-muslims-is-negative-major-study-finds> & <https://www.ft.com/content/60d5bea6-1ff9-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b> ³⁹⁶ Press Preview, Sky News 21st January 2020, 10:30PM BST

³⁹⁷ Faisal Hanif, How the British Media Reports on Terrorism, Centre for Media Monitoring 2020 available at <https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CfMM-How-British-Media-Reports-Terrorism-ONLINE.pdf>

gangs, and states that the reason why it was kept quiet was because 'nobody wanted to say that the gangs here are predominantly Pakistani Muslims'.³⁹⁸ None of Phillips' fellow panellists challenged him on this, despite a report on child sexual exploitation published by the Home Office in 2020, concluding that there were no links between ethnicity, religion and grooming men and that 'group-based offenders are most commonly white'.³⁹⁹ The clip on 'The Pledge' shows how the 'grooming gangs' trope is used to generalise about Muslim men but also bring a false narrative into a discussion which has nothing to do with Muslims.

Attacks by Muslims are not labelled as terrorism in contrast to attacks by non-Muslims

Another instance on Sky News' 'Press Review' when a generalisation made of the alleged special treatment received by Muslims was on 19 Aug 2019 when discussing the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. Brendan O'Neil, the then editor of Spiked magazine, states there is a 'double standard' when it comes to reporting attacks where the victims are Christians and the attacker is Muslim, and makes a direct comparison to the Christchurch attacks from March 2019. His claims go unchallenged.

*'I do think there was a bit of a double standard in how terrorism is covered, depending on who the victims are. If you look at Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama's response to this, they failed to use the word Christian, they do not say terrorism or say it is a product of a hateful movement, which are all things they said in response to the Christchurch massacres.'*⁴⁰⁰

Whilst CfMM has not compared how victims were covered following the Christchurch and Sri Lanka attacks, what we do know is that despite Muslims being the victims in the Christchurch attack, hate crimes against Muslims in the UK rose by 593%. Furthermore, CfMM's

analysis of the two terror attacks in the report 'How The British Media Reports Terrorism' showed that media coverage of attacks by white supremacists are three times more likely to have the perpetrator referred to by their name (and as such humanise them) in comparison to those who are identified as so-called Muslims who are more likely to be linked to their religion.⁴⁰¹ The words terror, terrorist and terrorism were also used nine times more frequently alongside Muslim(s)/Islam than when the terror attack has been committed by a white-supremacist, neo-Nazi or far right individual, showing the opposite to Brendan O'Neil's false claims that there are double standards in favour of Muslims when terrorism is reported. In actual fact when it came to Christchurch and Sri Lanka, CfMM found that the coverage was more balanced and consistent in using the term 'terror' or any of its derivatives, as can be seen below.

This segment featuring O'Neil also offered up another inherent danger in allowing right wing anti Muslim figures a platform on topics featuring Muslims and/or Islam. Such figures use these platforms not only to generalise about Muslims but also introduce fringe Islamophobic ideas into the mainstream discourse and narrative. Brendan O'Neill did this on this occasion by arguing that the uniquely modern European phenomena of fascism should be applied to 'Islamist Extremists'. Once again O'Neil suggests that Islamists (Muslims) are privileged vis a vis white nationalists with the term fascism only applied to the latter:

'white nationalist attack...we talk about neo-fascism', this is followed up with 'it is very rare that you hear the word fascism used in relation to Islamist extremists, who are more murderous in terms of numbers and are a greater threat to our society'.

The reference to 'Islamic fascism', sometimes known as 'Islamofascism' is a right wing and neo-conservative propaganda term to justify the War on Terror, as well as using, 'the faith of Islam as a

³⁹⁸ The Pledge, Sky News, 28th February 2019, 01:25 PM

³⁹⁹ Home Office, Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation Characteristics of Offending, December 2020 available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/944206/Group-based_CSE_Paper.pdf & <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/19/home-office-report-grooming-gangs-not-muslim>

⁴⁰⁰ Press Preview, Sky News, 19 Aug 2019, 10.30 PM

⁴⁰¹ Hanif, Terrorism, CfMM (2020) pp.133

cover for totalitarian ideology'.⁴⁰² Anne Norton, argues that 'Fascism belongs to the West, and the defenders of Western civilization are obliged to answer for it.'⁴⁰³ Robert Paxton, meanwhile, makes the point that to use the term Islamofascism 'isn't just a historical error, it's inappropriate...Because that makes it sound like to deal with them we must attack a state.'⁴⁰⁴ The economist, Paul Krugman, meanwhile, argues that 'there isn't actually any such thing as Islamofascism; it's not an ideology; it's a figment of the neocon imagination.'⁴⁰⁵ For Niall Ferguson, the term Islamofascism is problematic because:

*'It's just a way of making us feel that we're the 'greatest generation' fighting another World War, like the war our fathers and grandfathers fought. You're translating a crisis symbolized by 9/11 into a sort of pseudo World War II. So, 9/11 becomes Pearl Harbor and then you go after the bad guys who are the fascists, and if you don't support us, then you must be an appeaser.'*⁴⁰⁶

Not Challenging Anti-Muslim Rhetoric

One of the features of the coverage of right-wing personalities on news programmes and other genres is the lack of challenge to their sometimes dangerous and often untruthful polemics. The examples above demonstrate this, however this is not just a problem limited to the genre of news. In topical debate programmes for instance the failure to counter such voices means there is little more than an anti-Muslim talking shop being presented instead of genuine debate.

402 Wildangel, René. 'The Invention of 'Islamofascism'. Nazi Propaganda to the Arab World and Perceptions from Palestine.' *Die Welt Des Islams* 52, no. 3/4 (2012): 526-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41722010> & Bar-On, Tamir. 'Islamofascism': Four Competing Discourses on the Islamism-Fascism Comparison', *Fascism* 7, 2 (2018): 241-274, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00702005>

403 Norton, Anne (2020). *On the Muslim Question*. Princeton University Press, pp. 167

404 'What is Islamofascism', NPR, August 31, 2016, hyperlink: <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5743773>

405 Krugman, Paul (29 October 2007). 'Fearing Fear Itself'. *The New York Times*.

406 Ferguson, Niall (2006). Kreisler, Harry (ed.). 'The War of the World: Conversation with Niall Ferguson'. Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley.

According to the BBC's Editorial Guidelines and OFCOM's Broadcasters' Code (see below excerpts), presenters must adhere to due impartiality, and not give prominence to one point of view or opinion. They must ensure that as many sides of an argument as feasible are highlighted and given prominence.

- OFCOM Code 5.1: News, in whatever form, must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality.⁴⁰⁷
- OFCOM Code 5.12: In dealing with matters of major political and industrial controversy and major matters relating to current public policy an appropriately wide range of significant views must be included and given due weight in each programme or in clearly linked and timely programmes. Views and facts must not be misrepresented.⁴⁰⁸
- BBC Guideline on Impartiality Section 4.1: Due impartiality usually involves more than a simple matter of 'balance' between opposing viewpoints. We must be inclusive, considering the broad perspective and ensuring that the existence of a range of views is appropriately reflected. It does not require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from fundamental democratic principles, such as the right to vote, freedom of expression and the rule of law. We are committed to reflecting a wide range of subject matter and perspectives across our output as a whole and over an appropriate timeframe so that no significant strand of thought is under-represented or omitted.⁴⁰⁹

However, as shown in the examples above, this is regularly not adhered to, and people are platformed who make false and negative remarks regarding Islam without being appropriately challenged or having another viewpoint represented.

407 Section five: Due impartiality and due accuracy <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/broadcast-codes/broadcast-code/section-five-due-impartiality-accuracy>, 05 January 2021

408 *ibid*

409 BBC Editorial Guidelines, Section 4: Impartiality available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/guidelines/impartiality/>

No Challenge Allows For Misrepresentation

One instance of this occurred on 31st October 2019 at 10pm when Sky News platformed Lord Malcolm Pearson. Lord Pearson has previously made remarks such as, **'Sharia law is running de-facto in our land'** and has invited far-right figures such as Tommy Robinson to parliament.⁴¹⁰ The segment's focus was on Brexit and UKIP, the political party Lord Pearson was affiliated to during that period. However, this soon turned into a tirade about the 'problem of Islam' in which he said, **'Islamophobia is a very stupid word as it cannot be phobic or unreasonable to fear radical Islam'**. Lord Pearson also perpetuates the far right myth of Muslims planning on taking over the country when he states that: **'The Muslim birth-rate in this country is going up 10 times faster than ours,'** an idea which cannot be corroborated as there are no statistics for the birth-rate of Muslims in the UK, only the religion of those under the age of 5 and the statistic of 9.1% of children under the age of 5 has remained steady since 2001.^{411, 412} Furthermore, a report by The Pew Research Centre shows that by 2050 the Muslim population in the whole of Europe will most likely increase to just under 7.5% of the total (without migration) from a 2017 figure of just under 5%, further contradicting Lord Pearson's claims.⁴¹³ A Channel Four fact check from 2013 challenged the claim that Muslims would be in the majority by 2050: **'FactCheck wouldn't bet on the British Muslim population ever topping 10 per cent, let alone 50 per cent.'**⁴¹⁴

This scaremongering of Muslims taking over the UK is also shown through Pearson's closing comment: **'One of the world's leading Muslims said to my friend the other day, 'You know we really don't**

need to go on blowing you up. All we need is to wait, we will take over your culture, through the power of the womb and the ballot box.'" However, he does not state who this leader is or which friend had told him this^{415, 416}. The presenter takes him at his word without holding him to account for the claims he is making.

Lord Pearson also stated that Islam in its current state is not compatible with the West and will not be unless Muslims, **'produce a new form of Islam in this country, which is the mild form of Islam of Mecca, if you'd like, and not the Islam of Medina when Muhammad became a violent warlord.'** No historical context is given to this statement. Such ideas that differentiate Prophet Muhammad's behaviour based on geographic location has also been iterated in the anti-Muslim rhetoric pedalled by people such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali who states in her 2017 book **'The Challenge of Dawa'** that, **'There is also a difference in the behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad: in Mecca, he was a spiritual preacher, but in Medina he became a political and military figure.'**⁴¹⁷

Throughout this entire segment, Lord Pearson's Islamophobic and false comments are not challenged, no alternative viewpoints offered, nor does the presenter ask Lord Pearson to cite his sources. In not challenging his statements, the presenter and Sky News effectively allow for Islam to be misrepresented. When put into the context of 76% of viewers considering Sky News's output to be accurate according to OFCOM, not challenging Lord Pearson's portrayal of Islam is dangerous as it promotes many far-right myths that viewers will accept as truth.⁴¹⁸

410 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25007869> &

411 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/the-myth-of-urabia-how-a-far-right-conspiracy-theory-went-mainstream>

412 [https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/10/rise-british-muslim-birthrate-the-times-census#:~:text=The%20figures%20do%20not%20calculate,or%209.1%25\)%20were%20Muslim.](https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/10/rise-british-muslim-birthrate-the-times-census#:~:text=The%20figures%20do%20not%20calculate,or%209.1%25)%20were%20Muslim.)

413 Michael Lipka, Pew Research Centre: Europe's Muslim population will continue to grow – but how much depends on migration 04-Dec-2017 at www.pewresearch.org (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

414 <https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-will-britain-have-a-muslim-majority-by-2050>

415 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/the-myth-of-urabia-how-a-far-right-conspiracy-theory-went-mainstream>

416 Urabia is a conspiracy theory by author Gisèle Littman which has gained popularity in far-right circles. The theory posits the idea that French elites are planning on selling Europe in exchange for oil. Once this occurs non-Muslims in Europe will become second class citizens, who will be enslaved, forced to convert, or killed and essentially replaced by Muslims.

417 https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/ali_challengeofdawa_final_web.pdf

418 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/the-myth-of-urabia-how-a-far-right-conspiracy-theory-went-mainstream> & Ofcom's Annual Report on the BBC, 2019/20 https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/207228/third-bbc-annual-report.pdf

Sharia courts operate a parallel legal system in Britain and radicalisation happens in Islamic schools

A more recent example, showing such narratives being employed on Sky's 'The Pledge' comes from Carol Malone, who on 3rd February 2020, employed tropes in a discussion surrounding radicalisation. Malone stated that radicalisation occurs in Islamic schools, mosques and other settings within the Muslim community. This was not challenged, despite it being widely documented by counter-extremism specialists and the Government that most radicalisation takes place online and within prisons.^{419, 420, 421} Malone also stated that there are 'Shari'ah courts' operating a parallel legal system in the UK, which is a gross misrepresentation of UK based Shari'ah councils, which exist to arbitrate on personal religious matters such as Islamic marriage and divorce, and family mediation, much in the same way the Jewish Beth Din operates.⁴²² These comments were not met with challenge, and Malone was not asked to corroborate her sources of information.

Insufficient Challenge to the implication that Islam and/or Muslims are opposed to animal welfare

In some instances, the presenter will question statements made by a guest, but will do so insufficiently, or will miss the mark. On 29th November 2019, BBC North West Tonight hosted Green Party leader Jonathan Bartley, who discussed his views on banning halal meat. This was challenged by the presenter who stated, 'How do you think this will make Muslims in the North West feel? When it's a fundamental part of their life, their culture, their religion?' He begins by discussing how animals are important to the Green Party and that he is a man of Christian faith and he 'understands

419 Where does radicalisation take place?, Prisons at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/1446/144605.htm> & von Behr, Ines, Anais Reding, Charlie Edwards, and Luke Gribbon, Radicalisation in the digital era: The use of the internet in 15 cases of terrorism and extremism. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR453.html, Radicalisation in the digital era

420 at <https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/internet-and-radicalisation.html> & Kris Christmann, Preventing Religious Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2012) available at

421 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396030/preventing-violent-extremism-systematic-review.pdf

422 The UK's Sharia 'courts' 03 August 2016, available at <https://fullfact.org/law/uks-sharia-courts/>

the importance of faith'. The presenter then challenges this with, 'How would you feel if something fundamental to your faith is compromised by a political party?' to which he responds, 'I believe that the fundamental core of my faith is love of the world, love of animals, care for the world around'.

Despite the presenter challenging the MP's previous statements quite robustly, the final statement, which could suggest that Islam is somehow antithetical to caring for animals, the environment, and the world, went unchecked, although it too could have been commented on by the presenter. Whilst it can't be expected of all presenters to know Qur'anic verses or Hadith's verbatim or in any rigorous detail, the fact that the topic being discussed would have been known beforehand, should have prompted research on animal welfare in Islam, which basic internet searches can provide. This would at least allow for a rebuttal to the suggestion that Islam or Muslims were somehow opposed to animal welfare.

Good Challenge

On 6th December 2018, Sky News presenter Adam Boulton interviews Gerard Batten for the programme 'All Out Politics'. Gerard Batten succeeded Nigel Farage as UKIP leader after the latter left the party due to it being 'fixated on anti-Muslim policies'.⁴²³ Boulton questions Gerard Batten on UKIP policies and their decision to affiliate with former EDL leader Tommy Robinson, who has a long history of Islamophobia which resulted in a ban on social media platforms Instagram and Twitter.⁴²⁴ The presenter states, 'Tommy Robinson is a man who's been to prison multiple times...Anyone who's seen him and the English Defence League outside courts knows their message to Muslim people in this country is very clear, so you are choosing to associate the party, a party you and Nigel Farage created, with him?' Batten responds by stating that the EDL doesn't exist anymore, to which Boulton replies, 'They still are outside courts disrupting trials', and refers to

423 All Out Politics, Sky News, 06 December 2018

424 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/26/tommy-robinson-banned-from-facebook-and-instagram>

Robinson as a, 'dodgy and unpleasant character'. In questioning the connection between UKIP and Tommy Robinson, and challenging the replies to his questions, presenter Adam Boulton allows the viewers to understand the problematic nature of this alliance and how dangerous it could potentially be for British Muslims.

Counter Rebuttals

One way in which issues can be placed in their proper context and the media's exceptionalising of Muslims prevented, is for commentators as well as presenters to challenge the double standards within news coverage. An example of this was seen on an episode of Channel 5's Jeremy Vine show aired on , where panellists discussed the links between Prince Andrew and Jeffrey Epstein and the sex trafficking scandal. Panellist Iain Dale highlighted a double standard in the reporting of Prince Andrew within the scandal, stating that, 'The media has to be completely transparent here and consistent, where if the media here reports on so-called Muslim grooming gangs in the north of England that traffic girls or Romanian grooming gangs that traffic girls, then you've got to put this in the same category'. In highlighting that they should be treated the same, Iain Dale allows for a more realistic understanding of grooming, in which perpetrators of such violence and crime can come from all walks of life, including royalty.

Recommendations

1

Avoid stereotypes and tropes about Muslims as the main representation of Muslim characters or storylines.

2

Consult with scholars or experts on normative Islamic beliefs and practices where relevant to the story.

3

Right-wing and anti-Muslim figures given a platform should be introduced and challenged properly

4

Other view points should be given due prominence

Due Prominence

Whilst analysing how Muslims voices are represented in broadcast television, we found that 11% of all broadcast clips omitted due prominence to a relevant Muslim voice or perspective. All national channels exceeded the average of 11% of clips which omitted due prominence however there was no stand out offender with four national channels all showing 12% of clips having omitted due prominence. BBC and ITV regional channels had the lowest percentage of clips which omitted due prominence as well as a greater percentage of clips which showed 'Supportive Bias'. This could possibly suggest that the greater representation of Muslim voices and views contributes to a more positive as well as accurate picture of Muslims and/or Islam.

Table 4: Percentile of clips analysed which omit due prominence to a relevant Muslim voice or perspective, by station

Channels	Count of Omit Due Prominence	Total No. of Clips	%
BBC National	295	2532	12%
BBC Regional	44	614	7%
Channel 4	41	344	12%
FIVE	23	199	12%
ITV National	55	530	10%
ITV Regional	14	181	8%
Sky	129	1112	12%
Grand Total	601	5512	11%

Not all examples of due prominence are problematic. On some occasions having a Muslim voice or perspective would have given greater clarity and nuance to a particular issue. However, on other occasions the omission of a relevant perspective, voice or idea skews a narrative to the extent of misrepresenting the issue at hand. The following case studies are example of this. These are not necessarily the most egregious examples of omitting due prominence which we assessed, however, they are valuable in covering the various ways in which this problem occurs. Further more, these examples do not in

themselves suggest that those working on these particular stories or programmes have any inherent Islamophobic agenda. Merely that by considering these points there may be a better way to produce and cover what are often worthwhile and important subjects.

Promoting Anti-Muslim Figures

Many of the examples that omit due prominence are from clips under the genre of 'Topical Debate' programmes where the format is often set up to address controversial topics and allow for a broader range of opinions, and at times, polemic. This is welcome so long as what is said is reasonable in accordance with established facts and/or any viewpoint is sufficiently challenged so no vital information is omitted from the discussion.

One example of how a topical debate programme failed to challenge someone sufficiently and as such promoted tropes and falsehoods, can be seen on the BBC News show 'HARDtalk' which is often an 'In-depth interview with a personality with hard-hitting questions around sensitive topics'.⁴²⁵ Given that the format of the show allows for in depth scrutiny of an individual's beliefs and positions it is in a good position to explore topics and issues in a more balanced and rigorous fashion.

However, during one episode of 'HARDtalk', the author and anti-theist figure Sam Harris was invited on to the show. Harris is known for his 2004 book 'End of Faith' in which he posits an argument for secularism and ending tolerance towards religious beliefs.⁴²⁶ Within the book Sam Harris refers to Islam as a 'Cult of Death' and misconstrues verses from the Qur'an to reinforce this point^{427 428}. He also makes many generalisations surrounding Muslims. During the interview Harris promotes a very monolithic interpretation of Muslims, which is responded to by the presenter by talking instead about Harris' relationship with atheism. During the segment Sam

Harris makes many generalisations surrounding Muslims. He states that in order to tackle 'Jihadism' we must use so-called 'secular' and 'moderate' Muslims to bridge the gap and refers to people such as Maajid Nawaz and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, to 'midwife this renaissance in the Muslim community' and bring 'enlightenment values' to Muslims. Neither the presenter nor Harris point out that both of these figures have very little support amongst the vast majority of Muslims.

Using historical terms such as 'renaissance' and 'Enlightenment' to describe the supposed needs of the Muslim community is problematic, as they are associated with the Enlightenment period of Europe, which occurred during the 18th century and is often cited as the formation of liberalism.^{429 430} Therefore Harris is reinforcing the trope that Islam and/or Muslims are incompatible with liberalism and are in need of 'enlightenment values', and that those who do not fit this description are essentially backwards, and not 'moderate'.⁴³¹

Furthermore, Harris is allowed to promote his book with Maajid Nawaz, who has been criticised for championing a specific type of Muslim and undermining other voices in the community. Doubts have also been raised about the objectives of Nawaz's now defunct think tank, the Quilliam Foundation due to its disproportionate focus on alleged extremism among Muslims and a lack of investigation of far-right movements.^{432, 433, 434} Since its foundation, critics of Nawaz have accused him of fraternising with think tanks known to be part of the Islamophobia industry such as the Middle East Forum as well as mislabelling Muslim groups in the UK as extremists.⁴³⁵

425 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006mg2m>

426 <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2005/feb/06/society>

427 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-sep-18-oe-harris18-story.html>

428 Harris, Sam. 2006. The End Of Faith. London: Free Press.

429 Michael S. Merry (2004) Islam versus (liberal) pluralism? A response to Ahmad Youisif, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 24:1, 123-139, DOI: 10.1080/1360200042000212278

430 <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/41/islam-and-liberalism/>

431 <https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2020/09/23/why-the-idea-of-moderate-muslims-is-a-narrative-subtly-rooted-in-Islamophobia/>

432 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/31/maajid-nawaz-lib-dem-quilliam-jesus-muhammad-islam>

433 <https://newrepublic.com/article/128436/maajid-nawaz-really-believe>

434 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/problem-with-quilliam-foundation/>

435 <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/maajid-nawaz-from-radical-islamist-to-funded-by-the-radical-right-43230>

In the 'HARDtalk' interview, Harris also champions the voice of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who has referred to Islam as a 'nihilistic cult of death' that must be 'defeated', and even citing that military action should be taken⁴³⁶⁴³⁷, Ali has also promoted conspiracy theories surrounding the use of 'Dawah' claiming that it is 'civilisational Jihad' which attempts to destroy the West from within: 'It is indeed accurate to state that the goal of dawah is to Islamize; but it is more complex, more sinister, and more far-reaching than the idea of missionary work suggests'.⁴³⁸

Harris championing Ali and Nawaz as aspirational examples of what the Muslim community needs, without any challenge from Stephen Sackur, provides credibility to this trio, who are known to promote mistruths regarding Muslims and Islam as well as advocate for illiberal policies towards them.

We recommend that, if people with a history of anti-Muslim views are invited on these programmes that they should be adequately vetted, challenged and held to account for their views. It is a reasonable expectation from Muslim viewers of a state broadcaster to adequately challenge false views about their faith and beliefs as well as vet individuals who call for their civil liberties to be curtailed.

Simplifying History To Exclude Muslim Or Islamic Contribution

The Art of Persia documentary which aired on BBC 1 fails to give the correct prominence to the significant contributions of Muslims and Islam to Persian history. Fuchsia Hart, a postgraduate of Iranian Art, who reviewed the programme says,

'The Art of Persia does not quite fulfil the promise of its title, as art does not seem to be the focus. Rather, the emphasis is historical, with strong precedence given to the pre-Islamic history of Persia.'

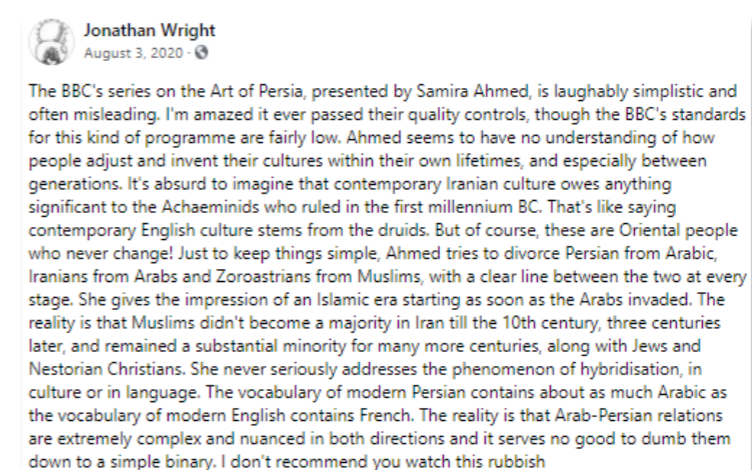
The general narrative of the otherwise splendidly choreographed documentary is linear with the Muslim invasions and Islamic history of Iran seen as somewhat of a complete break from the past. As Hart further explains that

'the simplicity of the general narrative does a disservice to the religious and ethnic diversity of the Iranian plateau, both in the distant and more recent past.'

This dichotomy, although not explicitly mentioned, sets up an unnecessary conflict of Arab/Muslim degeneracy compared with Persian Aryan supremacy to explain the history of Art in Persia. Again, Fuchsia Hart explains this through one prominent example of this is in episode 2 where the zurkhaneh (traditional gymnasium),

*'is said to be continuing a tradition stretching back to the years following the Islamic conquests, when courageous, young Persians had to train in secret for the rebellions against their Arab oppressors. This narrative, however, is a fabrication of the nationalist movement and was not widely claimed at any time earlier than the 1930's. In fact, the zurkhaneh draws on thoroughly Islamic concepts of chivalry and the image of a number of (yes, Arab) heroes of Shia Islam, such as Ali b. Abi Talib, whose name can be seen around the zurkhaneh, and is even inscribed on those hefty wooden clubs.'*⁴³⁹

Jonathan Wright the former chief for the Cairo Bureau of Thomson Reuters also takes umbrage with the documentary which he says lacks a basic understanding of how people adjust and invent their cultures within their own lifetimes, and especially between generations.



440

436 <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/09/us/brandeis-cancels-plan-to-give-honorary-degree-to-ayaan-hirsi-ali-a-critic-of-islam.html>

437 <https://web.archive.org/web/20121013010121/https://reason.com/archives/2007/10/10/the-trouble-is-the-west/2/>

438 https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/ali_challengeofdawa_final_web.pdf

439 Fuchsia Hart, Rebuilding Iran in Oxford Review of Books, July 2020 available at <https://www.the-orb.org/post/rebuilding-iran>

440 Jonathan Wright, Facebook post August 03 2020

One notable passage which demonstrates a somewhat orientalist tone is how the Takht-e-Soleman 'survived the Islamic Invasions in the 7th Century.' In this respect it can be argued that the BBC's view of the Muslim/Islamic attitude towards arts is that of destruction and in line with Daesh destruction of Palmyra or Taliban destruction of Buddhas. This despite the fact that such incidents are a departure from the norms in many Muslim societies which have preserved the monuments and architecture which they have inherited sometimes embellishing or adapting it to religious requirements.⁴⁴¹

No Muslim Voice

1. On 11th July 2019, BBC News got access to the Rakhine State in Myanmar to cover a story about a new housing initiative funded by the Indian government. Despite the overall tone of the broadcast which reported sympathetically on the plight of the persecuted Rohingya as well as the fact that there were no Muslims among those being offered any of the 250 new homes, there was one glaring oversight which was considered to be omitting due prominence. In his report the reporter asked a Hindu woman from a nearby village how she would feel if their Muslim neighbours came back. When she replied '**We wouldn't like it. A lot of Hindus were killed in Muslim villages**', her claim is not challenged or corroborated despite the well known fact of Muslims having been targeted by Myanmar Government soldiers and nationalist Buddhists. It is not clear which villages or how many Hindus were killed. Similarly, the Minister for Social Affairs, Win Myat Aye, is not challenged when he states that there is '**progress being made**' and Muslims will be housed eventually. There is no Muslim voice in the whole package to contest either of these claims.⁴⁴²

2. Another report about a Hindu temple being given the go-ahead by the Indian Supreme Court to be built on the site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya appeared on Channel 4 News on

9th November 2019.⁴⁴³ The mosque, which was built in the 16th century was torn down and destroyed by Hindu nationalists in 1992. There are several shortcomings in this report but most notably the lack of due prominence given to Muslim voices and perspectives surrounding this controversial decision and historical dispute. The presenter describes the 1992 destruction of the mosque as an event that '**sparked violence**' with little further information. There is no mention that the violence and ensuing riots were initiated by Hindu nationalists in India after being prompted through speeches by members of political parties such as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Neither does the report mention that most of the 2,000 people were killed were Muslims nor that 23 other local mosques were destroyed.⁴⁴⁴ The report also does not acknowledge the history of Muslims who lived in pre-partition India and the struggles that they faced in society, including being dominated by the Hindu ruling class in specific areas^{445, 446}. Despite Hindu leaders claiming that they had secular interests, the mixture of politics and religion made many Muslims fear for their safety as they were attacked by bandits and gangsters funded by local politicians for economic gain and to loot or '**gain a wife**'⁴⁴⁷. However, this is not acknowledged within the documentary, which essentialises the horrors of partition to a '**religious divide**', an over-simplification, if not a misrepresentation of the lived reality.

443 Channel 4 News, 9th November 2019, Time Unknown

444 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/09/india-thousands-of-hindus-demand-building-of-temple-on-disputed-ayodhya-site> & <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11436552> & <https://thewire.in/communalism/babri-masjid-the-timeline-of-a-demolition>

445 Roy, Asim. 'The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective.' *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 2 (1990): 385-408. Accessed February 21, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312661>.

446 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple>

447 <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/what-really-caused-the-violence-of-partition/>

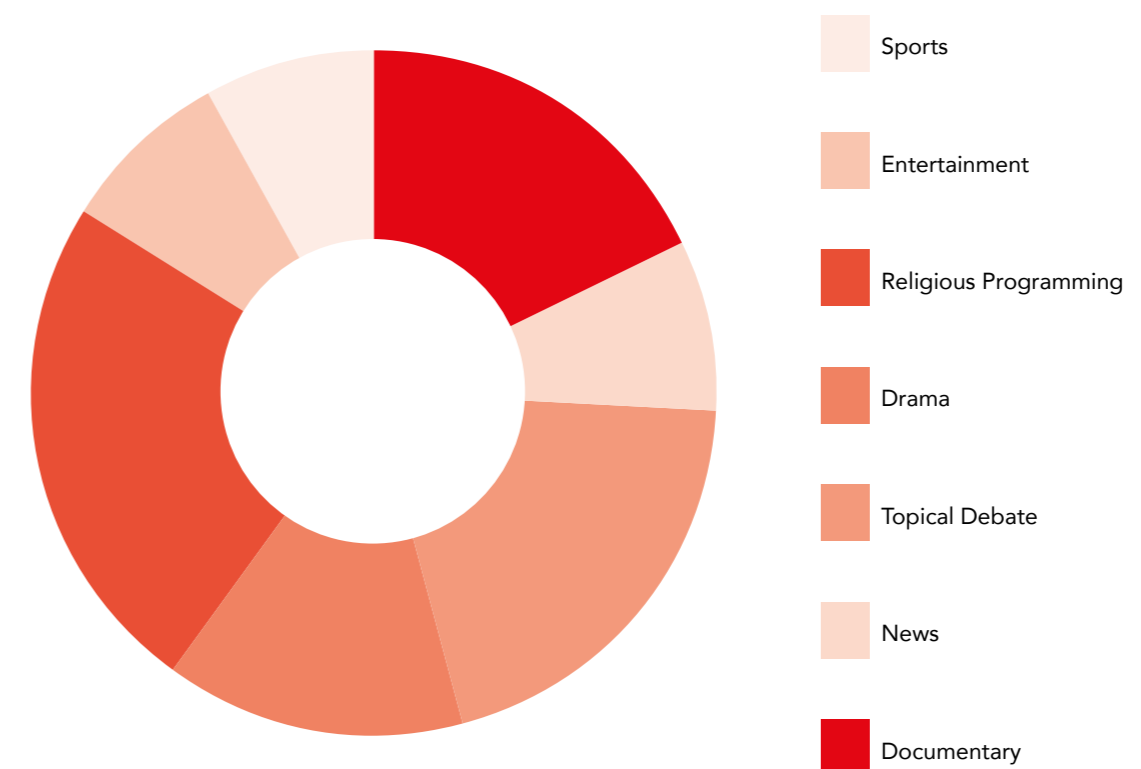
441 The Art of Persia, BBC 4, Episode 3, June 2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000kjj2/art-of-persia-series-1-episode-3>, 07:50 mins

442 BBC News, BBC 1, Jul 11, 2019 03:08 AM

Misrepresentation

In our analysis 11 per cent of clips were rated as having misrepresented any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief. Religious programming and topical debate programmes have the highest percentage of clips which featured a misrepresentation.⁷⁴ The third genre with the highest percentage of misrepresentation is documentaries suggesting that the long form programming which has scope for more careful and considered representation is often a medium for sensationalism and a misconstruing of narratives.

Graphic 9 Percentage of clips which misrepresent any aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief by genre



Simplification

These misrepresentations can be specific to a phenomenon, a historical event or even a person. In a Channel 4 documentary 'My Family Secrets Revealed', there is a discussion of the 1947 partition of Pakistan and India, in which the narrator states that the British government drew Pakistan and India's state lines based on religious lines, and Pakistan became a 'new Islamic State'. This however misrepresents history: Pakistan was conceived as a secular

state initially, according to founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah.⁴⁴⁸ It also does not explain what is meant by 'Islamic State', implying that only Muslims live there, despite the sizable Christian and Hindu populations.⁴⁴⁹ It also begs the question, if the religious demographic of Pakistan's population is the defining factor of it being referred to as an 'Islamic State', why then is India not referred to as a 'Hindu' state?

As the documentary progresses, there is mention of, 'Large scale violence, destruction and murder as partition ripped communities apart. It created one of the largest refugee crises of modern times, as an estimated ten million people were displaced along the religious divide'. However, this does not acknowledge the history of Muslims who lived in pre-partition India and the struggles that they faced in society due to their Muslim identity. Many Muslims living in India before partition faced class struggles and were often dominated by the Hindu ruling class in specific areas^{450, 451}. Despite Hindu leaders claiming that they had secular interests, the mixture of politics and religion made many Muslims fear for their safety as they were attacked by bandits and gangsters funded by local politicians for economic gain and to loot or 'gain a wife'⁴⁵². However, this is not acknowledged within the documentary, which essentialises the horrors of partition to a 'religious divide', an oversimplification, if not a misrepresentation of the lived reality.

Religious Illiteracy

Religious illiteracy is also particularly found in news reports and documentaries reporting on terrorism and extremism. The defeat of ISIS in March of 2019 had much commentary on the group's ideology and timeline between its emergence and downfall. Much of the analysis of reporting of terrorism is found in CfMM's special report, 'How the British Media Reports on Terrorism', published in

448 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24034873>

449 http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/pakistan/religious_demography_-_/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010

450 Roy, Asim. 'The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective.' *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 2 (1990): 385-408. Accessed February 21, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/312661>.

451 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple>

452 <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/what-really-caused-the-violence-of-partition/>

August 2020.

1. One example of the demise of Daesh was seen on BBC News' analysis of the 'Islamic State Group Defeated.' It included the claim that the Middle East, 'splits along sectarian lines, along ethnic lines, along regional lines. As long as those rivalries exist, the Middle East is going to remain a deeply unstable place, fertile ground for those who don't mind mixing extreme violence with a narrow, medieval version of Islam.'⁴⁵³

The 'extreme violence' of Daesh is not sanctioned or advocated by any authentic Islamic scholar or source, nor does it follow any rules of engagement from any era in Islamic history. The claim that the group's ideology was a 'medieval version of Islam' is inaccurate, given the work of prominent Muslim scholars has deemed ISIS as akin to the Khawarij, a heretical group which emerged in the formative period of Islam.⁴⁵⁴ Describing the group's ideology as a 'medieval version of Islam' belies the reality of the Middle Ages, a time of great upheaval in Europe and the Christian Church yet according to the BBC's own bitesize history page, 'the Muslim world was more advanced than Christian Western Europe.'⁴⁵⁵ This comparison also diminishes the ensuing impact of colonialism on Muslim countries. It also compares the violence of the reformation period with modern day extremism, thus implicating Muslims and/or Islam, when in fact the Reformation was a battle between the Catholic and Protestant churches. The only interactions with Islam were through the Ottoman Empire, which was tolerant of Protestantism at a time when many Protestant Christians were persecuted for their beliefs.⁴⁵⁶

2. Some documentaries were also found wanting in their description of Islamic precepts. Channel 5 showed the background of the killers of the soldier Lee Rigby in 'Britain's Worst Crimes', which

453 BBC News, BBC News Channel, Mar 23, 2019 10:01 AM

454 <http://muslimview.co.uk/culture/review-refuting-isis-a-rebuttal-of-its-religious-and-ideological-foundations/>

455 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z4v6m39/articles/zw8nhcw>

456 Goffman, Daniel (2002). *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe. New approaches to European history.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-45280-9.

broadcast in March 2019. In an otherwise considered description of the background and history of killers Michael Adebowale and Michael Adebolajo, the commentator says, 'Whilst the two men were, by this stage, guided by the principles of Jihad, or Holy War, another event early in Adebowale's life clearly affected him'. The claim that the vigilante killing of an unarmed man far from any conflict zone is 'guided by the principles of jihad' is fundamentally incorrect and is in fact a violation of such principles.⁴⁵⁷ Were he to have said 'guided by his perception of the principles of Jihad', this would have been more accurate.

Imagery

A large part of television broadcast journalism and presentation is reliant on imagery and what the viewer is shown. Images are chosen for their relevance to the topic being discussed. Sometimes the relevance of these images may not be as strong as they are on other instances, in which case generic images or background shots are employed to fill in segments and perhaps provide an overview of a specific location. For a relatively uncontroversial topic this is not an issue, however when sensitive topics are reported on, the choice of which images to show requires careful consideration. The decision by the BBC broadcast channels to not show the image distributed by Daesh of the bombers pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi and claiming responsibility for the bombings of churches in Sri Lanka over Easter 2019, is an example of the choices broadcasters and media organisations can make.

Hijab As A Symbol Of Extremism

One of the ways in which images are used to distort and misrepresent Muslim belief or practice is the use of everyday mainstream symbols to denote extremism. The Hijab and Niqab are sometimes used in the discussion on extremism. When commenting on one of the murderers of British soldier Lee Rigby, Michael Adebolajo and his decision to go to Kenya for the purposes of fighting, the imagery shows African Muslim women walking in front of what appears to be a military station with a large gun visible. The use of stock imagery of visibly Muslim women to illustrate conflict and terrorism is not only a problem in online and print media but as this example shows also in broadcast.

Britain's Worst Crimes, Channel 5, Mar 02, 2019 03:35 AM



Linking Religious Practice And Extremism

The linking of religious practice and extremism is more explicit in an exclusive BBC News report from Baghouz in Syria as Kurdish forces close in on the last remnants of Daesh. In several shots, clearly distressed and vulnerable women and children (of the now mainly defeated Daesh group) are commented on in regards to their extremism and hateful ideology. The words of the reporter 'Their hateful ideology which bought terror here still pollutes minds' is set against an image of women showing one finger and saying of the takbir (Allahu Akbar) which is a proclamation made by billions of Muslims and has nothing to do with Daesh. Any other image could have been chosen but the either conscious or unconscious attempt to link extremism to Islam can be seen again in this report. When the reporter says '**11 year old Amir from Iraq told us he wants to be a Jihadist**' the image they use is of him leading a prayer congregation (a normative practice of billions of Muslims that have nothing to do with terrorism) and also repeating the takbir (Allahu-Akbar) while raising his index finger which once again is a part of the Islamic prayer routine but has been appropriated by groups like

Daesh. Any other image or activity in the refugee camp could have been used which had nothing to do with Islam but these images seem to have been chosen consciously or sub-consciously, whilst leading a prayer congregation, and repeating the takbir (Allahu-Akbar) which signifies when to prostrate and rise as per the Islamic prayer routine.

'Their hateful ideology which bought terror here still pollutes minds'

'Women shouting 'Allah hu Akbar'



'11 year old Amir from Iraq told us he wants to be a Jihadist'



BBC News, Mar 11, 2019 12:09 am

'Even in this chaos it's members still praise the terror network'



A Sky News report on the I.S. last stronghold in Baghouz, Syria, Mar 06, 2019 10:17 pm



COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a lockdown across most countries worldwide including Great Britain for much of 2020-21. Previously, research has shown a relationship between global events and spikes in Islamophobic incidents. This has again proven true in the year since March 2020, when COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic. Academic research conducted by Imran Awan and Roxana Khan-Williams at Birmingham City University discovered that across social media, there was an influx of false narratives surrounding Muslims and COVID-19. On Twitter and Facebook, false statements spread, blaming mosques for the spread of COVID-19, claiming Muslims are super-spreaders, that police are not enforcing rules amongst Muslim communities out of fear of racism accusations, and that Muslims are ignoring social distancing rules.⁴⁵⁸

CfMM's submission to the APPG on British Muslims on the media's coverage of Muslims during COVID 19 found how this kind of media in this area found how this kind of media coverage apportioned blame to Muslims; **'specifically for the spread of the virus in stark contrast to the reporting of non-Muslims with specific regard to the spread of COVID19 or breaching regulations.'** Recent academic work by Elizabeth Poole and Milly Williamson looking at the representation of Muslims in four UK Newspapers in one month (March 30 – April 30) in 2020 found how coverage could be classed into three distinct categories namely;

1. the **'massification'** of Muslims, particularly in discussions of burials,
2. the creation of a moral panic over the construction of Muslims as refusing to social distance, particularly during religious festivals,
3. and a reconfiguration of **'good'** and **'bad'** Muslims to acknowledge their role in the NHS while continuing to construct Muslims in general as atavistic and un-British.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/coronavirus-information/news/covid-19-sparks-online-Islamophobia-as-fake-news-and-racist-memes-are-shared-online-new-research-finds>

⁴⁵⁹ <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/press-reporting-muslims-covid19/>

Whilst television broadcast coverage can't be said to have been as problematic as online or print news, CfMM found clips and news reports which fit with one or more of the above categories as identified by Poole and Williamson. Whilst individual broadcasts may not be problematic as a standalone clip, the collation of clips showing and focusing on Muslims and Islamic symbols with spikes in COVID-19 cases creates an association which could allow for Muslims being blamed for the outbreaks. This was a phenomena found online and repeated by a member of Parliament prompted by an LBC radio host as to whether those not taking the pandemic seriously were **'Muslims.'**

'Muslim Families' and Mosques

On the 21st August 2020 at 6:20pm ITV News broadcast a news segment in which they discuss the higher infection rates of COVID-19 in Oldham. The reporter declares that the higher infection rates result from **'people mixing within each other's homes'** especially in Oldham, **'where Muslim families tend to live'**. There was no justification for ITV News to single out the Muslim population in Oldham. The risk factors (overcrowded housing, multi-generational households, large extended families) are common in many BAME and other cultures and classes are not specifically Muslim or Islamic in nature. This unwarranted focus promotes the narrative that blames Muslims for the spike in COVID-19 cases in Oldham, echoing conspiracies that have appeared on social media platforms such as Facebook by far-right actors. These accounts have falsely accused mosques of operating during lockdowns, as well as using Ramadan as a means of stoking panic over potential rises in infections.^{460, 461} During this news segment, ITV uses an image of Muslim women in hijab and abaya (a long overgarment), and a picture of a mosque. Utilising imagery that is explicitly associated with Islam implies blame on Muslims for the spread of COVID-19 in Oldham.

⁴⁶⁰ <https://www.mend.org.uk/coronavirus-conspiracy-claims-far-right-fanning-the-flames-of-Islamophobia/>

⁴⁶¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-muslim-lockdown-conspiracy-theories-tommy-robinson-katie-hopkins-a9471516.html>



ITV News, 21st August 2020 at 6:20pm

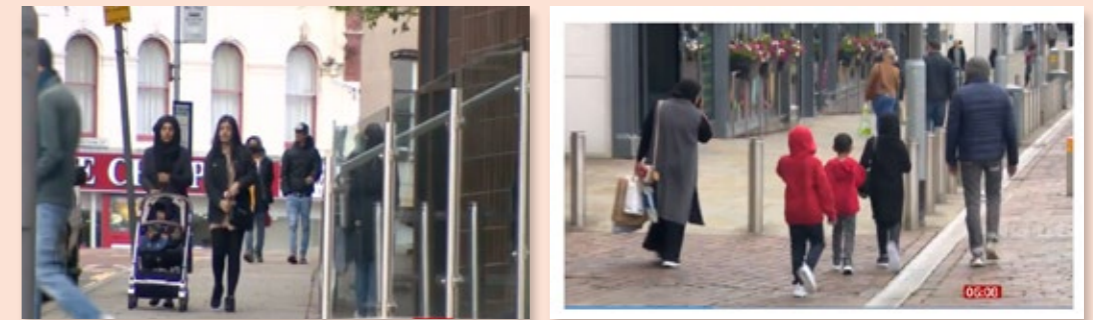
The showing of Mosques was found in several broadcasts with long shots of a town or city's skyline giving prominence to the Muslim place of worship when discussing high rates of COVID-19. This Mosque was used as the concluding shot on a BBC 6 O'Clock News clip reporting on extra restrictions announced in Blackburn and Darwen.



ITV News, 21st August 2020 at 6:20pm

Disproportionate images of Muslim's in one locality

The association of Muslim figures with the problems of COVID was also found in the broadcast coverage of events particularly from the Northern towns of England. One example was found on BBC Breakfast on 15 July 2020 highlighting the restrictions placed in Blackburn and Darwen following a rise in COVID cases. In two of the three scenes to show this visually, visibly Muslim families and women in hijabs were cut to. Whilst there is a substantial Muslim population in this town (30.9%), the majority of the population identifies itself as white British (66%) according to the 2017 census.⁴⁶²



BBC1 Breakfast, 15 July 2020, 6:08 AM



ITV1 Evening News, 15th July 2020, 6:36 PM

Another example of this was seen on ITV1 when it exclusively utilised pictures of South Asians with visibly Muslim markers such as women in hijab, men in caps or turbans. Use of such imagery in the reporting of Blackburn's COVID-19 spike serves to demonise Muslims,

⁴⁶² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/adhocs/008332populationofenglandwalesandselectedlocalauthoritiesagainstinumbersandpercentofmuslims2015162017>

implying that the rise in cases was only in these communities. In fact, there were spikes amongst the 'White Christian' demographic of Blackburn in areas such as Shadsworth and Roe Lee, but these were not given the same amount of coverage.^{463, 464}



The 'Massification' Of Muslims, Particularly Burial Discussion

In a Channel 4 broadcast regarding the pandemic death toll, the presenter highlighted a 'mass grave prepared in a London Muslim cemetery'. While the use of the term 'mass grave' is not offensive per se, it does misrepresent events, therefore causing alarm. Mass graves are commonly associated with genocidal acts.⁴⁶⁵ They are usually archaeological findings used to document historic human rights abuses and to help bring justice to those who may have been

⁴⁶³ <https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/specific-lancashire-areas-coronavirus-currently-18897483>

⁴⁶⁴ <https://postcodeinfo.co.uk/webapp/postcodes/BB1%209BA>

⁴⁶⁵ Haglund, William D., Melissa Connor, and Douglas D. Scott. 'The Archaeology of Contemporary Mass Graves.' *Historical Archaeology* 35, no. 1 (2001): 57-69. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25616893>.

persecuted in the past.⁴⁶⁶ They also have a specific form, usually where bodies are touching each other in some sort of pile.⁴⁶⁷ This however was not the case with regards to the corona virus Muslim burials, in which they were evenly spaced, had separate burial chambers, had separate funeral ceremonies and had died of illness, not atrocities committed in acts of war, genocide or human rights abuses. The graves were also pre-dug for logistical reasons and so the term 'mass graves' was totally inappropriate.

Channel 4, Apr 10, 2020, 7:04 PM



⁴⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid*

Recommendations

1

Avoid the use of everyday mainstream symbols and stock imagery of visibly Muslim women to illustrate 'Extremism/Terrorism'

2

Avoid imagery that scapegoats Muslims

3

Avoid imagery that scapegoats Muslims

Conclusion

Events around the world often dictate what is covered in the news and for how long. Any given year may throw up a story or set of stories which means a particular subject like Islam is more prevalent in column inches or on screen. Yet, the choice remains for editors and news reporters as to which stories they prioritise and how they choose to tell them.

That certain sections of the British media are hostile in their reporting towards Muslims and/or Islam is not a surprise. Academic research, CfMM's own analysis and countless anecdotal examples over the last 20 years, provide an overwhelming body of evidence for this uncontroversial claim.

As Muslims and Islam have become hot currency for news both written and broadcast, examples can be found from every news or magazine website and television broadcaster where this antagonism manifests. Yet despite some of these high profile examples of misreporting becoming notorious by the lack editorial standards which allowed them to be published, many more examples are left unchecked.

There are a lack of in-depth studies which explore how the mainstream British media covers Muslims and Islam in its entirety. This study has aimed to do just that. Given the challenges involved including varying interpretations and the sheer volume of the material being analysed it is by no means perfect. What it does do however is to uncover specific differences in approach and attitude towards Muslims and/or Islam between the various publishers and broadcasters that make up the British media. Additionally it goes some way into moving on from the blanket conclusions that would say that the British media is it itself Islamophobic.

In breaking down the various themes under which Muslims and/or Islam are reported we have established where the major issues exist, giving publishers possible areas of focus for introspection. So even as Muslims around the world grapple with the same challenges that face others namely economic uncertainty, climate issues and so on, they are most frequently reported on under the theme of 'Terrorism/

Extremism'. This is one of the reasons why there are seven times as many articles demonstrating an antagonistic bias against Muslims and/or Islam than those that can be said to be supportive.

The highest number of articles which were assessed as very biased are those that focus on the religion of Islam. Why this is the case has as much to do with what isn't reported. The omission of details or voices makes it easier for news websites to form a more clear narrative and tell a more coherent story; albeit one that is more sensationalised and partial towards the publishers favoured position.

The same applies in the reporting of Muslims in Britain. British Muslims deserve to be reported on as human beings who have the same motivations and strains as the rest of the population be they economic issues, parental rights against state intrusion or the desire to have and build institutions which reflect their particular worldview.

The report shows how a large section of the media still favours voices that echo colonial era tropes which see Muslims as dangerous fanatics, terrorists, and misogynists whilst giving preference to voices which regurgitate these tropes. News websites that are right leaning in ideological or political outlook do this both in their news reporting and opinion pieces and often buttress this narrative by cherry-picking those rare Muslim voices (e.g. a pro-Trump Muslim voice, or a Muslim voice who calls ordinary Muslims 'Islamist') who can be weaponised to promote generalisations against the majority. They further rile against orthodox Muslim beliefs or practice by couching them under the banner of Islamism or Islamist.

Whilst publications on the left are overall less damning of issues important to most Muslims, an anti-religious bias can sometimes be found which may, at times, be unreasonably hostile to those Muslims wanting to live by conservative moral codes or those who reject the liberal orthodoxy on issues both public and private.

Editorial choice is far more of a factor in the fictional genre of Drama as well as the choice of guests which topical debate

programmes choose to have on. In this respect there needs to be more consideration given to the choice of guest on a particular platform given their previous proclamations and views on Muslims and their beliefs. If the argument of free speech and allowing those who wish to say what they will is employed (often in bad faith) then presenters and/or fellow panellists should be armed with the sufficient rebuttals so misrepresentations and mistruths are at least challenged.

Furthermore, the representation of Muslims in the fictional genres could do worse than to better research the issues they are dramatizing so that all points of view are fairly represented whilst a greater space is given for Muslim actors to play the roles which depict their beliefs. In doing so, it may be possible that issues affecting the main body of Muslims who adhere to orthodox beliefs and positions are given more prominence. It may also stop the overly heightened portrayal of Muslims and their beliefs which have them either as terrorists or victims of their own faith.

The context in which Muslims exercise their civil rights is also an issue which requires greater nuance. There remains a rush to report the actions of Muslims primarily through the lens of a clash of cultures or beliefs scenario which has the effect of othering Muslims. Islamophobia on the street level has found increasing prominence in regional broadcasts yet remains absent from national bulletins despite rates of incidents increasing. The fact that a significant sector of the British population is at risk from an increasingly dangerous far right movement is worthy of greater attention even if many of these potential attacks fail and the perpetrators are given lesser sentences in comparison with their Muslim counterparts.

As this study has been ongoing ghosts from the past have resurfaced on screens including figures such as Anjem Choudhury showing once again that the British media is ready to make the fringe elements the face of Islam in Britain. Journalists and publications are free to choose their positions on any given issues, yet by omitting ordinary mainstream Muslim viewpoints and perspectives, their coverage cannot be said to come from a position of knowledge about

Muslims or Islam. It can't be said that British television is outrightly hostile towards Muslims and Islam. Previous years have seen far more incendiary content on screen like the documentary which claimed Daesh was authentically Islamic or that Muslims were a breed apart from the rest of British society. The rolling coverage of the Christchurch terror attack against Muslim worshippers was largely positive in as far as such an incident can be.

This is not a study which demands or even asks for special treatment for Muslims nor any sanitised view of Islam as a religion. What it does, is suggest that journalists and news publishers approach these subjects in a spirit of fairness and give access to a diversity of voices, allowing genuine scholars and academics of Islam to comment on issues of religion whilst including the breadth of Muslims in the discussions that are to be had without applying labels that in affect shut down and cancel groups and individuals. This in and of itself would be a vast improvement from simply taking the information and analysis from those with a known hostile bent or figures from the Islamophobia industry who have proclaimed themselves as authorities.

It also asks that journalists be given greater resources and training to adequately research and report on what can be unfamiliar theological concepts or practices. The need for expert views, nuance and the representation of the varying 'Islam's' that are believed in and practiced by Muslims worldwide are necessary.

The research is evidence-based and clear in its conclusions. The question is not whether there needs to be change for the better, but how this change will take place: who will take the lead, and not only work to ensure their journalists are best equipped to deal with the often complex stories involving Muslims and/or Islam. Neither CfMM nor the majority of British Muslims are under any illusions about the media and the role of journalists. Muslims and/or Islam do not require any special treatment nor privileges. What they can hope for is consistency in how they are reported on in comparison to other groups in society. This is a reasonable expectation.

Faisal Hanif, August 2021

Appendix

Appendix A

Online publications referenced

News platform as referred to in report	Some or all of coverage has been accessed via
Daily Mail Australia	dailymail.co.uk
The Spectator	spectator.co.uk
New Statesman	newstatesman.com
The Economist	economist.com
Daily Star and Daily Star Sunday (depending on which day it has been published and if identifiable)	dailystar.co.uk
The Jewish Chronicle	thejc.com
Press Association	dailymail.co.uk/wires
The Sun or The Scottish Sun or The Sun on Sunday (Depending on which day it has been published and if identifiable) If unsure then it will be the Sun	thesun.co.uk
The Mirror, Sunday Mirror, The People, (Depending on which day it has been published and if identifiable) If unsure then it will be Daily Mirror	mirror.co.uk
The Telegraph	telegraph.co.uk
ITV Online	itv.co.uk
The Daily Express & The Sunday Express	express.co.uk
The Mail on Sunday	dailymail.co.uk
The Guardian/The Observer	theguardian.com
Associated Press	dailymail.co.uk/wires
Mail Online	dailymail.co.uk
AFP	dailymail.co.uk/wires
Dailymail.com	dailymail.co.uk
Reuters	dailymail.co.uk/wires
London Evening Standard	standard.co.uk
Christian Today	christiantoday.com
The Guardian	theguardian.com
The Independent	independent.co.uk
The Metro	metro.co.uk
Sky News Online	skynews.com
The Sunday Times	thetimes.co.uk
The Tablet	thetablet.co.uk
BBC Online	bbc.co.uk
The Times	thetimes.co.uk
iNews	inews.co.uk
The Daily Mail	Dailymail.co.uk

Appendix B

List of Channels Analysed

BBC National	BBC 1, BBC 2, BBC News
BBC Regional	<input type="checkbox"/> BBC1EBL (BBC 1 East (Beds & Luton)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1EIN (BBC 1 East (Ipswich/Norwich)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1EM (BBC 1 East Midlands (Notts/Derby)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1IS (BBC 1 Channel Islands) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1LDN (BBC 1 London) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1NE (BBC 1 North East & Cumbria) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1NHM (BBC 1 North (Humberside & Lincolnshire)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1NI (BBC 1 Northern Ireland) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1NLS (BBC 1 North (Leeds)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1NW (BBC 1 North West (Manchester)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1SCO (BBC 1 Scotland) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1SE (BBC 1 South East (Kent)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1SOS (BBC 1 South (Oxford/Swindon)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1SSN (BBC 1 South (Southampton)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1SW (BBC 1 South West (Cornwall/Devon)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1WAL (BBC 1 Wales (Cardiff)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1WEST (BBC 1 West (Bristol)) <input type="checkbox"/> BBC1WSM (BBC 1 West Midlands (Birmingham))
ITV National	
ITV Regional	<input type="checkbox"/> ITV1ABL (ITV 1 Anglia West (Bedford/Luton)) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1AIN (ITV 1 Anglia East (Ipswich/Norwich)) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1BOR (ITV 1 Border) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1CBI (ITV 1 Central West) 'ITV 1 Central West Carlton (Birmingham)' <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1CHA (ITV 1 Channel) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1CND (ITV 1 Central East) 'ITV 1 Central East Carlton (Notts/Derby)' <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1GRA (ITV 1 Granada (Manchester)) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1LON (ITV 1 London) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1MES (ITV 1 Meridian East) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1MSE (ITV 1 Meridian South (Southampton)) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1TYN (ITV 1 Tyne Tees) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1WA (ITV 1 Wales) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1WCY (ITV 1 West Country) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1YO (ITV 1 Yorkshire East (Humberside)) <input type="checkbox"/> ITV1YON (ITV 1 Yorkshire North (Leeds))
Channel 4	Channel 4
Channel 5	Channel 5
Sky News	Sky News

Appendix C

List of Keywords

This list was collated by discussing with experienced practitioners in monitoring media about Islam and Muslims, as well as academics who have specifically studied this issue in the past.⁴⁶⁸ Professor Baker has described this as a 'sensible approach'.

Islam, Islamic, Islamophobic, Islamophobia, Islamist, Islamism, Muslim, Moslem, Jihad, Jihadist, Jihadi, Jihadism, Mujaheddin, Mujahedin Koran, Quran, Sharia, Shariah, Shari'a, Headscarf, Niqab, Burka, Burqa, Hijab, Shia, Shiite, Sunni, Hadith, Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Mohammed, Mosque, Masjid, Madrasa, Madrassa, Halal, Allah, Eid, Ramadan, Ramadhan, Mecca, Makkah, Medina, Madina, Mullah, Imam, Mufti, Caliphate, Hajj, Umrah, Umra, Ayatollah, Sheikh, Shaykh, Fatwa, Mujahedin, Mujaheddin, Mohammedan, Wahabi, Wahhabi, Salafi, Salafist (plurals for relevant terms such as Jihadists, Islamists, Muslims etc were also included)

⁴⁶⁸ In Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, Tony McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Media*, (Cambridge 2013), he uses 'Alah OR Allah OR ayatollah! OR burka! OR burqa! OR chador! OR fatwa! OR hejab! OR imam! OR islam! OR Koran OR Mecca OR Medina OR Mohammedan! OR Moslem! OR Muslim! OR mosque! OR mufti! OR mujaheddin! OR mujahedin! OR mullah! OR muslim! OR Prophet Mohammed OR Q'uran OR rupoush OR rupush OR sharia OR shari'a OR shia! OR shi-ite! OR Shi'ite! OR sunni! OR the Prophet OR wahabi OR yashmak! AND NOT Islamabad AND NOT shiatsu AND NOT sunnily'

Appendix D

Overall bias rating by each publication

REAL	Rating	Count	Percentage
AfP	Biased	827	16.9
	Not Biased	1,150	23.5
	Inconclusive	2,827	57.8
	Very Biased	87	1.8
Associated Press	Biased	621	15.2
	Not Biased	1,297	31.8
	Inconclusive	2,097	51.4
	Very Biased	67	1.6
BBC	Biased	194	8.4
	Not Biased	991	43.0
	Inconclusive	1,090	47.2
	Very Biased	32	1.4
Channel 4	Biased	6	7.6
	Not Biased	23	29.1
	Inconclusive	49	62.0
	Very Biased	1	1.3
Christian Today	Biased	55	16.9
	Not Biased	124	38.0
	Inconclusive	110	33.7
	Very Biased	37	11.3
Daily Express	Biased	249	12.3
	Not Biased	777	38.3
	Inconclusive	955	47.1
	Very Biased	48	2.4
Daily Mail Australia	Biased	144	18.0
	Not Biased	345	43.2
	Inconclusive	230	28.8
	Very Biased	80	10.0
Daily Mirror	Biased	159	10.6
	Not Biased	660	44.2
	Inconclusive	658	44.1
	Very Biased	16	1.1
Daily Star	Biased	100	14.2
	Not Biased	237	33.8
	Inconclusive	342	48.7
	Very Biased	23	3.3

iNews	Biased	37	5.3
	Not Biased	384	55.3
	Inconclusive	263	37.8
	Very Biased	11	1.6
ITV	Biased	62	8.9
	Not Biased	297	42.7
	Inconclusive	329	47.3
	Very Biased	8	1.1
London Evening Standard	Biased	60	5.5
	Not Biased	575	52.8
	Inconclusive	438	40.3
	Very Biased	15	1.4
Mail Online	Biased	404	15.5
	Not Biased	992	38.2
	Inconclusive	1,118	43.0
	Very Biased	86	3.3
Mail on Sunday	Biased	36	21.7
	Not Biased	44	26.5
	Inconclusive	77	46.4
	Very Biased	9	5.4
New Statesman	Biased	21	6.8
	Not Biased	176	56.6
	Inconclusive	111	35.7
	Very Biased	3	1.0
Press Association	Biased	121	12.8
	Not Biased	375	39.8
	Inconclusive	432	45.8
	Very Biased	15	1.6
Prospect Magazine	Biased	4	6.1
	Not Biased	38	57.6
	Inconclusive	24	36.4
	Very Biased	0	0.0
Reuters	Biased	757	13.5
	Not Biased	1,559	27.9
	Inconclusive	3,219	57.6
	Very Biased	54	1.0
Sky News	Biased	73	7.9
	Not Biased	392	42.5
	Inconclusive	445	48.3
	Very Biased	12	1.3
The Daily Mail	Biased	83	16.0
	Not Biased	213	41.0
	Inconclusive	204	39.3
	Very Biased	19	3.7
The Economist	Biased	58	10.0
	Not Biased	233	40.0
	Inconclusive	283	48.6
	Very Biased	8	1.4

The Guardian	Biased	231	6.0
	Not Biased	2,070	53.7
	Inconclusive	1,524	39.6
	Very Biased	28	0.7
The Independent	Biased	240	8.4
	Not Biased	1,356	47.2
	Inconclusive	1,248	43.5
	Very Biased	28	1.0
The Jewish Chronicle	Biased	88	18.6
	Not Biased	191	40.4
	Inconclusive	158	33.4
	Very Biased	36	7.6
The Jewish News	Biased	45	10.6
	Not Biased	221	52.2
	Inconclusive	147	34.8
	Very Biased	10	2.4
The Metro	Biased	117	9.3
	Not Biased	654	52.1
	Inconclusive	468	37.3
	Very Biased	16	1.3
The Spectator	Biased	101	22.4
	Not Biased	143	31.7
	Inconclusive	158	35.0
	Very Biased	49	10.9
The Sun	Biased	348	17.6
	Not Biased	671	33.9
	Inconclusive	891	45.0
	Very Biased	71	3.6
The Sunday Times	Biased	71	11.9
	Not Biased	252	42.1
	Inconclusive	244	40.7
	Very Biased	32	5.3
The Tablet	Biased	15	8.3
	Not Biased	99	55.0
	Inconclusive	59	32.8
	Very Biased	7	3.9
The Telegraph	Biased	179	12.5
	Not Biased	502	35.1
	Inconclusive	710	49.6
	Very Biased	40	2.8
The Times	Biased	269	10.4
	Not Biased	1,002	38.6
	Inconclusive	1,246	48.1
	Very Biased	76	2.9
dailymail.com	Biased	90	10.9
	Not Biased	382	46.5
	Inconclusive	333	40.5
	Very Biased	17	2.1

Appendix E

Each Text Bias rating by publication

REAL	Text Bias	Count	Percentage
AfP	Antagonistic Bias	1,297	26.5
AfP	Mixed	103	2.1
AfP	Not Sure	3,424	70.0
AfP	Supportive Bias	67	1.4
Associated Press	Antagonistic Bias	1,006	24.6
Associated Press	Mixed	74	1.8
Associated Press	Not Sure	2,935	71.9
Associated Press	Supportive Bias	67	1.6
BBC	Antagonistic Bias	353	15.3
BBC	Mixed	57	2.5
BBC	Not Sure	1,805	78.2
BBC	Supportive Bias	92	4.0
Channel 4	Antagonistic Bias	9	11.4
Channel 4	Mixed	2	2.5
Channel 4	Not Sure	65	82.3
Channel 4	Supportive Bias	3	3.8
Christian Today	Antagonistic Bias	102	31.3
Christian Today	Mixed	13	4.0
Christian Today	Not Sure	192	58.9
Christian Today	Supportive Bias	19	5.8
Daily Express	Antagonistic Bias	426	21.0
Daily Express	Mixed	24	1.2
Daily Express	Not Sure	1,536	75.7
Daily Express	Supportive Bias	43	2.1
Daily Mail Australia	Antagonistic Bias	272	34.0
Daily Mail Australia	Mixed	14	1.8
Daily Mail Australia	Not Sure	486	60.8
Daily Mail Australia	Supportive Bias	27	3.4
Daily Mirror	Antagonistic Bias	252	16.9
Daily Mirror	Mixed	29	1.9
Daily Mirror	Not Sure	1,162	77.8
Daily Mirror	Supportive Bias	50	3.3
Daily Star	Antagonistic Bias	175	24.9
Daily Star	Mixed	13	1.9

Daily Star	Not Sure	506	72.1
Daily Star	Supportive Bias	8	1.1
INews	Antagonistic Bias	77	11.1
INews	Mixed	16	2.3
INews	Not Sure	557	80.1
INews	Supportive Bias	45	6.5
ITV	Antagonistic Bias	116	16.7
ITV	Mixed	9	1.3
ITV	Not Sure	543	78.0
ITV	Supportive Bias	28	4.0
London Evening Standard	Antagonistic Bias	131	12.0
London Evening Standard	Mixed	18	1.7
London Evening Standard	Not Sure	879	80.8
London Evening Standard	Supportive Bias	60	5.5
Mail Online	Antagonistic Bias	649	25.0
Mail Online	Mixed	64	2.5
Mail Online	Not Sure	1,822	70.1
Mail Online	Supportive Bias	65	2.5
Mail on Sunday	Antagonistic Bias	55	33.1
Mail on Sunday	Mixed	4	2.4
Mail on Sunday	Not Sure	105	63.3
Mail on Sunday	Supportive Bias	2	1.2
New Statesman	Antagonistic Bias	28	9.0
New Statesman	Mixed	12	3.9
New Statesman	Not Sure	221	71.1
New Statesman	Supportive Bias	50	16.1
Press Association	Antagonistic Bias	205	21.7
Press Association	Mixed	17	1.8
Press Association	Not Sure	699	74.1
Press Association	Supportive Bias	22	2.3
Prospect Magazine	Antagonistic Bias	5	7.6
Prospect Magazine	Mixed	2	3.0
Prospect Magazine	Not Sure	55	83.3
Prospect Magazine	Supportive Bias	4	6.1
Reuters	Antagonistic Bias	1,212	21.7
Reuters	Mixed	127	2.3
Reuters	Not Sure	4,185	74.9
Reuters	Supportive Bias	65	1.2
Sky News	Antagonistic Bias	166	18.0
Sky News	Mixed	12	1.3
Sky News	Not Sure	728	79.0
Sky News	Supportive Bias	16	1.7

The Daily Mail	Antagonistic Bias	125	24.1
The Daily Mail	Mixed	17	3.3
The Daily Mail	Not Sure	361	69.6
The Daily Mail	Supportive Bias	16	3.1
The Economist	Antagonistic Bias	100	17.2
The Economist	Mixed	16	2.7
The Economist	Not Sure	446	76.6
The Economist	Supportive Bias	20	3.4
The Guardian	Antagonistic Bias	403	10.5
The Guardian	Mixed	52	1.3
The Guardian	Not Sure	3145	81.6
The Guardian	Supportive Bias	253	6.6
The Independent	Antagonistic Bias	355	12.4
The Independent	Mixed	57	2.0
The Independent	Not Sure	2,287	79.6
The Independent	Supportive Bias	173	6.0
The Jewish Chronicle	Antagonistic Bias	141	29.8
The Jewish Chronicle	Mixed	17	3.6
The Jewish Chronicle	Not Sure	285	60.3
The Jewish Chronicle	Supportive Bias	30	6.3
The Jewish News	Antagonistic Bias	71	16.8
The Jewish News	Mixed	6	1.4
The Jewish News	Not Sure	325	76.8
The Jewish News	Supportive Bias	21	5.0
The Metro	Antagonistic Bias	189	15.1
The Metro	Mixed	29	2.3
The Metro	Not Sure	935	74.5
The Metro	Supportive Bias	102	8.1
The Spectator	Antagonistic Bias	168	37.3
The Spectator	Mixed	22	4.9
The Spectator	Not Sure	250	55.4
The Spectator	Supportive Bias	11	2.4
The Sun	Antagonistic Bias	550	27.8
The Sun	Mixed	36	1.8
The Sun	Not Sure	1,346	67.9
The Sun	Supportive Bias	49	2.5
The Sunday Times	Antagonistic Bias	134	22.4
The Sunday Times	Mixed	15	2.5
The Sunday Times	Not Sure	433	72.3
The Sunday Times	Supportive Bias	17	2.8
The Tablet	Antagonistic Bias	28	15.6
The Tablet	Mixed	7	3.9

The Tablet	Not Sure	137	76.1
The Tablet	Supportive Bias	8	4.4
The Telegraph	Antagonistic Bias	286	20.0
The Telegraph	Mixed	26	1.8
The Telegraph	Not Sure	1,081	75.5
The Telegraph	Supportive Bias	38	2.7
The Times	Antagonistic Bias	549	21.2
The Times	Mixed	50	1.9
The Times	Not Sure	1,917	73.9
The Times	Supportive Bias	77	3.0
dailymail.com	Antagonistic Bias	161	19.6
dailymail.com	Mixed	15	1.8
dailymail.com	Not Sure	622	75.7
dailymail.com	Supportive Bias	24	2.9

Appendix F

Misrepresentation by type of article

Type of Article	Overall % of articles published	% of articles with a Misrepresentation
News	79.38	82.04
Feature	8.06	5.75
Opinion	6.1	6.95
Review	1.41	0.92
Analysis	1.39	1.39
NIB	1.04	1.25
Videos	0.45	0.38
Editorial	0.43	0.42
Letter	0.4	0.38
Images	0.28	0.16
Interview	0.26	0.22
Live Blog	0.25	0.25
Obituary	0.2	0.18
Profile	0.18	0.13
Essay	0.15	0.07
Quiz	0.02	0.02

Appendix G

Headlines mentioning Sharia/h

Headline	Publication
Terror-accused's brother wanted Sharia law	Associated Press
Terror plot accused's brother suggests Australia apply Sharia Law	Associated Press
Sharia Law scholar defends M&S for stocking hijabs for girls as young as four saying the brand is responding to the needs of British Muslims - but an MP argues they sexualise children	Mail Online
Muslim preacher who runs Britain's biggest sharia court denies raping two Dutch women in UK when they were young schoolgirls	Mail Online
Dread of sharia haunts Malian town besieged by jihadists	AfP
Third of British people wrongly believe there are Muslim 'no-go areas' in UK governed by Sharia law	The Independent
Why non-Muslims are converting to sharia finance	Economist
Muslim cleric, 51, who runs Britain's largest network of sharia courts is quizzed over child rape claims	Mail on Sunday
Preacher who runs UK's biggest sharia courts network questioned over historic child rape claims	The Metro
CLERIC COP QUIZ Muslim preacher who runs Britain's biggest network of sharia courts quizzed on suspicion of child rape	The Sun
Muslim woman, 21, lashed in public under Sharia law for 'getting too close to her boyfriend'	Daily Mirror
Young woman is caned in public as punishment under Sharia law for being 'in close proximity' to her boyfriend in Indonesia	Mail Online
Russian oligarch embroiled in UK's biggest divorce battle wins right to sail off in his £350 million superyacht after sharia judges in Dubai overrule British court	Mail Online
'It could certainly radicalise someone': Muslim imam discovers Sharia law book preaching jihad and hostage taking in Melbourne airport Islamic prayer room	Daily Mail Australia
The Judge review 'thoughtful study of the first female sharia judge	Guardian
Father of two Muslims accused of plotting a terrorist massacre in Melbourne 'called for Sharia law to be imposed'	Daily Mail Australia
Indonesia's 'millennials party' draws fire for comments on sharia bylaws	Reuters
Sharia law village bans WIFI because students were looking at porn instead of going to Koran study classes in Indonesia	Mail Online
'I live in the 21st century, not the 10th': the first female judge in a sharia court 'podcast	Guardian
Now you can become a Halal investor: The first Sharia-compliant robo-adviser launches in the UK, we take a look at what it offers	Mail Online

A new film follows the first female sharia judge in the Middle East	Economist
Indonesia's Aceh whips men for sharia-banned gambling	AfP
Could criticising Sharia law soon be illegal? Fears new religious discrimination law could protect hardline Muslims	Daily Mail Australia
Human rights court rules against Greece in Sharia law case	Associated Press
'MEDIEVAL' PUNISHMENT Gay people and cheating spouses can now be stoned to death as horrific new Sharia laws come into force in Brunei	The Sun
Bereaved British schoolgirl will be stripped of £500,000 inheritance after Sharia court in Dubai is told that she is a Christian	Mail Online
Brit teen's £500k inheritance stripped after Sharia court told she's 'Christian'	Daily Mirror
Brunei brings in STONING for people who have gay sex or cheat in new Sharia law	Daily Star
Brunei defends brutal Sharia law that will see gays and adulterers stoned to death as minister insists it aims to 'educate and deter rather than punish'	Mail Online
Brunei defends its right to stone people to death for homosexuality and adultery under strict new Sharia laws	Mail Online
Brunei outrage: US reacts with FURY to barbaric Sharia law to allow death by stoning	Daily Express
Brunei responds to human rights outrage over Sharia	BBC
Brunei to punish gay sex with death by stoning under sharia law	Sky News
Brunei's ultra-rich monarch adopts harsh Sharia punishments	Economist
Brunei's new Sharia laws threaten LGBT+ people with death by stoning – this human rights abuse can't be ignored	The Independent
CANED FOR THE CROWD Two women whipped by masked Sharia law enforcer after being caught with men in Indonesian hotel raid	The Sun
Caned in public for getting too close to the opposite sex: Six men and five women are flogged by hooded Sharia enforcer for breaking Islamic law in Indonesia	AfP
Council of Europe in warning to Britain over sharia law	Mail Online
FactCheck: viral video doesn't show violence in a 'Sharia Law Zone' in London	Channel 4
Female Isil supporter killed in row over makeshift Sharia court in Syrian camp	The Telegraph
Fox News claims Jeanine Pirro's weekly program didn't air Saturday due to 'internal scheduling matters' after she made remarks that Ilhan Omar's hijab means she's 'sharia-compliant'	dailymail.com
Fox News rebukes host Jeanine Pirro for suggesting Ilhan Omar's hijab means she subscribes to sharia law which is 'antithetical' to constitution	Mail Online
France DEMAND Brunei abandon death by stoning for gay sex after Sharia law implemented	Daily Express
Gay people face whipping and stoning next week under horrific sharia law	Daily Star
Gay people will be stoned to death as Brunei implements Sharia law	The Metro
German court fines 7 men who claimed to be Sharia police	Associated Press

Grieving Brit girl, 14, denied £500k inheritance after Sharia court hears she's not Muslim	Daily Star
'I am legally married to one and culturally to another': How Ilhan Omar desperately tried to shut down rumors she married her BROTHER amid evidence she never really split up from her first husband she married in sharia ceremony	dailymail.com
Imposing Sharia would be a disaster for Indonesia	The Times
Indonesian woman collapses in pain as she is flogged for having sex outside marriage in the country's only Sharia law province	Mail Online
Indonesian woman is caned on a public stage as a delighted crowd takes pictures, after she broke Sharia law by having sex outside wedlock	Mail Online
Indonesia's Aceh whips 11 for sharia-banned romance	AfP
Jeanine Pirro's Fox News show won't air for a second week following her remarks suggesting Rep. Ilhan Omar's hijab means she follows sharia law	dailymail.com
Ministers to bring in sharia marriage law to ensure Muslim weddings are properly registered and to protect women's rights if they get a divorce	Daily Mail
Money Pit Stop: I don't have a pension because my work scheme isn't Sharia-compliant, how can I save for retirement?	Mail Online
Muslim One Nation candidate reveals she STILL 'respects' Sharia law but says it will never happen in Australia	Daily Mail Australia
Nigeria sharia police arrest four over 'Facebook' wedding	AfP
One man Sharia courts 'discriminate against women'	The Times
One-man Sharia law councils dealing with religious divorce cases are discriminatory to women, Islamic scholar warns	Mail Online
Retrial of 'Sharia police' suspects opens in Germany	Associated Press
Russian oligarch at centre of UK's biggest divorce fight keeps his £350 million superyacht out of his ex-wife's hands after sharia judges Dubai overrule British court	Mail Online
Sharia bank Al Rayan launches a 1.6% easy access account less than a week after Marcus disappointed savers	Mail Online
Sharia court denies British girl a share of £500k legacy	The Times
Sharia Court WARNING: 'Anti-women Islamic law operating in the UK'	Daily Star
Sharia law HORROR: Unmarried couples flogged for HOLDING HANDS in Indonesia	Daily Express
Sharia law horror: Women unable to walk after public whipping in Indonesia	Daily Express
Sharia-compliant Gatehouse Bank launches mortgage alternative	Mail Online
Sudan army chief says Sharia law must be legislation source	BBC
Sudan Islamists back army in push to preserve sharia	AfP
Sudan military rulers want Sharia law to form basis of any new legislation	The Telegraph
Sultan of Brunei calls for 'Islamic teachings to grow stronger' as new sharia laws that punish gay sex with death by stoning come into force	Mail Online
Teenagers are thrashed for having a cuddle: Woman, 18, and her boyfriend are whipped with bamboo cane in public for breaching Indonesia's strict Sharia law	AfP

Tunisia invokes sharia law in bid to shut down LGBT rights group	Guardian
Two thirds of Tory members believe UK areas 'under Sharia law', as poll reveals scale of Islamophobia in party	The Independent
Unmarried couples are whipped for breaking Sharia law in Indonesia after they were caught either cuddling, holding hands or having sex	Mail Online
'VICIOUS' PUNISHMENT Gay people and cheating spouses could be stoned to death next week under horrific new sharia laws in Brunei	The Sun
Virgin Australia ends staff deal with Brunei airline over sharia law	Guardian
Woman collapses after being whipped by cruel Sharia police for 'behaving amorously'	Daily Express
Woman weeps as she is whipped 100 times for having sex before marriage under Sharia law	Daily Star

Appendix H

Negative Aspects and Behaviours

Publication	Negative Aspects & Behaviour	Total	Percentage
AfP	Y	3,651	74.6
Mail on Sunday	Y	117	70.5
Reuters	Y	3,923	70.2
Associated Press	Y	2,686	65.8
Channel 4	Y	51	64.6
Daily Star	Y	451	64.2
The Sun	Y	1,232	62.2
The Telegraph	Y	888	62.1
The Spectator	Y	279	61.9
Christian Today	Y	196	60.1
Mail Online	Y	1,551	59.7
Daily Express	Y	1,207	59.5
The Times	Y	1,527	58.9
The Economist	Y	341	58.6
Press Association	Y	538	57.1
The Jewish Chronicle	Y	270	57.1
The Sunday Times	Y	341	56.9
The Daily Mail	Y	291	56.1
Sky News	Y	512	55.5
BBC	Y	1,273	55.2
ITV	Y	380	54.6
Daily Mirror	Y	794	53.2
Daily Mail Australia	Y	419	52.4
dailymail.com	Y	422	51.3
The Independent	Y	1,452	50.6
London Evening Standard	Y	493	45.3
The Jewish News	Y	191	45.2
The Guardian	Y	1,728	44.8
The Metro	Y	561	44.7
INews	Y	296	42.6
The Tablet	Y	76	42.2
New Statesman	Y	131	42.1
Prospect Magazine	Y	27	40.9
Total		28,295	59.2%

Appendix I

Publication	Percentage of articles containing one or more generalisations
The Spectator	26
Mail on Sunday	20
Christian Today	19
Daily Mail Australia	16
The Jewish Chronicle	13
The Sunday Times	13
The Daily Mail	11
The Sun	10
Mail Online	9
Daily Star	9
The Telegraph	9
The Tablet	8
The Times	8
Associated Press	7
Press Association	7
The Jewish News	7
AfP	7
The Economist	7
dailymail.com	7
Daily Express	6
Reuters	6
The Metro	6
New Statesman	6
INews	5
The Independent	5
Daily Mirror	4
ITV	4
BBC	4
The Guardian	4
Sky News	4
London Evening Standard	3
Prospect Magazine	3
Channel 4	3

Appendix J

Daily Mail Australia Headlines which mention the word Muslim

Date	Original Headline
16 October 2018	Muslim Grand Mufti attacks gay teachers saying they 'suffer from a mental illness' and 'contradict nature'
18 October 2018	Muslim Labor MP tweets link to anti-Semitic article on former KKK leader's website which claimed Israel controls Australian foreign policy
18 October 2018	Could this be the end of gravy as we know it? Red Rooster is trialling a halal sauce to chase the Muslim dollar
19 October 2018	Would you like halal with that? The fast-food chains sell Muslim-friendly food - and there are more than you think
21 October 2018	'I'm not a gangster': Self-described 'Muslim soldier' Yakiboy opens up about his dark past, \$65,000 grin and slain friends - but insists he's a 'softy' as he proudly cuddles his newborn
23 October 2018	EXCLUSIVE: 'Finding it so hard not to be racist': The Bachelorette's Bill Goldsmith claims that '99 per cent of terrorists are Muslims' in shocking Facebook posts
25 October 2018	'Final solution' anti-Muslim senator Fraser Anning is kicked out of his party for 'using racist language'
26 October 2018	Muslim sheikh urges his followers to avoid Red Rooster gravy after staff revealed they didn't know about a halal trial
01 November 2018	Married At First Sight's Nasser Sultan embraces his Muslim faith and attends Dhuhr lunchtime prayer at a Sydney mosque
01 November 2018	'It's OK to be white': Office of Australia's first female Muslim MP is plastered with slogan Pauline Hanson tried to get through parliament - as another MP refers slurs to the police
01 November 2018	The cruel texts of a sexual predator who posed as a Hijab House model recruiter to dupe young Muslim girls into sending nude pictures and videos
01 November 2018	Muslim extremist set to be released from prison will be free to roam Australia without being monitored - as government is pressured to pass tougher laws to keep tabs on terrorists
04 November 2018	Muslims shouldn't wish Christians a Merry Xmas and wives can NEVER refuse sex: How hardline Islamic groups are still spreading hate and division in Australia
06 November 2018	Muslim worshippers attack golf club-wielding man who stormed their mosque and started hurling insults and threats at them
07 November 2018	'Go back to where you came from': Muslim senator is called a 'maggot' by vile trolls after opposing the Melbourne Cup because she thinks it's 'cruel' to horses
08 November 2018	Australian leader of extremist Islamic group that wants a global Muslim caliphate is moved to a notorious maximum security prison in Jordan
12 November 2018	'Out of line': Muslim leaders accuse Prime Minister of 'creating a wedge' with 'irresponsible' comments blaming Islam for Melbourne terrorist attack

12 November 2018	'Terrorist is another word for Muslim': Bourke Street killer's chilling Facebook rants mocking Australia for failing to deport extremists 'and backing a burqa-wearing ISIS supporter before his bloody rampage
12 November 2018	Controversial leaders of reclusive Muslim sect are granted bail after 'refusing to obey Australia's laws because they are against Islam'
12 November 2018	Aussie tourists beware: Indonesian Muslim leaders place a 'fatwa' on vaccines for measles and rubella in move that could see infection rates skyrocket
13 November 2018	'If you don't like it here, nick off': Ray Hadley slaps down Muslim leader who blamed the police for Melbourne attack despite the terrorist coming from his own Islamic centre
13 November 2018	Islamic centre where Bourke Street terrorist prayed was home to string of radical Muslims - but its leader says police and the PM are to blame for the attack
13 November 2018	'Find the wolves among the sheep': Scott Morrison fires back at Muslim leader who slammed him for blaming Islam for the Melbourne terrorist attack
15 November 2018	'Islam cannot be associated with terrorism': Muslim leader fires back and denies there's a link between barbaric attacks and religion
15 November 2018	Liberals candidate is dumped by the party after she appeared in an online video that called for a 'Muslim ban'
15 November 2018	'It could certainly radicalise someone': Muslim imam discovers Sharia law book preaching jihad and hostage taking in Melbourne airport Islamic prayer room
16 November 2018	Golf club-wielding man, 26, who allegedly stormed a mosque and threatened praying Muslims turns himself into police
18 November 2018	Nearly half of Australians want the number of Muslim immigrants slashed following the Melbourne terrorist attack
20 November 2018	'You guys are cockroaches': Niqab-wearing Muslim woman lashes out outside home of one of the Melbourne 'terror' trio accused of plotting a massacre 'as neighbours reveal he had started praying in his garage
20 November 2018	Woman, 29, wearing a head scarf to protect herself from the sun is left shaken after being mistaken for a Muslim and told to 'go home'
21 November 2018	Muslim leaders BOYCOTT meeting with Scott Morrison over his comments on Bourke Street terror attack - just after the PM asked them to help track down extremists
21 November 2018	'That's not an ISIS salute': Father of accused terrorists charged with 'planning a massacre' downplays 'innocent' Muslim hand gesture - as wife recounts police trashing their garage mosque
22 November 2018	Muslim-only swimming pools and university 'safe spaces' all BANNED: The radical changes that could be coming to Sydney VERY soon
22 November 2018	Father of two Muslims accused of plotting a terrorist massacre in Melbourne 'called for Sharia law to be imposed'
23 November 2018	The law DOES apply to them: Leaders of Muslim sect who claimed they had the right to illegally bulldoze pristine land for a religious hideaway concede defeat - and now face jail for contempt
26 November 2018	'I'd love to but my husband won't let me': Muslims gather for prayers in western Sydney - where women aren't allowed to talk about their burqas without checking with a man first

30 November 2018	Devout Muslim rugby star Sonny Bill Williams REFUSES to pose with scantily-clad ring girls at press conference for boxing match (but opponent Stu Laundry doesn't seem bothered)
03 December 2018	EXCLUSIVE: Still thumbing their noses at the law: Muslim brothers haven't demolished their illegal religious hideaway months after being ordered to tear it down
03 December 2018	Muslim cricket star Usman Khawaja's brother is arrested over 'ISIS terror hit list' found at a university – as police claim he faked the document to 'set up another student after a dispute over a girl'
03 December 2018	The one main factor driving young Muslims into extremism is revealed – and it's NOT hardline preachers or mosques
04 December 2018	Muslim woman, 23, who chatted online with jihadi brides and knew about a terror attack BEFORE it happened 'didn't understand' she was a member of ISIS
10 December 2018	Muslim preacher claims women are too 'sensitive and delicate' to remember things properly because they can't handle 'high levels of stress and pressure'
14 December 2018	Could criticising Sharia law soon be illegal? Fears new religious discrimination law could protect hardline Muslims
16 December 2018	EXCLUSIVE: Fear strikes a rural town as residents fight to stop a \$4million three-storey 'hostel' being built by a Muslim who claims to be 'exempt' from Australian law
17 December 2018	'No one is above the law': Muslim brothers who ignored court orders to pull down an illegal religious retreat lose charity status after a secret investigation into their Islamic 'guild'
17 December 2018	Hardline Muslim declares guitars, flutes and pianos are sinful because they encourage pre-marital sex and claims female singers cause EARTHQUAKES
19 December 2018	Hardline Muslim preacher tells worshippers at a Sydney mosque that ANYONE who celebrates Christmas will go to hell for eternity – saying it's worse than drinking or premarital sex
21 December 2018	Chilling viral WhatsApp message about a Muslim girl warning of a terrorist attack at Chadstone shopping centre circulated just days before car park explosion – but it was all a hoax
24 December 2018	'It's Christmas, and always will be Christmas': Muslim Greens senator is blasted for wishing her followers 'happy holidays' while sharing her pavlova recipe
24 December 2018	'This is a twisted perversion of Islam': Muslim ex-politician Sam Dastyari slams preacher for saying women who refuse their husband's demands for sex are committing a 'major sin'
24 December 2018	'I don't know how that happened!' The Project's Waleed Aly has plans to host a Christmas gathering despite not celebrating the Christian holiday as a practicing Muslim
19 March 2019	'We're the sleeping dragon and we have awoken!': Right-wing thug who took down Egg Boy posts a sickening rant claiming the Christchurch mosque massacre was 'karma' and says Muslims can't 'play the victim'
31 July 2019	All Muslims are terrorists': Islamophobe wearing a Donald Trump t-shirt who abused people praying at Christchurch massacre mosque weeks after the attack is sentenced

20 March 2019	Australia to review travel advice for tourists travelling to Gallipoli for Anzac Day in the wake of Turkish president's threats that anti-Muslim visitors would return in 'coffins like their grandparents'
23 March 2019	Australian white supremacist accused of killing 50 Muslims called far right nationalist Blair Cottrell 'Emperor' three years before mosque massacre - as it is revealed he was living off a \$500,000 inheritance
09 January 2019	Australia's first Muslim senator calls for an end to halal slaughter
08 May 2019	Biblical prophets appear in the Quran': Waleed Aly's Muslim feminist wife Susan Carland reveals the surprising link between Christianity and Islam... after converting at age 19
16 March 2019	'Blood on his hands': Politicians roundly condemn controversial Australian senator who blamed Muslim immigration for the Christchurch mosque shooting
15 September 2019	Butcher is forced to take down 'non halal certified' sign after it was found to be offensive and 'inciting hatred' of Muslims
18 September 2019	Butcher told to remove a notice that read 'non halal certified' because it 'incited hatred' of Muslims changes ONE LETTER - and now authorities say it's fine
23 September 2019	Christian and Muslim protesters gather outside KIIS studios demanding Kyle Sandilands be FIRED over 'offensive' comments about Virgin Mary
27 June 2019	Christian church is turned into an Islamic mosque after Muslim group bought the property for \$3.4million
06 September 2019	'Dear Mr Trump, please send an atom bomb to Lakemba': Homeless man arrested after 'increasingly violent' Facebook posts against Muslims lead him to 'plan a mass casualty attack at local mosque'
15 March 2019	Defiant Australian Muslims attend evening prayers in emotional scenes at Lakemba mosque following worst ever terror attack in New Zealand
19 March 2019	Did she really just say THAT? Liberal MP accuses Q&As Tony Jones of asking an 'inappropriate and tacky' question about claims Scott Morrison said the Liberals should capitalise on anti-Muslim sentiment in Australia
20 March 2019	'Disgraceful smear and appalling lie': Scott Morrison takes on Waleed Aly after The Project host claimed the PM once encouraged 'anti-Muslim' feelings as a political strategy
21 March 2019	Disturbing footage reveals how accused Christchurch mosque gunman beeped his car horn to get Muslim worshippers' attention 'before opening fire on them'
09 July 2019	Don't come to work: Job on the line for Muslim convert prison psychologist after she failed to tell her new boss she was struck off after love affairs with TWO convicted rapists
23 September 2019	'Don't mess with our faith!' Hundreds call for Kyle Sandilands to be SACKED after he outraged Muslims and Christians with a segment about the Virgin Mary - but others passionately defend his right to tell religious jokes
06 March 2019	Double standards? Right-wing poster boy Milo Yiannopoulos is banned from Australia only DAYS after Muslim sheik who described September 11 as a 'comedy film' toured the nation
08 June 2019	Drunk law student who yelled 'Muslims go home' the day after Christchurch mosque massacre is ordered to do community service
01 March 2019	Egyptian Muslim cleric who described the September 11 attacks as a 'comedy film' is touring Australian mosques

21 March 2019	Embarrassment for The Project as it's forced to issue a correction after slamming Scott Morrison in a rant about 'the facts' when the PM called Waleed Aly a liar over anti-Muslim smear
19 March 2019	'Everyone and anyone is welcome': Muslim woman's moving message of hope and love following the Christchurch mosque massacre goes viral
20 September 2019	'Everyone is entitled to their own religious beliefs': Kyle Sandilands apologises after sparking outrage among Christian and Muslim communities for vile Virgin Mary joke
04 March 2019	EXCLUSIVE: How a troubled Australian teenager was 'turned' by Muslim extremists inside prison - becoming a feared jihadist known as 'The Carver'
02 February 2019	EXCLUSIVE: Muslim woman, 39, is revealed as One Nation's shock star candidate for Parliament - as she calls for burqa to be BANNED and slams women's 'lame excuses' for wearing the Islamic garb
18 February 2019	EXCLUSIVE: 'Protecting your wife is not a crime': Heavily tattooed 'Muslim soldier with a Lamborghini body', 29, vows to defend his name after he was charged with 'assaulting a men's accessories designer, 58, at the gym'
02 March 2019	EXCLUSIVE: Schools face being shut down for a YEAR to weed out Muslim extremist teachers under radical plan that could see male teachers sacked for refusing to shake hands with women
14 January 2019	Ex-Muslim woman reveals she received death threats and online abuse
25 July 2019	Extraordinary moment a Muslim tourist orders local Bali families off a public beach while 'brandishing a knife' - so his wife wouldn't see other 'partially-dressed' men
24 September 2019	Family of grandfather killed by a flying wine bottle in Singapore say he may have been targeted because he was Muslim - as accused Australian faces 15 years jail and CANING if found guilty
31 May 2019	Far-right Islamists viciously attack Australian Muslim doctor on social media for doing charity work with Jews to help sick Palestinian children get treatment in Israeli hospitals
19 March 2019	Footy legend and devout Muslim Sonny Bill Williams pulls out of upcoming game so he can help Christchurch community devastated by terror attack
07 January 2019	Fraser Anning doubles down on his calls to BAN Muslims and Africans
16 July 2019	Futurist who predicted 9/11 reveals the biggest challenge facing Australia and why China is NOT a military threat - but we should watch out for our Muslim neighbour Indonesia
17 March 2019	'Go back to your f***ing country': Young Muslim sisters are targeted with vile abuse at a New Zealand train station - just 48 hours after the horrific attacks on two Christchurch mosques
15 February 2019	'Go back to your own country!' Sickening taunts of racists who tried to rip off three Muslim women's hijabs - while bystanders just stood there and watched
11 September 2019	Grieving Muslim family whose grandfather died when an Australian IT worker chucked a wine bottle from a high rise balcony in Singapore says 'we bear no grudges' over the tragedy in an incredible act of forgiveness
19 March 2019	Guard of honour: Mongrel Mob biker gang vow to stand watch outside mosques in New Zealand to protect Muslims as they pray following the Christchurch massacre
09 July 2019	Halal row explodes after a Muslim spots a burger chain frying bacon on the same grill as its Islam-friendly beef patties - before the restaurant fires back

04 February 2019	Hardline Muslim preacher rages against public urinals and says Allah will punish Islamic men who get 'splash back' on their shoes
22 March 2019	Heartbroken Anthony Mundine embraces a grieving Muslim as he joins prayers outside a mosque attacked in Christchurch
10 May 2019	Hero tradie stands guard outside a mosque to protect Muslims every Friday prayers in the wake of the Christchurch massacre
17 March 2019	'His mum should have done it a long time ago': Senator Anning says he doesn't regret lashing out at boy who hit him with an egg - and calls for an end to Muslim immigration to Australia
05 June 2019	Hundreds of Muslims cram into a Sydney mosque and spill onto the streets as they celebrate the end of Ramadan by praying and breaking their fasts
21 March 2019	'I screamed on the side of the road': Heavily pregnant Muslim woman relives terrifying moment carjacker drove away in her luxury Mercedes with her two young kids inside
21 March 2019	'I was in floods of tears': Sam Neill reveals how he was comforted by a Muslim taxi driver after he broke down on hearing about the Christchurch mosque massacre
15 March 2019	'I will carry out an attack against the invaders': New Zealand mosque shooter vowed to massacre Muslims in sick blog post a day before the attack - but wasn't stopped because he was not on the terror watchlist
13 May 2019	If you want a Muslim for a neighbour, just vote Labor': Fraser Anning slammed for exploiting grieving Islamic family in racist Facebook post
18 March 2019	'I'll kill as many invaders as I can': Christchurch 'copycat' threatens to murder Muslim worshippers at an Australian mosque
08 March 2019	'I'll kill him!': Bizarre argument about whether Muslims and Christians should marry sparked Melbourne café shooting
27 June 2019	Inside Waleed Aly's secret life: The notoriously private Project host is a university lecturer, doting father and New York Times columnist in addition to his day job - as the devout Muslim campaigns to win a second Gold Logie
10 July 2019	'It will legalise child brides and polygamy': Pauline Hanson says proposed religious discrimination laws will be exploited by Muslim extremists
11 February 2019	'I've stood against Muslims and them coming to this country': Pauline Hanson grills One Nation's new Muslim candidate as far-right groups threaten to boycott the party over her selection
25 March 2019	Jacinda Ardern announces a royal commission into whether the Christchurch mosque massacre that killed 50 Muslims could have been stopped
23 September 2019	King of controversy: The jokes that nearly ended Kyle Sandilands' career as Christian and Muslim protesters gather outside KIIS FM studios demanding the radio host be FIRED
20 March 2019	Kiwis are encouraged to wear headscarves to show their support for Muslims following the Christchurch mosque massacre
22 March 2019	Kiwis of all faiths don headscarves as they pay their respects to the 50 Muslims killed in the Christchurch mosque massacre
20 September 2019	Kyle Sandilands sparks outrage among Christian and Muslim communities for saying the Virgin Mary was a 'liar' who got knocked up 'behind a camel shed'

17 May 2019	Lifelike mural of hijab-clad Jacinda Ardern hugging a Muslim woman after the Christchurch mosque massacre is unveiled in Australia despite petition from angry locals
24 March 2019	'Love over hate': Security guards at the SCG 'force rugby fans to take down homemade banners' dedicated to the 50 Muslims slain in mosque massacre
17 September 2019	Married At First Sight EXCLUSIVE: Gay Muslim man dumped from new season just days before filming after experts 'could not find him a match' following a five month application process
18 March 2019	Massacre survivor had moved his young family to New Zealand and promoted it as a safe country where Muslims were 'treated as human beings' - just months before he and his daughter, five, were shot during mosque attack
15 March 2019	'More important than ever for us to stand together': Thousands of Australian Muslims defy increased terror threat levels to pray for the 49 victims of the twin Christchurch mosque attacks
01 March 2019	More than 800 people pack into a mosque to listen to a Muslim Egyptian cleric who said the September 11 terrorist attacks were a 'comedy show'
17 March 2019	More than one million Australians sign the nation's largest petition in history demanding Senator Fraser Anning be booted from parliament after he linked Muslim immigration to the Christchurch massacre
18 March 2019	Mosque shooter SACKS his lawyer and reveals he plans to represent himself in court - sparking fears he could use murder trial to spread his vile anti-Muslim views
22 May 2019	Mural masterpiece showing Jacinda Ardern wearing a hijab as she hugs a Muslim after the Christchurch mosque massacre is finished
23 July 2019	Muscle-bound 'Muslim soldier' with a 'Lamborghini body' begs followers to comment on a nude picture in response to Instagram's 'likes' ban
21 June 2019	Muslim extremist's half-hearted apology to soldier he tortured in jail - saying he's sorry for carving him up but hopes 'Allah will reward him' for the brutal bashing
28 August 2019	'Muslim family ONLY': Landlord is accused of racism for putting out a Gumtree advert for a two-bedroom flat - but only accepting Islamic tenants
15 April 2019	Muslim father shot in Christchurch terror attack shares heartbreaking pictures of his brain damaged daughter, five, in her hospital bed - as he calls for the shooter to be hanged
24 March 2019	Muslim feminist Dr Susan Carland attends mosque open day to unite the community after Christchurch terror attacks ... as her husband Waleed Aly meets with Jacinda Ardern
27 January 2019	Muslim man who left his wife to die for five days appeals his sentence
20 March 2019	Muslim mother's horror after racist vandals graffiti a swastika and the word 'dog' on her white BMW
10 February 2019	Muslim One Nation candidate reveals she STILL 'respects' Sharia law but says it will never happen in Australia
21 July 2019	Muslim woman is kicked out of a public swimming pool 'by a sniggering lifeguard' because she was wearing a burkini
22 August 2019	Muslim youth group embarks on a 30,000km trip across Australia to break down 'misconceptions' about Islam - but no women are going
18 January 2019	Muslim family demand council builds new showers so women have privacy

25 March 2019	'My job is to make people feel safe': Jacinda Ardern says it was an 'obvious decision' to wear a hijab as she grieved following the massacre of 50 Muslims
05 January 2019	Nationals candidate outs himself for threatening to shoot Muslims
21 March 2019	New Zealand school BANS Muslim students from wearing the hijab and says headscarves are not in line with its uniform policy
13 February 2019	No pork, no food in public during Ramadan and women must cover their hair: The letters promoting fake Muslim laws being delivered to Melbourne homes
22 March 2019	Notorious Mongrel Mob gang performs a stirring haka outside a New Zealand mosque in a moving display of solidarity - before standing guard out front to protect Muslims praying inside
19 March 2019	One of Australia's most senior Muslim clerics is refused entry to New Zealand after the Christchurch mosque massacre
15 March 2019	'One of New Zealand's darkest days': Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says 'there is no place for acts of extreme violence' as Muslims are warned 'don't go to mosques'
11 May 2019	Police with machine guns guard mosque targeted in Christchurch terror attack to protect Muslims as they celebrate Ramadan
08 February 2019	Primary school student 'taunted teacher for not being Muslim and said she looked like Donald Trump'
02 July 2019	'Quiet Australians' donating to Israel Folau's legal costs include GAY people and Muslims - as footy star prepares to take his case to the Federal Court
27 April 2019	Ramadan terror alert: Heavily armed police will guard mosques in New Zealand during the Islamic holy month over fears Muslims will be targeted after Christchurch massacre
05 June 2019	Retail expert calls on Australians to do more to appeal to the Muslim community during Ramadan and Eid - as businesses risk losing MILLIONS by ignoring the holy month
16 March 2019	Rush to dig dozens of graves for the 49 murdered Muslims - ahead of an unprecedented number of burials
21 March 2019	Scott Morrison and Waleed Aly will go head-to-head on The Project TONIGHT after the PM slammed the star for claiming he wanted to target voter fears about Muslim immigration
19 March 2019	Scott Morrison says he's 'deeply offended' by Turkish President Recep Erdogan's Gallipoli comments after he warned anti-Muslim Australians would be sent home 'in coffins like their grandfathers'
18 March 2019	Scott Morrison's office blasts Waleed Aly for 'defamatory' claims in his emotional The Project editorial that the PM once 'encouraged' anti-Muslim feelings as a political strategy
22 March 2019	Selfless Sikh taxi drivers offer free taxi rides to Muslims after the Christchurch mosque attack
06 January 2019	Self-proclaimed 'Muslim soldier' Yakiboy shares his 2019 resolutions
22 March 2019	'Shy' Sonny Bill Williams reveals his struggle following the Christchurch mosque attack - but knew he had to step forward 'as an All Black and a proud Muslim' to help victims' families
11 September 2019	Sick vandals spray paint the accused Christchurch shooter's name, a swastika and an anti-Muslim song on the walls of an Australian mosque

15 February 2019	Sonia Kruger DID vilify Muslims on the Today show by calling for Australia's borders to be closed to followers of Islam because she 'didn't feel safe' from terrorist attacks
24 September 2019	Sonny Bill Williams' fury as Instagram REMOVES picture of star rugby player and his fellow Muslim teammate praying to Allah before World Cup match
21 March 2019	Students dressed in white perform an emotional haka at New Zealand's largest Muslim school in memory of those slaughtered in terror attack
24 January 2019	Survivor of Muslim groomer was raped daily
10 September 2019	Sydney's city centre grinds to a halt as thousands of Muslims take to the streets for annual Ashura Procession to remember the Prophet Mohammad's grandson
02 February 2019	Tattooed 'Muslim soldier' who bragged about his 'Lamborghini' body is charged with assault after bizarre fight involving his wife and gym equipment
21 May 2019	Teacher accused of punching and spitting on students because she's 'not Muslim' plans to sue police because the kid's claims were MADE UP
11 February 2019	'Tell us if they're alive or dead': 17 Australian residents are 'detained in China in crackdown on Muslims' as their families beg the government for help
05 February 2019	Terrifying moment a former leader of an anti-Muslim group assaults his Uber-driver neighbour in front of the man's two-year-old son
18 March 2019	'Thank you, you've raised awareness': Muslim footy star's VERY surprising message to the Australian accused of the Christchurch mosque massacre
19 August 2019	That's how you make a 'Lamborghini body': 'Muslim soldier' Yakiboy pleads guilty to possessing steroids and growth hormones
29 January 2019	'The look on her face, the blood splattered on the wall': Man relives the moment he was stabbed in the neck by a 25-year-old Muslim terrorist staying in his home
31 January 2019	'The verses aren't ignored by terrorists': Judge who sentenced jihadi 'Bonnie and Clyde' terrorists blames parts of the Quran for inspiring radical Muslims
22 March 2019	'Their blood has watered the seeds of hope': Muslim cleric leads powerful call to prayer and pays tribute to the 50 victims of the Christchurch massacre as thousands join emotional ceremony
19 July 2019	'They weren't very happy when they found out': Why a Muslim footy star had to keep his talent hidden from his family - and how it took his dad two years to take him to training
30 September 2019	'This is a step towards a more respectful dialogue': Christian and Muslim leaders issue a statement in response to Kyle Sandilands' apology
24 September 2019	'This kind of behaviour is disgusting': Outraged Muslim activist responds to Kyle Sandilands' controversial joke about the Virgin Mary
10 May 2019	Thousands of jubilant Muslims take to western Sydney streets to celebrate Ramadan in a defiant show of solidarity after the Christchurch terror attack
19 March 2019	'Time to go': Over 65,000 viewers call for Sunrise host David Koch to be sacked after 'bullying' Pauline Hanson in fiery interview where he accused the One Nation leader of being anti-Muslim
20 March 2019	Top Muslim sheikh accuses politicians of 'crocodile tears' after the Christchurch mosque massacre – and takes a thinly-veiled swipe at Fraser Anning
26 January 2019	True blue Muslims celebrate Australia Day with BBQ at mosques

19 March 2019	Turkey's president makes Gallipoli reference in the wake of Christchurch terror attack and says anyone who comes to his country for anti-Muslim reasons will return 'in coffins'
20 March 2019	Turkish President shows footage of the Christchurch mosque massacre to incite hatred after sparking diplomatic row by saying anti-Muslim Australians would be 'sent back in coffins like their grandfathers'
11 March 2019	Waleed Aly's TV presenter wife Susan Carland asks for Logie votes because she thinks it will annoy Pauline Hanson if a Muslim wins
10 May 2019	Wannabe politician attempting to be the Liberal MP in Sydney's Muslim heartland of Lakemba hits a hurdle as it's revealed his halal supermarket has been fined for using dodgy packaging
24 September 2019	'We've never done this in 19 years': Kyle and Jackie O announce a major change to their show - amid a growing backlash from Muslims and Christians over THAT Virgin Mary joke
17 June 2019	'What a lot of dribble': Controversial Christian leader who slammed Muslims after Christchurch terror attack sparks outrage with latest rant
06 July 2019	'What if he started carving people up?' Australian truck driver sparks outrage over his astonishing rant after he sees a Muslim praying to a 'sky fairy' at a rest stop
19 March 2019	'When I speak, he will be nameless': New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern vows to NEVER name the accused mosque shooter – as she opens parliament with a Muslim prayer
14 May 2019	Why are you so upset?' Pauline Hanson and Muslim Labor MP clash on the campaign trail during argument over lunch they shared three years ago
09 July 2019	'You've said Muslim lives don't matter': Outrage as a human rights lawyer accuses an ENTIRE Q&A panel of ignoring China's treatment of Islamic minorities

Appendix K

Percentage of articles which omit Due Prominence

Publication	Percentage of articles which omit due prominence
The Spectator	21
Christian Today	18
The Jewish Chronicle	18
Daily Mail Australia	14
Mail on Sunday	10
The Jewish News	10
Agence France Presse (AFP)	8
The Sun	8
The Tablet	8
The Sunday Times	8
Mail Online	8
Daily Star	7
The Telegraph	7
The Times	7
Reuters	7
Average	7
Daily Express	6
The Daily Mail	6
Associated Press (AP)	6
dailymail.com	6
The Economist	6
BBC	6
Press Association (PA)	6
Sky News	5
Daily Mirror	5
The Metro	4
INews	4
ITV	4
The Independent	4
Channel 4	4
London Evening Standard	4
Prospect Magazine	3
The Guardian	3
New Statesman	2

Appendix L

Type of article	Total number of articles	Total Number of articles omitting due prominence	% of articles omitting due prominence
Analysis	667	25	4%
Book Review	1	0	0%
Editorial	209	15	7%
Essay	71	1	1%
Feature	3,845	195	5%
Images	136	7	5%
Interview	126	10	8%
Letter	191	11	6%
Live Blog	118	7	6%
News	37,965	2,497	7%
NIB	496	38	8%
Obituary	97	2	2%
Opinion	2,911	261	9%
Profile	87	7	8%
Quiz	9	1	11%
Review	674	27	4%
Videos	215	10	5%
Total	47,818	3,114	7%

Appendix M

Analysis of overall rating for broadcast clips, Oct 2018 – Sep 2019 (Total number of clips =5512)

Rating of Broadcast Clips by Channel

Rating	BBC National	BBC Regional	Channel 4	FIVE	ITV National	ITV Regional	Sky	Total
Biased	355	51	56	29	80	22	154	747
Not Biased	1146	440	171	100	271	113	371	2612
Inconclusive	924	113	99	64	162	46	525	1933
Very biased	107	10	18	6	17		62	220
Grand Total	2532	614	344	199	530	181	1112	5512

Total number of broadcast clips by channels and genres

Channel	Documentary	Drama	Entertainment	News	Religious Programming	Sport	Topical Debate	Total
BBC Regional	32	2	18	510	8	1	43	614
BBC National	457	70	180	1665	49	17	94	2532
Channel 4	25	51	107	160	0	0	1	344
FIVE	45	7	18	57	12	1	59	199
ITV National	28	10	257	220	0	0	15	530
ITV Regional	1	0	1	177	0	0	2	181
Sky News	17	0	0	1072	0	0	23	1112
Total	605	140	581	3861	69	19	237	5512

Overall Rating of each clip by genre

Genre	Inconclusive	Not Biased	Biased	Very biased	Total
Documentary	144	341	87	33	605
Drama	48	44	44	4	140
Entertainment	82	420	59	20	581
News	1588	1628	501	144	3861
Religious Programming	4	44	18	3	69
Sports	9	8	1	1	19
Topical Debate	60	127	35	15	237
Total	1936	2613	748	220	5512

Overall Bias Rating by genre of each clip by percentage

Genre	Inconclusive	Not Biased	Biased	Very biased	Total
Documentary	24%	56%	14%	5%	605
Drama	34%	31%	31%	3%	140
Entertainment	14%	72%	10%	3%	581
News	41%	42%	13%	4%	3861
Religious Programming	6%	64%	26%	4%	69
Sports	47%	42%	5%	5%	19
Topical Debate	25%	54%	15%	6%	237
Total	35%	47%	14%	4%	5512

Appendix N

Tables for each rating criteria

Generalisations

Channels	DK	N	Y	Total
BBC National	1	2288	243	2532
BBC Regional		577	37	614
Channel 4		279	65	344
FIVE		179	20	199
ITV National		485	45	530
ITV Regional		169	12	181
Sky	2	1011	99	1112
Grand Total	3	4988	521	5512

Omitting Due Prominence

Channels	DK	N	Y	Total
BBC National	6	2231	295	2532
BBC Regional		570	44	614
Channel 4		303	41	344
FIVE		176	23	199
ITV National		475	55	530
ITV Regional		167	14	181
Sky		983	129	1112
Total	6	4905	601	5512

Negative aspects and behaviours

Channels	DK	N	Y	Total
BBC National	2	1319	1211	2532
BBC Regional	1	471	142	614
Channel 4	1	198	145	344
FIVE		102	97	199
ITV National		294	236	530
ITV Regional		128	53	181
Sky		420	692	1112
Grand Total	4	2932	2576	5512

Misrepresentation

Channels	DK	N	Y	Total
BBC National	38	2197	297	2532
BBC Regional		578	36	614
Channel 4	1	304	39	344
FIVE		178	21	199
ITV National	2	459	69	530
ITV Regional		166	15	181
Sky	13	961	138	1112
Grand Total	54	4843	615	5512

Headlines and/or Imagery

Channels	DK	N	Y	Total
BBC National	1	2350	181	2532
BBC Regional	2	587	25	614
Channel 4		322	22	344
FIVE		189	10	199
ITV National		504	26	530
ITV Regional		173	8	181
Sky		1029	83	1112
Grand Total	3	5154	355	5512

Overall Bias Rating by genre of each clip by percentage

Genre	Inconclusive	Not Biased	Biased	Very biased	Total
Documentary	24%	56%	14%	5%	605
Drama	34%	31%	31%	3%	140
Entertainment	14%	72%	10%	3%	581
News	41%	42%	13%	4%	3861
Religious Programming	6%	64%	26%	4%	69
Sports	47%	42%	5%	5%	19
Topical Debate	25%	54%	15%	6%	237
Total	35%	47%	14%	4%	5512

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“This report by the Centre for Media Monitoring shows how much we as journalists must question ourselves and the work we are producing in relation to reporting of Muslims and Islam.”

- Alison Phillips, Editor-in-Chief, The Mirror

“I welcome this report - in the full knowledge that it contains criticisms of the press, my own paper included.”

Emma Tucker, Editor, The Sunday Times