



CENTRE FOR
MEDIA MONITORING

STATE OF MEDIA REPORTING ON ISLAM & MUSLIMS

Quarterly Report: Oct - Dec 2018



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INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is real and concerning to Muslims across the UK with 70% of Muslims reporting that they experienced religion-based prejudice in the last year according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission.¹

This type of racism that is targeting expressions of Muslim identity appears to have become normalised within many sections of our society. Racist tropes such as the idea that “Muslim immigration to this country is part of a bigger plan to make Muslims a majority of this country’s population” or that “there are “no-go areas in Britain where Sharia law dominates and non- Muslims cannot enter” are believed by a fifth and a third of the population respectively.²

Where do such ideas come from?

The majority of Britons polled believe “the media” is to blame.³ This aligns with academics such as a University of Cambridge/ ESRC Roundtable held at the House of Lords, where it was concluded that mainstream media reporting about Muslim communities was contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility towards Muslims in Britain.⁴ Since 2006 academics observed how media coverage on a global level has represented Muslims as underdeveloped, illiterate, homeless and orchestrators of failed states.⁵ More recent examples of false information being published has led to one mainstream commentator to declare that reporting on Muslims has gone from dog-whistling to fear-mongering, to

complete fabrication without consequences.⁶

CfMM acknowledges that there is a lot of excellent coverage on Muslims and Islam. John Sudworth’s BBC feature on ‘China’s Hidden Camps’, on the systematic persecution of Uighur Muslims by the Chinese state,⁷ is an outstanding example for this quarter. However, in accordance with our methodology, the aim of this report is to highlight areas of concern with the ultimate goal of improving the comprehension and quality of reporting about Islam and Muslims in the media.

The team monitors most mainstream newspapers (print and online) and all the five main TV channels. On a daily basis the evidence base is built with each article and clip documented and analysed for bias and accuracy. It is on the basis of this evidence that 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. This quarterly report (Oct-Dec 2018), which highlights our key findings, is one of the primary outputs of our work.

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.

1 Dominic Abrams, Hannah Swift & Diane Houston, Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain, 11-Oct-2018 at www.equalityhumanrights.com (Accessed on 01 June 2019)

2 YouGov – Conspiracy Theories (GB), August 2018 at yougov.co.uk (Accessed on 01 June 2019) & YouGov – Hope Not Hate exclusive survey of more than 10,300 people, reported in Independent; Lizzie Dearden, “Third of British people wrongly believe there are Muslim ‘no-go areas’ in UK governed by sharia law”, 17-Oct-2018, The Independent at www.independent.co.uk, (Accessed on 01 June 2019)

3 Comres, MEND – Islamophobia Poll, 27-Oct-2018 at www.comresglobal.com (Accessed on 01 June 2019)

4 Media fuelling rising hostility towards Muslims in Britain, April 2016, (Accessed on 01 June 2019)

5 Elizabeth Poole & John Richardson, Muslims and the News Media (New York 2006)

6 Nesirine Malik, The thirst for stories that vilify Muslims has eroded basic principles of journalism, 11-Sep-2018, NewStatesman at newstatesman.com (Accessed on 01 June 2019)

7 John Sudworth, China’s hidden camps: What’s happened to the vanished Uighurs of Xinjiang?, 24-Oct-2018, BBC News Online at www.bbc.co.uk/news (Accessed on 24-Oct-2018)

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 stream of inaccurate stories about Islam or Muslims were changed or retracted by national newspapers and broadcasters following discussions with managing editors or complaints to the press regulator.

This initial work created the foundations for the inception of CfMM in 2018: a five-person team monitoring the media, creating a broader evidence base of inaccurate and biased stories and engaging both with media influencers and community activists to improve the quality of coverage.



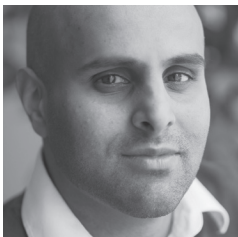
Executive Director
Miqdaad Versi

Miqdaad is the founder of CfMM and media spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain, who writes frequently for the Guardian, Independent and New Statesman. Prior to the 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.

Director
Rizwana Hamid



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 for BBC Television (News, Current Affairs, Religious, Documentary, World Service & Multicultural Programming) as well as for Channel 4 and other international broadcasters.



Media Monitoring Analyst
Faisal Hanif

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.

Community Liaisons Officer
Amanda Morris



Amanda Morris is responsible for helping communities to engage with the media in a more informed and proactive way, through training workshops and practical support. 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.



Media Monitoring Assistant
Genevieve Stephens

Genevieve is responsible for monitoring and analysing media coverage of Muslims and Islam. She is a master's graduate in Theology and specialised in Islamic Studies under Professor Mona Siddiqui at the University of Edinburgh.

METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

Our methodology was developed and validated by experienced media monitoring practitioners and academics who specialise in studying how Muslims and/or Islam are covered in the media.

The process involves 2 key steps:

Monitoring: All the main British media outlets are monitored, including 31 online media platforms and five broadcasters, using 50 key chosen words (some in various forms of spelling) as well as their relevant plurals relating to Islam and Muslims.

Analysis: Each article and broadcast clip is assessed against five key metrics (association with negative aspects or behaviour, misrepresentation, generalisations, lack of due prominence to a Muslim voice or identity, issues with imagery or headlines) which gives an overall rating. Ratings are either “Not Biased”, “Biased”, “Very Biased” or “Not Sure.” A “Very Biased” rating would be if there were affirmative responses to 4 out of the 5 metrics. We then rate each item (article or clip) 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 “Not Sure.”

We acknowledge that as with all research,

there are limitations as well as elements of subjectivity. However, with the guidance of experts, the process has been designed to be as objective, and exhaustive, as is reasonably possible.

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 as well as The Guardian and The Observer.

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). In such instances, articles from these publications are indistinguishable and as such are monitored and analysed under their one online banner.

10,931

articles analysed this quarter

Terrorism

is the most recurring theme in the media relating to Muslims & Islam

59%

of all articles analysed associated Muslims with negative behaviours

Daily Mail Australia

has the highest proportion of articles rated "Very Biased"

Over

1/3

of all articles misrepresented or generalised about Muslims

37%

of articles in right leaning and religious publications were

"Very Biased"

ITV Regional channels - no biased content

Sky News - 14% "Very Biased"

Drama

proportionately misrepresented Muslims & Islam the most



KEY INSIGHTS SUMMARY

Online Publishers

- ▶ Almost **1 in 4 online articles (23%) misrepresent** an aspect of **Muslim behaviour or belief** with **religious publications** being the **most antagonistic (47%)**.
- ▶ **Headlines** are **one component of misleading information** with 5% of all headlines being misleading with a **higher proportion amongst many right leaning and religious publications**.
- ▶ **Unreliable sources** which **promote tropes and misinformation about Muslims and/or Islam** are also found **mainly across the right leaning and religious publications**.
- ▶ **Right leaning and religious publications** are consistently **the worst offenders in all metrics with the highest proportion of "Very Biased" articles (37%)**.
- ▶ **Daily Mail Australia** has the **highest proportion** of published articles **rated as "Very Biased" (37%)**, followed by **Christian Today (35%)** and **The Spectator (29%)**. This compares with the overall average of (9%).
- ▶ Right leaning and left leaning publications are split when it comes to bias rating. **Right leaning publications** have far **more "Antagonistic Bias"**, compared with the greater number of **"Supportive Bias" among left leaning publications**.
- ▶ **Religious publications** have **proportionally high numbers of "Very Biased" articles** yet also publish **higher than average content** which shows **"Supportive Bias"**.

KEY INSIGHTS SUMMARY

TV Broadcast

- ▶ **Regional television** broadcasts presented **more supportive coverage** of Muslims and/or Islam **than national television** channels.
- ▶ **Sky News** has the **highest proportion of “Very Biased”** clips (**14%**) whereas **ITV regional channels** have **no content** rated as “Very Biased”.
- ▶ The **platforming of far-right tropes and personalities** are a **feature of a number of topical debate programmes**.
- ▶ **One of the main mediums** for the **misrepresentation of Muslims** on television **is Drama** with **16%** of clips rated as **misleading**.



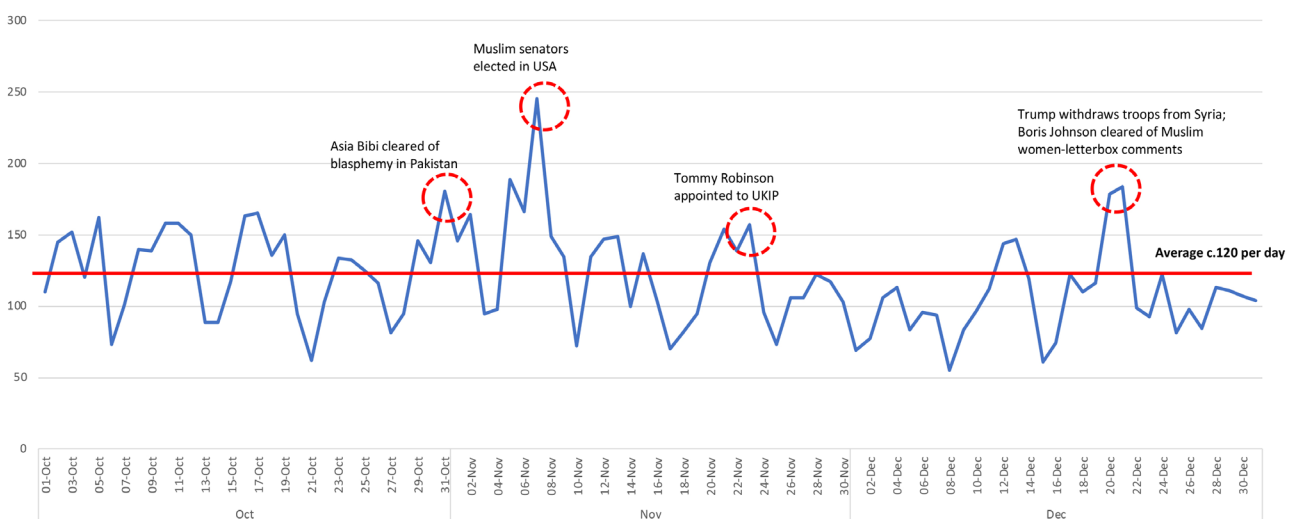
SECTION 1: ONLINE PUBLISHERS KEY INSIGHTS

Analysis & Ratings Summary

CfMM analysed 10,391 individual articles from a list of publications ranging from right to left leaning as well as wire agencies and prominent religious publications. Each article was categorised as being either UK based or world based dependent on the focus and location of the particular coverage (Table 1).

Over the quarterly period of monitoring (Oct-Dec 2018), four major stories dominated the coverage of Muslims and/or Islam, creating spikes in the number of articles analysed daily and bringing the average number to 120.

Daily News Coverage 01-Oct-2018 - 31-Dec-2018



Of the total analysed, 74% were international stories referencing Muslims and/or Islam. Wire agency copy from Agence France-Presse (AFP), Associated Press (AP) Press Association (PA) and Reuters accounted for the majority of these stories. Once wire copy is removed from the analysis, the overall percentage of UK coverage rises to 37%.

Table 1: A list of publications analysed for this report and divided between UK or World coverage.

Publication	Articles	UK	World
AFP	1333	14	1319
Associated Press	1056	30	1026
BBC	526	159	367
Christian Today	113	23	90
Daily Express	371	92	279
Daily Mail Australia	204	25	179
Daily Mirror	283	159	124
Daily Star	135	60	75
Dailymail.com	157	8	149
Evening Standard	235	122	113
iNews	108	63	45
ITV	127	64	63
Mail Online	563	232	331
Metro	220	133	87
New Statesman	78	41	37
Press Association	257	104	153
Reuters	1481	24	1457
Sky News	161	41	120
The Daily Mail	140	96	44
The Economist	138	22	116
The Guardian	807	227	580
The Independent	640	208	432
The Jewish Chronicle	107	65	42
The Mail on Sunday	41	35	6
The Observer	73	37	36
The Spectator	95	47	48
The Sun	416	217	199
The Sunday Times	127	81	46
The Tablet	18	4	14
The Telegraph	326	97	229
The Times	595	272	323
Total	10,931	2,802	8,129

In addition to categorising articles according to publication, we also divided them into 14 types depending on their genre. The vast majority are news pieces (82%). The next largest categories of any numerical significance are features (7%) and opinion pieces (5%). All other categories constitute less than 2%.

Table 2: Types of articles according to the categorisation stated by the particular publisher.

Type	Number of items	%
Analysis	97	1%
Editorial	25	0%
Essay	4	0%
Feature	810	7%
Images	34	0%
Interview	32	0%
Letter	34	0%
News	8951	82%
News in Brief	130	1%
Obituary	22	0%
Opinion	581	5%
Profile	29	0%
Quiz	9	0%
Review	173	2%
Grand Total	10,931	

89% of articles rated “Biased” and 82% rated “Very Biased” were in the news category. Features and opinion pieces, have a significantly lower percentage of “Biased” articles (5% and 3% respectively). A similar trend emerges when considering text bias, whereby 86% of articles rated “Antagonistic” were news articles while 13% were features and opinion pieces.

Five Key Metrics

ONLINE PUBLISHERS

In line with our methodology, five key questions are asked of each article which determine the overall rating. Two or more affirmative answers categorise the article as “Biased”, four to five affirmative as “Very Biased”, one as “Not Sure” and zero as “Not Biased”. The table below reveals worst performing and least worst performing publications.

The data below reveals the publications which have the highest and lowest percentage ratings of articles marked in the affirmative for each of our five key metrics.

DOES THE ARTICLE
ASSOCIATE MUSLIMS OR
ISLAM WITH NEGATIVE
ASPECTS OR BEHAVIOUR?

59%
YES

HIGHEST %

The Mail on Sunday (78%)
Daily Mail Australia (78%)
Christian Today (75%)

LOWEST %

New Statesman (27%)
The Observer (33%)
The Guardian (35%)

KEY METRIC 1

NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Articles associating Muslims or Islam with negative aspects or behaviour can be found across most publications. One example is Trevor Phillips’ article in The Mail on Sunday. In arguing for more power for prison governors against gang members, Phillips singles out the nationality and religion of “*Pakistani Muslims*”, while using broader terms for “*Black*” and “*White*” people.¹

¹ Trevor Phillips, *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 semighettos*, 11-Nov-2018, Mail on Sunday at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 11-Nov-18)

DOES THE ARTICLE
MISREPRESENT ANY
ASPECT OF MUSLIM
BEHAVIOUR, BELIEF OR
IDENTITY?

23 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Daily Mail Australia (54%)
Christian Today (48%)
The Spectator (43%)

LOWEST %

New Statesman (8%)
The Guardian (9%)
Evening Standard (12%)

DOES THE ARTICLE MAKE
GENERALISING CLAIMS
ABOUT MUSLIMS OR
ISLAM?

14 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Daily Mail Australia (45%)
Christian Today (43%)
The Spectator (36%)

LOWEST %

The Guardian (7%)
Reuters (8%)
Evening Standard (9%)

KEY METRIC 2

MISREPRESENTATION

Qanta Ahmed's piece in The Spectator, following Boris Johnson's article in The Telegraph (August 2018) where he mocked Muslim women wearing the burqa, is an example of misrepresenting Muslim behaviour and belief. Ahmed claims there is no basis for the niqab in Islam. This ignores and negates the belief of some Muslims whose decision to wear the burqa or niqab is rooted in a particular interpretation of the religion.²

² Qanta Ahmed, *As a Muslim woman, I'd like to thank Boris Johnson for calling out the niqab*, 8-Aug-2018, The Spectator at www.spectator.co.uk (Accessed on 23-Dec-2018)

KEY METRIC 3

GENERALISATIONS

The claim by Dominic Green in The Spectator that there are Muslims wanting to target him for his "*Jewish blood*" is just one example of generalisations made about Muslims being anti-semitic, a trope that is increasingly being used by right leaning publications.³

³ Dominic Green, *Life 'n' Arts Podcast: History and Ism's with David Pryce-Jones*, 22-Oct-2018, The Spectator at www.spectator.co.uk (Accessed on 22-Oct-2018)

DOES THE ARTICLE OMIT
DUE PROMINENCE TO A
RELEVANT MUSLIM VOICE
OR PERSPECTIVE?

13 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Christian Today (46%)
Daily Mail Australia (38%)
The Spectator (35%)

LOWEST %

New Statesman (4%)
The Guardian (6%)
Metro (7%)

DOES THE IMAGE/HEADLINE
DEPICT MUSLIMS/ISLAM
IN AN UNFAIR/INCORRECT
MANNER IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE STORY

10 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Daily Mail Australia (35%)
Christian Today (20%)
The Jewish Chronicle (18%)

LOWEST %

New Statesman (1%)
The Guardian (2%)
The Independent (3%)

KEY METRIC 4

PROMINENCE

A comment piece in The Jewish Chronicle, about how Mossad misread the Iranian Revolution, references Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic credentials numerous times in a negative context.⁴ However, when it comes to citing a 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 writer. He is instead only referred to as the "great 'Persian' poet and mystic" which omits the relevance of his religious identity.

⁴ Colin Shindler, *How Mossad misread the Iranian revolution*, 27-Dec-2018, The Jewish Chronicle at www.thejhc.com (Accessed 27-Dec-2018)

KEY METRIC 5

IMAGERY & HEADLINES

In an article about the Indonesian earthquake, published by the AFP news agency, the headline "Muslims pray to the sea", is incorrect.⁵ The article goes on to say that worshippers "chanted before sending prayers out to the waters". The connotation is that Muslims are either praying in the direction of, or to, the sea, when in fact Muslims only pray in the direction of the Kaaba and to God. On this occasion, the direction of the Kaaba just happened to be in the same direction of the sea.

⁵ AFP, *Muslims pray to the Sea after Indonesia quake-tsunami*, 5-Oct-2018, AFP at www.dailymail.co.uk/wires (Accessed on 05-Oct-2018)



SECTION 1: ONLINE PUBLISHERS KEY INSIGHTS

Misrepresentation

Almost one in four published online articles (23%) misrepresent an aspect of Muslim behaviour or belief with right leaning and religious publications being the most antagonistic. Common factors resulting in the misrepresentation of Muslims and/or Islam are headlines and unreliable sources.

Headlines

Headlines are a major component of misleading information. This section will look at a selection of antagonistic headlines, including those rated as “Misleading” and “Irrelevant”. We also look at examples of what we have termed as “Story-telling” headlines, and those which conflate the terms Islam and Muslim. In doing so, the aim is to shed light on the common ways in which headlines misrepresent Muslims and/or Islam. Headlines were rated as being either “Misleading”, “Irrelevant” or “Not Misleading.” “Misleading” headlines are those which misconstrue the content or story being presented in the article’s text. An “Irrelevant” headline is that which contains detail that is extraneous to the content or the story.

Table 3: Publications which had the highest proportion of "Misleading" and "Irrelevant" headlines above the 6% average.

Publication	Leaning of Publication	Total No. Of Articles	"Misleading" Headline	"Irrelevant" Headlines	% of "Misleading" and "Irrelevant" Headlines
Daily Mail Australia	Right	204	27	35	30%
The Mail on Sunday	Right	41	4	3	17%
Daily Express	Right	371	42	21	17%
The Sun	Right	416	24	44	16%
The Jewish Chronicle	Religious	107	11	3	13%
The Telegraph	Right	326	34	7	13%
Daily Star	Right	135	10	6	12%
Christian Today	Religious	113	12	0	11%
Mail Online	Right	563	26	28	10%
The Spectator	Right	95	5	2	7%
The Sunday Times	Right	127	5	4	7%
Dailymail.com	Right	157	5	6	7%
Average					6%

Misleading Headlines

“Duchess’s mosque linked with 19 terrorists”

One example of a misleading headline is in the Mail on Sunday in a story about the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, launching a new cookbook for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. She collaborated with women from the Hubb Community Kitchen in the Al Manaar Mosque, West London, to compile the book. The mosque had been praised widely for its response to the Grenfell fire in 2016 and its work with victims in the community. However, the Mail on Sunday’s article chose to run a headline “Duchess’s mosque linked with 19 terrorists”.¹

The headline refers to terrorist suspects as “terrorists” even though the outcome of the trial had yet to be determined. The Times, which is one of the few right leaning publications to have a lower than average proportion of misleading and irrelevant headlines, is more accurate in its description of the story. It refers to the accused as “suspects”.²

Muslim Imam falsely accused of targeting a women

A story in The Sun headlined as “NAILED DOWN: Islamist Indian cleric threatens to target Muslim women who wear nail polish”³ is misleading and inaccurate. The actual 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. Nowhere in the article is there a mention of him threatening to target women nor any indication from which this can be reasonably interpreted.

The Imam is also referred to as 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 as in the article above. This suggests what Mansoor Moaddel

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'Duchess's mosque' linked with 19 terrorists

By ABUL TAHER FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY
PUBLISHED: 02:49, 25 November 2018 | UPDATED: 02:49, 25 November 2018

7 shares

A mosque in London that hosts a community kitchen visited by the Duchess of Sussex was accused yesterday of having links to 19 Islamist terrorists.

The Al-Manaar mosque was once the place of worship for Mohammed Emwazi, the

THE TIMES

Mosque Duchess of Sussex visited linked to terror suspects

The duchess visited the Al Manaar Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre as part of a charitable project
OWIS JACKSON/GETTY IMAGES

The community kitchen that inspired the Duchess of Sussex to work on a Grenfell Tower charity cookbook is in a mosque linked to 19 terrorist suspects including the Islamic State fighter known as Jihadi John, an investigation has found.

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NAILED DOWN Islamist Indian cleric threatens to target Muslim women who wear NAIL POLISH and trim their fingernails in fatwa against 'un-Islamic' grooming

Muslim women have been advised to use henna decorations for cosmetic purposes instead

By Debbie White
5th November 2018, 9:37 pm | Updated: 5th November 2018, 9:44 pm

- 1 Abul Taher, 'Duchess's mosque' linked with 19 terrorists, 25-Nov-2018, Mail on Sunday at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 25-Nov-2018)
- 2 John Reynolds, Mosque Duchess of Sussex visited is linked to terror suspects, Nov-24-2018, The Times at www.thetimes.co.uk, (Accessed on 24-Nov-2018)
- 3 Debbie White, NAILED DOWN Islamist Indian cleric threatens to target Muslim women who wear NAIL POLISH and trim their fingernails in fatwa against an un-Islamic grooming, 05-Nov-2018, The Sun at wwwthesun.co.uk (Accessed on 05-Nov-2018)

of Eastern Michigan University has observed, “The use of the term Islamist does not capture the phenomena that is quite heterogeneous.”⁴ For the purposes of the this study the arbitrary use of the word Islamist has been rated as misleading.

Irrelevant Headlines

Woman described as *“brainwashed”* for converting to Islam and marrying a Muslim

An example of an “Irrelevant” headline appears in The Sun.⁵ The article describes a woman leaving her husband for another man who happened to be a Muslim. The headline leads with *“BRAINWASHED”*, an irrelevant detail vocalising the jilted husband’s opinion over the woman’s own account that she has ‘never been happier’. While the article’s text indicates that she chose to convert to Islam, the term *“BRAINWASHED”* suggests she was manipulated into doing so. This clearly associates her conversion to Islam with a lack of agency, without any clear evidence.

The article’s headline was updated to read, *“IT’S A MIDLIFE CRISIS”*⁶ again failing to acknowledge the varying perspectives of the woman and her jilted husband, while continuing to shame both her and her choice to convert.

“Muslim girl warning of a terrorist attack...but it was all a hoax”

Our analysis further exposes how headlines which tell a story, are often antagonistic when they give undue prominence to certain information, which misconstrues the accuracy of the story.

One story in Daily Mail Australia about a Muslim girl who allegedly had knowledge of a *“terrorist”* attack.⁷ The crux of the story, that it was a hoax, is positioned at the end of the headline. Even though the fabricated WhatsApp



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

- Hoax text foretelling terror at Chadstone Westfield has sent people into a frenzy
- The WhatsApp message claims a Muslim girl warned a friend to stay away
- Two days after it was shared to Twitter, a car exploded in the car park
- The centre was evacuated and 11 cars were damaged, but nobody was injured
- Police have said there was nothing suspicious about the carpark fire

By HANNAH MOORE FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 00:41, 21 December 2018 | UPDATED: 01:22, 21 December 2018

4 David Briggs, *Is It Time to Reconsider the Term Islamist?*, 06-Jun-2012, HuffingtonPost, Accessed on (01-Jun-2019)

5 Robin Perrie, *'BRAINWASHED' Mum of nine Heidi Hepworth, 45, converts to Islam so that she can marry her 31-year-old Gambian toyboy*, 22-Nov-2018, The Sun at www.thesun.co.uk, (Accessed 22-Nov-2018)

6 Robin Perrie, *'BRAINWASHED' Mum of nine Heidi Hepworth, 45, converts to Islam so that she can marry her 31-year-old Gambian toyboy*, 23-Nov-2018, The Sun www.thesun.co.uk, (Accessed 23-Nov-2018)

7 Hannah Moore, *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*, 21-Dec-2018, Daily Mail Australia at www.dailymail.co.uk, (Accessed on 21-Dec-2018)

message had been used previously on social media against other minority communities, the majority of the headline reports it as if it is a fact. Furthermore, the headline's focus on the false belief of the girl's previous knowledge of the attack perpetuates an association of Muslims with terrorism.

Storytelling Headlines

Muslim trope presented as fact

A story in Daily Mail Australia reports on a police officer who threatened to rape a senator's daughter during a phone call.⁸ In the article, he is reported stating many obscenities as well as other information surrounding the incident. Despite this, the Daily Mail Australia's headline chose to lead on a false claim made by the defendant about Islam during the phone call. It further presents it as a question to its readership as if it were a fact; 'Did you know under Islam you can sleep with nine-year-old girls?'. In doing so, this article perpetuates a false stereotype and narrative.

Conflation of Islam & Muslim

The conflation of Islam and Muslim is a recurring trend in misleading headlines and articles. In a Mail Online story describing an Italian man being attacked because he was thought to be a "f*****g Muslim", the publication chose to label the abuse as "anti-Islamic" despite the fact that the attack was aimed specifically at the individual who was thought to be a Muslim. In choosing anti-Islamic rather than anti-Muslim, the Mail Online conflates Muslim, which in this case is the identity of the person under attack, with Islam - a belief system - which is not under attack by the perpetrators.



⁸ Mark Brook, 'Do you know under Islam you can f*** nine-year-old girls?' Police officer threatens to rape Greens senator's young relative, 06-Nov-2018, Daily Mail Australia and Australian Associated Press at www.dailymail.co.uk, (Accessed on 06-Nov-2018)

Unreliable Sources

Another typical cause for misinformation on Muslims and/or Islam in the media is unreliable sources. This section will focus on religious and right-leaning publications as they tend to contain significantly more unreliable sources than their counterparts.

Geopolitics presented as sectarian conflict

A video uploaded to Facebook by one of Donald Trump's lawyers, claiming that 60,000 Christians have been killed by nomadic Muslim herdsmen in central Nigeria since 2001, was the source of stories in a number of publications (Christian Today,⁹ and the Daily Express).¹⁰ As an AFP factcheck showed the claims made about death tolls as well as the underlying issue behind the violence were both unverified and unreliable¹¹.

The claim that the conflict was ultimately determined by religious differences also fails to recognise the complexity of the situation in question. This oversimplification is particularly typical of reportage on instances of conflict among the Fulani people, and ignores, as Leif Brottem has stated, "state repression" and "predatory structures" between communities down to the village level.¹²

Open Doors USA which states that "the religious agenda is clear"¹³ in this conflict, has been the source of four articles in Christian Today during this quarter, whilst also being referenced in three Daily Express articles. The Independent also quoted Open Doors in one of its articles.

The Council of Foreign Relations in Washington D.C. says, "*linking these tragedies to each other and to a perceived global trend of violence against Christians mischaracterizes the nature of the conflicts in Nigeria.*"¹⁴

⁹ Stoyan Zaimov, *A US missionary arrested in Turkey the day after pastor Andrew Brunson was freed*, 19-Nov-2018, Christian Today at www.christiantoday.com, (Accessed on 19-Oct-2018)

¹⁰ Athena Chrysanthou, *CHRISTIANITY CRACKDOWN: Church ATTACKED by mob - 'It happens every day'*, 13-Dec-2018, Daily Express at www.express.co.uk, (Accessed on 13-Dec-2018)

¹¹ Emmanuel Akinwotu, AFP factcheck: *No, there is no evidence that 60,000 Christians been killed in a 'genocide' by 'Fulani Herdsmen' in Nigeria*, 25-Nov-2018, AFP at www.factcheck.afp.com, (Accessed on 14-May-2018)

¹² Leif Brottem, *Blame climate change for Nigerian farmer-herder violence? Not so fast, expert says*, 08-Jul-2018, www.salon.com, (Accessed on 14-May-2018)

¹³ *Write a note to Fulani Violence victims*, Open Doors USA at www.opendoorsusa.org (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

¹⁴ Jack McCaslin, *Conflict in Nigeria Is More Complicated Than "Christians vs. Muslims"*, 01-May-2019 at www.cfr.org (Accessed on 14-May-2019)



In the Middle Belt of Nigeria, the center of Christian presence in northern Nigeria, Muslim Fulani herders have been attacking Christian farmers. Hundreds have been brutally killed. Many of the victims are women and children.

SECTION 1: ONLINE PUBLISHERS KEY INSIGHTS

Types of Bias

This section will explore the spectrum of bias ratings within our methodology, from “Very Biased” to “Supportive Bias”. An article or broadcast clip is “Very Biased” if at least 4 out of the 5 metrics are marked in the affirmative or if there is a factual inaccuracy in the article/clip relating to Muslims and/or Islam.

In terms of overall articles rated as “Very Biased”, it is the right-leaning online publications as well as religious publications that are producing the most unfavourable content relating to Muslims and/or Islam, and are at least four times above the average value.

Table 4: Publications exceeded the 9% average for articles rated as “Very Biased”

Publication	Leaning of Publication	Total No. of Articles	“Very Biased”	% of “Very Biased” Articles
Daily Mail Australia	Right	204	77	38%
Christian Today	Religious	113	39	35%
The Spectator	Right	95	28	29%
The Jewish Chronicle	Religious	107	29	27%
The Tablet	Religious	18	4	22%
The Sunday Times	Right	127	26	20%
The Mail on Sunday	Right	41	7	17%
Daily Express	Right	371	54	15%
The Sun	Right	416	59	14%
The Daily Mail	Right	140	19	14%
Daily Star	Right	135	18	13%
Mail Online	Right	563	71	13%
The Telegraph	Right	326	38	12%
The Times	Right	595	67	11%
Average				9%

The right-leaning publishers and certain religious publications also have a higher proportion of the articles (in comparison with the average) which are “Very Biased” in the reporting of Muslims and/or Islam (Table 4). Daily Mail Australia comes top of the league table with almost 2 in 3 articles published demonstrating a hostile or antagonistic attitude towards Muslims and/or Islam. All left-leaning platforms analysed come in at below the average of 9% of very biased articles and 26% average of “Antagonistic Biased” articles. In terms of “Supportive Bias”, the whole picture is more balanced (Table 5 and 6).

Table 5 & 6: Publications that exceed the average for articles rated as having "Antagonistic Bias" and "Supportive Bias" respectively.

Publication	Leaning of Publication	Total No. Of Articles	"Antagonistic Bias"	% of Articles rated as "Antagonistic Bias"
Daily Mail Australia	Right	204	131	64%
Christian Today	Religious	113	62	55%
Daily Star	Right	135	64	47%
The Jewish Chronicle	Religious	107	48	45%
The Spectator	Right	95	42	44%
The Mail on Sunday	Right	41	18	44%
Daily Express	Right	371	149	40%
The Tablet	Religious	18	7	39%
The Sun	Right	416	160	38%
The Sunday Times	Right	127	45	35%
Mail Online	Right	563	180	32%
The Daily Mail	Right	140	44	31%
The Telegraph	Right	326	101	31%
Associated Press	Wires	1056	304	29%
Press Association	Wires	257	71	28%
AFP	Wires	1334	356	27%
The Times	Right	595	158	27%
Average				26%

Publication	Leaning of Publication	Total No. Of Articles	"Supportive Bias"	% of Articles rated as "Supportive Bias"
New Statesman	Left	78	23	29%
iNews	Left	108	24	22%
Metro	Centre	220	32	15%
Evening Standard	Right	235	31	13%
The Jewish Chronicle	Religious	107	13	12%
The Guardian	Left	807	94	12%
The Independent	Left	640	74	12%
ITV	Right	127	13	10%
BBC	Centre	526	52	10%
The Sunday Times	Right	127	11	9%
The Daily Mail	Right	157	13	8%
The Observer	Left	73	6	8%
The Telegraph	Right	326	25	8%
The Times	Right	595	45	8%
Christian Today	Religious	113	8	7%
Average				6%

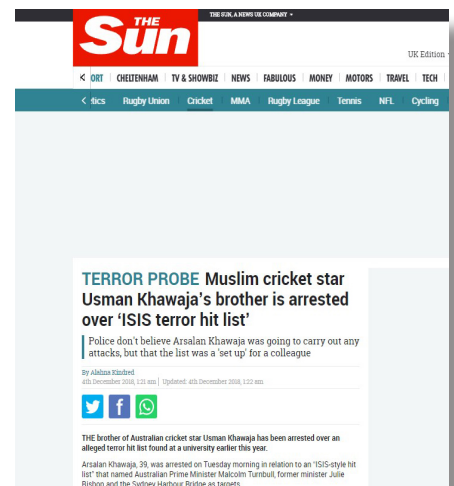
Right Leaning Publications

A number of articles analysed below illustrate how right leaning publications and left leaning publications covered the same story but why we rated them differently.

Usman Khawaja: 'Muslim cricketer' or "top international cricketer"

The story about the arrest of Arsalan Tariq Khawaja, the brother of Australian cricketer Usman Khawaja, who was found to be in breach of his bail conditions, is a good example of how a newsworthy story is covered by different publications and how we rate the coverage “Not Biased” compared with “Very Biased”. Arsalan had been found guilty of attempting to pervert the court of justice after he allegedly used fake documents containing a terror plot to kill senior politicians, in an attempt to “set up” his colleague over a personal grievance.

The story is newsworthy because the suspect is the brother of a top international sports star. The right-leaning tabloids chose to describe the cricketer, Usman Khawaja, as a “Muslim Cricketer” even though his religious identity is irrelevant to the story.¹⁵ The Guardian and The Independent identify him as a top international cricketer without any reference to his faith.¹⁶



15 Alahna Kindred, *TERROR PROBE Muslim cricket star Usman Khawaja's brother is arrested over 'ISIS terror hit list'*, 04-Dec-2018, The Sun at www.thesun.co.uk (Accessed on 04-Dec-2018) & Josh Hanrahan, *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-Dec-2018, Daily Mail Australia at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 03-Dec-2018)

16 Michael McGown, *Cricketer Usman Khawaja's brother charged over 'terrorism' notebook*, 03-Dec-2018, The Guardian at www.theguardian.com/uk (Accessed on 03-Dec-2018) & Toyin Owoseje, *Brother of cricket star Usman Khawaja framed love rival with fake terrorism plot, police claim*, 04-Dec-2018, The Independent at www.independent.co.uk (Accessed on 04-Dec-2018)

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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

- Muslim fundamentalist Nassim Abdi said celebrating Christmas 'worse than sin'
- Allah Sanaah Wali Jamaah preacher declared they would go to hell for eternity
- Sunni hardliner said observing Christmas worse than premarital sex, alcohol
- He isn't the only Muslim preacher making declarations against Christmas Day

By STEPHEN JOHNSON FOR DAILY MAIL AUSTRALIA
PUBLISHED: 06:03, 19 December 2018 | UPDATED: 06:05, 19 December 2018

THE SUN A NEWS UK COMPANY

THE Sun

NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

NEWS FABULOUS MONEY MOTORS TRAVEL TECH DEAR DEIDRE PUZZLES

All News UK News World News Brexit Politics Opinion Health News

YOU KHAN'T WEAR THAT Trolls attack Amir Khan for 'disobeying Allah' after Christmas message to fans

The Bolton-born boxer, who is a Muslim, wore a Santa hat in the picture which was captioned: 'What you all wanting for Christmas?'

By Mark Hodge
20 Dec 2018, 22:50 | Updated: 21 Dec 2018, 3:26

7 COMMENTS

ONLINE trolls have attacked Amir Khan for "disobeying Allah" after the Bolton-born boxer posted a Christmas-themed Instagram post.

BBC NEWS

Home UK World Business Politics Tech Science Health Family & Education Entertainment & Arts

England Local News Regions Liverpool

The Muslim families donating to food banks for Christmas

23 December 2018



Liverpool's Happy Children Nursery, where families are donating to local food banks

Muslim families across Liverpool have been donating food to people who would otherwise go hungry this Christmas.

The Guardian

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle More

World Europe US Americas Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Cities Global development

Church welcomes its special Muslim visitors on Christmas Eve

Every year worshippers from the nearby mosque attend service at St Alban's in London

Harriet Sherwood Religion correspondent
@harrietsherwood
Mon 24 Dec 2018 08:00 GMT



For the past 10 years, worshippers at the Shia Ithra'ashari Community of Middlesex have been attending midnight mass at St Alban's. On Christmas Eve, churches all over the country will welcome into their midnight mass services people who rarely take part in acts of Christian worship but find candlelit carols irresistible.

In the pews of St Alban's in North Harrow there will be a special group of visitors: about three dozen Muslims from a nearby mosque.

Muslim attitudes to Christmas

Articles reporting on Muslims in relation to Christmas are often indicative of underlying bias. The right-leaning media, both broadsheet (Sunday Times), and tabloids (Daily Mail Australia and The Sun) show a trend in portraying Muslims as being both antagonistic towards Christmas and disrespectful towards Jesus. This is evident in the examples provided below from Daily Mail Australia,¹⁷ The Sun,¹⁸ and The Sunday Times.¹⁹


Left-leaning and centrist publications, on the other hand, are more sympathetic towards Muslims, focusing more on the altruism of Muslim communities during Christmas festivities and their acts of kindness. This is evident in the examples of "Supportive Bias" from BBC News²⁰ and The Guardian.²¹

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Muslims 'should share respect' for Jesus with Christmas cheer

Jason Allardyce
December 9 2018, 12:01 am, The Sunday Times

Athletics Religion



Last year athlete Mo Farah was targeted with racist messages after posting a picture of himself wearing a Santa hat

Share

An Islamic scholar in Scotland, who lives under a fatwa, has suggested that Muslims should join in Christmas celebrations to foster better community relations in Britain.

Paigham Mustafa, who has written on the issue in today's Sunday Times, said Muslims should feel able to send festive cards, decorate their homes with tinsel and balloons, wear Santa hats and pull crackers.

The Pakistani-born publisher and businessman spoke out in response to what he

- 17 Stephen Johnson, *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*, 19-Dec-2018, Daily Mail Australia at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 19-Dec-2018)
- 18 Mark Hodge, *YOU KHAN'T WEAR THAT Trolls attack Amir Khan for 'disobeying Allah' after Christmas message to fans*, 20-Dec-2018, The Sun at www.thesun.co.uk (Accessed on 20-Dec-2018)
- 19 Jason Allardyce, *Muslims 'should share respect' for Jesus with Christmas cheer*, The Sunday Times 2018 (Accessed on 09-Dec-2018)
- 20 BBC News, *The Muslim families donating to food banks for Christmas*, 23-Dec-2018, BBC News Online at www.bbc.com/news (Accessed on 23-Dec-2018)
- 21 Harriet Sherwood, *Church welcomes its special Muslim visitors on Christmas Eve*, 24-Dec-2018, The Guardian at www.guardian.co.uk (Accessed on 24-Dec-2018)

Case Study: Daily Mail Australia

37%

"VERY BIASED"

30%

HEADLINES ARE
MISLEADING OR
IRRELEVANT

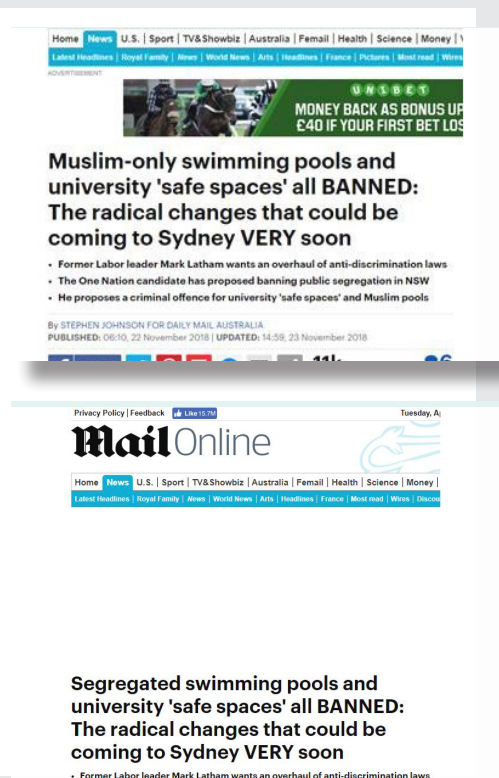
OVERALL WORST OFFENDING PUBLICATION

Daily Mail Australia overall was the worst offending publication as it ranked top in 4 out of 5 key metrics with the exception for “negative aspects and behaviour”, where it is second. The data collected indicated that Daily Mail Australia had more than four times the average bias when compared with other publications.

False reporting

In November 2018, Daily Mail Australia ran a headline claiming “Muslim only swimming pools” could be banned, in a story about a local MP’s policy manifesto to overhaul anti-discriminatory laws.¹ Not only is the 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.

¹ Stephen Johnson, *Muslim-only swimming pools and university 'safe spaces' all BANNED: The radical changes that could be coming to Sydney VERY soon*, 22-Nov-2018, Daily Mail Australia at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 22-Nov-2018)



CASE STUDY

Irrelevant details

In a newsworthy story on a multi-million pound drugs raid, Daily Mail Australia included an irrelevant detail about the dealer in its headline: “Halal-friendly meat merchant”. The fact that he sold halal meat has no relevance to the crime nor the story. After pointing this out to Daily Mail Australia, CfMM were told that it is purely an “issue of taste” on the publication’s part.



Framing Muslims as perpetrators

Depictions of the 'Muslim perpetrator' in conjunction with a 'non-Muslim victim' constitute a common narrative in British media. Frequently, stories in which the victim(s) is/are Muslim are manipulated by the media to suggest Muslim blame.

Despite Muslim worshippers being threatened with a golf club and verbally abused by a man who “stormed” their mosque, a headline in Daily Mail Australia chose to lead with the Muslim worshippers’ response to the attack as opposed to the perpetrator’s initial actions.² 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.

² Alison Bevege, *Muslim worshippers attack golf club-wielding man who stormed their mosque and started hurling insults and threats at them*, 06-Nov-2018, Daily Mail Australia at www.dailymail.co.uk (Accessed on 06-Nov-2018)





Analysis of Religious Publications

This section will focus on religious publications, as they are among the worst offenders in most categories. CfMM recognises and respects the intent and purpose of religious publications to represent the voices of their adherents, especially those facing persecution. The discussion of religious publications is specifically in regard to cases where stories concerning Muslims or Islam have been misconstrued or are inaccurate.

Table 7 illustrates the various themes through which Muslims and Islam are reported on in the media, with a percentage of overall coverage, per major theme, per publication.

While a majority of publications reference Muslims and Islam through the themes of terrorism and extremism, religious publications tend to report on Muslims and Islam through the theme of Religion. This is not surprising considering the focus of such publications. However, their reportage of Muslims and Islam are frequently in conjunction with “Very Biased” content: Jewish Chronicle (27%), Christian Today (36%) and The Tablet (22%).

There are repeated claims of Muslims persecuting Christians (Christian Today), as well as anti-semitism and extremism amongst Muslims (Jewish Chronicle). More generally, there is a markedly different perspective on themes like terrorism, extremism, or politics in religious publications, than other media outlets.

Table 7: Themes under which articles have been categorised for each publication

Publication	Major Theme Relating to Muslims & Islam	% of articles containing themes
Daily Mail Australia	Terrorism/Extremism	45%
The Spectator	Politics	38%
New Statesman	Politics	37%
The Economist	Politics	37%
Daily Star	Terrorism/Extremism	37%
The Jewish Chronicle	Anti-Semitism	31%
Press Association	Terrorism/Extremism	29%
The Sun	Terrorism/Extremism	28%
Daily Mirror	Terrorism/Extremism	27%
The Telegraph	Terrorism/Extremism	27%
ITV Online	Terrorism/Extremism	26%
Daily Express	Terrorism/Extremism	25%
The Mail on Sunday	Terrorism/Extremism	24%
The Observer	Politics	23%
Associated Press	Terrorism/Extremism	23%
Mail Online	Terrorism/Extremism	23%
AFP	Terrorism/Extremism	21%
Dailymail.com	Terrorism/Extremism	20%
Reuters	Terrorism/Extremism	20%
Evening Standard	Terrorism/Extremism	20%
Christian Today	Religion	19%
The Guardian	Politics	18%
The Independent	Politics	17%
Metro	Terrorism/Extremism	17%
Sky News Online	Terrorism/Extremism & Politics	17%
The Sunday Times	Politics	17%
The Tablet	Religion	17%
BBC Online	Terrorism/Extremism	17%
The Times	Politics	17%
iNews	Politics	15%
The Daily Mail	Politics	13%

Case Study: Religious Publications

36%

OF ARTICLES IN CHRISTIAN TODAY ABOUT MUSLIMS WERE "VERY BIASED"

31%

OF ARTICLES IN THE JEWISH CHRONICLE ABOUT MUSLIMS FOCUSED ON ANTISEMITISM

Perpetuating Far-Right tropes on the "Islamisation of Europe"

There is a growing trend amongst certain publications to perpetuate a far-right trope about the supposed "*Islamisation of Europe*". This news report from Christian Today quotes a bishop discussing an "*Islamic invasion*", and claiming that "*Europe is being Islamized*".¹ The use of the term "creeping" to describe Islam is typically negative and provocative. Throughout the article no alternative voice is sought and there is no scrutiny of his claims, despite the fact that Pew Research shows that by 2050 the Muslim population in Europe will most likely increase to just under 7.5% (without migration) of the total from a 2017 figure of just under 5%.²

- 1 Christian Today staff writer, *The European Church is sleeping while Islam is creeping in, says African bishop*, 25-Oct-2018 Christian Today at www.christiantoday.com (Accessed on 28-Nov-2018)
- 2 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)



Assuming faith to be a driver of political disputes

As mentioned before, a common theme employed by certain Christian publications is of alleged violence against Christians by Muslims. In particular, Christian Today hosts numerous articles on religious-based conflicts, but almost exclusively focuses on violence against Christians by Muslims. In one published piece, a bishop calls for more protection for Christians as "*Islamist violence soars*",³ there is no counter voice. The views of the bishop are left unchallenged and uncontextualised. This is particularly troubling given that much of the conflict in Nigeria is ostensibly about on resources or the lack of them.

- 3 Christian Today staff writer, *Nigerian archbishop urges protection for Christians as Islamist violence soars*, 28-Nov, 2018, Christian Today at www.christiantoday.com (Accessed on 28-Nov-2018)



CASE STUDY

Creating an image of Muslims being hostile to others

A trend recognised by CfMM's analysis is the unfounded portrayal of Muslims as being particularly hostile to non-Muslims.

In this headline, The Tablet employed misleading words to suggest that non-Muslims were deliberately excluded from attending the inauguration of Germany's biggest mosque.⁴ In reality, certain Christian groups themselves refused to attend, despite invitations from the mosque. Their refusal to attend was based on "feeling unwelcome", a sentiment clearly misconstrued by the headline. A second issue with the piece is that no comment or perspective is sourced from representatives of the mosque in question.

⁴ Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, *No welcome for non-Muslims at inauguration of Germany's biggest mosque*, 02-Oct-2018, The Tablet at thetablet.co.uk (Accessed on 02-Oct-2018)



Portraying Muslims as anti-semitic

A common theme amongst certain Jewish Publications is of the "anti-semitic Muslim".

In a Jewish Chronicle article defending Victor Orban and Hungary as not being anti-semitic, the article goes on to say that more "worrying anti-semitism" can be found in France. The author says "Many jews no longer wear the kippah in public for fear of abuse" and singles out "heavily Muslim areas of Paris" and "migrant dense parts of Sweden" as posing a threat to Jews.⁵ However, several reports show that anti-semitic attacks have risen across Europe, not due to Muslims but due to a rise in far-right activity.⁶

⁵ Jenni Frazer, *Muslims who 'peddle hatred' against Jews being challenged by 'progressive-thinking imams', Lord Ahmad says*, 07-Oct-2018, The Jewish Chronicle at thejc.com (Accessed on 07-Oct-2018)

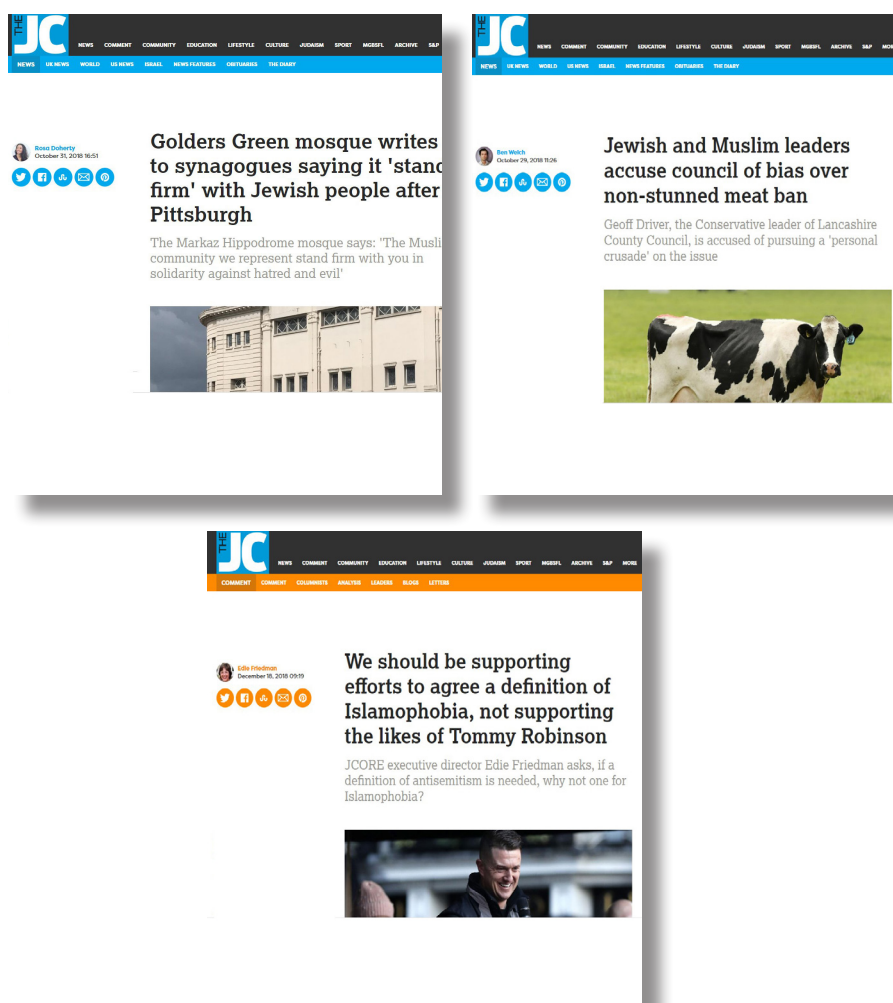
⁶ Reuters, *Germany sees 20% rise in anti-Semitic crime in 2018, blames far-right*, 14-May-2019, Reuters at Reuters.com (Accessed on 14-May-2019)



Supportive Bias of Religious Publications

Despite scoring highly in a number of articles ranked as “Very Biased” and “Antagonistic Bias”, religious publications also rank well in “Supportive Bias” most notably in stories which illustrate similarities shared by different faiths. Examples of this can be found in The Jewish Chronicle, which is the fifth highest ranking publication with “Supportive Bias”. On numerous occasions The Jewish Chronicle draws on points of relatability between Muslims and Jews, such as being subject to anti-semitic and Islamophobia respectively.²²

“Supportive Bias” in Religious Publications



A positive impact of this supportive bias in religious publications is seen in Mark Wood’s comment piece about Asia Bibi’s asylum case in Christian Today (a website which features heavily in our analysis of negative portrayals of Muslims and Islam).²³ The piece explores Britain’s supposed refusal to allow Asia Bibi asylum because the number of Muslims in Britain might put her life at risk. The argument is well-balanced as it counteracts the tropes presented about British Muslims in other media outlets. As well as demonstrating that the story is not actually true, Woods also explores why such a narrative is allowed to be perpetuated.

²² Ben Weich, *Jewish and Muslim leaders accuse council of bias over non-stunned meat ban*, 29-Oct-2018 The Jewish Chronicle at thejc.com (Accessed on 29-Oct-2018) & Rosa Doherty, *Golders Green mosque writes to synagogues saying it 'stands firm' with Jewish people after Pittsburgh*, 31-Oct-2018, The Jewish Chronicle at thejc.com (Accessed on 31-Oct-2018) & Edle Friedman, *We should be supporting efforts to agree a definition of Islamophobia, not supporting the likes of Tommy Robinson*, 18-Dec-2018, The Jewish Chronicle at thejc.com (Accessed on 18-Dec-2018)

²³ Mark Wood, *Did Britain refuse asylum to Asia Bibi? Some questions*, 12-Nov-2018, Christian Today at www.christiantoday.com (Accessed 12-Nov-2018)

CHRISTIAN TODAY

HOME NEWS US WORLD CHURCH CULTURE LIFESTYLE COMMENT VIDEO

Home > World

Did Britain refuse asylum to Asia Bibi? Some questions

Mark Woods | Mon 12 Nov 2018 16:57 GMT

There's a story doing the rounds from the [Huffington Post](#) which I've seen widely shared. It's about Asia Bibi, and the claims by the chair of the British Pakistani Christian Association, Wilson Chowdry, that Britain has decided not to offer her asylum in the event of her being allowed to travel abroad.



It's no reflection at all on Wilson Chowdry – who is a doughty campaigner for Pakistani Christians and deserves huge respect for his work – to say that this story raises certain questions, or rather its reception by many Christians does.

Chowdry told HuffPo that he had been 'led to believe' that 'the UK government had concerns that her moving to the UK would cause security concerns and unrest among certain sections of the community and would also be a security threat to British embassies abroad which might be targeted by Islamist terrorists'.

Cue outrage among campaigners for Asia Bibi's freedom, both British and foreign. 'How on earth could we let ourselves be intimidated by these fanatics?' was the cry. We should be ashamed of ourselves for giving in to terrorists. Was this the kind of country

Asia Bibi – also known as Asia Bibi – is according her death sentence for blasphemy

“HuffPo’s story plays to a wider narrative, a story told by people with a particular agenda. In that narrative, Islam is a violent and alien force intent on conquest. In some countries, like the UK, it’s the enemy within, getting its way through useful liberal idiots and naked intimidation. In others, like the US, it’s (largely) the enemy without, to be kept that way by a huge wall. A caravan of Middle Eastern jihadis is on its way through Mexico right now; best vote Trump, that will help. Well, no, no and no. It shouldn’t really need saying that ‘Muslim’ does not equal ‘terrorist’ or even ‘terrorist sympathiser’, but it does.”

The importance of Wood’s work cannot be underestimated when measured against overall coverage of this particular story in Nov 2018. The piece was rated Not Biased and had a Supportive Bias for Text Bias. Fifteen other items were published between 11 Nov 2018 and 14 Nov 2018 on the topic of the UK’s alleged refusal to grant Asia Bibi asylum.

Eleven were classified as News pieces. Nine out of the eleven were rated as "Very Biased" with all exhibiting "Antagonistic Bias". However, despite the valuable contribution of Mark Wood to this story, it should not be taken as a given that opinion pieces necessarily offer an antidote to the antagonism directed at Muslims and/or Islam through the news. Table 8 shows other opinion pieces accompanying Wood’s writing on the subject were rated as "Very Biased" all with "Antagonistic Bias".

Table 8: Total online coverage and CfMM ratings of Asia Bibi UK Asylum ‘Refusal’ articles: 11 Nov 2018 – 14 Nov 2018 (exc Wire Copy)

		Overall Article Rating		Text Bias Rating		
Type	Total	Very Biased	Not Biased	Antagonistic	Supportive	Not Sure
News	11	9	2	9	0	2
Opinion	4	3	1	3	1	0
Other	1	1	0	1	0	0



SECTION 2: TV BROADCASTS KEY INSIGHTS

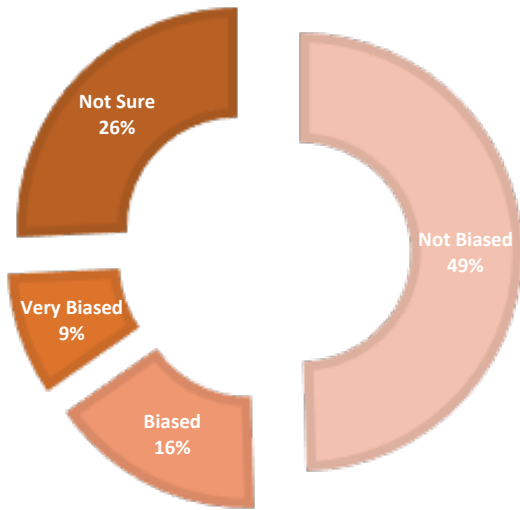
Analysis & Ratings Summary

In addition to online publications, CfMM analysed a total of 1,376 TV broadcast clips using the same list of keywords to determine their relevance. Each clip is unique, and has been categorised according to one of nine genres of programming as can be seen in table 9, which indicates the number of clips per channel per genre. Of the total 1,376 clips analysed, 1 in 4 were rated as either “Biased” (16%), or “Very Biased” (9%). The number of clips rated as “Antagonistic Bias” (21%) and “Supportive” (18%) are evidently similar in proportion.

Table 9: Total television broadcast clips by channels and genres

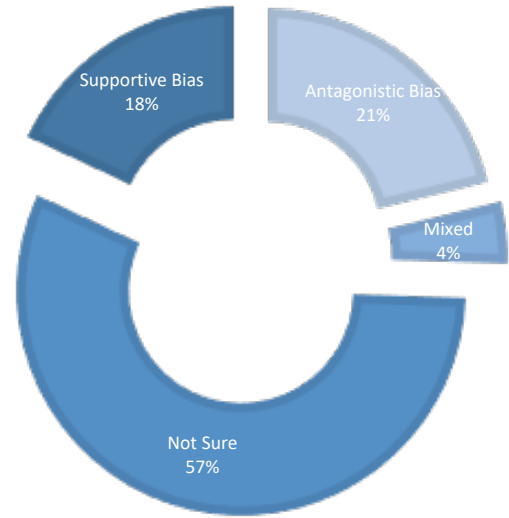
Channel	Documentary	Drama	Entertainment	News	News Investigation
BBC Regional	3	0	3	82	0
BBC National	150	27	40	353	17
BBC Parliament	0	0	0	0	0
Channel 4	1	11	27	41	0
Channel 5	8	3	2	14	0
ITV	8	1	24	65	0
ITV Regional	1	0	0	41	0
SKY News	1	0	183	9	0
Total	172	42	96	779	26

Overall Clip Rating by %



Not Biased Biased Very Biased Not Sure

Overall Clip Bias Rating by %



Antagonistic Bias Mixed Not Sure Supportive Bias

Of the total number of broadcast clips analysed, less than one in ten clips were judged to be “Very Biased”, as opposed to almost one in four online news articles. Of the TV Broadcasts rated as “Very Biased”, longer formatted content such as Documentaries (13%), Drama (14%), News Investigation (18%), and Topical Debate (17%) have more “Very Biased” (see page 42) content exceeding the 10% average of clips .

Table 9 [contd]: Total television broadcast clips by channels and genres

Channel	Parliament	Religious Programming	Sport	Topical Debate	Total
BBC Regional	0	0	0	13	101
BBC National	0	0	7	49	645
BBC Parliament	144	0	0	8	152
Channel 4	0	0	0	0	80
Channel 5	0	0	0	8	35
ITV	0	0	0	8	106
ITV Regional	0	0	0	2	44
SKY News	0	0	0	20	213
Total	144	7	2	101	1376

Five Key Metrics

TV BROADCAST

The same key metrics were used to analyse television broadcast clips. Overall television broadcast performance is noticeably better than its online counterparts. This may be due to the more stringent OFCOM regulations for broadcast media. Less than one in ten clips were judged to be “Very Biased” as opposed to almost one in four online news articles. Discussion of Muslims and/or Islam on a national level is less favourable than regional output where the stories of local citizens are often more nuanced and sympathetic. Many of the tropes discussed in this report are also given airtime on national television. Some longer formatted programmes gave airtime to the far-right while drama perpetuated stereotypes.

DOES THE BROADCAST
ASSOCIATE MUSLIMS OR
ISLAM WITH NEGATIVE
ASPECTS OR BEHAVIOUR?

43 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Sky News (53%)

LOWEST %

ITV Local (18%)

KEY METRIC 1

NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Despite an extended Sky News report on the UK's apparent denial of asylum to Pakistani Christian, Asia Bibi and the ability of the programme to debate the issue at length, no attempt was made to do so.¹ In particular, Wilson Chowdhury's claim that Britain has the “*largest Muslim population in Europe*” and thus is an unsafe destination for Asia Bibi, is incorrect. (The presenter did point out that France has a larger Muslim population than the UK).

¹ Wilson Chowdhury, *Lunchtime Live*, SKYNEWS, 12-Nov-2018, 13:50PM BST

DOES THE BROADCAST
MISREPRESENT ANY
ASPECT OF MUSLIM
BEHAVIOUR, BELIEF OR
IDENTITY?

22%
YES

HIGHEST %
ITV (27%)

LOWEST %
Channel 5 (11%)

DOES THE BROADCAST
MAKE GENERALISING
CLAIMS ABOUT MUSLIMS
OR ISLAM?

17%
YES

HIGHEST %
Channel 4 (24%)

LOWEST %
ITV Regional (7%)

KEY METRIC 2

MISREPRESENTATION

Joanna Lumley, in describing the former Soviet satellite state of Kyrgyzstan, suggests that the communist system (which was repressive towards Islam) had a positive impact on how the religion is practiced giving it a “less strict Islamic feel”. The assumption is that, had the state been allowed to practice Islam, it would have inherently been “strict”.

“This is a mainly Muslim country, but its communist legacy gives it a much less strict Islamic feel.”²

² Joanna Lumley, *Silk Road Adventure*, ITV1, 03-Oct-2018, 21:33PM BST

KEY METRIC 3

GENERALISATIONS

The Channel 4 drama “No Offence”, has a scene in which the police are trying to locate a bomb. It plays into the notion that Muslims and Muslim children are more likely to be terrorists. The Mosque, a place of worship, is also presented as the most likely location for the bomber.

“How the hell’s Beckett persuaded someone to have a load of explosives strapped to them?”

“Usual target. Asian kids. Could be another school? Or a Mosque? Mosque is more likely.”³

³ *No Offence*, Channel 4, CH4, 11-Oct-2018, 21:38PM BST

DOES THE BROADCAST
OMIT DUE PROMINENCE
TO A RELEVANT MUSLIM
VOICE OR PERSPECTIVE?

9 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Channel 5 (26%)

LOWEST %

BBC Regional (4%)

DOES THE IMAGE/HEADLINE
DEPICT MUSLIMS/ISLAM
IN AN UNFAIR/INCORRECT
MANNER IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE STORY

10 %
YES

HIGHEST %

Channel 5 (14%)

LOWEST %

BBC Regional (5%)

KEY METRIC 4

IMAGERY & HEADLINES

A Channel 5 news report on the release of Anjem Choudhury from prison chose to include footage from a previous protest which contained images of an antagonistic placard which associates Muslims as an existential threat to society.⁴ This does not reflect the reality that the vast majority of Muslims reject the views of Choudhary and his followers.

⁴ Julian Druker, *5 News at 5*, Channel5, CH5 19-Oct-2018, 17:01PM BST

KEY METRIC 5

PROMINENCE

In a crime documentary on Channel 5 about the murder of a young man by an ex-girlfriend, the religious background of the girl and the strictness of her homelife, are repeatedly mentioned. The murder was a case of domestic violence by a jealous, insecure, jilted lover and has nothing to do with her faith.

“Hasna Begum was from a strict Muslim background and lived with her parents at their home in east London”⁵.

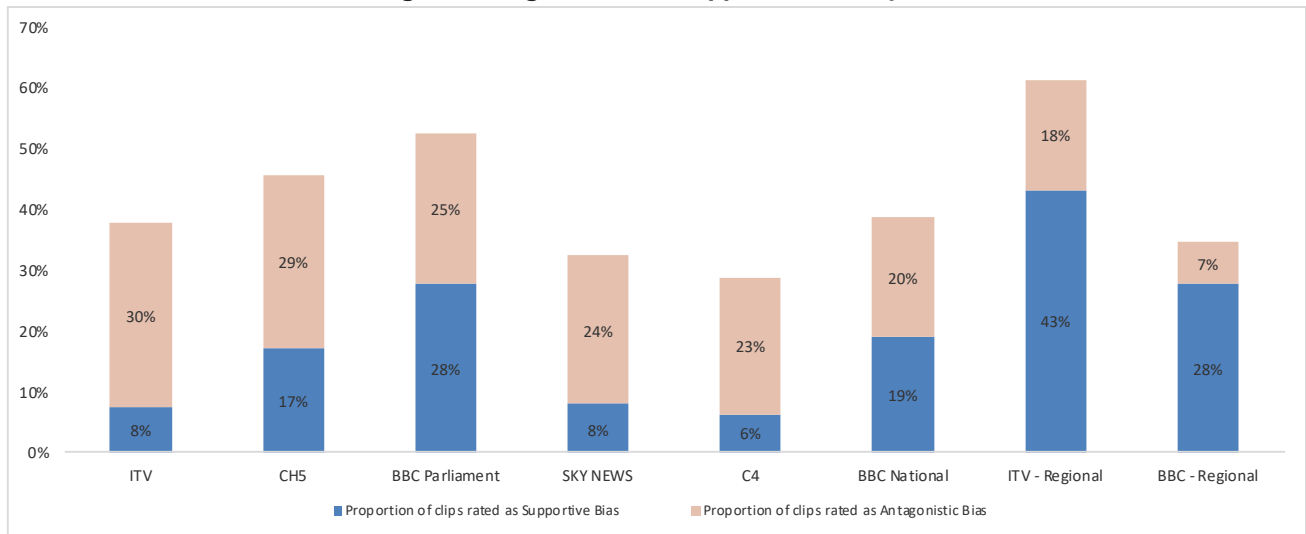
⁵ *Murdered by*, Channel5, CH5, 20-Nov-2018, 23:25PM BST

SECTION 2: TV BROADCASTS KEY INSIGHTS

Regional vs National TV

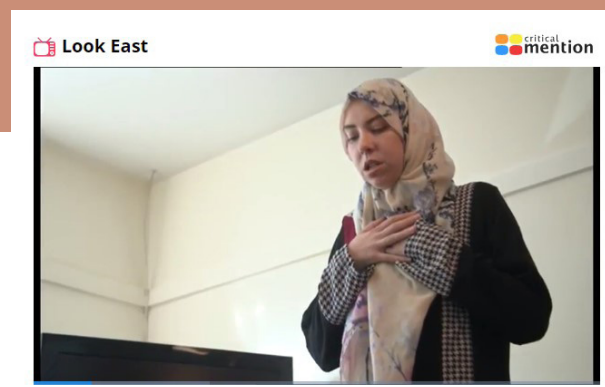
One of the findings of our analysis, is a clear disparity between regional and national coverage when it comes to “Supportive” and “Antagonistic Bias”. Regional coverage is significantly less antagonistic and more supportive of Muslims and/or Islam. Regional television news bulletins, in particular, perform best in terms of the lowest percentage of “Antagonistic Bias” reports, coupled with the highest percentage of “Supportive Bias” stories.

Percentage of Antagonistic and Supportive Bias by Channels



Thirteen of the nineteen supportive clips covered stories such as the increase in hate crimes against Muslims, the rise of local far-right chapters and attacks on Mosques. One story which was covered exceptionally well was by BBC East news. It was on an anti-Muslim attack in Milton Keynes against convert Jennifer Parsons who was taunted for wearing a hijab and attacked with a glass bottle.²⁴ ITV Yorkshire North,²⁵ gave a regional insight into the national problem of hate crimes and featured Muslim voices prominently.

BBC East (Ipswich/Norwich): Anti-Muslim attack in Milton Keynes



ITV Yorkshire North: Hate Crime Increase



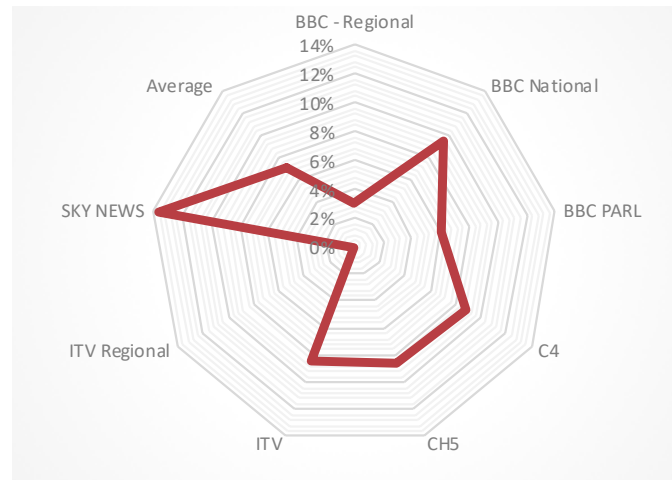
²⁴ Jennifer Parsons, *Look East, BBC1 East (Ipswich/Norwich)*, BBC1EBL, 14-Nov-2018, 13:34PM BST

²⁵ John Hill, *ITV1 Yorkshire North (Leeds)*, ITV1YON, 16-Oct -2018, 18:01PM BST

Case Study: Sky News

"VERY BIASED" COVERAGE

Sky News, despite broadcasting less material on Muslims and/or Islam, has proportionally the highest number of "Very Biased" coverage (14%). In contrast, ITV Regional fared the best with no broadcasts judged to be "Very Biased". The graph shows how all national broadcasters exceeded the 6% average of "Very Biased" clips.



Proportion of Clips Rated as "Very Biased" by TV Channels

Sky News reporting of Huddersfield grooming case

Gerald Tubb's report on the Huddersfield grooming case; where 20 men were found guilty of rape and abuse of 15 girls between 2004 and 2011, it shows how the faith of these men became wrongly associated with the crime.¹ The men were mostly British Pakistanis, apart from two (including the 'ring leader'). While the reporter detailed the perpetrators' "*histories of crimes, violence, and drugs*", an emphasis was nonetheless placed on their Muslim faith and "*Muslim community*" they came from in tandem with the white heritage of the abused girls. This is a clear example of what Shamim Miah has described as the "*dominance of cultural repertoire*" when discussing crimes committed by those of non-white heritage.²



"This is predominantly a problem from the Muslim community. These were not people who worshipped at mosques, most of them had extensive histories of crimes, violence, drugs, et cetera. They were not all Muslim but they were from a Muslim community and almost all of the victims were young, vulnerable white girls."

1 Gerald Tubb, *Sky News At Six*, SKYNEWS, 10-Oct-2018, 18:01PM BST

2 Shamim Miah, *The Groomers and the Question of Race. Identity papers: A journal of British and Irish studies*, A journal of British and Irish studies, pp.54 at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk> (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

CASE STUDY

Sky News coverage of the Jamal Khashoggi

The coverage of the brutal murder of the journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, included a succession of commentators who presented a “Very Biased” position.¹ A number of them shifted the focus away from the murder and victimisation of Khashoggi to his alleged association with the Muslim Brotherhood and being an “Islamist critic”. In doing so, they delegitimised his credibility as a journalist and his opposition to the Saudi State. One contributor even suggested that the overthrow of the Saudi regime would lead to “*very Islamic*” leaders that would make “ISIS look like a picnic” - the suggestion being that there is something inherently abhorrent about being Islamic.²

1 Melanie Phillips (The Times), *Sky News Press Review*, SKYNEWS, 17-Oct-2018, 00:34AM BST & Tom Wilson (Henry Jackson Society), *The Kay Burley Show*, SKYNEWS, 24-Oct-2018, 14:51PM BST

2 Johnathan Paris, *Lunchtime Live*, SKYNEWS, Oct 23, 2018, 11:17 AM BST



Melanie Phillips,
Sky News Press Review

"We now rely on the Crown Prince in particular to help us hold the line against the twin evils of Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood."



Tom Wilson,
Henry Jackson Society,
The Kay Berley Show,
Sky News

"He was a critic, but he was an Islamist critic, rather than a western style one"



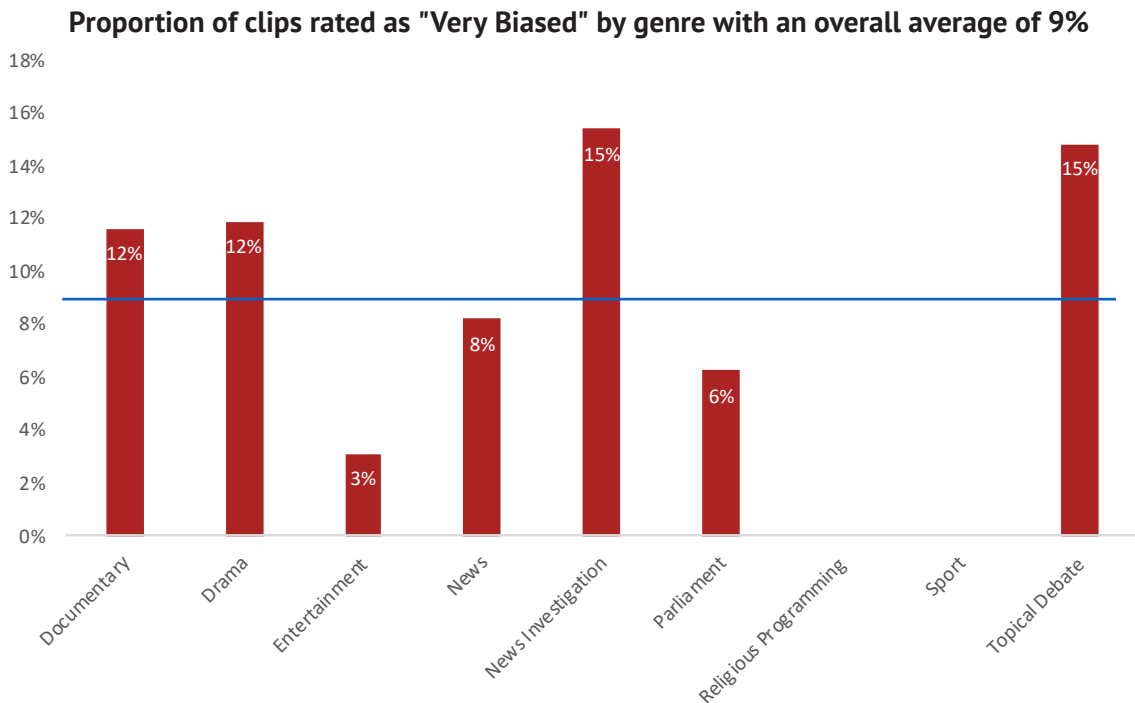
Jonathan Paris,
Middle East Security Analyst,
Sky News

"We have to be aware, as we were in 9/11 after that when there were many calls for the removal of the Al'Sauds, that what may replace the Al'Sauds is some group of tribal, medieval, very Islamic leaders who will make ISIS look like a picnic."

SECTION 2: TV BROADCASTS KEY INSIGHT

Topical Debate Programmes & the Far-Right

We categorised all programmes into their respective themes, allowing us to recognise which themes displayed the highest and lowest bias ratings. Topical Debate programmes are one of the genres which had a proportionally high percentage of “Very Biased” clips. The format of such shows allows for more in-depth scrutiny of guests and ideas. Conversely this also allows for those with deeply prejudiced views to gain a footing on a national mainstream platform.



Newsnight platforming of Yaxley-Lennon (Tommy Robinson)



In a discussion about Steven Yaxley Lennon’s claims of being silenced, BBC Newsnight used the far-right agitator’s own propaganda image of being gagged as a backdrop image in the studio.²⁶ The topic was given further prominence by interviewing Danny Lockwood, a supporter of Yaxley Lennon and an editor of a weekly newspaper, known for editorials which bait Muslim communities and beliefs.²⁷

²⁶ Lucy Clarke-Billings, *Tommy Robinson fans cheer as far-right extremist arrives for contempt case* May 2019, Daily Mirror at www.mirror.co.uk (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

²⁷ Mark Townsend, *Tommy Robinson and the editor: how a newspaper 'sows division' where Jo Cox died*, 02-Sep-2018, The Observer at www.theguardian.com (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

BBC Politics Live interview with Gerard Batten

On BBC Politics Live, presenter Jo Coburn and UKIP leader Gerard Batten had an extensive discussion about Muslim communities and their beliefs.²⁸ Batten takes the opportunity to perpetuate certain tropes about grooming gangs; linking them with Islam and what he refers to as an “ideology”. Jo Coburn challenges Batten robustly, and as such the item is not classified as “Biased” nor “Very Biased”.



Batten: *“There is the industrialised exploitation and sexual slavery across the country, which is not just being done for the sake of a perverted lust but for a business run out of cab offices, run out of fast-food offices, where girls are trafficked up and down the Country.”*

Coburn: *“But you are condemning a whole community all Muslims, men, women and children if they adhere to an ideology that you think is hateful”.*

Batten: *“I am not condemning individuals and have never spoken about individuals, I talk about the ideology and you know because you’ve had me on this programme before. And who are the people who follow that ideology?”*

Coburn: *“They are men, women and children who are part of the Muslim community so you are condemning a whole community.”*

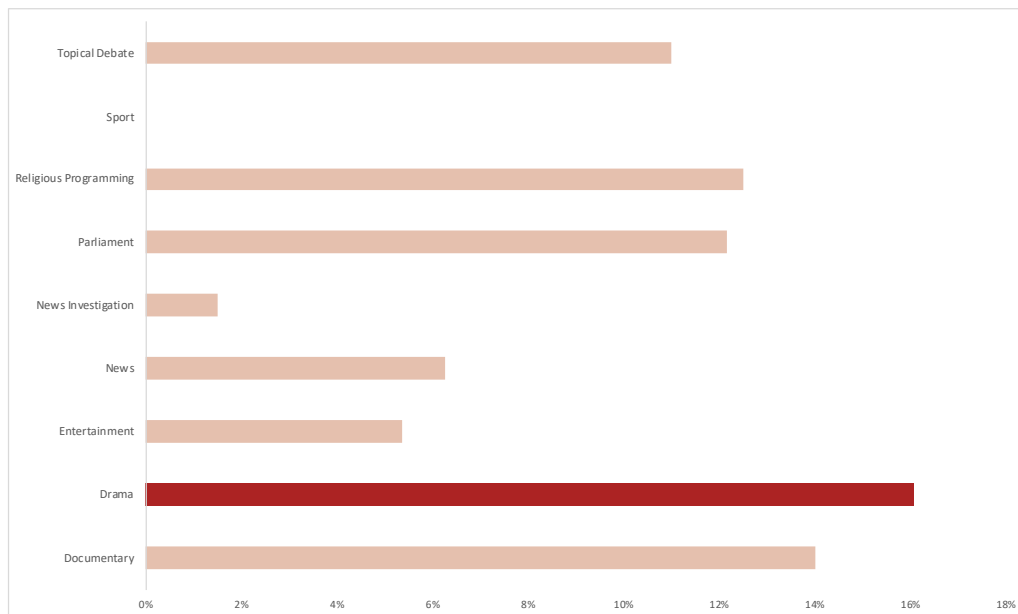
²⁸ Gerard Batten & Jo Coburn, *Politics Live*, BBC2, 12-Oct-2018, 12:39PM BST

SECTION 2: TV BROADCASTS KEY INSIGHT

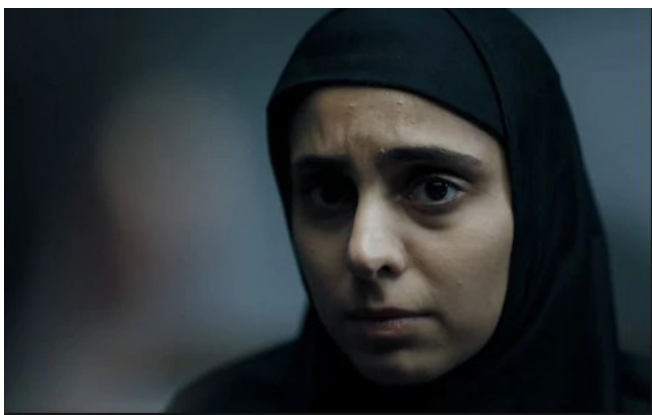
Misrepresentation through Drama

One of the main mediums for the misrepresentation of Muslims on television is Drama. It has the highest percentage (16%) of "Misleading" clips and overall is "Very Biased" in its content and scripting. Given the reach of drama, this percentage is worrying. Stereotypes are often reinforced through fictional characters, the most concerning being that Muslims are terrorists, Muslim men are misogynistic, Muslim women are oppressed, and Islam is a threat to Western society.

Proportion of clips for each genre rated as "Misleading"



BBC's Bodyguard



"You all saw me as an oppressed Muslim woman, I am an engineer, I am a jihadi."

One of the most high profile dramas of 2018, which had over 10 million viewers and won several awards, was the BBC's *Bodyguard*.²⁹ The series pandered to stereotypes of Muslim women who wear the hijab as oppressed or subservient.

Shelina Janmohamed discusses this stereotype in an article about the programme in the Telegraph. *"It was lazy, unimaginative and a simple re-hash of almost every other story told about Muslim women being oppressed victims, and evil terrorists. Can you think of more than a handful of other representations of Muslim women on screen? No, me neither."*³⁰

²⁹ *Bodyguard*, BBC One, BBC1, 21-Nov-2018, 21:17PM BST

³⁰ Shelina Janmohamed, *Bodyguard's worst offence? Its desperate stereotypes about Muslim women*, 24-Sep-2018, The Telegraph at www.telegraph.co.uk (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

Law and Order on Channel 5

A similar example of negative stereotyping of Muslim women can be found in an episode of Law and Order which conflates Sharia Law with harsh penal codes.³¹ The Sharia constitutes a comprehensive legal guide for Muslims to live according to their faith, while the penal codes refer to a small segment of Sharia, the penalties of which require a high burden of proof in order to be applied, and a number of safeguards preventing their application. As Michael Knight noted as far back as 2012 in his analysis of Law and Order: *“As long as writers treat religious identity as the sole factor that determines every Muslim’s motivations or behaviour, or imagine Islam as a source of universal norms, their Muslim characters will never be fully human.”*³²



“They say I broke Sharia Law. And they will stone me to death in front of my children.”

BBC’s Eastenders

In Eastenders,³³ a mother (Chloe) is mortified by the mention of her son receiving the Qur’an from his foster parents (Miriam and Arshad). Chloe’s reaction of looking on in horror when the Qur’an is mentioned could be there to show how some people react to the Qur’an but it can also be interpreted as her finding the Muslim holy book as something to be feared.



*“What’s this?
The Qur’an. I translated some verses.
Harley loves it. It’s a joke!”*

³¹ Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, Channel 5, CH5, 02-OCT-2018, 03:39AM BST

³² Michael Muhammad Knight, ‘Law & Order: SVU’ Sucks at Depicting Muslims, Vice.com/en_us 23-Oct-2012, Vice at Vice.com/en_us (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

³³ EastEnders, BBC One, BBC1, 23-Oct-2018, 7:52 PM BST



SECTION 3

Common Themes - Online Publishers & TV Broadcasts

Despite there being differences between online publishers and broadcasters, there are common themes that emerge across all platforms. This section will focus on the use and effect of imagery as well as generalisations and tropes concerning Muslims and/or Islam.

Imagery

An image can have a powerful effect on its audience, the memory of which often lives on beyond that of its corresponding text and sound. Frequently, the choice of image is indicative of underlying bias. While the metric of image is an area where the media is generally more responsible in its portrayal of Muslims and/or Islam, both online and TV Broadcast clips have a 9% average of images which were rated as "Very Biased".

Association of terrorism with sacred Muslim site

In the example of Khalid Masood, the Westminster Bridge terrorist, an image of him is used next to the Kaaba in Makkah, Islam's holiest site. The image supplied by the Metropolitan Police and Press Association was used repeatedly across all media including the BBC (although it was subsequently removed after a complaint by CfMM), The Times, ITV, Mail Online and other wire agencies. Placing Masood at a site of pilgrimage for Muslims, subconsciously links Muslim practice to terror and terrorism.

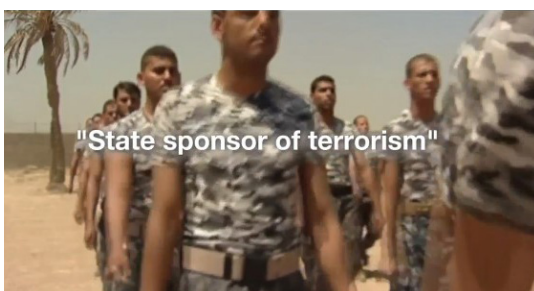
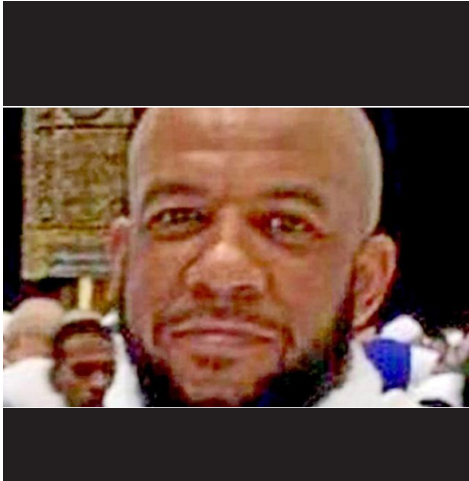
The Guardian readers' editor produced an entire op-ed to explain the dilemma of choosing images and the need for sensitivity.³⁴

"From an editorial standards perspective, there was nothing wrong with the image. Conscious that the Muslim community can suffer discrimination when terrorist acts are committed in the name of a political ideology that feigns religiosity, as a gesture of goodwill the editors replaced the photo for another image, a police mugshot. It is essential that journalists cover the crimes that constitute terrorism, and the legal processes which follow. Coverage can justifiably include images of perpetrators but should take care not to glorify them."

Iran portrayed as a "State Sponsor of Terrorism"

Another example in which imagery can indicate bias is in reports on various conflicts, especially those concerning Muslim-majority countries. Frequently, images are chosen which present groups of protestors as appearing overtly aggressive, while editing is applied to heighten colour, creating a more striking impression.

Reporting on the Trump administration's decision to break the nuclear treaty between the US and Iran, James Landale's BBC News at 10 emphasised the US' line of



³⁴ Paul Chadwick, *Two images that show we need to be sensitive about our photos*, 14-Oct-2018, The Guardian at theguardian.com (Accessed on May 14 2019)

declaring Iran as a “State Sponsor of Terrorism”.³⁵ This caption, as shown in these stills, is tapered across several graphics showing images depicting Iran and its people as aggressors. The choice to editorialise a major segment of a mainstream news report in such a graphic manner raises questions on neutrality.

Misrepresentations of Muslim dress

Regional television broadcasters tend to exhibit the least biased and prejudicial attitude. However, on occasions, they do endorse negative stereotypes surrounding Islam and/or Muslims. A clip that was broadcast on ITV London news, reporting on an increase in Islamophobia, shows Muslim women clad in black abayas (long dresses) when illustrating the words ‘about Islamophobia’.³⁶ Such images have become synonymous with representations of Muslim women, despite estimates indicating that very few Muslim women wear such garments. Islamophobia affects all Muslims (as well as people of other faiths such as Sikhs) who wear a multitude of clothing and head coverings, and as such the overuse of images of Muslim women in black abayas fails to recognise and represent the diversity of British Muslims.



³⁵ James Landell, *BBC News at 10*, BBC1 05-Nov-2018, 22:06PM BST

³⁶ Ria Chatterjee, *ITV Evening News London*, ITV1LON, 16-Oct-2018, 18:06PM BST



Generalisations and Tropes

Generalisations about Islam and Muslims appear across the spectrum of media platforms but are significantly more common in right leaning and religious publications. Their proportion of published articles containing generalisations about Muslims and/or Islam far exceeded the overall average of 14% across the monitored publications. INews is the only left leaning platform which averaged over 14%.

This section will present the typical generalisations made about 'Muslim women', 'Anti-semitism' and 'Muslim dress'. These being particularly common in manifestations of negative bias in both online publications and TV broadcast.

Muslim Women

Muslim women often bear the brunt of generalisations and tropes; being both 'othered' through misrepresentative choices of images and silenced through a general lack of due prominence.

Trope about Muslim women having no free will

In a BBC 2 documentary about a missing princess from Dubai, a generalised statement is made about the status of all Muslim women under Sharia Law concerning their ability to make independent decisions. "A woman, regardless of how old she is, she's under the guardianship of either her father, her husband. **At no point in her life she can make decisions or choose anything**".³⁷ This may be the case in certain households or relationships but to infer that a woman can never make decision at any point in her life is factually incorrect, as women have their rights to make decisions prescribed in the Qur'an.

Anti-semitism

Tropes about Muslims or Islam being inherently anti-semitic are repeated across media platforms.

"Muslims want to come and get me for my Jewish blood"

A Spectator interview with author David Pryce-Jones included the following words: "And lo and behold, there are Muslims who want to come and get me for my Jewish blood",³⁸ insinuating that Muslims are inherently anti-semitic.

The conflation of support for Palestinian people with antisemitism

The presenter on BBC 4 propagated the view that support for Palestine is akin to anti-semitism; broadly generalising and misunderstanding the Palestinian solidarity movement³⁹:

"Fabien Beatrice Webb dismissed Fels as a 'decidedly vulgar little Jew.' She was merely manifesting the knee-jerk anti-semitism which a chapter of the English left displays to this day in its enthusiasm for Palestine and Islam. There's more of this to come."

The use of words "enthusiasm for Palestine" are themselves misleading, considering that support for Palestinian people, and an awareness of their occupation, is not cause for "enthusiasm", but rather concern.

Portraying Muslim solidarity with Jews as unusual

At the scene of the Pittsburgh Synagogue shooting, Channel 4's commentary on the presence of several Muslim families at the scene, paying condolences after the attack, seemed to suggest that this was unusual and therefore a newsworthy mention.⁴⁰

Muslim Dress

"Several Muslim families were here as well"

Muslim dress is consistently a reference through which Muslims are stereotyped. Boris Johnson's view that "women who wear Burkas look like letterboxes and bank robbers", is echoed across various platforms.⁴¹

³⁷ Herve Haubert, *Escape from Dubai: The Mystery of the Missing Princess*, BBC2, 06-Dec-2018, 21:53PM BST

³⁸ Dominic Green, *Life 'n' Arts Podcast: History and Ism's with David Pryce-Jones*, 22-Oct-2018, The Spectator at blogs.spectator.co.uk, (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

³⁹ Jonathan Meades: *The Joy of Essex*, BBC4, 29-Nov-2018, 01:12 AM BST

⁴⁰ John Snow, *Channel 4 News*, CH4, 29-Oct-2018, 19:31 PM BST

⁴¹ Boris Johnson, *Denmark has got it wrong. Yes, the burka is oppressive and ridiculous – but that's still no reason to ban it*, 05-Aug-18, The Telegraph at www.telegraph.co.uk (Accessed on 14-May-2019)

One sided view on the hijab

A BBC News item about women in Iran wearing the hijab is a typical example of an omission of due prominence, providing the subjective opinion of one woman's experience of wearing the hijab without the counterbalancing view of another's preference towards wearing one. In doing so, the viewer is left with the impression that the hijab is generally oppressive.⁴²

"When I wear a hijab it's like I'm restricted, I'm oppressed, when I don't wear a hijab it's like I'm free!"

"Alhaggagi didn't dress like an Islamic extremist"

In an article for the dailymail.com and Associated Press about a man in California

charged with terrorism, former CIA employee Marc Sageman, who evaluated terror suspect Amer Alhaggagi for the defence, is quoted as saying:⁴³

"Alhaggagi was not that religious and didn't dress like an Islamic extremist or express anger with the US like many do."

Despite this being a direct quote, this example demonstrates the impact that language in news output can have. Such casual assertions which are frequently used by the counter-terror industry can cast unjustified suspicion on Muslims who wish to display their Muslim identities without fear of being labelled as extremist.

⁴² Shaparak Shajarizadeh, *100 Women, Hijab in Iran*, BBC News, 23-Nov-2018, 21:31PM BST

⁴³ Megan Sheets For, Expert: *California man convicted in terror case no extremist*, 17-Dec-2018, Dailymail.com and Associated Press 2018 at www.dailymail.co.uk, (Accessed on 14-May 2019)

CONCLUSION

Despite this report highlighting many examples of Muslims and/or Islam being misrepresented as well as scoring negatively according in our key metrics, the overall picture is mixed. As acknowledged through various examples including AFP's investigative fact check into the alleged mass killings of Christians in Nigeria others, the media can be a very effective balance against the misreporting and prejudices exhibited within its own ranks. Furthermore, the BBC's uncovering of the systematic persecution of the Uighurs by the Chinese state, shows how the media can sometimes impact on issues far more effectively than those in positions of political power.

In contrast to this, is the constant drip feed of misinformation seen in rolling news coverage, particularly concerning suspected 'terror' attacks and the misreporting of Muslim beliefs, actions and ideas. Of particular concern is what can only be reasonably interpreted as a deliberate attempt by some online news platforms, in particular, to associate Muslims and/or Islam with anything negative. This as shown includes a rather inventive manufacturing of headlines. More disturbingly is the building of certain narratives around Muslim populaces including the rather disturbing insinuation that Muslims are inherently antisemitic.

The critical mass of this output, particularly among the right leaning media, (although by no means exclusively), has the effect of dehumanising Muslims. Furthermore, the framing of complex issues as religious conflicts or disputes, distorts reality as well as provides tropes seized upon by those seeking to cause real harm to Muslims. A greater emphasis on fact checking as well as more responsible editorial decision making, are some ways in which this can be corrected. The regional broadcast media has demonstrated how issues effecting Muslim communities are not so far removed from those of their fellow citizens. The contribution of Muslims to civic life, as well as progress in many fields, can be interesting enough to populate column inches and television screens to balance the negative coverage.

As the first in a series of quarterly reports, CfMM hopes that by highlighting examples of coverage on Muslims and Islam, this can serve as a valuable resource for journalists and editors alike. Furthermore, the in-depth Critical Discourse Analysis by experts in corpus linguistics gives the required nuance focused on the use of language and its wider meaning and impact. This can both highlight prejudices, unconscious bias as well as dispel myths. Given the increase in falsehoods about Muslims, CfMM hopes to bring greater accuracy and balance in media coverage.

Faisal Hanif
July 2019



SECTION 4

COMPLAINTS & CORRECTIONS

In this quarter, we lodged 44 complaints and secured 17 successful changes of varying degrees. Despite the best attempts of editors and journalists, online and television broadcast coverage has the potential to contain mistakes - sometimes extremely serious - as we highlight below. In the worst cases, CfMM aims to hold broadcasters and online publications to account and advocates for mistakes and misrepresentations to be corrected or changed. Complaints are made to the individual publisher in the first instance and only referred to IPSO or OFCOM, if no successful resolution can be reached.

We recognise our own limitations and not every potential complaint has been submitted. Complaints are not only made with the publishers and broadcasters assessed within the study, but any medium of which CfMM is informed of or identifies.



Nick Ferrari column: Correction

In an article published on October 28, 2018, entitled "Javid dares tell us truth about abuse" we said a study had found that 84 per cent of those convicted for child grooming since 2005 were Asian. In fact the report found that 84 per cent of those convicted of child grooming gang offences since 2005 were Asian.

Issues range from problematic terminology, incorrect headlines to wrong information. Furthermore, images representing Muslim women as well as the explicit association of Islam's holiest site, the Kaaba, with terrorism were particularly problematic.



Bodyguard breaks down over terror attack

Westminster attacker "was carrying two large knives... he was going to kill me", officer says.



Bodyguard breaks down over terror attack

Westminster attacker "was carrying two large knives... he was going to kill me", officer says.

As this image shows the BBC along with other news websites used this image of terrorist Khalid Masood standing in front of the Kaaba in Mecca, despite other images being available. Some publications including the BBC and the Guardian replaced the image when notified by CfMM.

On occasions the right leaning press particularly Mail Online, The Sun and Daily Express used language and emphasised details which associated Muslims with negative, aggressive, criminal and sometimes uncaring behaviour.

Mirror

NEWS

Melbourne attack: Lone wolf terrorist 'screams "Allahu Akbar"' in knife rampage

WARNING - DISTRESSING CONTENT: The Bourke Street attacker set his truck on fire and killed one person before he was fatally shot by police

Mirror

NEWS

Melbourne attack: 'Lone wolf' terrorist kills one in knife rampage before he's shot dead

WARNING - DISTRESSING CONTENT: The Bourke Street attacker set his truck on fire and killed one person before he was fatally shot by police

The coverage of terrorist attacks in Melbourne and Thousand Oaks California all published incorrect details which associated the crime with Islam. There was similar reporting by many publishers including the BBC and the SKY News during the Strasbourg attacks in December 2018.

The Daily Mirror uses the unverified claim that "Allahu Akbar" was said despite the police denying this. The headline was changed after CfMM complained

When making changes, publications on most occasions did not provide any acknowledgment of the change made, in part because acknowledgements only occur when they believe the error to be one of factual accuracy.



The Express claims that the suspect was a "Middle Eastern man" even though he was a white ex-marine Ian Long. The article was removed after CfMM complained

Table 10: Successful corrections by CfMM

Issue	Publisher	Date of Complaint	Description	Result
Use of misleading term	BBC News Online	05/10/2018	The phrase Islamic Terror was changed to Islamist	Changed
Image	BBC News Online	08/10/2018	Problematic use of image for terrorist Khalid Masood in-front of the Kaaba in Makkah.	Changed
Image	The Guardian	08/10/2018	Use of image for terrorist Khalid Masood stood in-front of the Kaaba in Makkah.	Changed and op-ed written to explain decision.
Headline	BBC	18/10/2018	Headlined the Strasbourg terrorist attack with witness testimony of gunman having shouted 'Allah-hu Akbar'	Updated headline
Wording	Daily Mirror	18/10/2018	Article on celebrity Zain Malik describing a visit by his family as "armed" with Halal Meat.	Changed
Introduction	BBC Radio 4 Today	24/10/2018	Introduction of notorious anti-Muslim Frank Gaffney was insufficient with no mention of his anti-Muslim campaigns or rhetoric.	Noted
Inaccurate	New Statesman	24/10/2018	Article stated that the "The ringleader of the Huddersfield grooming gang Amere Singh Dhaliwal, converted to Sikhism (from Islam) in 2013". This was incorrect.	Changed
Incorrect Stat	The Sunday Express	29/10/2018	Nick Ferrari column citing The Quilliam Foundation statistic of 84% of grooming gangs being Asian, which has subsequently been proved to be incorrect by seasoned academics and researchers.	Printed correction online and in Print
Language	Daily Mirror	29/10/2018	Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (Tommy Robinson) described as an anti-Islam activist when he is an anti-Muslim	Acknowledged and changed
Incorrect Detail	Daily Express	08/11/2018	Description of "Middle Easterner" used for white shooter in California	Article removed
Incorrect Detail	Sky News	08/11/2018	Description of "Middle Easterner" used for white shooter in California	Changed but no acknowledgment
Incorrect Detail	Daily Mirror	09/11/2018	Headline inaccurately states that Melbourne Terrorist shouts 'Allah-hu Akbar'	Changed without acknowledgment of error
Incorrect Detail	Mail Online	09/11/2018	Headline inaccurately states that Melbourne Terrorist shouts 'Allah-hu Akbar'	Changed but no acknowledgment
Headline	The Guardian	13/11/2018	Israel- Gaza headline focusing on rockets from Gaza whilst ignoring Israeli aggression which started latest hostilities and killed Palestinians.	Changed but no acknowledgment
Incorrect Story	Daily Mail Australia	28/11/2018	Incorrect headline and story stating that Muslim Only Swimming Pools had been established in Australia.	Changed Headline and Descriptions
Incorrect Detail	BBC News Online	04/12/2018	The Man who blesses Salmon: Article suggested that this was mainstream Shia practice despite it not being so.	Changed
Headline	Daily Express	20/12/2018	In an article on vandalised graves in Indonesia, the headline used the words 'Muslim ONLY!' Shock as furious mob DESTROY cross on grave of Catholic priest	Changed by removing words Muslim Only
Headline	Daily Express	21/12/2018	Headline stated that "Islamic Terror" was to regroup following US withdrawal from Syria.	Changed by removing words Islamic Terror

SECTION 5

Critical Discourse Analysis

In this section four academics who have produced recognized work on the reporting of Muslims in the media give an in-depth account of one particular article or broadcast using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Critical Discourse Analysis is an inter-disciplinary approach focusing on how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language.

All the academics have contributed to the oversight of this project and were selected given their experience and impact of previous work and their experience in the fields of language and corpus linguistics. The following insights all use a glossary of terms already established within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Analyses are focused on articles and broadcasts selected by academics since the inception of CfMM in April 2018, thus some of these fall outside of Oct-Dec 2018.



Professor Paul Baker

Professor Paul Baker is a Professor of English Language at Lancaster University, corpus linguist, discourse analyst: Department of Linguistics and English Language

This article is a case about a 15-year-old and 14-year-old who got married in the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, after a legal battle, when a religious court over-ruled the government.⁴⁴ Although the article does not explicitly label this as problematic, it refers to the government, an expert on gender and Islamic studies, a group of female Islamic clerics, and Human Rights Watch – all of whom are against the marriage. So, the marriage is represented problematically (and I agree that it should be when it involves people of these ages).

While we may not want to question the factual content of the article, we could ask about the effect of presenting certain facts in certain orders, whether certain facts are relevant and whether other relevant facts are not present.

A notable phrase in the article is: 'Indonesia is a majority Muslim country and has among the highest number of child brides in the world.' The framing of Indonesia in the article as a 'Muslim-majority country' is an improvement over newspaper reporting in 1998-2009 where there was frequent reference to 'Muslim countries', a term which over-emphasises religious homogeneity.⁴⁵ The article doesn't make a distinction between different branches of Islam though, and could have noted that most Muslims in Indonesia are Sunnis, and this is also the case for Sulawesi (and also true for

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. The main headline is "Indonesian children marry despite outcry" dated 24 April 2018. Below the headline is a video player showing a young girl in a yellow shirt and brown hijab holding up a drawing of a man and a woman. The video caption reads "One in four Indonesian women gets married before she's 18". The UNICEF logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the video frame.

the UK for that matter).

However, the positioning of 'majority Muslim country' and 'among the highest number of child brides in the world' next to one another, along with the use of the conjunction *and* creates an implicit association between Islam and high numbers of child brides. This is the fourth sentence in the article (out of 22 sentences), so the point is foregrounded and is likely to function as a way that readers can make sense of the news story. The word *and* can easily be used to suggest causality (it can imply 'and thus') in a way that other conjunctions do not (try replacing the word 'and' in the sentence with 'but', or 'although', which negate causality).

⁴⁴ BBC News, Indonesian children marry despite outcry, bbc.co.uk 2018, (Accessed 15-Dec-2018)

⁴⁵ Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge 2013)

According to the website GirlsNotBrides⁴⁶ Indonesia is not in the top 20 countries for rates of child marriages, although due to its large population, it does have the 8th highest number of total child marriages (defined as marriage below 18). This distinction could perhaps have been made clearer in the article as there are many other countries where child marriage is relatively more common.

Considering that there are other countries where child marriages are happening, why would this article be considered particularly newsworthy? In this case, the legal battle and controversy indicates that this is an interesting story, especially as the government are aiming to change the law. Is it relevant to mention that it happened in a Muslim-majority country then? It could be argued yes, because the battle was between the government and the office of religious affairs so religious status is relevant. The article does imply elsewhere that the religion in question is Islam – with the quote from the expert in Islamic Studies and the reference to female Islamic clerics, which occur later in the article. So, the mention of Indonesia being a Muslim-majority country early on isn't strictly needed.

The article reports that female religious clerics have opposed these kinds of marriages – which indicates that within Islam there is not consensus about child marriage, so Islam is not represented as a homogenous belief system, something which has been noted as problematic in earlier studies.

However, is religion the only relevant factor in this story? GirlsNotBrides lists four drivers of child marriage: gender inequality, tradition, poverty and insecurity (they do not mention religion).⁴⁷ While Indonesia could be viewed as a middle-income country according to the IMF data⁴⁸, rates of poverty are not equally spread across the country and rural farm-workers are more likely to be poor. Most of Sulawesi has seen increasing poverty in recent years.⁴⁹ The article does hint at this factor, mentioning that the 15 year old boy had dropped out of school and 'would continue working to feed his family'. So it could be argued that in terms of helping to better explain the reason behind the marriage, the article could have foregrounded poverty in that area of Indonesia rather than religion.

A question that we might want to end on is the extent to which this article is typical of the way that the BBC reports on child marriage. Does it report on child marriage in other countries and if so, does it foreground religion in other cases? A look at other articles on the website published recently by the BBC notes that the focus tends to be on countries where large numbers of Muslims live e.g. Kenya, Malaysia and Turkey. Some of these articles do foreground Islam in their articles. For example, in an article about Turkey, the first sentence reads 'Turkey's main opposition party has called for a parliamentary inquiry after the directorate of religious affairs said that, under Islamic law, girls as young as nine could marry.'⁵⁰ And in an article about Malaysia a caption on a picture at the start notes 'Islamic

46 *Child Marriage Around the World*, Girls not Brides at www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen

47 *Why does Child Marriage Happen?*, Girls not Brides at www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen

48 Luca Ventura, *The World's Richest and Poorest Countries* 2018, 22-Apr-2019, Global Finance Magazine at www.gfmag.com

49 Winarno Zain, *Behind the rise of poverty in Indonesia*, 01-Feb-2016, The Jakarta Post at thejakartapost.com

50 *Turkish child marriage religious document sparks anger*, 03-Jan-2018, BBC News Online at www.bbc.co.uk

sharia courts can approve Muslim marriages for those under the age of 16 in Malaysia'.⁵¹ Two countries which are in the top 10 for highest absolute numbers of child marriage are Brazil and Mexico – although these countries did not seem to attract much focus. Perhaps then, the BBC finds child marriage in Muslim-majority countries particularly interesting.

In conclusion, some aspects of this article could be viewed as sensitive in terms of representation of Islam and Muslims, and while the article does not appear to be factually inaccurate, the linking of Islam and child marriage at the expense of other factors, is suggestive of a subtle ideological 'nudge' in a particularly direction.

51 Child marriage involving bride of 11 sparks outrage in Malaysia, 03-Jan-2018, BBC News Online at www.bbc.co.uk



Dr Michael Munnik

Dr Michael Munnik is a lecturer in Social Science Theories and Methods: School of History, Archaeology and Religion at Cardiff University

The *Times* leading article on Sajid Javid's appointment to the post of Home Secretary is generally upbeat.⁵² Javid's promotion is described in positive terms, right from the headline which uses the phrase 'more compassionate', aligns him with 'overdue changes' in the department, and suggests that the appointment 'may well further his own political career'. The piece that follows gives a resumé of Javid's biography, then spells out the issues that are of greatest priority for the Home Office and speculates on how he might perform.

The leader writer has performed something of a sleight of hand in the editorial, and we must be attentive to its context and subtext. Representations of Islam and Muslims are the focus of this media monitoring project, and the word 'Muslim' appears nowhere in the piece, 'Islamic' only once. This is nested in the middle of the phrase 'violent Islamic extremism', which recurs frequently in media representations of Muslims and risks associating extremist beliefs or activities with religiously founded precepts. 'Islamic' is sometimes contrasted with 'Islamist', which linguists have noted is something of a journalistic safe harbour, whereby writers can align extremism (and in this case, violent extremism) with a political ideology espoused by a narrow band of Muslims rather than the religion itself⁵³ These scholars note, though, that journalists seldom explain this distinction

⁵² Leading Article, *Humanising the Home Office*, 07-May-2018, The Times at www.thetimes.co.uk

⁵³ Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge 2013)

THE TIMES

LEADING ARTICLE

MAY 7 2018, 12:01AM, THE TIMES

Humanising the Home Office

Sajid Javid has a chance to show a more compassionate face of Conservatism and in making some overdue changes he may well further his own political career



At some point before 2022, it is likely that the Conservative Party will seek a new leader. Most departments have now become auditions for the top job. Amber Rudd was thought to be in that position until she was forced to stand down over the Windrush fiasco. Now her successor has been thrust into prominence.

in their articles, and many lay readers may not even register the difference.

At any rate, the *Times* has chosen the broader and therefore more problematic association: the violent extremism being discussed is Islamic. Moreover, the leader writer says it is Javid's 'top priority'. Strangely, this is the last we hear of it, as the issue the *Times* wants to discuss is immigration. Though the word 'immigration' doesn't appear in the first four paragraphs, it features in the following three; the final paragraph does not include the word itself, but by discussing 'ethnic minority communities already in the UK' and 'refuge for the politically oppressed', this is still the theme with which we are working.

It is here that attention to context and subtext matter, for discussions about 'immigration' remain very much discussions about 'Muslims' as well. Hope Not Hate commissioned YouGov

to poll people in Britain, and their recent report states ‘concerns about immigration have increasingly become focused on Muslims and Islam in Britain, and integration is of increasing public salience.’⁵⁴ This is the subtext in discussions of immigration. The context, of course, is Brexit – a political act aimed in large part to curb immigration. If the much-vaunted targets of the Conservative government for reducing immigration were not feasible due to the practicalities of freedom of movement, then leaving the European Union allows the government more independence on that front.

The *Times* is sensitive to the costs of such a policy. The leader writer knows the reliance of ‘the NHS, the transport system and even most high street coffee chains’ on ‘a steady flow of immigrant labour’. And the impulse to bring net migration figures to five digits is characterised here as a ‘perceived need to assuage the Tory right’ rather than a useful or desirable policy. There is a superior tone to the editorial, as the writer seems to acknowledge fusty, xenophobic views whilst sitting above such sentiments. Javid is similarly pitched as above it all.

Our discourse analysis of this article must look for absences as well as presences, and perhaps the most striking one, given the *Times*’s history, is that Javid’s own relation to Islam is not mentioned. Javid characterises himself as from a Muslim family, ‘but I do not practice any religion’.⁵⁵ Calling him a Muslim MP or ‘the first Muslim Home Secretary’ would be inaccurate. Still, his entanglement with

Islam is persistent: he was one of five MPs specifically targeted in the ‘Punish a Muslim’ hate campaign,⁵⁶ exemplifying the contention of researchers that one can be involuntarily rendered a Muslim, with real-world effects.⁵⁷ Yet his complex relationship with the faith is not discussed in the article at all.

On the one hand, perhaps the leader writer doesn’t need to. Javid’s name already signifies Muslimness in immediate ways that don’t require unpacking. His name marks him as somehow different from, say, Jacob Rees-Mogg or Andrea Leadsom. Readers encountering the name will draw their own conclusions. We are told that Javid is ‘the first Briton from an Asian background’ in this role, and his biography references Rochdale and Pakistan, which also imply Muslimness. Finally, he is, like London’s first Muslim mayor, Sadiq Khan, ‘the son of a bus driver’ – a phrase which has become something of a modern British cliché for Muslims who have risen above immigrant, working class roots.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the *Times* may have deliberately deflected attention from Javid’s Muslim heritage. The flattering tones of the leading article suggest the organisation has confidence he could be an appropriate, successful Conservative leader some day. Mindful of parts of their readership that might not be as open, perhaps, as the editorial board itself (as discussed above concerning immigration), they may have felt it prudent not to link Javid to Islam in an article that

54 Rosie Carter, *Fear, Hope & Loss: Understanding the drivers of hope and hate*, Sep 2018, at www.hopenothate.org.uk

55 Ahmed Versi, *Home Secretary hits back at those questioning his faith*, 29-Jun-2018, *The Muslim News* at www.muslimnews.co.uk

56 Richard Vaughan, *Sajid Javid becomes fifth MP to receive ‘Punish a Muslim’ parcel* *The Independent*, 16-Mar-2018, *iNews* at iNews.co.uk

57 Nasar Meer (2008) *The politics of voluntary and involuntary identities: Are Muslims in Britain an ethnic, racial or religious minority?* *Patterns of Prejudice* 42(1): pp.61-81

58 Parveen Akhtar, *Sajid Javid: The son of a Pakistani bus driver who became Britain’s home secretary*, 01-May-2018, *The Conversation* at theconversation.com

maintains 'violent Islamic extremism' as a top priority for the department.

In general, the article does not dwell on negative representations of Muslims in Britain, though if one reads between the lines, tensions are still present. The only front-line reference to the faith is the slippery phrase 'violent Islamic extremism', which is worrying for the assumptions it makes about the

religious roots of extreme violent behaviour. It is not the focus of the article, however, and one might even be impressed that the *Times* would consider a politician of Muslim heritage to be suitable for party leadership. From an institutional newspaper identified with the belief in Britain as a Christian country,⁵⁹ that looks like progress.

59 Elizabeth Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, (London 2002)



Dr Elizabeth Poole

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The Express reports on a new product launched by the supermarket chain Morrisons in the run up to Ramadan, an advent calendar⁶⁰. On the face of it the article appears quite factual; it is short and lacking in detail or seemingly, bias. There is even some factual information about Ramadan:

'Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year during which time strict fasting is observed from dawn to sunset to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief'. The article is accompanied by a picture of the calendar in situ with the caption 'The Ramadan calendars contain 30 chocolates for the 30 days leading up to Ramadan'.

The only source quoted appears to be positive and creates some excitement about the product, even featuring a supporting hashtag: *"It's so nice to see more options in supermarkets for the different cultures that walk in daily. I like cute things like this it excites the young children about Ramadan #ramadan"*

However, I would argue that the story is featured in the newspaper as part of a larger narrative on Islamification. In a conservative newspaper that regularly features articles with negative representations of Muslims, I would suggest this feeds into an idea of Muslims as a cultural threat, diluting British identity. The article has to be read in the wider context of



macro-discourses about Islam in The Express.

The threat of the growth of Islam, a common trope, is encapsulated in the line 'There is a growing demand for such products as more and more supermarkets are stocking foods and commodities from across the world'.

The word 'demand' can frequently be seen in newspaper articles about Muslims and Islam in the UK.

Other evidence to support this argument is the use of the only named source, Jeremy Corbyn, who is featured in a slightly awkward video message to Muslims at Ramadan. Given the demonisation of Jeremy Corbyn in the right-wing press in the UK, the inclusion provides a further spin on the article and an indication of how it should be read as an attack on British culture by the left and their 'liberal ideas'. This is reinforced by the last sentence of the article:

'Last week Morrisons announced they would be selling wonky fruit and veg at a cheaper price in a pledge to cut down waste'.

There is an absence of the personification we

⁶⁰ Ramadan 2018: Morrisons launch advent calendar for Ramadan, 12-Apr-2018, Daily Express at express.co.uk

may see in an article on a Christian festival such as Christmas, the source is described as 'One Twitter user', although this will also be a result of journalistic routines and practices that require being able to access a source quickly without needing permission (due to anonymity). However, it does have the effect of aggregating Muslims by describing a group

religious practice without any individuation. This should also be seen in the wider context of the reporting of Muslims.

The article individually, however, is inoffensive, in fact it could be described as an example of fair reporting if it was located elsewhere. In its current context, I would be sceptical.



Dr Salman Al-Azami

Dr Salman Al-Azami, FHEA: Senior Lecturer in English Language, Liverpool Hope University

The video clip analysed in this section is between 24.47 to 26.07 minutes of the fourth episode of “Joanna Lumley’s Silk Road Adventure” broadcast on ITV between 12 September and 3 October 2018.⁶¹ In this travel documentary, the famous actress and human rights activist Joanna Lumley takes on a 7000-mile journey through the ancient Silk Road, which is a network of trade routes connecting the East with West. The documentary describes the history, landscape, people, culture and food of different places along this road, which ITV terms as “..... a breath-taking odyssey from Venice to the Chinese border.....”. Joanna Lumley is an accomplished storyteller, and in this documentary she incorporates three of the six types of modes in documentaries as suggested by Nichols⁶² – poetic, observational and participatory due to her abundant use of descriptive adjectives, her observation and description of the landscape and history, and her personal involvement with people and places.

In the final episode of the series, the presenter travels across the post-Soviet Central Asian states of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan describing their scenic beauties and the histories behind them. This 100-second clip is taken when the presenter leaves Uzbekistan and enters the capital city Bishkek of Kyrgyzstan where she describes the beauty and tradition of



the country. Near the end of this clip, Joanna Lumley utters the following sentence:

“This is a mainly Muslim country, but its communist legacy gives it a much less strict Islamic feel than other countries I have visited.”

In the context of the documentary, there is nothing to suggest a sinister attitude towards Islam by the presenter. It seems to reflect a piece of factual information that due to the influence of communism, Kyrgyzstan is different from other Muslim countries Ms Lumley had visited. However, the expression ‘much less strict Islamic feel’ in the context of a documentary that tells all the positive stories of the country and its people might be received by the audience that there may be a link between the less Islamic feel and the

61 ITV – Joanna Lumley’s Silk Road Adventure, Joanna Lumley, *Silk Road Adventure*, ITV1, 03-Oct-2018, 21:33PM BST

62 Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Indiana 2002)

positivity of this country. According to Lorenzo-Dus⁶³, television documentaries undergo a storytelling process that constructs 'socially situated identities'. When that storytelling is done by a 'celebrity narrator', then the impact is greater due to the credibility of the narrator.⁶⁴ In this context, when a positive story of a country tells the viewers that it has 'less Islamic feel', some viewers may develop unnecessary inhibitions towards a country that would have an apparent 'more Islamic feel', though it is not clear what the presenter means by 'Islamic feel'.

The term 'Islamic' comes with a baggage of huge negative connotations due to the excessive use of the term in mainstream media. There are very few media representations where positive connotations of the words 'Islam' and 'Muslims' can be found. These two terms are intrinsically linked as Muslims are the adherents of Islam, and negative attitudes towards Islam leads to negative attitude towards its adherents. As Johansson⁶⁵ suggests, media representations do not only convey information, but within their structures, they can create meaning that links to social and cultural contexts. What the presenter means by 'less Islamic' is not clarified at all and this is the only time in the documentary where a link between the country and Islam is created.

Although this may not have been intentional, the presenter should have been aware of the negative connotation of the term and should have explained what the difference between

'less Islamic' and 'more Islamic' might be as this association seemed quite unnecessary in the context of the documentary. Being a popular celebrity with distinguished position in the context of British popular culture, and the fact that media messages have considerable influence on the construction of public knowledge,⁶⁶ this expression should have been either elaborately explained or not used at all.

Collocations are always an important aspect in language, particularly when describing a person or a place. By using the adjective 'strict' before Islamic is another problematic phrase in this sentence. The media is known to use this term often with the term 'sharia law', which refers to Islamic jurisprudence that covers every aspect of a Muslim life, but often misused to refer to Islamic penal code. It is a term extensively used by the far-right to demonise Islam and Muslims. Out of 49 countries with more than 50% Muslim population,⁶⁷ very few countries impose Islamic law on its people, so the presenter's characterisation of Kyrgyzstan as *much less strict Islamic* compared to other Muslim countries is a type of Weasel claim that carries little weight but can create a sense of discomfort towards Islam and Muslims among the audience, particularly among those who never visited a Muslim country. Another interesting association is the presenter's claim that the country is less Islamic due to the influence of communism. 'Communism' or 'communists' are terms often used with negative connotation in the West due to the

63 Nuria Lorenzo-Dus, *Television Discourse: Analysing Language in the Media* (Basingstoke 2008)

64 Ibid.

65 Sofia Johansson, *Reading Tabloids: Tabloid Newspapers and Their Readers* (Södertörns högskola 2007)

66 Ibid., Greg Philo 'Active Audiences and The Construction of Public Knowledge', 27-Jun-2008, *Journalism Studies*, 09(4), pp.535-544.

67 Pew Research Centre Report, 'The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Muslim Majority Countries', 27 January 2011, Pew Research Centre: Religion & Public Life at www.pewforum.org

Cold War, but here, it is indirectly praised for making the country less Islamic.

However, it will be unfair to suggest that the association was deliberately created by the presenter. At the same time, it is a mystery why a celebrated presenter with vast experience would like to say something that can create a sense of uneasiness among the audience towards Muslim countries. As Van Dijk⁶⁸ suggests, the

language used in the media has a lot of power that can control the minds of the public, which has social consequences. When a popular celebrity like Joanna Lumley, who has a large following, uses the term 'Islamic' in such a way, then the consequences can be even greater. The documentary itself is not problematic but the unnecessary inclusion of a sentence that represents Islam in a negative light represents poor judgment by the presenter.

68 Teun A. van Dijk, *Critical Discourse Analysis in D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Eds.), Handbook of Discourse Analysis (Oxford 2001), pp. 352-371*

Appendix

News platform as referred to in report	All 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 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
The Times	www.thetimes.co.uk
INews	inews.co.uk
The Daily Mail	Dailymail.co.uk





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