

Muslims in the European Mediascape

UK Country Report

October 2011

*Dr. Siobhan Holohan (Lecturer in Sociology and Media,
Communications and Culture, Keele University)*

*Dr. Elizabeth Poole (Senior Lecturer in Media, Communications and
Culture, Keele University)*

*Researchers: Justin Schlosberg (PhD Candidate, University of
Goldsmiths) and Joanna Redden (Postdoctoral Fellow, Ryerson
Infoscape Centre for the Study of Social Media)*

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Media Producer Findings and Analysis | |
| Muslim Media Organisations | 7 |
| Mainstream Media Organisations | 19 |
| Media Consumer Findings and Analysis | |
| Muslim Consumers | 30 |
| Mixed and Monocultural Consumers | 41 |
| Consumer Survey Findings and Analysis | 51 |
| Conclusion | 59 |
| References | 63 |
| Appendices | |
| 1. Methodology and Sample | 65 |
| 2. Producer Demographic Data | 67 |
| 3. Consumer Demographic Data | 69 |

Introduction

It goes without saying that today's media environment is more diverse than ever before. The advent of satellite and digital technologies has opened up a wealth of opportunities for the development of channels of communication directed toward specialised interests. Consumers can now choose from a wide variety of publications, television channels, radio stations and Internet sites from a global media pallet. Moreover they are increasingly able to disconnect from mainstream media organisations that fail to address the issues close to their heart.

The central question investigated by this project was:

How far does a diverse media environment affect patterns of media production and use in the UK and what might the impact of such fragmentation be on intercultural community relations?

The project addressed this question with a particular view towards the production and consumption of news and information about Islam and Muslims. Revisiting questions about the media as tool for democratic public sphere discussion and the discursive construction of citizenship (Habermas, 1989; Dahlgren, 1995; Curran, 2011), we wanted to consider not only the extent to which information is presented within an ideological framework that might seek to support dominant forms of knowledge, but also test the notion that media users are able to resist and challenge meaning via their consumption choices. As such the main aims and objectives of the project were:

Aims and objectives

- To comparatively analyse patterns in the media use and production of media by people of Muslim and Non-Muslim heritage in the United Kingdom.
- To identify possible relationships between perceptions of and attitudes towards various groups in society and patterns in the use and production of media, in view of relevant variables including socio-economic background, education, gender, ethnicity, religion, generation, personal and private inter-cultural relationships, and age.

In meeting these aims, the project:

- Documented radio, print, television and Internet media outlets targeted at, produced by and significantly consumed by audiences of both mainstream and Muslim heritage in the United Kingdom.
- Investigated diversity and equality practices within mainstream and minority/community media institutions.
- Explored the dynamics of journalistic work, particularly in relation to the coverage of issues related to diversity and inclusion.

- Explored the professional practices and experiences of mainstream and Muslim journalists and their relationship to the nature of content produced in different media outlets.
- Explored to what extent Muslim and non-Muslim (including minority) populations in the United Kingdom relate to media coverage of diversity issues.

Project context

The suggestion that the media serve to effectively represent *all* people has been debated endlessly. In recent years many studies have found that mainstream news organisations in the UK often represent Islam in negative terms (Poole, 2002; Featherstone et al, 2010). Media consumers in this study supported the belief that mainstream media organisations are guilty of bias (Eldridge et al, 1997; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). However, if mainstream media organisations are failing to reflect the diversity of concerns in contemporary Britain, can alternative media aimed at Muslims be the solution? Emerging from a strong tradition of local, community and special interest media, the development of independent publications and web-based media aimed at Muslims in the UK could serve to challenge dominant narratives communicated through mainstream media.

However, as new media products spring up to challenge dominant production practices, and as consumers circumnavigate dominant media forms, the very notion of citizenship may take on new meanings. We wanted to question whether the development of a parallel media prohibits successful communication and interaction across all parts of society. In other words, do consumers of alternative media simply end up ‘talking to themselves’ and, as a consequence, fail to integrate into wider UK society? In the wake of 9/11, the perceived failure of minority communities to integrate into mainstream culture and society has been of increasing concern. Indeed, the past decade has seen a series of political endeavours to shore up notions of citizenship, inclusion and (national) identity, indeed about what it means to be British.

UK media environment

When we think about the media environment in the UK, mainstream news publications and broadcasters tend to spring to mind. Mainstream organisations such as BBC television and radio, newspapers like The Times, Daily Mail or The Sun, dominate our psyche to the extent that it can be easy to disregard the plethora of alternative media sites vying for our attention. Indeed, in this environment, it is perhaps unsurprising that despite turning to alternative media, consumers remain tied to the notion of a national mainstream media as their ‘go to’ place for news and information. This was borne out in the current study, which revealed that despite consumers’ awareness and even use of alternative media outlets, they would often turn to the mainstream as the ‘voice of authority’.

This raises questions regarding ownership and control. The make-up of news media in the UK remains tied to a few controlling organisations such as News International (*The Sun*, *The Times*, and a controlling share of BSkyB) owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, and The Daily Mail and General Trust (*The Daily Mail*, *The Sunday Mail*, and *Metro*) and its sister organisation Northcliffe Media, which owns much of the local and regional press in the UK. In broadcasting, many television and radio companies such as the ITV regional franchise (part of ITV plc) and Heart, Classic FM and LBC (part of Global Radio), are similarly organised into large corporations in order to compete financially in today's media marketplace.

The BBC, the only public service media provider paid for by licence fee and established by Royal Charter, remains the largest broadcaster in the UK (indeed the world), with a portfolio of more than 60 channels, stations and online content sites aimed at UK national, regional and community audiences. The BBC's profile incorporates special interest channels and radio stations, including an Asian Network. BBC executives strongly emphasise their ability to cater to everyone within the suite of programming they offer.

Not only do mainstream media organisations dominate the market share, but our study reveals that despite employment policies aimed at encouraging equality and diversity in the workplace, media establishments remain worryingly white, male and middle-class. Beyond purported tokenism in front of camera, minority producers working in the mainstream media reported feeling marginalised or pushed toward special interest stories. Indeed we could ask: is the very composition of and practices entrenched in the mainstream newsroom, guilty of prohibiting a fair and even reporting of events? Given this media landscape, it is perhaps unsurprising that talented media professionals turn to alternative methods of communicating a different world view to public audiences.

Nevertheless, while digital technologies have clearly enabled the multiplication of alternative media and provided a much needed platform for minority or special interest groups, in a market-driven media environment it can be difficult for smaller enterprises to gain a significant audience share. These enterprises may remain economically marginalised and rely on 'switched on' audiences finding them. While the Internet has enabled the growth of the alternative media market, many small media organisations rely on funding from advertising revenue and, as is the case with some of the media catering to ethnic minority groups, government grants, third-sector or community funding.

Of course, it would be wrong to suggest that alternative media aimed at minority groups have only surfaced following the arrival of the Internet. There is a rich tradition of alternative community and minority media in the UK, ranging from satirical commentaries on political life, such as *Punch*, to more recent publications aimed at black Britons like *The Voice*. The Voice was initiated in response to police discrimination and the riots in the 1980s, amid concerns that it would become a divisive voice between the UK's black and white communities. Similarly, online publications aimed at Muslim audiences in the UK now form a growing share of the alternative media scene as British Muslims attempt to carve

their own niche in the sector. Publications targeting Muslim audiences in the UK, largely developed following the terrorist attacks in the US and UK, have responded to concerns within the community about the unfair treatment of Muslims by the mainstream media. Although others, including participants in this study, have voiced concerns about the self-segregation of some minority communities, we could argue that the production of Muslim media complements the existing landscape. Indeed, this study suggests that rather than consuming alternative media at the expense of mainstream media, consumers ‘top-up’ their mainstream quota with a range of different additional sources.

A note on the concept of ‘Muslim media’

While potentially problematic, this study employs the term ‘Muslim media’ as shorthand to describe media whose audience includes a large proportion of Muslims. It is of course evident that many of the minority publications in our study are consumed by and target a wider audience. However, participants in the study were quite comfortable with the term ‘Muslim media’. In fact, the term was generally positively received.

Intergroup relations: the UK context

This study provides an inquiry into the notion that the media contribute to divisive community relations. Though it has been widely reported that mainstream media contribute to divisions by reproducing negative discourses about minority groups in society, concerns are similarly voiced that the creation and use of alternative media outlets may lead to divisions through the segregation of communities based on ethnicity, faith and cultural heritage. Within the UK context, such concerns mirror the contradictory nature of the multiculturalism adopted by rhetoricians and policy-makers since the 1990s. While diversity in Britain has been celebrated as a success story under successive governments, the rise of counter-narratives in response to global events and changes in recent years has led to an environment where difference is at once welcomed and feared.

Since the terrorist attacks in the USA and UK, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and urban unrest across parts of the north England involving youth of Asian heritage, multiculturalism has suffered under accusations that it encouraged ‘separateness’. Alongside increased immigration controls implemented under successive policy regimes, the 2000s has so far witnessed a plethora of measures intended to ensure cohesion. For example, since 2004 migrants to the UK are required to attend a citizenship ceremony, while in 2007 Lord Goldsmith’s citizenship review emphasised the importance of deepening citizenship bonds and the need for newcomers to achieve a sense of belonging through engagement in social, political and economic activities. Such measures effectively support the commonly-held notion that there is a problem among minority groups in the UK: that different ways of life are a threat to Britishness.

At a time of social and political upheaval we have also witnessed the rise of right-wing and Islamist fundamentalist groups across Europe. For some, these groups make sense of an increasingly complex and divisive world order. It is within the current socio-political context that we wanted to examine how people imagine their community relations. Do they actually experience tension between different groups in society and do media discourses reinforce intergroup conflict? Here, the notion that Islamophobia is reinforced via channels of communication was prominent in the responses of both media producers and consumers.

Methodology (see appendix 1 for breakdown of methodology and sample)

In this project we were concerned to generate rich qualitative data that would throw light on some of our central questions about media production, consumption and impacts on intergroup relations. We structured the research in three sections: interviews with media producers, consumer focus groups, and an online consumer survey.

Producer interviews were split further into mainstream and Muslim media categories, allowing us to gain insight into commonalities and differences between mainstream and minority media practices and attitudes. These interviews included press and broadcast editors as well as reporters, documentary film-makers, and online content contributors. We approached individuals working in mainstream national and local publications and broadcast media, as well as producers and editors from the minority media, which were predominantly web-based publications. The interviews with producers of mainstream media included several with journalists of minority ethnic or faith backgrounds.

A number of the producers interviewed, however, work across different sectors. Some are freelancers who predominantly work in one sector, but occasionally write for another. How to categorise Al Jazeera, for example, was particularly problematic. In these cases, we categorised people according to their own identification or in terms of where they currently work. For example, if a Muslim producer has worked for minority media in the past but now works in the mainstream media, we have categorised him or her as working for the mainstream media. There was obvious bias in favour of liberal media organisations, which tended to maintain that they represented all groups fairly.

The consumer focus groups took place in two locations: Staffordshire and London. We held four focus groups in each location, eight in total. Two focus groups in each location were conducted with Muslims of varying ages; one group was mixed in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, faith; and one group identified as white British.

The online consumer survey was intended to supplement the consumer focus group data. This was sent to a range of Muslim and non-Muslim participants in order to generate a demographic sample. The UK survey generated 102 respondents with a fairly equal share of males and females. The sample did favour those employed and those with higher degrees largely due to the origin of the survey. Current demographic data shows that Muslims

account for 4.6% of the total population (<http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/?p=598>). The proportion of Muslims represented in this sample is 21.4%.

Case study stories

To focus the producer interviews and consumer focus groups, we showed two recent news stories to respondents: David Cameron's speech on multiculturalism in February and the coverage of the uprisings in the Middle-East. For many, Cameron's speech was regarded as an attack on the perceived failures of multiculturalism. Given on the same day that 3000 EDL (English Defence League) members marched through London, the speech argued that political multiculturalism had created a divided society where different groups led segregated lives. Further to this, he argued that Britain needed to foment a stronger national identity as a means of stifling the advance of extremist Islamist groups. Many respondents did not remember the particular story, which took place a few months before the interviews and focus groups.

By focusing on the uprisings in the Middle East (the 'Arab Spring'), we wanted to investigate to what extent participants would associate the event with Islamist movements. This story perhaps unsurprisingly garnered more response from our participants, as it was still very much in the public eye at the time the research was conducted. While we focused on the Egyptian uprisings and the occupation of Tahrir Square, respondents were able to talk with great awareness about the events and the socio-political implications surrounding them.

Media Producer Interviews: Findings and Analysis

This section presents the findings from interviews with UK media producers working in both specialist and mainstream media. Thirty-seven people were interviewed overall including both editors (13) and producers across the sector, across a range of media, including high profile organisations. Twenty-three of these worked in mainstream media and include producers from ethnic minority groups (9). Fifteen were working in minority media. There were 28 males in the sample compared to nine females. Seven of the producers were freelance. Access to producers was extremely difficult due to the time constraints on people working in the industry. Mainly it was producers that had an interest in this subject who agreed to be interviewed. This resulted in a bias in the sample towards the more liberal media. However, that more conservative publications declined to take part is interesting in itself.

Muslim media producers

14 people were interviewed from a wide range of Muslim media platforms, including a number of well-known publications.

Main findings

- Producers working in Muslim media believe that mainstream media coverage has a polarising effect. Muslim media could serve as an outlet for this frustration.
- Muslim media is perceived to be a positive development, although many producers questioned the quality of other products in the specialist media sector.
- The Muslim media producers in this study demonstrate a professional, critical and intelligent journalistic approach to diversity issues. They aim to have a positive impact, countering negative media coverage of Muslims and providing a more nuanced understanding of diversity issues, based on their own acute understanding of these.
- Those working in Muslim media were frustrated with mainstream media, which is seen to foster an unhealthy approach to diversity in the UK.
- Producers believe that Muslim media is an increasingly valuable resource for mainstream media, as it contributes to the diversity of voices available.

Who are they? (for demographic breakdown see Appendix 2)

The producers interviewed were predominantly male (11m: 3f), of Asian origin, British nationals and Muslim. Two individuals identified themselves as converts. The individuals in this sample have worked in media from 5-25 years, with the majority having worked in the field for 10 to 15 years. Of those who elaborated on their career paths, 10 had gone to university and then worked across a diverse range of media to gain experience, often abroad, before entering their current job. Their career paths involved positions at both mainstream and specialist organisations. While they all currently work as general media specialists, it has been their experiences writing on ethnic minority issues that has often led

to career opportunities, in particular openings in more mainstream organisations such as The Guardian and Channel 4.

Who do they work for?

Many of the media outlets these producers work for are not specifically newsgathering organisations, but rather social and cultural organisations producing written resources for educational or religious purposes, such as public and community events. Many of these organisations have a religious, political or socio-cultural mission. Because such organisations tend to be smaller outlets with mainly freelancing staff, the lines between editor and producer categories were more blurred than in larger mainstream organisations. However, six of those interviewed were editors (who were also involved in production) and nine were solely producers. Five of these producers were freelancing.

The types of organisations they work for range from print media targeting broader Asian markets, community magazines, blogs and other Internet sites to NGOs and publishing companies.

The organisations in the sample could be described as ‘progressive’ in their politics, focusing largely on humanitarian issues, social and cultural policy, identity and race relations. One editor stated, ‘We try and keep a broad issue range...We do have a core interest in human rights, the Muslim world and minority communities in Europe’.

Audience profile

The audiences of the organisations ranged from small (5,000 readers per month) to medium-sized (publications with monthly circulations of 60,000 with some supporting websites reaching 1.5million hits a month). Most, however, were on the smaller end of the scale.

All the organisations described Muslims as their core audience or, in the case of the Asian publications, their largest audience, but were keen to emphasise their outward facing content. Most talked of their ‘broad’, ‘wide’ and ‘varied’ content that targeted wider interests. One editor emphasised the desire not to ‘ghettoize’. Most of these organisations have a national focus and tend to be aimed towards the South Asian diaspora in the UK. Only one organisation described itself as being international (a publisher). Most did not have an accurate way of measuring their audience (due to costs), but were consumed by broad age ranges, with two organisations targeting younger markets.

Staff profiles / diversity policy

Being small organisations, they did not appear to have formal policies, but talked about having ‘mixed race’ profiles, relying largely on voluntary contributions and freelancers. There was a tendency towards a greater number of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds due to the content generated by these organisations.

Amongst those who had worked for mainstream organisations, there was a difference between those who had worked in the print media and those who had worked in broadcasting. Those who had worked in newspapers did not appear to know what their organisation's policies on diversity and equality were, and felt it was not their remit. There was a sense that the organisations they worked for trusted them to work independently and that editors would only intervene if necessary. This may be reflective of a more casual approach to diversity within the employing organisations. Those who had worked in broadcasting felt that diversity practices were much more about meeting regulations and quotas;

'Yeah, yeah, that's why you'll find a lot of presenters not on the main show for example London Tonight, but the late bulletin or the early bulletin, a black or Asian, and why do you think that is? Because they have this kind of quota where they've got to tick boxes – how many Asians or black people do you vox pop? How many women? And they're very strict' (producer).

However, some claimed that the local media were more sensitive to local demographics;

'Whereas what I found with London Tonight there was much more of an awareness that we have a mixed audience in London in particular, and I found their stories quite balanced and the coverage quite balanced. And there are a lot of stories about ethnic minorities, not really pushed by the editor' (producer).

Further thoughts on make-up of newsroom

The majority of journalists interviewed said that their religious and ethnic identities made them better equipped to cover stories relating to Muslims and Islam because they would have a greater understanding (and interest) of the complexities involved in the issues. They also have more contacts and access to particular communities, where they are trusted. The benefits were generally recognised, although many indicated the challenges posed by their ethnic identities;

'I think, I think it helps when you're trying to get stories and access. I think sometimes they may hinder you because you become attached. So when you feel like an attack taking place on Muslims, it's hard to detach yourself from that' (producer);

'I'd be a liar if I said that my faith or my values or my principles, my ethics, my morals don't impact on what I choose to report, how I choose to report it. In fact quite the opposite, I try not to gloss over nasty things when I find it, because that's the journalist in me. You know those are things I wanna expose. At the same time I'm always careful about context [...] you can't simply understand X without the context around it' (producer).

Of those who had worked in the mainstream media, most felt that they were expected to represent Muslims or ethnic minorities due to assumptions about 'specialist knowledge' and access (this tallies with results from minorities working in the mainstream media). Some felt positively about this, that an individual had the opportunity to make a difference by challenging accepted practice. However, some found this challenging, particularly if colleagues were resistant and others had lost jobs when their objectivity was under question. One participant suggested that while there were several high profile minority presenters, few existed amongst the production staff.

Class was also mentioned as an issue, with many stating that middle class minorities would fit into the media world, but may not be able to relate to ordinary Muslims. Two of the journalists felt ethnic or religious background was not an issue in the newsroom, one non-Muslim Pakistani working in 'Muslim media' and one Muslim working at an Asian publication.

Editorial policy

Editorial processes within these organisations appear to be fairly relaxed and informal, partly due to the sizes of the organisations. Even those working in larger organisations and for the mainstream media felt there was a high level of trust and lack of interference from editors perhaps due to the liberal nature of these organisations, described by one as 'a common sense approach'. One mentioned having a harder time when working in a more conservative mainstream organisation, where staff were meant to 'do what they were told'.

The news agenda/ news worthiness was mentioned a few times as an issue, particularly in relation to mainstream organisations and their commercial imperatives. While it was recognised that business models (economics) often drove the agenda of the mainstream media, there was recognition of some economic imperatives that constrained the creativity of these organisations. One blogger also mentioned the challenges of getting news on the agenda outside the established framework.

Media representation

There was complete agreement that mainstream representation of Muslims was predominantly negative. This inevitably became a highly discussed topic in the interviews despite the original emphasis on production in the questions asked.

Participants noted the increased simplifying, 'formulaic', 'reactionary' and 'xenophobic' coverage that focused on extremism, radicalism, barbarism, homogenisation and sensationalism. Participants referred to representations focussing on the religion of protagonists and narratives of violence. They mentioned that Muslims are often portrayed as fifth columnists and sexual predators, lacking a sense of humour and integration, and falling under a good/bad Muslim binary. They emphasised the lack of an investigative

approach and double standards in highlighting the conservatism in Muslim practises but ignoring it elsewhere.

‘If our mainstream media organisations continue to just go for really cheap binaries, the easy way out, the de-contextualised good Muslim-bad Muslim dynamic then we’re all screwed’ (producer).

The participants were particularly critical of the Daily Star, Fox News, Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Murdoch media, Newsnight, Dispatches, and some outspoken right wing commentators.

What were the reasons given for negative coverage?

It was argued that negative coverage reflects xenophobia in wider society, systemic (institutionalised) prejudice within organisations, ignorance of journalists, lack of Muslim journalists and the proliferation of media as a white middle class profession. This was described as an ‘editorial echo chamber’, a combination of production pressures and lazy journalism. Other production issues included the type of media, for example TV, requiring sound bites, an emphasis on hard news and big stories in broadcasting and an emphasis on comment in print. Commercial reasons were mentioned frequently, and the need to sell more products and capture audiences.

Overall the participants felt these trends had led to Muslims being suspicious and sceptical of the media, which was losing credibility, even in the case of the BBC.

Coverage within own organisation

Almost all of the producers working in these outlets felt it was somewhat their responsibility to counter this negative representation not so much with positive images (a strategy rejected as ‘promotion’), but with a more nuanced approach. This may involve showing positive contributions to society (without over romanticising), giving Muslims a voice and platform to respond to political issues, as well as demonstrating a ‘shared history’;

‘to provide a very strong, robust, relevant, contemporary faith-based message and vision to young Muslims in Britain at a time when there was a lot of confusion, a lot of anger, a lot of frustration especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks’ (editor).

However, there was a general keenness to make the content more widely accessible with as many references made to providing an ‘open view’, ‘different sides of the picture,’ a ‘broad range of content’ and ‘complexity’. Participants also felt a responsibility to criticise minorities, but with more sensitivity than the mainstream media had employed. The aims expressed were to provide a critical journalism which may appeal to a wider public rather than to engage in the ‘promulgation of Islam,’ while focusing on diversity issues to appeal to core audiences;

‘so a lot of the ideas that I write about are things which don’t explicitly try and offer a positive viewpoint but which try and offer a more complicated portrayal of Islam. Whether that’s to do with, you know, speaking with Muslim comedians, or whether that’s to do with talking about my own wedding, or whether it’s to do with Muslim girls who are learning about British fashion. I try and tell stories which haven’t been heard, which kind of add something to the more perennial and familiar tropes that are present in Muslim portrayal in the media’ (producer);

Many producers specifically countered examples of poor coverage of Muslims, which was described by one as a ‘response to mainstream media coverage’ while maintaining a balanced approach. However, one editor argued that this type of coverage was ‘reactionary,’ representing what was wrong about ‘Muslim media’ and was to be avoided. Another editor preferred to focus on the positive, avoiding negative mainstream news stories.

Core content included attention to issues such as the rise of Islamophobia, race relations, identity, coverage of ‘the Muslim world’ and minorities in Europe. This is not sectarian coverage and the participants demonstrated a thoughtful, measured approach to coverage, which was reflected in these statements;

‘But I do sometimes think, you know, am I adding to the corpus [sic] of hysteria about Muslims sometimes [...] you can end up perpetuating a narrative [...] And you know, so we try and avoid doing that as much as possible’ (editor);

‘showing Muslim women role models, but not just the big high-flying types but the sort of everyday, amplified voices’ (producer).

Few, if any, of the Muslim media outlets engage in regular newsgathering. They tend to offer more feature-based stories of a human interest or religious nature. This was partly due to publication cycles, which may not follow established news routines, for example bi-monthly publications. Some felt it was their duty not to focus specifically on ethnic issues but to include features on universal issues such as relationships and marriage, financial matters, medical concerns, environmental issues and how these relate to their religion. Those with a greater religious focus explored facets of the religion and how these related to everyday life whilst some of the diasporic media had a strong focus on countries of origin such as Pakistan. Some of these believed it was important to provide a balanced view so as not to appear too pro-Muslim to non-Muslim audiences. Each outlet emphasised a contextualised approach, exploring meaning and significance of experience within a specific context.

The process of choosing stories is quite spontaneous. None of the outlets were big enough to have specialists who were sent out to cover specific stories. Rather, they are specialists following their own interests. Many of these outlets relied either on the interests of others

sending stories in, or followed their own interests. For some of these organisations, it may thus not have been possible to follow a media agenda involving the Middle East, as they did not have the resources to do so. Some of the coverage was therefore generated as a reaction or response to mainstream media coverage. Those with a team of writers also pursued their own interests. One of the producers also working in the mainstream media was able to pursue his own ideas as he had the profile and networks to be able to do this. He maintained that what he was offered by the mainstream media was always 'ethnic issues' and the only way he could provide a balance was by proactively seeking out other stories. Overall, the editorial policy in relation to content generation was to 'represent the community', or the target audience.

Sources

Many were against the practice of some news organisations using extreme sources or self-appointed 'representatives' that do not actually speak for members of the Muslim community. They argued that the consistent use of these minority 'representatives' causes a lot of frustration.

It was felt that the use of extreme sources is part of a structural problem within the mainstream media. The precise causes cited varied, from a perceived lack of effective media strategies amongst moderate Muslim groups to tabloidization and associated stereotyping;

'there are quite a few so-called Muslim community leaders, so-called representatives that are just rabble rousing attention seekers, they're [...unclear] allowed to dominate headlines. The obvious example are people who have got zero following in the Muslim community – they have got a handful of individuals, if that – that are presented as if they are mainstream voices and essentially they are no more representative of Muslim communities than the grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan represents Christian communities' (editor).

Journalists of a Muslim background working in the mainstream press affirmed that their identity was beneficial in engaging with and identifying the right sources. More widely, it was suggested that being Muslim enabled a more critical take on Muslim issues (being insulated from accusations of Islamophobia);

'But I think that sometimes as journalists and society in general we recognise institutions or someone that sets up an organisation, but we don't recognise individuals, we don't recognise people. So [I] try to just go out of my way and try to speak to individual people, and the contacts that I had in the community' (producer).

What is missing in the coverage? Participants noted that spiritual aspects of Islam and its diversity, achievements and contributions to civilisation were missing, along with coverage of attacks on Muslims, and Muslim voices themselves;

'I often feel that the realities... that the very interesting realities and contours of Muslim communities in Europe or in Britain on the ground are often missed' (producer).

One editor in particular was critical of the editing process, through which she felt she had been misrepresented. These experiences had pushed her to avoid contact with mainstream media.

One example of poor journalism referenced was the reporting that followed the death of Osama Bin Laden;

'And as a journalist I know that's poor journalism. It's shoddy, it's shoddy. But why does it pass muster these days?no one asked, you know, the basic questions. Where's the evidence for... did you actually see this happen? Have these reports been corroborated? Are there any independent observers of this thing?Journalism should be – cleverly, in a pithy way, with expertise – giving us the context' (producer).

Generally, it was the critical awareness that these journalists had of changes in recent decades – global geopolitics and migration, leading to social fracture and religious diversity – which they felt did not frame the debates about multiculturalism and diversity issues in the press;

'Look at the Salman Rushdie affair. Who was commenting during the Salman Rushdie affair? Very few voices who were able to say that it's not about... it's not just about freedom of speech and Western values versus X. It's something much more complex about racism, and Islamophobia, and the way ethnic communities deal together, and migration, and many of the things Rushdie was talking about in a book like *Satanic Verses* wasn't picked up by the mainstream' (editor).

However, there was some praise in places, for example for The Guardian. However, the Guardian was also criticised for having a 'liberal' agenda (exclusive liberalism). Other newspapers, like the New Statesman, were felt to represent a generally positive and diverse cultural and social media environment, particularly in comparison to the rest of Europe;

'Apart from a couple of awful, awful institutions that tend to be the Murdoch press, the Daily Star, there is quite a grown up attitude toward race in Britain and diversity in Britain. Primarily because such a large part of Britain's population is black or Asian, primarily because most people in Britain are fair minded and recognise the history of the relationships between Britain and India and Pakistan and the West Indies' (editor).

There was also some recognition of the intellectualism present in some parts of the media, for example;

‘And it’s the mastery of the language; it’s the sense of history. Like I love reading the guys, you know they got a historical sensibility; they almost got a historical weathervane. They can make those interesting connections. And I admire that’ (producer).

There was a feeling that the UK had a great history of investigative journalism, but that this was being lost to new pressures in the news room;

‘There’s something very exciting about, you know, the discourse, the public discourse in this country. But why don’t we apply that same intellectualism, the same complexity of arguments, the same sensibility to our discussions of Islam and Muslims?’ (producer).

These critical questions extended to writers in the tabloid press;

‘Who are they playing to, which gallery are they playing to, do they actually believe it? Or is it part of the show, is this party of the show and [dazzle] that they’re doing?’ (producer).

Role of new media

While some highlighted the increase in coverage of Muslims post 9/11, with a continuing negative narrative, some also highlighted improvements in the diversity of voices partly due to social media which had expanded coverage of and become a source for mainstream outlets. There were frequent references to social media as a source of greater diversity. However, this was not only perceived as a positive development, but as promoting a ‘quantity over quality’ approach to media sources and increased fragmentation, which could undermine democracy;

‘And I do think that new media – new media as shorthand for all the other stuff that’s out there – is really challenging the way in which things are being covered. But also we’re creating [...] a whole bunch of echo chambers that exist, echo chambers-silos, that exist next to each other. You know that... we’re speaking to ourselves because now given the media choice we have we can just go to the places that reflect our opinions and ideas and perspectives to begin with’ (producer).

On ‘Muslim’ media

The majority view held that the growth of Muslim media is a positive development in providing an outlet for under-represented voices in the mainstream, catering for specialist interests and important in identity and community building. One participant had given up on the mainstream media deeming Muslim media ‘necessary’. But there was some criticism of outlets that are sectarian and pursue more aggressive adversarial interests/ stance. So while there was a general feeling that more Muslim voices are now available, this did not always lead to more quality coverage.

Case study stories

Cameron's speech on multiculturalism

Cameron's speech on multiculturalism was covered by most of the organisations included in the study although two producers had refused to cover it, one due to a feeling of déjà vu, or 'we have been here before', and one who was asked by mainstream media to comment but felt he did not want to become a self-appointed spokesperson for Muslims on these issues. Most of the producers condemned the speech and wrote critical responses to the linkage of multiculturalism and security issues and the confusion of these separate and complex issues. They had also criticised the singling out of the Muslim community for its separatism rather than exploring wider social fracture. However, two producers had presented a balanced approach asking people from across the political spectrum to comment. This was felt to be particularly important in the Asian media, who were also targeting a non-Muslim audience. Again, many thought that complex issues were being simplified and that politicians and journalists should adopt a more critical approach. There was a widespread view that the mainstream media supported the speech (excluding the liberal press), and that this support was shared by the wider public, demonstrating the divisive nature of such coverage;

'the politician isn't saying anything new, he is only reflecting a certain opinion in society and an opinion that's being perpetuated by certain parts of the media, so for them (wider public) it was oh yeah, you know, finally he is speaking out, er, but for Muslims it was very uncomfortable to listen to' (producer).

Discussions on Cameron's speech also raised the issue of identity. Most people felt that Britain is a positive model for diversity in Europe and that being British is a strong part of their identity. Many felt that Muslims had been proactive in the struggle to be part of British society. Cameron's approach to diversity in the UK was therefore unhelpful; 'made things worse' by marking Muslims out as the problem; and distracted people from the real issues such as the economic factors in social isolation.

'Arab Spring'

The producers had been less involved in the coverage of the Arab Spring due to its international focus, and often due to a lack of resources to cover it. Most felt it had been covered in a similar way across the mainstream and specialist media, given its general resonance. While most considered the coverage to have been positive, focusing on the struggle for freedom, some negatives were mentioned. This included the homogenisation of the people involved in the uprisings, the concentration on specific countries excluding others (one producer commented on the need for 'a systematic analysis of the whole region') and the tendency for coverage to move on rather than follow up progress in those countries. Other criticisms included the lack of historical context, a tendency to look for

negative news angles and the use of the word 'revolution,' implying a complete change in governance.

Those who had reported on it had tried to present the diasporic perspective; what it meant to people in the UK. One said they tried to provide more critical analysis of the contribution of Western foreign policy in the region. Reporting had 'oscillated between hope...and fear' – the inspiration and anxiety regarding those being killed, and the instability remaining.

Only two producers explicitly referred to Islam in their reporting. One covered the possible rise of Islamic groups in the region. An explicit aim of Q-News was to explore the role of Islam and the faith of the protestors in the uprisings, arguing that the movement for the 'common good,' and 'equity, equality and social justice' was central to Islam. The view was that both mainstream and minority reporting contributed somewhat to challenging stereotypes of the 'Muslim world'.

Impact of Coverage

There was complete agreement that media coverage has an impact on attitudes on the ground and on inter-group and community relations. Its effects could include an increase in antagonism, tension and even racial violence. It was agreed that media needed to be sensitive when reporting in some situations.

Q. 'Do you think that media coverage of minorities has an impact on inter-group relations and attitudes on the ground?'

A. 'I think it does. Yeah, I think it does. I think it probably does in the sense that if you hear the same thing again and again and again through a multiplicity of media, and you don't have direct experience which contradicts it, I can't see why... you know I think it's impossible to not accept that there must be some impact on that' (producer).

There was a recognition that negative coverage leads to frustrations amongst Muslims and a feeling of exclusion. Some went as far as to say that negative media coverage breeds extremism.

It was felt that giving Muslims a voice has a positive impact on integration. Muslim media provides a channel for the articulation of frustrations and a focus for young Muslims who are politically mobilised. However, it was also agreed that this space should also be provided in mainstream media.

Most journalists did say they have adapted or carefully considered the way they covered a story because of community tensions they were aware of on the ground.

Q. 'Are there times when you have not reported or been careful about the way that you have edited a particular story because concerns about potential impacts on community tensions?

A. 'Yes absolutely. The major very, very sensitive thing is desecration of the Koran. As someone who spends a lot of time in Pakistan and is involved minority rights and human rights work in Pakistan I am very aware that the actions of a mob and the actions of lunatics wanting to create a response in Europe lead to the reactions and a consequential impact of activity of mobs in Karachi and Lahore, so we tread very carefully because some of these things incendiary and have an impact on the streets' (editor).

In summary, producers working in Muslim or specialist media organisations felt that mainstream media often had negative impacts on community relations, due to hyperbolic representations of Muslim groups and individuals. They felt that specialist organisations such as theirs could have a positive influence on the wider media agenda, as they increasingly became a critical resource for mainstream news outlets.

Mainstream media producers

The findings here result from the analysis of 23 mainstream media producer interview transcripts, including 7 interviews with editors.

Main findings

- Mainstream media producers felt that they did all they could to engage in responsible journalism that attempted to dispel myths and promote critical dialogue.
- Respondents were keen to say that while there has been increased reporting and awareness of issues surrounding Muslims and Islam, the media has, on the whole, responded in a fair and un-biased manner. There was, however, recognition that there is much hostile reporting of Muslims and Islam from certain sections of the national tabloid press, and that this does little to help in terms of inter-group relations.
- There is acknowledgement that Muslims and ethnic minorities are generally under-represented in newsrooms, coupled with the belief that this should not impact on how stories are covered.
- While mainstream media producers do use various sources from Muslim organisations and individuals to support their journalism, there was some concern about the usefulness or representativeness of some Muslim spokespeople.
- There was some difference of experience between media producers self-identified as minorities and those as white British. While all media producers stated that any good journalist should be able to cover any story, minority journalists working in the mainstream media in the UK had felt pigeon-holed by the types of stories they were encouraged to pursue. In some cases this had been regarded as a positive trend, because it enabled some journalists to approach subject matter sympathetically.
- Local and community media professionals felt that they had greater responsibility to engage with everyone in the community they served. In contrast, national media professionals felt it was primarily their role to tell a story, despite their awareness of potential impact.

Who are they? (for demographic breakdown see Appendix 2)

Respondents had been working in media industry between 2-40 years. Nineteen respondents in this analysis are currently, or have recently been, employed or contracted by mainstream media organisations. Three referred to themselves as freelance, again having worked in national mainstream media, with one respondent directing a community media project. Career routes varied between respondents, but the majority had held a number of positions in a range of mainstream media organisations before arriving in their current position. Although the respondents were mainly from press organisations, many respondents worked across a range of media organisations and formats and also contributed to blogs and other digital media forums.

The gender division was largely skewed toward male respondents (17:6), but this is perhaps representative of the newspaper industry in general. In terms of ethnic division of respondents (appendix 2), a number of individuals chose not to reveal their ethnic or religious background. However it was clear that the ethnic minority media producers were overrepresented in the sample, perhaps due to the nature of the project.

Who do they work for?

Of those currently directly employed or contracted as a regular contributor, this included: national broadsheet press / magazine (10 – liberal 9 / right-wing 1); local / regional press, including one aimed at ex-pat UK community in Spain, (4) international / national broadcast media e.g. radio / television (6); regional / local broadcast media (1). Many respondents bridged many media outlets, some running independent blogs, including one online user-generated publication, or contributing to the blog of their employer. It was the intention of the majority, if not all of our respondents, to report news and provide commentary on newsworthy events via whatever means possible.

Note: Al Jazeera English is represented in this sample because it does not define itself as an Islamic media organisation, but rather a global mainstream news and broadcaster based in the Middle-East (<http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus>).

Audience profile

The audiences of these producers' organisations ranged from local and regional circulation (circa 10,000) to national circulation (audience figures varying between outlet). The Guardian, for example, has an average daily circulation figure of 270,000 (www.guardian.co.uk/advertising/guardian-circulation-readership-statistics), while Al Jazeera English claims to broadcast to up to 220 million homes in over one hundred countries worldwide (<http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus>), plus a wider web-based audience.

Producers suggested that mainstream audience comprises a cross-section of the population depending, in some cases, on political leaning and location, e.g. regional, national or international. Local media producers noted that readership came predominantly from the white, working-class, older sections of the communities they served.

When asked whether mainstream media could attract, or should cater to, minority (Muslim) audiences, one broadcast editor explained that national broadcasters could not have a target audience, because they had to provide content to a diverse population. In this sense, he argued, there would always be space for channels that catered to Asian audiences, but that it was not necessarily the role of (UK) national broadcasters to do so, other than in their normal range of varied programming. In this context, he also questioned the notion that minority groups should be regarded differently than other audience members;

‘You know in certain households there will be Zee TV, and all those channels will be on, and then what happens then is, as a viewer, you might watch Top Gear on the BBC or Dave – or whatever it’s on – you might watch Match of the Day, but you’re also watching Sky Sports and you’re definitely in your household watching lots of Asian Bollywood movies, et cetera, and Bollywood shows’ (national broadcast editor).

In this regard, it is becoming increasingly difficult to categorise audiences in the contemporary fragmented media environment, as people get their media fix from a variety of sources and are able to mix and match across a range of local, national, international, print, broadcast and digital media.

Staff profiles / diversity policy

Respondents were only aware of diversity policies within large national organisations, for example the BBC. Other than at Al Jazeera English, most observed that newsrooms were predominantly white, male and middle-class, and felt this to be problematic. Some suggested that tokenism was evident in some broadcast organisations, particularly on the presenting side of the camera. As was the practice in larger newsrooms, local newsrooms would occasionally use freelance reporters to cover stories that required a particular angle or access to a particular community. However, local media did not always have this resource available.

Further thoughts on make-up of newsroom

There were mixed feelings about this practice. Many respondents asserted that any good journalist should be able to cover any story, ‘[i]f the journalist is a good journalist I don’t think their background should hinder them’ (national broadcast editor). However, many felt that certain stories could benefit from the use of journalists from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, particularly given the increased access these journalists may have within certain communities. However, this notion was considered problematic by some who felt that emotional distance is required to produce objective journalism;

‘[y]ou’re gonna feel uneasy whistle-blowing or maybe talking out of turn which is what journalists rely on to someone who lives just kind of tits by jowl with you, someone at a bit of a remove might be better placed’ (regional press editor);

‘I think sometimes they may hinder you because you become attached [...] but for me [...] it made me stand out. Um, not because I’m a Muslim or I’m a Pakistani, it’s because I’m a good journalist and those are the stories that I get. Because you can have many Muslim and Pakistani journalists but they are detached from their own communities, because they come from the same backgrounds as the white middle-class journalists’ (national press producer).

Further analysis of the data revealed differences between respondents who self-identified as ethnic minorities and those self-identified as white British. Those from minority backgrounds strongly suggested that they would often be approached specifically to cover stories related to their culture or ethnicity, 'if you come from that background then invariably they assume that you have some more specialist knowledge than you might otherwise have... people find it quite hard to transcend skin colour when it comes to ideas' (freelance producer).

Interestingly, while reflecting on this point, one producer concluded;

'[...] my, sort of, success rate in pitching stories relating to more, kind of, the hidden Hindu community, British Asian culture and India, seems to be... my kind of hit rate is more successful there than it often is in a lot of the other stories that I pitch' (national press producer).

Such statements reveal a fascinating, though not necessarily surprising, dynamic at play in the newsrooms of mainstream media. The experiences of mainstream producers from minority backgrounds contradicted the notion, presented by white British producers, that any good journalist should be made to cover any story. These producers suggested that they were often pushed (however nicely) into covering stories about minorities or indeed pushed into minority or specialist media itself. However, one reporter at Al Jazeera believed ethnic or religious background was not an issue, and did not feel that their employer sent 'a Muslim-looking reporter' to cover Muslim stories. Some organisations made use of 'fixers', enabling them to access various communities across the world.

Editorial policy

Discussion of editorial policy emerged during a number of discussions held in this study, and as such will appear in other sections of the report. However, one respondent stated that the editorial line often changed according to the editor, having worked under one who would let the story dictate resources and another who would only put resources into a story that would push audience figures up and increase revenue.

Media representation

Most respondents felt that their organisation's coverage of stories related to Islam and Muslims was well-done and even-handed, with those working in the liberal broadsheet press and national broadcast media praising its coverage highly (see internal representation). However, all acknowledged that negative representation existed in certain sections of the media. The tabloid press was held up to particular scrutiny. Referring to his previous job at a national tabloid newspaper, one respondent stated;

'I would say that on an almost daily basis there would be a story about Muslims negatively in the paper, almost daily. It was certainly something that you look out

for; and it was certainly something that got good coverage in a way that no story about Jews or Sikhs or any other religion was ever covered' (freelance producer).

It was also noted within one discussion group that 'tabloid' practices were evident in certain broadcast newsrooms. Sky News and ITN were mentioned as examples here.

The responses to the question of whether representation of Muslims had changed over the last 10 years, were mixed depending largely on the number of years the individual had spent in the business,

'When I started in the business there was a kind of complete disdain and ignorance, then there was a great urge to go around and saying sort of 'Muslims are just like us and shouldn't be misunderstood'. Which I would say was the late 90s zeitgeist [...] And then in the 2000s [...] there was a noticeable backlash against that stuff, with people, some of them of course Muslims, talking very violently and you know strongly against groups like Hizbut-Tahrir [...] so I'd say yeah there have been three phases in the last 20 years, from ignorance, to a sort of uncritical and rather patronising welcome, and now to a more critical but less patronising view' (national press producer).

Further to this, some recognised that there had been more focus on Muslim issues in a national and international context, which, in the event of bad journalistic practices, could result in sensationalist coverage; 'I think some of the press is just racism frankly' (regional press producer) and; 'I think that a lot of journalists and the media output is reflecting the wider xenophobia in society' (national press producer). However, not only tabloid press and broadcasters were under scrutiny here, as some expressed the view that 'even in quite liberal newspapers like The Guardian I think very often the way that the Muslims are spoken about is I suppose [as] a kind of homogenous body of opinion' (national press editor).

There was widespread recognition that coverage and representation of events was context-dependent. This related back to who (and in what form of media) was covering the story, their knowledge and experience, the kind of access they had and what resources were available. Many respondents felt that the representation of Muslims in good quality media showed an awareness of the different Muslim voices and attempted to not conflate the many and varied 'Muslim' views.

Some respondents suggested potential methods of countering poor representation of Muslims, for example stopping advertisers from contributing to papers, 'if every Muslim in this country said they would not buy any food from Tesco until they stop advertising in The Daily Star because of anti-Muslim stories, it would stop' (freelance producer).

Coverage within own organisation

Respondents on the whole felt in tune with the editorial lines of their organisations, which aimed to present a balanced, intelligent view about events that may relate to or have resonance with Muslim communities. While the coverage of major events negatively representing Muslims, such as 9/11 and 7/7, was mentioned, respondents were keen to emphasise that they also presented 'positive' stories.

Most producers in this sample felt that there had been no change or an improvement in representation of Muslims within their organisations, 'I think that [...] there is much more awareness of the fact that Islam itself is not a monolithic religion and British Muslims are not a monolithic community' (national press producer).

'Very generally speaking I'd say our organisation is very keen to get really get behind the truth of what's happening both with Muslim communities in Britain and abroad. I'd say we're not a 'let's bash the Musies no matter what' type paper. Of which there are quite a few. I mean we certainly don't have... do we have a line? Probably not in the sense that the line we take toward Islam is the same as the line we take toward most news stories which is to be as objective as possible and to not fall into the trap of sort of populist reporting and scaremongering' (national press producer).

This was the general consensus amongst the national media producers; however, perspectives slightly diverged amongst the local / regional producers.

One local producer did not feel the impact so directly and spoke of certain national issues not affecting their particular community, '[w]e don't have a Muslim or Islam population so it's not something that would impact' (local press editor). Another local producer mirrored this idea despite being in a region where community tensions have run high in the past:

'[...] we treat the Asian Muslim community as we would anyone else in our circulation area. We run stories every day in the newspaper involving local Muslim groups / individuals. The fact that they are Muslim is not an issue. It's very rarely relevant to the actual tale that we're telling. It's more about them as people, them as members of organisations' (local press editor).

However, one local press producer acknowledged that there were constraints on what could be reported on due to local sensitivities, explaining that care would be taken to ensure that representatives from local community groups, such as The Council of Mosques, were approached to provide their opinion on issues that had been linked to Islam / Muslims.

One respondent working for Community TV Trust emphasised the importance of local media projects aiding communities to make their own news. Discussing his latest project on Islamic Southwark, he stated, '[...] I had come to think of it as a tool that could be used to unpick the work of mainstream media' (community media producer).

These sentiments were repeated in a number of interviews and will be examined when we discuss 'impact' later on.

Sources

While the larger organisations represented had planning desks where journalists could go for sources, most respondents used a variety of trusted sources when following a story, and there was an understanding among the national press and broadcasters of where to look – Quilliam, MCB, CSC, etc. – with some from the liberal broadsheet press showing greater awareness of such organisations. This was consistent across the majority of respondents, regardless of ethnic or religious background. Alongside this awareness, however, was circumspection about the use of sources that promoted what they saw as a particular agenda. One former tabloid reporter stated that extremist or controversial views were sought out as a matter of course within the tabloid media, for example, 'Omar Bakri and Anjem Choudary: I mean I've got their mobile phone numbers in my phone, you'll call them up in the morning and go "how you doing mate... got anything for us today... give us a line, you know something outrageous"' (freelance producer).

In contrast self-identified minority producers felt that they were able to mitigate the general mistrust from minority communities and their reluctance to speak to the mainstream media by calling upon their inside knowledge and experience within these communities. They acknowledged that their background might allow better access to sources, but more pointedly, they felt advantaged because they were able to sympathetically interrogate all angles of a story that might otherwise be missed. Nevertheless, the same respondents recognised the drawbacks of being too closely involved with the source material.

The role of new media

Of those interviews that touched on the topic of digital media, it was largely regarded as a positive development, adding to consumer choice, with one respondent arguing that the development of digital media allowed audiences to sidestep the largely white, middle-class mainstream media, which most had argued was problematic,

'The internet hit the industry like a train and that digital revolution has kind of forced the hand of media organisations. I think it's fragmented the industry to an extent where if you are a media organisation with a particular niche, and let's say your niche is football or you want to appeal to a certain section of the community and your example would be the Muslim community, then why not. I think it's got to be a good thing' (local press editor).

And within mainstream too; 'the internet as well has obviously completely revolutionised the way we can report and access people' (press producer). The development of digital media alongside traditional media also provoked comments about the speed at which stories could break, for example, the Arab Spring.

On 'Muslim media'

There was some difference of opinion here. Most respondents noted that any development of independent media had benefits, particularly for the communities they service, to act as a counterweight to dominant public discourses by giving those communities a voice. One respondent, a mainstream national press producer, mentioned Al Jazeera as an example of particularly good journalism, with the caveat that you might not define Al Jazeera as an Islamic media forum.

However, a few had reservations about the usefulness of such outlets, not least because there was a sense that communities may 'talk to themselves' (national press producer). For example when asked whether Muslim media outlets were a useful resource, one respondent answered; 'not all the time, um, because there's not that many there and the ones that are there are not very good, because they struggle [for resources]' (national press producer); 'I think there's scope for what I would term broadly as the Muslim media to up its game, it should really up its game a bit' (national press producer). For others there appeared to be a lack of awareness about such organisations: '[...] if there are these niche, erm, media for Muslims apart from *Muslim News* I'm certainly not aware of them' (national press producer). Two respondents compared the development of the Muslim media in the 2000s unfavourably with the black press in the 1980s, stating that while black communities had used publications such as *The Voice* to present a strong political narrative which was in turn taken up by the mainstream media, the current Muslim media has failed to do so.

There were also reservations that the development of an alternative media might contribute to self-segregation of Muslim communities. Indeed, one respondent discussed the need to hijack 'the current conversation... not allowing that conversation to exclude Muslims' (freelance producer), rather than setting up a parallel media that might work to further marginalise minority publics.

Case study stories

'[...] you know we have to write stories that our readers would be interested in and, er, we know that our readers are mainly white, middle class, people over 50' (national press producer).

In general respondents stated that stories were pursued in accordance with public interest. This also relates to the particular public they were communicating to, e.g. local, liberal, right-wing, etc.

Cameron's speech on multiculturalism

There were mixed responses from the few producers who remembered covering Cameron's speech. The views of producers seemed to align with the ideological biases of the organisations at which they worked. The respondent from the right-wing broadsheet was

largely uncritical of the political narrative of the event, while liberal broadsheet producers were more questioning. Local and regional media producers stated that they tend to only cover such stories as part of a national or international news round-up, which may only be a few paragraphs long unless they have a reporter with special interest or inside knowledge.

One respondent stated that Cameron 'didn't appear to be saying anything that hadn't been said before' (national press producer), but that it had created headlines purely because of its poor timing, coinciding with the EDL (English Defence League) march on the same day.

'[T]he politics of the story got a little bit skewed by the question of "why this speech?", "why now?", "was it good judgement to deliver it?" When actually, if you remember, the context was that the [Arab] Spring was really just going out of the way and there was some very difficult security and strategy questions to be asked about what was happening in the Middle East' (national press producer).

'Arab Spring'

Inevitably, there was a much greater response from participants when asked about the Arab Spring. Responses tended to agree that there has been good quality widespread coverage of the events across the range of media in the UK, 'I think mainstream media coverage in Britain of the uprisings has been phenomenal' (national press producer). Most respondents note that the coverage has been largely non-partisan, 'religion has been surprisingly absent' [from the coverage] (national press producer); and that it is not a Muslim issue but rather an international relations issue. Al Jazeera was picked out as being particularly influential in the coverage of the uprisings, perhaps in much the same way that *CNN* had been noted for its coverage of the 1990-91 Gulf War. There was also a feeling that media coverage had helped reduce misconceptions about the Middle East. For example, Al Jazeera covered the active role of women in the protests.

A few respondents from minority backgrounds did note that coverage in the mainstream media centred on Libya and Syria, to the exclusion of Bahrain and Yemen. Further to this, the media had perhaps overplayed the role of social media in the organisation and development of the uprisings; 'you know democracy movements in the past have happened even at the time when there was not internet' (national press producer). This was mirrored in the view of one respondent who touched upon the role of editorial decision-making in the reporting process; '[i]t goes wherever it goes and some subjects appear to have instant power over editorial judgement and Syria and Yemen do not at the moment' (community media producer).

Two respondents, identified as white British, described the coverage as coming from a West-centric point of view. Again the tabloid and mid-market press was held up to scrutiny for scaremongering about the potential fallout of the uprisings in the midst of the positive coverage, by prompting questions such as, 'is the government there going to be even more

fundamentalist than the one that has gone out?’ (regional press producer), and in doing so reinforcing negative stereotyping and suspicion about ‘the Islamic state’.

Impact of coverage

Respondents unanimously stated that media does have an impact on inter-group relations; however, there were differences in the way that they perceived their role in, or responsibility for, this impact;

‘[...] there are an awful lot of stories which can be written so that they stir up all kinds of prejudice, but at the same time I don’t think you should write them that way. But I don’t think you should ignore them altogether simply because they might lead to bad things’ (national press producer).

‘I was thinking about that, that’s one of the hardest questions. I don’t think it’s the journalist’s responsibility to spend too much time worrying about the impact of their story on community relations. For instance after the Bradford riots you go up there and you have to tell the story what happened in the Bradford riots why did it blow up this way. Now by doing that you may inflame tensions further, but it’s definitely in the public interest to tell the public how on earth the situation got as bad as it did’ (national press producer).

Mainstream producers from all sections of the media overwhelmingly believed that they engage in responsible journalism, with many stating that they would be careful not to frame a story in such a way that might contribute to inflaming existing community tensions – locally, nationally and internationally. However, all respondents noted that they would not avoid reporting a story for this reason, stating that good journalism can contribute to a constructive debate and should, in fact, engage all communities.

Q. Do you think that media coverage of minorities has an impact on inter-group relations and attitudes on the ground?

A. I’m sure that it does yes [...] it’s a great responsibility to work for a newspaper, be it a local newspaper or a national newspaper, because you know that in some shape or form you are shaping the agenda’ (local press editor).

Finally, one respondent commented that coverage in the national context was quite different to local or community media production;

‘I think ethics in journalism is a big question and in the national media I think it’s fragile. In local media I think it’s automatically different because I think if you’re writing, commenting on people and issues that grow out of an area and relate to you, therefore, directly I think you behave appropriately’ (community media producer).

There seemed to be some divergences of opinion between national and local or community media producers here. While national producers felt that their remit was to get to the 'truth' behind a story, local producers were more aware of the tensions that might well play out on their doorstep as a result of insensitive reporting.

In summary, producers working in mainstream media organisations felt that reporting on minority groups was for the most part handled fairly, but that there were divergent practices across national and local / community organisations, which could lead to negative impacts on community relations. Though the usefulness of specialist media was questioned, minority producers working in the mainstream media often felt pigeonholed into reporting on special interest stories. It was also largely agreed that mainstream newsrooms remain largely white, male and middle-class.

Media Consumer Focus Groups: Findings and Analysis

This analysis is taken from 8 focus groups (58 participants) in two locations. There were two groups with a mixed demographic, two monocultural (predominantly white British UK citizens) groups, and four Muslim groups.

Muslim focus groups

Four focus groups took place: two in London (around the Finsbury Park area) and two in Staffordshire (one in Stoke-on-Trent and one in Stafford). There were 29 participants, 19 male and 10 female, and 10 in Staffordshire and 19 in London.

Main Findings:

- Muslims in this sample consume mainly mainstream news. Broadcasting is the most popular source of news, in particular the BBC (television and online).
- Consumption of minority media is limited and occasional. Alternative news is mainly sourced from Al Jazeera.
- Mainstream news reporting is viewed negatively by Muslims and has a real impact on their own self-perceptions, well being, perception of others and trust in the media.
- Muslims believe that media coverage has a negative impact on perceptions of Muslims amongst non-Muslims. They believe that these negative perceptions of contribute to a reluctance of non-Muslims to mix with Muslims. The media therefore may contribute to divisions in society.
- However, Muslims believe in multiculturalism, and that living in mixed societies brings benefits.

Background information (for full background data see Appendix 3)

All groups reflected the local Muslim population in those areas; in Stoke these were mainly British Pakistanis and in Stafford, international students from Bangladesh and Iran. Only 1 participant described themselves as 'British Pakistani,' while most born in the UK (10) defined their ethnicity by their ethnic or national heritage, as 'Indian' or 'Pakistani' for example. The London groups were predominantly Black Africans, many foreign-born and from a range of countries of origin (14) and who had been resident in the UK from between 8-41 years. The sample was fairly mixed in relation to age, employment and gender although everyone was educated to at least GCSE standard. One group was particularly biased towards young male participants. English was the primary language spoken (13) then Arabic (6) followed by various other languages, depending on country of origin. While the sample therefore includes Muslims from a range of backgrounds, it is perhaps not representative of the UK Muslim population (which is mainly South Asian) due to the large number of Black Africans included. However, the sample groups do reflect the local populations from which they are drawn. (See Appendix 3 for full background data).

Media use

Most participants were keen to follow the news with more reticence from the female group in London; this will be explored elsewhere, although there was still a desire to keep up to date with goings on. Media use mainly consisted of television consumption, predominantly the BBC, closely followed by Al Jazeera (a mix of Arabic and English). Nineteen of the participants got most of their news from the BBC, 15 from Al Jazeera and 11 from Sky News. Otherwise, consumption was diverse and included only a few newspapers. BBC news was just as likely to be accessed on its website, as through other mediums. Social media was used, but mainly as a social tool. A couple of people mentioned local news in Stoke-on-Trent. Radio was referred to only once. Muslim media sources included the Islam channel, Press TV and Peace TV. Only 1 print source was cited by two people, a local religious paper. Alternative news was mainly sourced from Al Jazeera.

Media representation

The participants unanimously agreed that media representations of Muslims are negative, to different degrees. Not surprisingly, this topic dominated the discussions. Many people referred to being 'stereotyped' and 'targeted'. There was little attempt to differentiate between media forms and outlets but when pressed the tabloid press was singled out for criticism whilst some people identified The Guardian and the Independent as being 'unbiased'. There was some disagreement over how neutral the BBC was with its reporting of Israel (it was understood by some to be 'pro-Israel') and the death of Osama Bin Laden whilst others thought the BBC was more 'even-handed'. In general, people believed that television was less obvious than the press in its negativity, due to the regulations it is subject to.

Particularly notable was the extreme distrust towards the media expressed by women in the London focus group. This group was very emotional about this topic, suspicious of all media and those in control of it, even fearful about the potentials of a surveillance society. This has resulted in reduced media use, with the participants preferring to rely on word of mouth to keep up with events,

'because of the vast, I'll keep repeating that - the technology - they can pick the person wherever it is, and they seeing whatever bus stop, whatever house it is, they will see him right on his bed because of the vast technology.' (female, London).

This relationship with the media may partly be explained by personal experiences of media in other countries (Sudan, Somalia).

The participants were certainly aware of tendencies to report negatively on Islam. The most predominant image of Muslims recalled by respondents was that of the 'Islamic terrorist'. Other specific stories mentioned were 9/11, the July 2005 bombings in London, events in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan and the death of Osama Bin Laden. Other themes referred

to were jihad, women's rights, capital punishment, restrictive practices, for example in schools, Shariah law, converts and criminal activity. These things, they felt, had come to symbolise Islam, with Osama Bin Laden serving as a principal representative of Muslims in the media.

'You've got stories about Halal meat that keep coming out time and time again, schools providing our children they're forcing them to eat meat which has been slaughtered according to these appalling rituals, you've got stories that come out about Ramadan and children who don't have to do x, y and z because they're fasting, you constantly see headlines about communities that want Shariah law, so there's lots of examples I can give you about sort of the negative stories around Muslims.' (female, Staffordshire).

In particular, respondents highlighted double standards and one sided representations. For example, several participants referred to the assumption that Muslims or an Islamist group was responsible for the Norway bombing (Summer 2011). Media bias was highlighted in relation to the reporting of the death of British and American soldiers, with little reporting of Afghan and Iraqi casualties, and the lack of criticism of Saudi Arabia in comparison to other dictatorships. Others referred to the contradiction in calls for freedom for women whilst attacking women's choice to wear a veil;

'[...]the point is being made British society allows women to dress in any way that they want then what's wrong with a Muslim woman choosing to wear the niqab (male, Staffordshire).

'[...]then they did them bombings and stuff yeah, say you had family members there that were Muslim working there or whatever, there are Muslim people that got killed and suffered the effects from that but it wasn't shown, they said yeah Muslims are all to blame, Muslims are this. Muslims are on the receiving end as well, we weren't just - people in this country - but it's not fair' (male, London).

'If you look at the Norway bombings, they thought straight away when they thought it was a Muslim people had done it, straight away that story got picked up they were showing it in every country' (male, London).

Respondents were consistently critical about the use of extremists as sources and processes of editing in the media. This has caused Muslims to be suspicious of talking to the media, due to concerns over how their statements may be edited.

'I have had a couple of encounters with the journalist or whoever is writing the column. Once I received a quote myself in the story because the place where I work they sell Halal chicken so they wanted to write a report about it. The lady rang me up and she was really, really not polite with me and she was saying oh you're posing religion over our society by selling Halal meat. My reply was simple because this was

the quality meat is better than any normal meat and people love it, people like it, it's not selling the religion or anything like that. We are not imposing anything, if you don't like it you don't buy it as simple as that. But she wrote it in a very negative way and it was on the local newspaper somewhere, I can't name it at the moment, but I have had an interview with that journalist and it was very negative and full of misinformation.' (male, Staffordshire).

As with the producers, participants were keen to counter the claims made in the media about Islam. Particularly in the London groups much emphasis was placed on correcting dominant perceptions of links between Islam and terrorism and the poor treatment of women in Islam;

[...] 'what they promote(terrorists) is against Islam so people can be terrorists and it's all - that's irrelevant because it says if you kill yourself you reach suicide you are going to hell,' (male, London).

Only a couple of people directly stated what they felt had been excluded in the media portrayal of Muslims (positives);

'Another example is when the Hindus have the celebration of the powder and all of that, they have a big news thing for them of congratulations. But when it comes to a Muslim side you don't really see anything about, you don't see anything nice about them' (male London).

When asked why participants used mainstream media, given its negativity, people argued that they were selective in what they consumed – with some people actively seeking out stories that had relevance for them (often men) whilst others avoided them (often women). Participants also stressed the need to access a range of sources for balance. For most people the gap was filled by Al Jazeera;

'I don't have to look at the negative parts I don't have to look at the politics parts of it, because it doesn't have to do with me all of the time does it? There's fashion, I mean, I'm a human being at the end of the day aren't I? I don't have to use all that part, I don't have to look at the negative parts' (female, Staffordshire).

This demonstrates how religious identity is not always at the forefront of decision making in relation to media consumption.

Positive coverage

As these focus groups followed the summer of 2011, when riots took place across the country, many people noted the positive coverage of the Muslim community following the death of three Muslim men in Birmingham. The father of one of the men had called for calm following the deaths, successfully preventing a further rise in tensions. The participants noted how the riots themselves grew out of racial tensions (when police shot an unarmed

black man) but felt subsequent coverage lacked a racial element. When asked why coverage of these events had been positive, responses ranged from the media being 'caught on the hop' to coverage being purposely used to quell the rioting by encouraging empathy with the victim's family. However, the 'positive' nature of this coverage was marked as 'unusual' and thus particularly notable.

'As far as positive stories are concerned I was really shocked after the riots in Birmingham about some of the positive aspects of community that have come out in some of our tabloid papers after the killing of three Muslims and the way that their families come out and said you know these guys were out there they were supporting all communities, they weren't meant to support just the Muslim businesses, they were out there to protect the white population, they were out there to protect the Sikh population, everybody's businesses. And there have been a couple of very positive stories that have come out in response to that, where it's actually said that these were Muslim lads and I think that is a very, very rare occasion that any of the media would print something positive about Muslims. I thought that was down to what his father said as well. I can't think of another positive Muslim story' (female, Staffordshire).

The recent BBC series on the Prophet Muhammad (July/August 2011), presented by Rageh Omar, was also mentioned by several people as an example of positive portrayal of Muslims in the media.

What were the reasons given for negative coverage?

The primary reason believed to be responsible for negative coverage of Muslims was a lack of knowledge and understanding of Islam. This was followed by economic reasons – ratings, profit and lack of regulation. Only one person mentioned production pressures and one a 'conflict of values'. One argued that no-one (excluding extremists) speaks out for Islam, while another respondent countered this perception as naivety;

'But the issue is the media won't allow access, so there's one thing missing they are not going to go on Newsnight sit down and have a discussion on Islam. It's another thing for Newsnight to say, Ok we'll allow you to come on. Can you see the point?' (male, Staffordshire).

Behind this was the assumption that 'the media' has an agenda. Only one person was able to articulate the complexities of setting media agenda in relation to wider geo-political processes. For example, this person indicated that you cannot regulate the media when senior politicians like David Cameron are expounding negative discourse (see Cameron story). Most people instead talked of Muslims being the latest group to be 'targeted,' following Irish, Jewish and black people, etc. The exception to this was the London based

female group, whose suspicion of the media and those controlling it was taken to conspiracy level; 'they have eyes everywhere', 'they are controlling the world'.

Role of new media

In general, most people seemed to use social media (Facebook and/or Twitter) but clearly perceived this to be a tool primarily for social use. However, in relation to the specific stories discussed in the groups (see below), social media could be seen as having a political function. Here, people highlighted both the potential positive (Arab Spring) and negative (as an organisational tool in the London riots) consequences of its use. Some felt that it was useful for breaking news and, in the London women's group, a more trusted source than mainstream media for its 'eye witness accounts'. Fragmentation was alluded to by one person, however, social media was largely perceived to be one of many alternative sources of information.

Muslim (specialist) media

Concept of Muslim media

For those who addressed this issue in the two focus groups, there was a split between those who felt the term was inaccurate (that perhaps ethnic/regional media would be a better descriptor), and those who felt happy with it (that the term had 'resonance'). One participant suggested that because 'Muslim media' has little reach, it lacks impact.

Uses of Muslim media

As demonstrated by the previous section on media usage, media aimed at Muslims in the UK tends to have limited reach. While many participants did emphasise the importance of alternative sources of news, for most people this was Al Jazeera, with some individuals also mentioning the Islam Channel and Press TV. Apart from Al Jazeera, use of minority media appears to be occasional. People used Al Jazeera for news about their own country and about specific issues regarding Muslims or countries that were not represented fairly in the UK mainstream media.

Only one person claimed to use diasporic media, or media from their country of origin. There was a general feeling that the BBC World Service covered these topics just as well. The London based women's group argued that channels coming from specific home countries were just as biased and to be viewed with caution (excluding Al Jazeera which, for this group, was the only outlet to be trusted). While there was a realisation that all media may be biased, consuming a range of sources allowed access to a variety of opinion and events,

'To be for real for real, say now the BBC are saying something about the Muslims and they are basically in a way they are attacking the Muslims, if you go to Islam Channel, it's going to be obvious that they are obviously going to back themselves, even say

maybe the thing that BBC are saying is true Islam Channel is not going to say yeah that's true we've (Muslims) done this' (male, London).

For one young person mainstream media had more relevance;

[...] the thing about the older generation, with me I don't watch most of the Asian channels. Because I live here, I'm more focused on what is going on around me here and what's going to affect me now and in the future' (female, Staffordshire).

Case study stories

Cameron's speech on multiculturalism

Discussions around this story led to some interesting debates about multiculturalism in the UK. Most people disagreed with Cameron's argument and thought that multiculturalism worked well in Britain. Residents of London, in particular, argued that London itself demonstrates this, and they themselves (with mixed heritage) felt part of a harmonious 'open minded' community.

'Yeah but he's the leader of our country which is the most multicultural – London is the most multicultural city in the world and if he's saying he doesn't support it then he is saying probably that most of the citizens here would support the fact that they are spreading their culture because the UK is built up of everyone from different cultures, from different backgrounds, their tea, their cars, everything, the TV, so if he's saying he doesn't like multiculturalism, then he's saying London should be emptied out and it doesn't make sense' (male, London).

This reflected a more general positive attitude to the UK;

'the way I see it Britain is probably, is the most tolerant society to live in Europe, the privileges that you have, the freedoms that you have in this country. We don't get them in Muslim countries to be honest, the ability to speak your mind say what you feel about the government, individuals, you don't have that freedom anywhere. As Muslims we've seen what's happened in France, we've seen what's happened in Denmark and in Germany. Muslims are very, very lucky in this country because I think this government and this country does take human rights and it understands what it's about. However having said that, because of the media I think you have got some communities who have suffered.' (female, Staffordshire).

It was agreed that coverage of Cameron's speech reflected a level of ignorance (and racism) both in Government and the media on these issues, focusing on the need to restrict Muslims rather than far right groups such as the EDL;

'[...] What he is talking about is we want to give it more diversity I'm happy with Muslims everyone, but he wants to crack down on more Muslim groups. Why is

there not a crackdown on more Christian groups such as the EDL what they're doing?' (male, London).

'It's not multiculturalism that's failed I'm sorry. You know it's our governments who have failed certain communities' (female, Staffordshire).

Social fracture was perceived by several participants to be widespread, and it was agreed that these challenges should not be blamed on Muslims.

Interestingly, the negative tone of coverage made the men's group in London want to continue reading, while female respondents were put off by this approach. All participants were keen to stress the benefits of multiculturalism;

'You could compare it to before when Irish people came for the working, then like Indian Pakistani's they came for the .., they needed after the war, in the second world war, they needed ...so they allowed like my grandfather came in and settled down here. So then they allowed the Middle East countries and then all of these countries, now they allow the European people to come in and work. So it has always been like that you know. That's labour make this country stronger and powerful' (female, London).

'Arab Spring'

Initially most people felt that coverage of the Arab Spring had been similar across organisations. Similar to the findings from Muslim producers, many thought Islam had not been a major focus in the reporting on the Arab Spring;

'I think they are fairly equitable to the regional as we mentioned, regional broadcasters Al Jazeera and Arabia, basically if you're following the latest news like the falling down of Gaddafi regime, it's basically it's almost the same, it seems to be copying from each other even sometimes even the headlines' (male, Staffordshire).

'I don't think in an international context unless it (religion) actually affects the society that it is actually mentioned, I don't think the fact that these are Muslim is not something that I've picked up on...' (female, Staffordshire).

Some men, both in London and Staffordshire, felt there had been a bias to the coverage of these events. They raised the issue of gaps in coverage; the motivations behind Western foreign policy; the lack of understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in some of the countries involved; the exaggerated role of social media; and the double standards in response to activism in different countries (and the reporting of this).

'So for example where politicians have come on when they talk about Islamic groups they give power within Egypt, they've actually talked about the Islamic takeover

within these countries, so that's actually come from a very negative viewpoint.' (male, Staffordshire).

Al Jazeera and the Islam Channel were therefore used to supplement news in mainstream media. The lack of credibility awarded to the media by the London women's group pushed them to seek news from the personal accounts of friends at home. One person suggested that the coverage of the events in Egypt might provide people with a more positive image of Muslims.

Impact of coverage: community relations

The main impact cited was the negative impact coverage can have on the attitudes of non-Muslims, and how Muslims are perceived in the UK. As with the producers, most felt Britain was a welcoming positive country. However, participants felt they had to work hard to prove themselves against the weight of negative coverage. Some participants had experienced racism first hand, and several were aware of the shift from ethnic to religious hatred which worsened following 9/11,

'I've personally had bad experiences. I am a cab driver. And basically I was physically attacked by two young 20 year olds, can you remember the Bradford riots? It was on Sunday, and they come out of the *** pub in *** and they were only going to *** around the corner and I thought that was quite strange, you know they were going from that pub to let's say to that block up there. I thought that was a strange job, I talked to them and you know 'are you alright lads' and everything and they kept quiet and as soon as they got me to *** street in *** they started hitting me there and back, it was about 11 o'clock at the time on a Sunday, it was a very hot Sunday I can still remember. But I had not done anything to these particular guys I mean, you know if I had done anything bad or you know anything, but I think that related to the media because at the time the Bradford riots were on and obviously this whole a brown face in a, near the rioting at the time, and the police didn't give them enough support and the EDL was coming through Bradford and they were attacking shops and taxis and obviously the Bradford youth got hostile and the riot happened. You know that I don't need to go into all that yeah, and basically I was attacked for no reason' (male, Staffordshire).

The female London group felt particularly emotional about this, referring to the depressing nature of coverage and how it causes them grief and worry for their families, both for their education and employment prospects, but also for their safety. However, many people felt the nature of coverage had also led to a fear of Muslims amongst non-Muslims (and for one, even suspicion of other Muslims), demonstrating the negative impact on community relations.

Q- And do you think that has an effect on identity as well? Self- Identity?

A- Absolutely, I think you just become very, very conscious of who you are, I am not visibly a Muslim woman, I don't wear the head scarf. I choose not to wear the head scarf. And in a sense I know that there are a lot of things that I can do, a lot of things that I say, if I was wearing a head scarf, I don't think I'd be able to get away with because you are viewed very, very differently if you wear a head scarf. And I have had other Muslims say to me, just so you know you do a fantastic job but you should wear the head scarf. And I've had others turn on them and say you can't say that, do you know what she does, and she couldn't do that, she wouldn't be able to get away with doing all of these things and saying all of these things if she was visibly Muslim. I think that is the media that has created this fear, this suspicion, and this hate of all Muslims. (female, Staffordshire)

Older people in Stoke felt they were protected and described their area, a particular district in Stoke-on-Trent, as a safe 'bubble' given the high number of Pakistani Muslims living there. However, they were wary of venturing outside the area for fear of racism;

'I think in Stoke on Trent the Muslim community lives in communities where we segregate so we live in a bubble. *** is an inclusive Muslim community. So you have people all the people, but in terms of, there's Mosques, there's other Muslims. So I think there's a degree of comfort there. I think the real question is would I be comfortable going into other areas, which I don't know, which have a large number of non-Muslims. What I would say is I would hesitate' (male, Staffordshire).

For the women living in Finsbury Park, the local Muslim community gave them the security and community that they felt was lacking in wider British society, despite their differing backgrounds;

Speaker 1: 'Multicultural is from different backgrounds, different country, different background, but we are the same Ummah, the same Muslim. One body.'

Speaker 2: 'Like this we are different, different country but we are Muslim. Islam has united us.'

Young students in Stoke and London felt less affected by community tensions, and claimed they maintained good relations with people from different backgrounds, particularly at University or College.

'But I think because we are a younger generation and we start studying it (discrimination) hasn't affected us as much because as, because we haven't really lived it right now' (female, Staffordshire).

Despite general feelings of negativity, most people felt relations in their diverse communities were good. There were mixed views on segregation, with some rejecting the idea that UK was segregated and others agreeing. Some supported segregation, but viewed

this as living in like-minded communities. These respondents rejected the negative connotations this carries in the mainstream media. Others thought mixing was good for community relations, allowing individuals to learn from each other. One participant mentioned the mutual support between the Muslim and Sikh communities during the riots, but explained that this support was omitted from media coverage;

‘[...] for example when the riots were happening the Sikhs and the Muslims in *** came together to protect the area because as you know there is a lot of temples and there is a lot of Mosques there and that’s one positive part where actually you see, and it didn’t really get put on BBC news or anything - I had to see it from a Sikh channel’ (male, London).

Despite maintaining a high degree of suspicion towards mainstream media, Muslims mainly consume mainstream broadcasting (primarily the BBC). Alternative sources are used, particularly Al Jazeera, alongside mainstream media consumption, especially when mainstream media is seen to be lacking in its coverage.

Mixed and monocultural groups

These findings result from 4 focus groups including 2 mixed demographic groups (1 each in Staffordshire and London) and 2 monocultural demographic groups (again in Staffordshire and London). There were 29 participants in total.

Main findings:

- Most participants used a variety of sources to gain a variety of perspectives on news stories and could be described as being critical or, at least questioning of, media messages. This included a recognition that Muslims were being represented negatively, particularly since 9/11 and 7/7.
- However, despite critical use of media, respondents often repeated the dominant narratives presented in the mainstream media.
- There may be some correlation between levels of education and age, and the extent to which individuals 'believe' what they consume in the media, but this would need much greater depth of analysis to draw out.
- On the question of integration, many felt that the UK is a good example of how multiculturalism works. However, the degree to which people seemed to believe this depended on location and personal experiences.

Background information (for full background data see Appendix 3)

Most participants described themselves as white British (19), were born in the UK and spoke English as their first language (22). Interestingly, in the London monocultural group, one respondent self-identifying as white British was born in New Zealand and had resided in the UK for 11 years. The sample was balanced in terms of gender, and largely aged between 21-50 and in paid employment. An exception was the monocultural group in Staffordshire. Drawn from a rural village location, the majority of participants in Staffordshire were 41 or over, and included more retirees. Graduates and those with higher degrees (Masters degrees) were heavily represented in the focus groups due to the chosen locations (close to university campuses) and time of year. Religious affiliation was split largely between Christian (11) and those with no religion (14). Three Muslims participated in the focus groups.

Media use

The demographic questionnaires identified television as the form of media that all participants would turn to first for their news and information. There was no particular variation among the groups, however there was a slight increase in the use of digital media in the mixed groups due to lack of access to technology, for example, accessing television broadcasts via the Internet rather than television. The Internet came in close second as a main source of news, with radio and newspapers lagging far behind. The focus group discussions supported this data, with a number of people indicated that they turned first to

the BBC as a trusted source for news and information. This was particularly true for some of the international respondents who stated that for news about the UK, the BBC would be the main source for objective news. Al Jazeera was also mentioned by a couple of participants as a good alternative source of information and was held up as being 'more balanced' (male, monocultural group, London) within a global news context. However, this also depended on factors such as access, which particularly affected the international students.

It was clear from the discussions that media consumers were using a variety of media, and in terms of consumption habits, newspapers were quite low in priority. Only a few participants regularly bought a daily, weekend or local newspaper. Those that did were more likely to come from older age groups, and often referred to the 'quality press', e.g. The Times, The Guardian, The Independent, etc. Many respondents were disparaging of the tabloid press, which they said were 'more likely to sensationalise things' (male, monocultural group, London). This included the Daily Mail, which one respondent remarked that they read 'just because it makes me laugh [...] because it's so extreme' (male, mixed, London). A few participants from both of the London groups consumed free newspapers, for example The Evening Standard, as a good source of local information. This was mirrored by one respondent from the Staffordshire region who regularly listened to local radio to find out about local news and events. Despite this, radio was only referred to a few times as a medium that consumers would regularly listen to for news and information, for example in the car to and from work. It was the Internet that really cut across all groups as a source for news and information. While participants would not necessarily buy a daily newspaper or listen to regular news bulletins on the radio, they would go to the website of the newspaper or use the relevant application on their phone (see more under 'Role of new Media').

In agreement with a number of previous studies, respondents also spoke about family, colleagues and friends as channels through which they shared information. In this sense, media consumption was becoming much 'more customised' to individual needs (male, mixed, Staffordshire). Those from outside the UK would also often look to media from their home country in order to 'get a different flavour of the news' (male, mixed, Staffordshire).

Media representation

Respondents across the groups noted that portrayal of Muslim communities in the media tends to be negative. Muslim members of the mixed groups asserted this more strongly than others. For example, when talking about media representations head coverings, or the Burka, one female Muslim participant noted that Muslim women are often portrayed as oppressed, and non-Western nations were generally represented as undeveloped in terms of human rights. International participants spoke of the media from their home country as following the UK media coverage of these topics with interest and sometimes concern.

Relating this to the recent killings in Norway by right-wing extremist, Anders Behring Breivik, one Muslim respondent originally from Pakistan, said that he was 'much relieved actually

that it was not a Muslim doing it' [because] 'that would have been more trouble in all of its forms' (male, mixed, Staffordshire). It was noted by participants in two groups (mixed Staffordshire and mixed London) that some media reports initially jumped to the conclusion that it was an Islamist terrorist attack. In fact, one respondent thought that the media 'were just trying to find an excuse to bring Islam into it' (female, mixed, Staffordshire).

Respondents were able to identify a number of recent media stories that had focused on Muslims and Islam. For example, the Danish cartoons, 'Mohammed teddy', the Glasgow airport bombings, Shariah Law, and Nigella Lawson wearing a 'Burkini' in Australia were all mentioned. Respondents expressed a sense that since 9/11 and 7/7, more coverage of Muslims and Islam had linked them to terrorism or extremism, with one respondent from the London monocultural group mentioning the Rushdie affair prior to 9/11 as another key turning point in negative media representations of Islam. There was recognition across the groups that the profile of Muslims and Islam had been raised since these key moments in recent history, for example:

'Women were wearing Burkas a long time ago and nobody ever bothered about it. But since this sort of almost demonisation of British Muslims, it's the kind of, it becomes sinister then. Oh is this one of the abused women or is this one of the women who are forced into forced marriages or female circumcision and all of the negative stories?' (male, monocultural group, London).

However, there was some debate about to what extent the stories were positive or negative. For example the French ban on wearing the Burka and its subsequent reporting in the UK media was discussed in three of the four groups. When asked if the coverage of the ban was positive or negative, one participant answered, 'it was a mixture wasn't it really. It makes people aggressive because there are a lot of people who are aggressive about Muslims' (female, monocultural group, Staffordshire). The monocultural group based in Staffordshire often conflated media narratives with reality, for example, speaking of their anger when they read stories about positive discrimination. We will discuss this further in the section on 'Impact'.

One story that could have been perceived as positive coverage of Muslims was the Birmingham riots. Initially it was felt that this was one recent story that represented Muslims positively because the media 'reported the father of the boys in a very good light' (female, mono, Staffordshire). However, further discussion in the mixed Staffordshire group suggested that the story was not presented in terms of religion but was rather about people, who happened to be Asian, protecting their community. One participant stated about one Asian father calling for calm; 'I just think he was portrayed as protecting his community really, you know, regardless of [being] Muslim or not' (female, mixed Staffordshire). In this sense it was not Islam that was represented positively, but a story of individual courage and communities pulling together in the face of adversity.

There was some discussion in all groups about perceived bias in media outlets. The mixed London group in particular felt that sections of the British media were opposed to immigration:

‘I would only say that on the covers of newspapers that sometimes you do see headlines which are really, really annoying, which are annoying and really biased about immigration’ (male, mixed, London).

Conversely in both the monocultural London and Staffordshire groups, there was a sense that bias worked in favour of minority groups. This was understood to be positive discrimination;

‘I’ve noticed after the riots I was listening to some radio program and they were trying to talk to a cross section from Peckham; and I found that if a few people phoned up and said things that they really didn’t like they were cut really short, and when people phoned up and started talking about things that seemed more, I don’t know, I suppose politically correct. At the time they were allowed to talk for ages and I think that often happens with some TV programs as well’ (female, mono, London).

Often this issue was discussed in relation to actual or perceived audience, ‘they are thinking of the demographic and who their audience is, so I think that influences what their stories are going to be (female, mono, London). For example the London free press was referred to by one respondent as ‘pro London for what London is, a sort of cultural melting pot’ (female, mono, London). Yet others felt that it mirrored national sensibilities in terms of content.

Overall there was a real sense that audiences are aware of the way various media report on certain issues. How this was expressed, however, depended on whether participants were in the mixed or monocultural groups, with those in the monocultural groups reflecting on notions of positive discrimination. This was much more the case in the Staffordshire monocultural group where participants were older.

What were the reasons given for negative coverage?

There was recognition, in fact one might say resignation, across the groups that media reporting has always been, and is always going to be, biased in favour of the dominant norms and values in society. While one respondent from the Staffordshire monocultural group talked about bias in terms of what sells;

‘you can’t say Islam is wonderful, Christians and Islam get on. Who’s going to buy that? Who’s going to turn the TV on and watch that?’ (female, mono, Staffordshire);

yet another participant related negative coverage to a perceived necessity to label people;

‘I think the press can’t really function without labelling people, they have to have a label or a box. Put them in that box that’s them, put them on - they’re labelled as that and you’re forever, it will never go, it will forever follow people, British Muslims’ (female, mono, London).

To a similar end, one member of the monocultural Staffordshire group noted the link between reporting of Islamist extremism and Irish terrorism;

‘I just wonder if we had had this conversation 45 years ago, instead of Muslim it would have been Irish, you know. You’re right that polarity of violence always attracts and sells newspapers and I just think the Muslims are in the crossfire at the moment’ (male, mono, Staffordshire).

The sense that there will always be a scapegoat based on fear, or lack of understanding, of the other came through strongly in both of the monocultural groups. One participant suggested that one form of representation fed into another, for example when people read stories about ‘Islamification’ it leads them to repeat the ideas in other forms, such as ‘round robin’ emails, which in turn perpetuates negative attitudes (female, mono, Staffordshire).

Role of new media

A number of respondents spoke about doing their own research rather than relying on one source of information from large media organisations which may be biased. This included searching through a number of television news channels and Googling information, looking at blogs and social media sites such as Facebook. Blogs and social media were particularly relevant for London groups in regards to the recent riots. Here, they stated that they could keep themselves informed about what was happening in a particular area rather than rely on national media coverage, which only focused on certain hotspots.

‘I was sitting there waiting for them [mainstream media] to show me something about what was going on in my local area and it just didn’t, it was focusing on Tottenham and Central London, or whatever, and it was going on all around me. I could hear the helicopters right above my house and I thought I’d like to know - and like I say I just went on Facebook and everybody told me where the riots were going, what little pockets of trouble were going on,’ (female, mono, London).

Muslim (specialist) media

Perhaps unsurprisingly only a few respondents from the mixed and monocultural focus groups had experience of Muslim or specialist media other than via the aforementioned Internet use, blogs and so forth. Others mentioned Al Jazeera when asked if they were aware of any ‘Muslim’ media organisations. However, participants did express views about the possible benefits or drawbacks of specialist media outlets. In the mixed London group, discussion centred on the possibility for extreme voices to emerge from specialist media.

Yet more points were made about the possibility that it could lead to further marginalisation of voices;

‘So basically restricting an audience makes that audience a sort of a restricted group that has some sort of common identity that is not shared with the rest of the nation,’ (male, mixed, London).

However, participants felt specialist media could still make a positive contribution if done properly.

Case study stories

Cameron’s multiculturalism speech

Many respondents did not remember Cameron’s speech on multiculturalism without prompts. Those that did remember the speech made the link between Cameron’s speech, Baroness Warsi’s contribution to the multiculturalism debate, the EDL march planned for the following day, and Jack Straw’s comments on predatory Pakistani men. In relation to the latter story, one participant noted that Straw’s comments had sent a shockwave through his Pakistani community,

‘[...] even back home we were always taught that Labour is very pro Asians or pro this thing, and coming out of Jack Straw was a bit of a shocker. In that sense it felt like, we all felt betrayed. Had Cameron would have done it, we would not have felt betrayed in that sense’ (male, mixed, Staffordshire).

When prompted, respondents noted that the articles picked particular ‘soundbites’ out of the speech in order to present a particular view in line with the ideology of the publication;

‘It’s being reported in a confrontational way and it’s this versus this rather than... presumably what could have been useful would have been to get people talking honestly about certain things which, whether Cameron was trying to do that or whether he was just trying to keep right wing people on side and say don’t worry look I am taking on board (male, mono, London).

Some respondents felt the tone of the media coverage to be confrontational, and yet others felt that the reports were neutral, simply reporting the content of the speech. There seemed to be a lot of variables at play here, which would need further analysis. For example, this discussion was undoubtedly impacted by where the participants were from (UK or overseas) and their age group. It was also dependent on which publications they had read. For example, those looking at tabloid reports felt that the language was inflammatory: ‘it’s like they’re picking out bits of his speech to slot into what they want to say in the paper’ (female, mixed Staffordshire) and ‘They’ve taken his speech and written it as *The Sun’s* Cameron speech’ (male, mixed, Staffordshire). However, those looking at the broadsheet press broadly agreed that it reflected the speech fairly.

Again there was a sense that media coverage of the speech focused less on issues of religion (i.e. Islam) and more on claims about the self-segregation of ethnic communities in the UK. Only one participant from the mixed Staffordshire group noted some conflation in the broadsheet right-wing press between the failure of multiculturalism presented in the speech and religious extremism.

Interestingly one participant in the mixed Staffordshire group made the link between Cameron's speech and German Chancellor Angela Merkel's very similar speech a few months before;

'its saying David Cameron is saying something nobody dare say, yet 3 months ago Angela Merkel said the exact same thing. So it's a bit of a contradiction in terms, but no it's, it's definitely not, well it's very partisan in favour of the government which The Sun is a pro government paper at the moment, it's very brazen about that' (male, mixed, Staffordshire).

'Arab Spring'

The majority of the focus group participants believed that the uprisings across the Middle-East were reported in terms of politics, particularly around the question of democracy, rather than in terms of religion:

'To me it's mostly been about "OK we're getting rid of a dictator," I haven't been particularly aware of any talking about "oh this is a Muslim" or anti-Muslim or anything at all' (male, mixed, London).

Because the events were fresh in the memories of the respondents, many could talk freely about the media coverage, which they felt to be:

'Pro-Change. It was pro-Arab Spring wasn't it? There's not many BBC reporters defending Colonel Gaddafi or anyone like that. It's always, it's very much pro the revolution I'd say' (male, mono, London).

While generally people felt the coverage to be positive, there was some cynicism about the political motivation for Western governments getting involved;

'[...] with the Arab spring I get the feeling that the media or the West sort of liked it because it's about Westernisation and democracy and almost becoming homogenised with the kind of cultures we have here on this side of Europe. So it's sort of like yes bring it on and yeah we want you to get on with it and topple the dictators and you know, because we know that three hours after that's happened somebody will get contracts to start building shopping malls, really, really, as that's been happening in Iraq' (male, mono, London).

In fact a number of participants made the link between the Arab Spring and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq;

‘I think Iraq and Afghanistan kind of set the news in terms of what is going to be reported anyway. I think all the countries that are at war at the moment are Muslim countries and the fact that in Muslim views it’s the West that are coming in and trying to help them, that alone is set the mindset of all Muslim people. You know, why is it Muslim countries. So all the media is pointed toward the fact that the West is trying to help but then when you start seeing how many countries that these countries are going into that’s when certain issues arise’ (female, mono, London).

There was also some difference of opinion within the mixed Staffordshire group about which particular event within the Arab Spring had been the top story. While one respondent thought that the uprisings did not become a priority until Libya, others agreed that the UK media had reported closely from the early days in Tunisia and especially Egypt. This was discussed with reference to the UK’s particular relationship with Egypt;

‘In some way it feels closer, even though geographically they are all about the same distance from Britain, they feel closer to home, they feel more Westernised, you are more used to seeing them in the news, therefore it almost feels like it’s on your doorstep I think’ (male, mixed, Staffordshire).

Importantly, a few participants mentioned the lack of coverage of the events in Syria and Bahrain, in comparison to extensive reporting on Egypt and Libya. Some spoke of the UK’s variable history with Egypt and Libya as a way of explaining this contrast.

Impact of coverage: community relations

‘It’s like all these groups, like the extreme Muslims and the extreme right wing groups, I think they should be given a voice, I think it is highly dangerous to try and push down what they’re saying. I think people have got to hear different views, and some people may agree with what the extremists are saying on either end, but most people I’m guessing don’t. ’ (male, mixed, London).

An underlying commitment to freedom of expression was expressed in the focus groups, with participants maintaining that all views should be aired. However, there were also clear links drawn between media rhetoric and potential impact on community relations;

‘for a lot of people every time they hear the phrase British Muslim is with a negative association that we’ve heard the news in the background or reading it that its suspected terrorism’ (male, mono, London).

This sentiment was mirrored across the groups, many feeling that normal events are often presented in ways which instigate conflict. It was discussed that this could stir up feelings of anger and resentment between different communities.

Looking across the discussions held in the different groups, however, provides some insights into how that happens. Is the media a mirror on the world or does the media set the agenda? '[...] there's a lack of understanding you know and I think the press just really sort of jumps on that' (female, mono, London). In the monocultural Staffordshire group in particular, there was a certain amount of conflation between negative stories presented in the media and actual community relations. Participants in this group often repeated fears expressed in the media about 'being taken over' (female, mono, Staffordshire), referring to various examples ranging from faith schools to segregated communities. However, these participants also appeared to understand that media reports somehow play upon or exaggerate those fears.

These feelings were supplemented by the recognition that there is racism and conflict, but that it exists between all groups, not just, for example, between British and Asians. Interestingly it seemed that non-UK citizens feel people in the UK are generally open to difference;

'[...] as a Muslim in this country I feel British people, the English people, *you*, are more welcoming compared to other white Europeans because you are used to the new multiculturalism, you are used to Muslim community, you are used to, you know, African communities' (female, mixed, Staffordshire).

On the other hand, many respondents claimed to have seen evidence of self-segregation, which seemed to chime with what many politicians and sections of the UK media report. There was no clear distinction between the mixed and monocultural groups here. International participants in the London mixed group perceived London to be a collection of segregated communities living alongside each other, and suggested in that sense multiculturalism had failed. Yet others saw what exists now to be a stepping stone to greater integration;

'I think it is inevitable that people migrate to areas that they feel comfortable with whether it's a social economic class where the rich all stick together, it's true, where the poor stick together, and they become ghettoized with that. It's just that we are able to differentiate much more clearly because of colour. Now to me I think we live in quite a rich and vibrant society that embraces those cultures through music through art through sport, and you know, those are quite mainstream. I think it's a matter of time, to your point, that [we] will become more integrated' (male, mono, Staffordshire).

There was a strong feeling from the monocultural Staffordshire group in particular that different communities should 'integrate' into the UK rather than stick to their own areas. However, it was clear from the accompanying narrative that what many meant by integration was in fact assimilation. One participant from the mixed Staffordshire group,

however, felt that self-segregation should not necessarily be perceived as a problem – that the portrayal of the ‘problem’ community was in itself a media construct:

‘Basically what I am trying to say is people are pushing an identity on a group, they see a group, they see there is something that they have in common with one another and need to label it and I think that creates the problem that might not necessarily exist. Yes there’s a lot of Jewish people in one place but there’s a reason for that maybe, that’s a common thing they’ve got but that doesn’t necessarily mean they don’t interact outside that group, you just might not notice it because once they move outside of those social groups they become invisible, like everyone, well not invisible but you get what I’m getting at. They become invisible like everyone else. It’s only when they come together that everyone notices it and starts to label’ (male, mixed, Staffordshire).

Similarly to the Muslims groups, these participants recognised bias in the media, both generally and towards Muslims in particular. Although critical and media literate, somewhere more likely to conflate media coverage of an event with the reality of the event itself. Mainstream broadcasting was again the most popular source of news, accompanied by the mixed media consumption practices paralleled by the Muslim participants.

UK Survey: Findings and Analysis

Main Findings

- While data gathered from the survey was not representative, our analyses found that the data corresponded to the findings of the focus groups, indicating some patterns of consumption amongst both Muslim and non-Muslims in the UK.
- Non-Muslims predominantly recognise the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media and empathise with these communities. However, a small number of non-Muslims in this survey do not empathise with Muslims.
- Muslims turn to a wide range of media and are not consumed within a parallel media society.
- Despite their awareness of negative media discourses towards Muslim communities in the UK, Muslims assert their British identity. Both in this sample, and the focus groups, Muslims strongly feel part of mainstream society, while also identifying with minority groups.

Demographic data

In the UK survey there were 102 participants, 21 of which were Muslim.

The respondents were quite evenly split between males and females (48: 52%). However, male respondents were over-represented within the Muslim sample (66.7%_m to 33.3%_f) and under-represented slightly in the non-Muslim sample (43.2%_m: 56.8%_f).

The majority of respondents fell into the 31-40 age bracket; however, slightly more Muslim participants were younger, aged 21-30 years (see Figures 1-3).

The sample was skewed towards highly educated people (30.4% with a degree and 53.9% with a higher degree). The percentage of highly educated respondents was equally high amongst non-Muslims (29.6% and 53.1%) and Muslims (33.3% and 57.1%).

Most of the participants were employed, 76.5%. Only 12.7% were students. The data for Muslims and non-Muslims corresponded in this category.

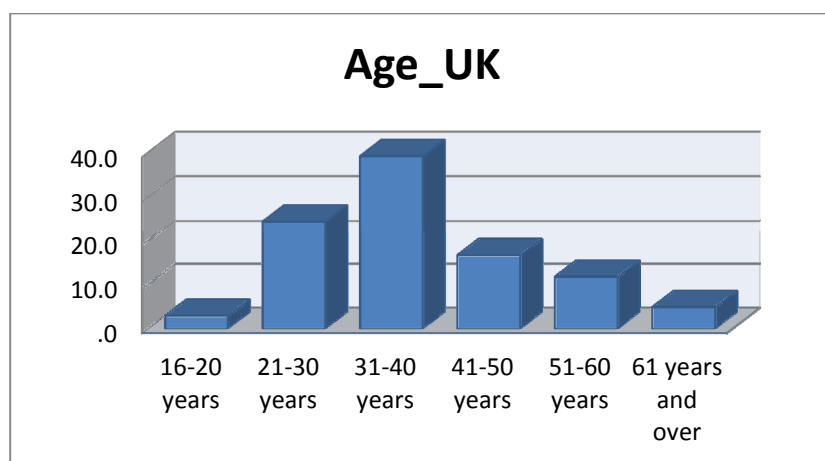


Figure 1: Age in the UK sample: all participants

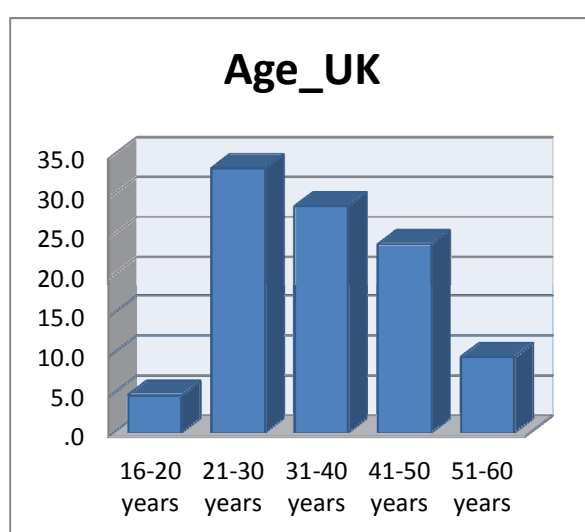


Figure 2: Age in the UK sample: Muslims

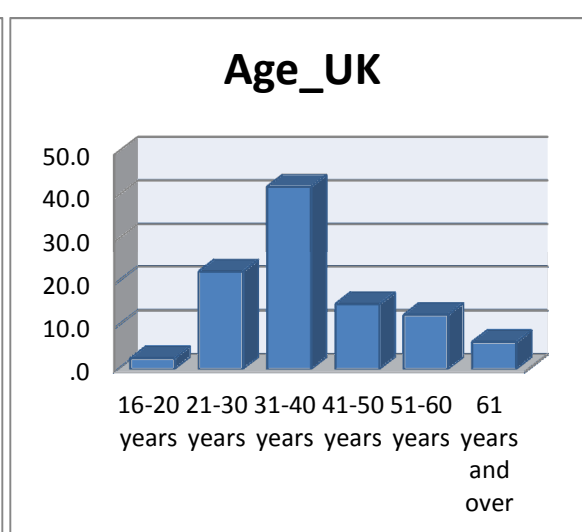


Figure 3: Non-Muslims

Ethnicity and cultural background

The majority of respondents, 72.5%, self-identified as British, 20.6% other and 5.9% British and another nationality. The proportion of self-identified British respondents was highest amongst both Muslims and non-Muslims (Muslims 52.4% British, 38.1% other, 1.9% British and other; non-Muslims 77.8%, 16% and 4.9%).

80.2% of non-Muslims were born in the UK compared to 47.6% of Muslims.

76.2% of Muslims have at least one parent who was born outside the UK compared to 22.2% of non-Muslims.

91.2% of respondents gave English as their first language, 85.7% of Muslims and 92.6% of non-Muslims.

Whilst the majority of people identified with a religion (37.3% Christianity, 20.6% Islam, 6.9% other), Muslims were more likely to attend religious service, with 66.7% of Muslims

attending at least once a week compared to 14.8% of non-Muslims. 53.1% of non-Muslims never attend a religious service (compared to 23.8% of Muslims). Attendance at a place of worship was particularly low amongst young people. This appears to gradually increase with age. For non-Muslims the older population is more likely to feel attached to its religious community.

Muslims in this sample predominantly described themselves as 'religious' or 'very religious' (61.9% compared to 22.2% of non-Muslims). More non-Muslims described themselves as 'not so religious' with 48.1% saying they are 'not religious at all' compared to 14.3% of Muslims. There was a high level of correlation between feelings of religiosity amongst Muslims, tendency to attend services and feelings of attachment to a religious community.

Media Consumption

Muslims feel that the mainstream media does not cater to their needs and interests (71.4%). However, the majority of Muslims do not consume specialist media. Over half of the Muslims in this sample claim not to consume specialist media (57.1% compared to 50.6% of non-Muslims). They appear to use a combination of both mainstream and specialist media (57.1%) which corresponds with the focus group results. For those Muslims that do consume specialist media, use is slightly more frequent than amongst non-Muslims. This occurs either on a daily (55.6%) or weekly (44.4%) basis amongst Muslims, compared to 35.5% and 19.4% for non-Muslims. Muslims born outside the UK have a slightly higher frequency of use (often 'daily') than those born in the UK, who are more likely to use this media 'weekly'. However, when specifically asked about *Muslim* media, 66.7% of Muslims did not find Muslim media attractive.

The main reason for use of specialist media amongst the wider sample was having a specialist interest (61.2%). Of the whole group, only 16.3% claim to use specialist media for language reasons, those quoted were Swedish and Finnish. Men appear to use specialist media more than often than women. Examples of use include specialist digital TV channels, church newspapers and academic publications. Christian sources were quoted by 6 people compared to 7 quoting Islamic sources. Only 33.3% of Muslims claim to use media specifically targeted at Muslims. Of these sources, only Al Jazeera, Peace TV and the magazine Emel were quoted by more than one person. Three people mention print sources (only The Muslim weekly and an Islamic finance magazine were mentioned). Otherwise various digital channels and websites were highlighted (but only on an individual basis).

When asked to define Muslim media, most people referred to specific organisations. Al Jazeera was mentioned most frequently, 27 times (only twice by Muslims), followed by Emel (4) Muslim News (3) and the Islam Channel (2). The Asian Network was also mentioned twice despite its wider demographic. Many people mentioned topics they thought Muslim media might cover, such as 'women's rights', and other areas of coverage, largely related to culture and lifestyle. Only eight people defined Muslim media as 'religious'. Some people

referred to foreign affairs and international issues. Apart from descriptive labels many people used evaluative terms. Most of these were pejorative (23), 7 of these negative statements were from Muslims. Examples include 'narrow-minded', 'segregation', 'insular', and 'not free'. There were only a handful of positive evaluations, including 'professional' and 'promoting acceptance'.

The majority of respondents use social media (83.3%). This is only slightly higher amongst Muslims (90.5% compared to 81.5% for non-Muslims). The frequency of use of social media is higher amongst non-Muslims with 86.4% purporting to use it on a daily basis, compared to 63.2% of Muslims. The main reason given for social media use is for social purposes (78.4%).

Muslims in the Media

Most people think Muslims are stereotyped in the media (Figure 4). This is higher amongst Muslims (Figure 5) than non-Muslims, where there is more variation in the response (Figure 6). A larger number of non-Muslims disagree with the statement, 'The mainstream media portrays a negative view of Islam' (24.7% compared to 9.5% of Muslims). Young Muslims (age 16-20), however, are less likely to agree with the statement 'the media convey a distorted view of Islam.'

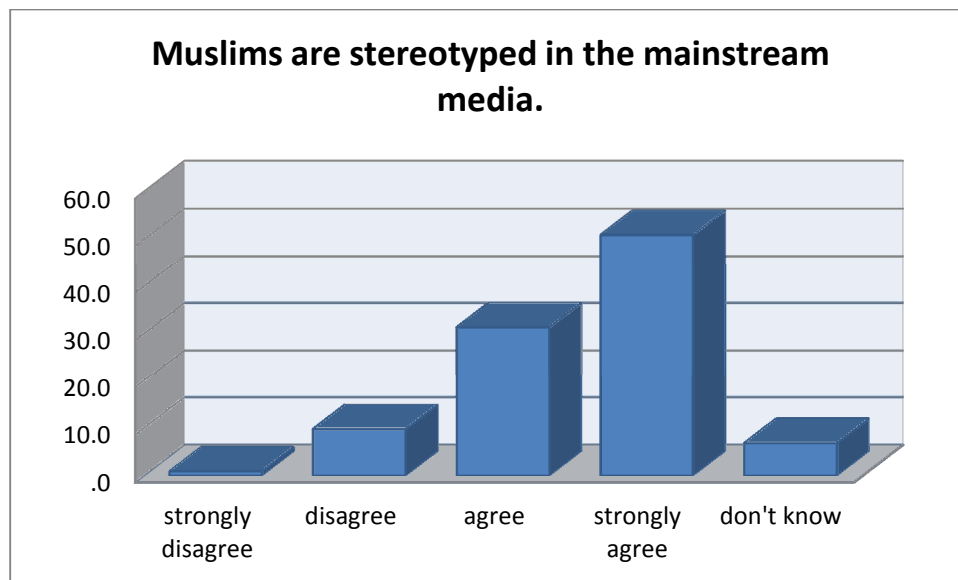


Figure 4: All respondents

When asked, 71.4% of Muslims could think of a recent negative story written in the media about Muslims. 61.9% of Muslims could not think of a recent story that challenged prejudices about them. When referring to recent stories about Muslims that were positively received, the most popular stories were about the Arab Spring (mentioned by 17 people), coverage of the Muslim community in Birmingham following the death of 3 Muslims in the

riots (15 mentions). Four people referred to coverage that criticized the rush to blame Islamists for the bombing in Norway. Sixteen people could not remember any. When asked to identify a recent media story that was received negatively, most people said they couldn't think of one (22). Otherwise coverage of the Norway bombing was the most popular (13 mentions) followed by terrorism (6), Islamism in the Arab Spring (4) and the participation of Muslims in the London riots (3).

Muslims tended to believe, more so than others in the sample, that their religion is treated disrespectfully by the mainstream media (71.4%). Some non-Muslims agree that Islam is more likely to be treated disrespectfully than their own religion (26%).

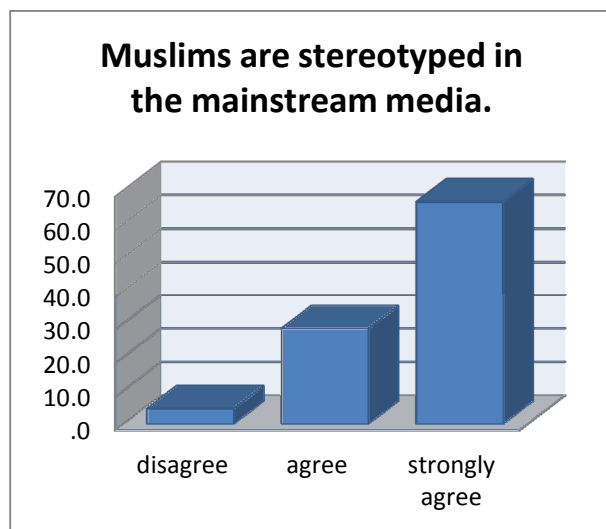


Figure 5: Muslim response

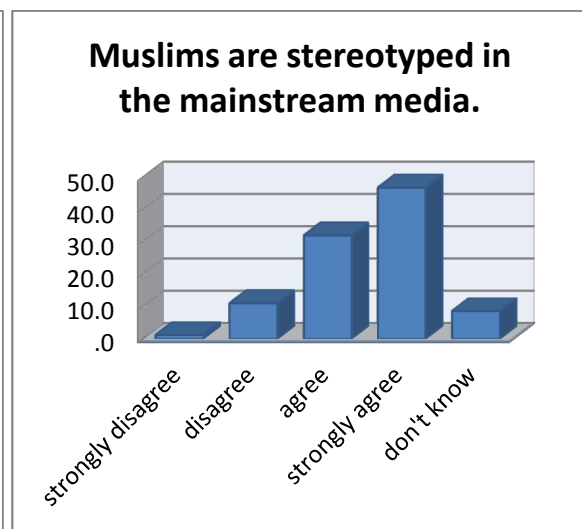


Figure 6: Non-Muslim response

In turn, most people disagree with the statement 'Media reporting of Islam is fair and balanced' (75.5% disagree in total, including 90.5% of Muslims and 71.6% of non-Muslims). However, when asked if there should be more coverage of Islam-related stories in the media, there was a fairly even split between those agreeing (43.1%) and disagreeing (39.2%) within the wider sample. 52.4% of Muslims agreed compared to 40.7% of non-Muslims. A majority of people also felt the media should report more on prejudice against Muslims (66.7% of Muslims and 64.2% non-Muslims).

A high percentage of people claimed they did not know whether non-Muslim Britons are stereotyped in 'Muslim media' (55.9%). 52.4% of Muslims disagreed with this compared to 12.3% of non-Muslims, who mostly claimed not to know. 25.9% of non-Muslims agreed with the statement compared to 14.3% of Muslims.

More people disagreed that the media they consume has a positive effect on relations between Muslims and other Britons (41.2%); however, a significant percentage of people claimed not to know (34.3%). 47.6% of Muslims disagreed with this statement compared to 39.5% of non-Muslims. When the media was identified as 'mainstream' in this statement,

the percentage of people disagreeing increased to 76.5%, and amongst Muslims to 81% (Figure 6). There is much more variation in the responses to the statement ‘Specialist media coverage has a positive impact on relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in my country of residence’ (Figure 7). 48.4% of Muslims disagreed, while the majority of non-Muslims (58%) claimed not to know (with 23.4% agreeing and 18.5% disagreeing).

On the other hand, 89.2% of people believe the media can play a role in reducing prejudices against Muslims in the UK. 100% of Muslims agreed with this compared to 86.4% of non-Muslims.

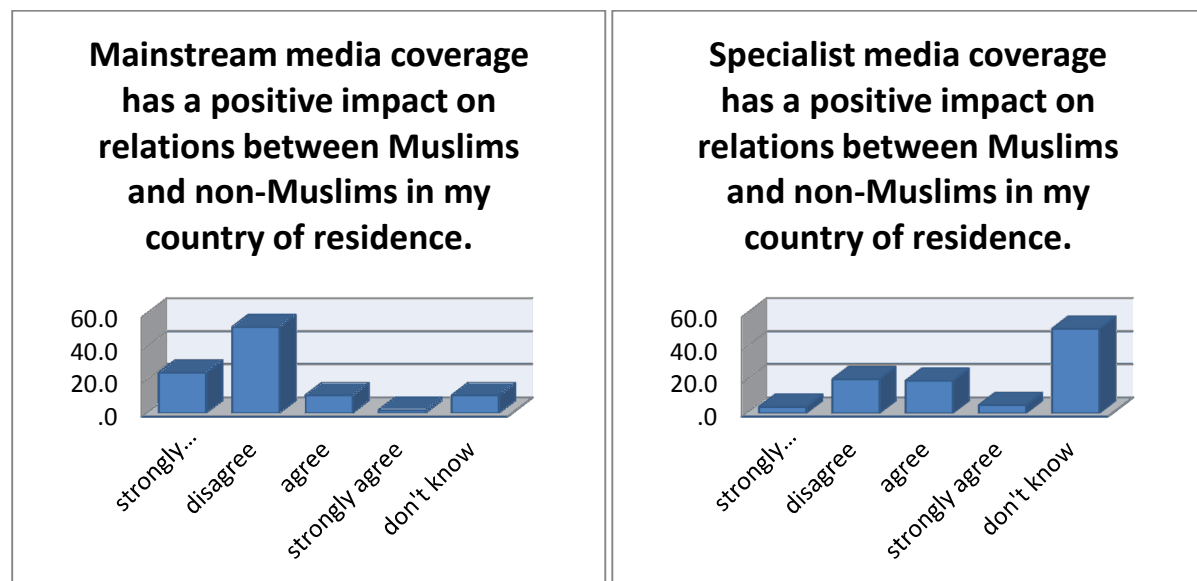


Figure 6

Figure 7

Most Muslims do not feel represented by the mainstream media (Figure 8), although the proportion of non-Muslims feeling unrepresented was also quite high. 71.4% of Muslims feel threatened by reports on Islamophobia, compared to 59.3% of non-Muslims. Men are slightly more likely to feel threatened by these reports than women. Muslims who feel threatened by reports on Islamophobia are less likely to feel attached to the UK and more likely to use specialist media.

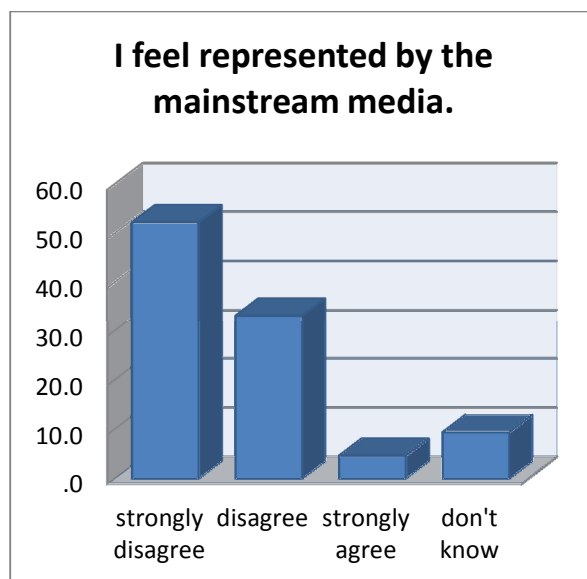


Figure 8: Muslim response

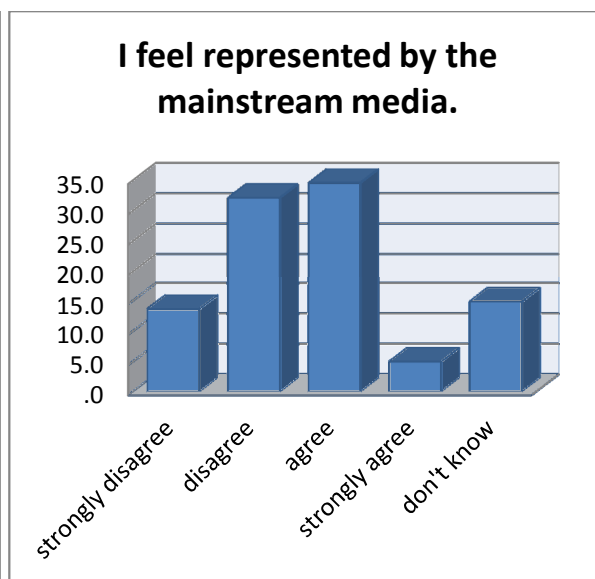


Figure 9: Non-Muslim response

Questions of Belonging

While most Muslims do not feel represented by mainstream media, this does not correlate with feelings of attachment to the UK. 85.8% of Muslims feel attached to their country of residence and 75% feel they are members of mainstream society. Most Muslims agree that Muslims are an important and accepted part of the country (61.9% compared to 38.1% who disagree). This compared to 58% of non-Muslims who agreed and 32.1% disagreeing. The majority of Muslims also feel attached to a parent's country of birth (66.7% compared to 28.6% who did not). Women are more likely to feel attached to a parent's country than men. However, 75% of Muslims also claimed to be a member of a minority (compared to 27.6% of non-Muslims), demonstrating the reality of both being a minority and feeling like part of mainstream society.

Yet when asked the extent to which they feel 'British,' and whether this is important to them, there was more variation (see Figure 9, where 1 means 'not at all' and 7 means 'very much').

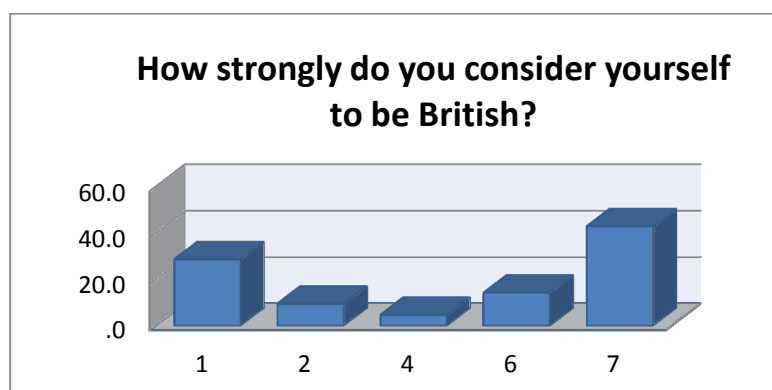


Figure 9: Muslim response

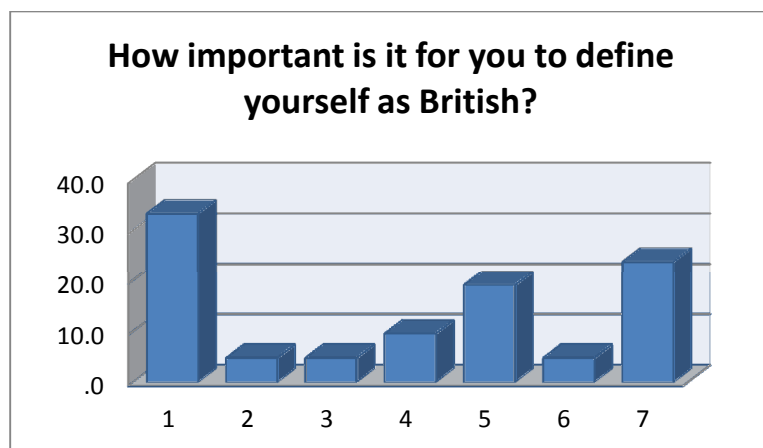


Figure 10: Muslim response

Muslims, however, feel strongly attached to their religious community (85.7% compared to 39% of non-Muslims). This was higher amongst older participants in the sample.

More people in this sample felt attached to Europe (63.7%), Muslims more so (71.4%) than non-Muslims (61.8%).

63.3% of people believe that immigrants should be able to maintain their culture of origin. This was higher amongst non-Muslims (65%), while 55% of Muslims agreed and 30% claimed not to know. 92% of people believe immigrants should mix with the wider population. This was consistently high amongst both Muslims and non-Muslims, and men tended to agree with this more strongly than women.

Caveat

This survey was by no means conducted with a representative sample. It was a small scale survey, and the highly educated were overrepresented in the sample. With only 21 Muslims in the sample, we do run the risk of over-generalising about these communities. However, the figures provided here are not intended to stand alone. Due to correspondence with the findings of the focus groups, the survey data provides some indication of patterns of consumption amongst some groups of people in the UK.

Conclusion

This project demonstrates the recent growth of media organisations and content aimed at minority audiences. These organisations serve a number of functions, and are often aimed specifically at religious, ethnic and/or diasporic communities. This diverse range of new media, however, all seek to address elements lacking in mainstream media. The specialist media producers we interviewed aim to provide a more nuanced approach to diversity, as well as coverage of wider issues within a critical, ethical and professional journalistic framework. These outlets are not sectarian and are keen to differentiate themselves from 'religious' media that might seek to propagate Islam. They should instead be seen as part of a wider process of diversification and personalisation of the media, offering more consumer choice.

These Muslim journalists perceive themselves as a useful resource for mainstream media, offering access to diverse communities. They do appear to be used as a resource by some liberal publications and outlets. However, with many mainstream producers giving little platform to alternative sources, the actual reach of Muslim journalists in specialist media may be limited. Equally, while specialist media offers an outlet for underrepresented voices, caters to specialist interests and is potentially important in identity and community building, it has some way to go before it can play a stronger role in the consumption habits of its target groups.

Muslim producers and consumers unanimously agree that mainstream media coverage of Muslims is negative and reductive. Criticism is particularly levelled at the use of extreme and unrepresentative sources and simplistic, binary and divisive representations. The conservative media, particularly the tabloid press, was singled out for criticism in this regard. Both Muslim producers and consumers were keen to counter these negative portrayals of Islam by offering alternative constructions of and explanations for these particular stories. Some positive reporting was mentioned, largely amongst liberal publications, the BBC and individual commentators. Mainstream producers in particular (the majority working in liberal media) claimed there was a concerted effort to represent different Muslim voices and not to conflate the many and varied 'Muslim' perspectives in their own organisations. Such arguments were reflected in the editorial lines of these organisations, which, they said, was simply to present a balanced, intelligent view about events which may relate to or have resonance with Muslim communities.

Yet despite the general disparagement of the mainstream media and the more sensitive approach to diversity issues found in minority organisations, consumption of specialist media amongst Muslims was low. The findings here do not support the idea that Muslims engage in parallel media societies. News consumption, in this sample, took place predominantly through mainstream media (often BBC), whether this be on television or online. When the mainstream lacked in their reporting on diversity issues, alternative

sources were consulted. Al Jazeera (both English and Arabic) was the main alternative source referenced. Despite awareness of media targeting Muslims, Muslims used this media only occasionally, with the main sources being satellite TV channels. In fact, there was some criticism of this kind of media in terms of quality, impact and potential fragmentary consequences. This occasional and critical use was paralleled in the consumption patterns of the participants in the monocultural/mixed groups.

These findings demonstrate that Muslims and non-Muslims comprise of an active and critical audience who are selective in their use of sources to access a variety of opinions and perspectives. They tend to use the Internet and social media for this purpose, in addition to what may be characterised largely mainstream media consumption. The way Muslims use media certainly parallels that of the wider population.

Diversity Policies

Employees were only aware of their company's diversity policies within large national organisations, for example the BBC. Other than at Al Jazeera English, most observed that mainstream newsrooms were predominantly white, male and middle-class and felt this to be problematic. There was a suggestion of tokenism appearing in some broadcast organisations, particularly on the presenting side of the camera. Smaller organisations lacked the formal policies evident in broadcasting, or at least knowledge of them. The minority media represented here claimed a commitment to diversity in their approaches to staffing and editorial decisions. There appeared to be a high level of informality in the editorial processes of both mainstream and minority media organisations in this sample. Mainstream and minority* producers felt there was a high level of trust and lack of interference from editors, perhaps due to the organisational culture (liberal, progressive). However, whilst having a minority background was seen to be an advantage to minority producers working across the media, many mainstream producers suggested that this should not impact on how stories are covered (maintaining a notion of objective professional journalism). Certainly, minority producers feel pigeon-holed in terms of the topics they are asked to report on and have to work hard to challenge these practices. Their Muslim background was therefore both an opportunity and a burden. While there was a feeling that their heritage had been useful in getting ahead, they were keen to escape the foregrounding of this identity. Both producers and consumers across the board recognised wider constraints within the newsroom – time, economics, and the news agenda - have an impact on the reporting within all organisations. Lack of resources was an issue, particularly for small organisations. Both the type and identity of organisation and/or journalist, size and/or governance arrangements can have an impact on inclusivity how diversity is managed within an organisation.

The patterns identified above were underpinned by the range of responses to the media stories selected as case studies. Minority producers and consumers were critical of Cameron's speech and the way it had been framed in mainstream media. However, the

focus on this story generated some interesting data about attitudes towards multiculturalism in the UK. Minority participants stressed the benefits of diversity and multiculturalism to the UK. Despite the negative discourse generated by mainstream politicians and the media, the participants in this sample championed the inclusivity of Britain and their own British identity. However, participants from an ethnic background were more likely to agree with the crux of Cameron's argument – that multiculturalism has failed, that Muslims self segregate and that assimilation is a necessary solution.

Most people felt that Islam had not been a major focus in the coverage of the Arab Spring and that the events had been covered similarly across organisations. Discussions of this particular story demonstrated both the critical abilities of audiences and the use of alternative sources by both Muslims and non-Muslims. There was also a feeling that reporting on the Arab Spring had contributed to challenging stereotypes of the 'Muslim world'.

Impact

There is no doubt that people believe that media coverage has an impact on attitudes as well as inter-group and community relations. While most minority producers did consider this when writing a story, mainstream respondents noted that they would not avoid reporting on a particular story for this reason, stating that good journalism can contribute to constructive debate. Local and community media professionals felt that they had far greater responsibility to engage with everyone in the community they served. However, national media professionals, though aware of potential impact, felt it was primarily their role to tell the story.

Both Muslim producers and consumers have had largely negative experiences dealing with mainstream media. Perceptions of the mainstream media's bias continue to threaten the credibility of these organisations and may impact negatively on consumption in the future. This trend was evident from the Muslim focus groups, whose participants were more likely to avoid mainstream media.

Interestingly, many participants from non-Muslim backgrounds held views on these topics similar to those of Muslims. This may be a result of the sampling (2 focus groups in London, 1 of international students, with participants predominantly educated to a high level) which resulted in an abundance of openness to diversity in the UK.

Mainstream representation can have a real impact on behaviour, self-esteem, wellbeing and identity. Muslims in this study described the inhibiting feeling of constantly needing to justify themselves and what they do. Mainstream coverage may serve to reinforce divides between communities by feeding suspicion on both sides. Social contact seems to go some way to negate the effects of these divides, as young people socialising in mixed groups tend to be less affected. Mainstream media practices can generate frustration for Muslims, and

Muslim media offers an opportunity to platform alternative voices and concerns. However, Muslim media was not a vehicle for the majority of Muslim consumers involved in this study. These outlets could be a force and a resource for improving relations, but require more visibility and acceptance by both consumers and mainstream media to have a significant impact.

*We are using the term minority here rather than Muslim as more often than not non-Muslim minority producers working across the media were more likely to agree with Muslim producers than those from the majority population in the mainstream media.

References

- Curran, J (2011) *Media and Democracy*, London: Routledge.
- Dahlgren, (1995) *Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*, London: Sage.
- Eldridge, J., Kitzinger, J and Williams, K, (1997) *The Mass Media and Power in Modern Britain, Oxford Modern Britain*, Open University Press.
- Lord Goldsmith QC (2007) *Citizenship: Our Common Bond*, Institute for Citizenship.
- Habermas, J (1992) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Polity Press.
- Featherstone, M., Holohan, S and Poole, E (2010) Discourses of the War on Terror: Constructions of the Islamic Other in the Wake of 7/7. *The International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, vol. 6(2), 169-186.
- Herman, E. S and Chomsky, N (2002) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York: Pantheon.
- Poole, E (2002) *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*, London: I.B Tauris.
- ‘Circulation and the Readership’ on *The Guardian Online*, www.guardian.co.uk/advertising/guardian-circulation-readership-statistics (accessed June 2011).
- ‘Facts and Figures’ on *Al Jazeera English Online*, <http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus> (accessed June 2011).
- ‘How Many Muslims?’ on *British Religion in Numbers* <http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/?p=598> (accessed October 2011).

Muslims in the European Mediascape

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology and Sample

The methodology was constructed between colleagues at Bielefeld University and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to include in-depth qualitative interviews with media producers, focus groups with media consumers and an online survey of media consumer beliefs and habits of media use.

Producer Interviews

Media professionals were approached from the major news outlets from national, regional and local press, television and radio broadcasting, and online content organisations. This included a wider scope for the minority media to include community, educational, public media. Initially, only those organisations that were primarily targeted at Muslims were included which was extended to Asian media to raise numbers. Some group and individual face to face interviews were held but pressures of time for busy professionals meant that often telephone interviews were necessary. Professionals employed at all levels of the media industry were approached. We have defined *editors* as those who held decision-making roles and *producers* as those working in either paid or freelance positions as journalists, columnists, broadcasters and contributors to online content. Industry contacts and directories as well as snowballing techniques were used. This led to most well known media organisations being approached. However, access to producers was extremely difficult due to the time constraints on people working in the industry. Mainly it was producers that had an interest in this subject that agreed to be interviewed. This resulted in a bias in the sample toward the more liberal media.

Thirty-seven people were interviewed overall including both Editors (13, with 7 from Muslim media) and producers across the sector working in a range of media and including high profile organisations. Twenty three of these worked in mainstream media and included producers from ethnic minority groups (9). Fifteen were working in minority media. There were 28 males in the sample compared to 9 females.

Consumer Focus Groups

8 focus groups were conducted in two locations (Finsbury Park, London,4; Staffordshire, 4), made up of:

- 4 Muslim only groups split further into
- 2 mixed-faith / multi-ethnic groups
- 2 monocultural groups

Locations were chosen based on: 1. ease of access, 2. demographic make-up (ethnically /culturally diverse populations with pockets of monoculturalism), and 3. socio-political significance in UK context, i.e. locations where there has been a history of conflictual community relations.

Focus groups were conducted with between 4-14 participants, and each lasted between 1 – 1.5 hours. Along with information about the project and consent form, participants were presented with a short questionnaire at the start of the session asking for demographic data. Researchers recorded focus groups using digital audio equipment and in some cases with video equipment to help identify speakers during transcription.

Participants were shown 'prompts' from newspapers or television broadcasts from both mainstream media and media aimed at a Muslim audience, to illustrate the case study stories (David Cameron speech and the 'Arab Spring').

Researchers used a variety of techniques to recruit focus group participants, including snowball sampling, recruitment posters, and blog / social media posts. For the Muslim only groups, gatekeepers from community / education centres and Mosques were used to recruit participants within the local area. Due to the locations for conducting the groups (on or close to university and college campuses), a high proportion of respondents in the mixed and monocultural groups were professionals with university level education, while there was a higher proportion of younger respondents in the Muslim groups in both Staffordshire and London, which took place near to local community colleges.

While the sample used is too small to be representative or to provide legitimate comparative data between different locations or cultures, it does present a snapshot of views and rich contextual data from which to create a narrative about media use.

Online Survey

The survey was constructed by colleagues at the University of Bielefeld with input from the UK team and the Institute of Strategic Dialogue. The survey was mainly quantitative with some qualitative questions. The aim was to include a range of people according to age, gender, ethnicity and social background; however certain interest groups and Muslim associations were targeted. An online survey was considered the best way to reach a wide range of respondents whilst recognising its exclusivity. It also had a language bias being in English. It was hoped that the focus groups may deal with some of these inadequacies. The timing of the survey (July and August) was unfortunate and resulted in a low response rate. A snowballing technique was used to boost numbers. The survey generated 102 responses with an equal number of males and females. There was a high number of people with qualifications of degree level and above probably due to the networks in which it was circulated.

Appendix 2: Media Producer Demographic Data

Table 1 below details the main demographic characteristics of the media producers interviewed for this project. In total there were 37 respondents (23 working in the mainstream media / 14 working in the Muslim media).

Table 1: Muslim and mainstream producer demographic data

| | Mainstream | Muslim | Total |
|--|------------|--------|-------|
| Main Employing Organisation | | | |
| National (mainstream) Press | 9 | | 9 |
| Local & Community Press (including minority) | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Television / Radio Broadcasting | 6 | | 6 |
| Internet | | 6 | 6 |
| Other Media Organisation | | 1 | 1 |
| Magazine | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Freelance | 2 | | 2 |
| | | | |
| Position | | | |
| Editor | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Producer | 20 | 9 | 29 |
| | | | |
| Age | | | |
| 16-20 | | | 0 |
| 21-30 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| 31-40 | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| 41-50 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 51-60 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 60 + | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| No answer | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| | | | |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 17 | 11 | 28 |
| Female | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| | | | |
| Nationality / Ethnicity* | | | |
| White British | 13 | 3 | 16 |
| White other | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Indian British | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pakistani British | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| British Asian | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Black African | | 1 | 1 |
| Mixed | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Palestinian | | 1 | 1 |
| Iranian | 1 | | 1 |
| No answer | 1 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | |
|--------------|----|---|----|
| | | | |
| Religion* | | | |
| Christian | 1 | | 1 |
| Catholic | 1 | | 1 |
| Muslim | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| Muslim Sunni | | 1 | 1 |
| Methodist | 1 | | 1 |
| None | 13 | 3 | 16 |
| No answer | 4 | 1 | 5 |

*Self-identified categories

Appendix 3: Consumer Focus Group Demographic Data

There were 58 participants in total: 29 Muslim (Staffordshire: 10, London: 19); 13 mixed (Staffordshire: 7, London: 6); 16 monocultural (Staffordshire: 9, London: 7). The tables below detail the demographic characteristics of participants in each group.

Table 1: Muslim Consumer Focus Groups Demographic Data

| | Staffs 1 | Staffs 2 | London 1 | London 2 | Total |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Age | | | | | |
| 16-20 | | 2 | | 11 | 13 |
| 21-30 | 2 | 1 | | 3 | 6 |
| 31-40 | 1 | 2 | | | 3 |
| 41-50 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 4 |
| 51-60 | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 60 + | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Male | 3 | 2 | | 14 | 19 |
| Female | 1 | 4 | 5 | | 10 |
| | | | | | |
| Nationality/Ethnicity | | | | | |
| White British | | | | | 0 |
| White Irish | | | | | 0 |
| White other | | | | | 0 |
| Indian | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Pakistani | | 6 | | | 6 |
| Bangladeshi | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Black Caribbean | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Black African | | | 4 | 10 | 14 |
| Chinese | | | | | 0 |
| Mixed | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Other | 2 | | | 2 | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Place of Birth | | | | | |
| UK | 1 | 5 | | 4 | 10 |
| Other: | | | | | |
| Iraq | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Saudi | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Somali | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Sudan | | | 1 | | 1 |
| India | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Jamaica | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Mogadishu | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Kenya | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Ethiopia | | | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----|----|
| Netherlands | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Algeria | | | | 1 | 1 |
| No answer | | | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| Residence in UK | | | | | |
| Those born outside the UK have been in residence between 1 and 41 years. | | | | | |
| Occupation | | | | | |
| In paid employment | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 5 |
| Unemployed | | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| In education as a pupil | | | | 3 | 3 |
| In vocational training | | | | | 0 |
| Student | 3 | 3 | | 6 | 12 |
| Retired | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Housewife/husband | | | | | 0 |
| Voluntary | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Permanently sick or disabled | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Otherwise not working | | | | | 0 |
| Missing | | | | 1 | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Education | | | | | |
| Never finished school | | | | | 0 |
| GCSE / 'O' Level / CSE | | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 'AS' Level / NVQ | | | | | 0 |
| 'A' Level / BTEC National Diploma | | 3 | | 9 | 12 |
| Bachelors degree (BA, BSc, BEd) | | 2 | | 2 | 4 |
| Masters degree (MA, MSc, MBA, MPhil) | 4 | | | 1 | 5 |
| Professional degree (MD, LLB) | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Higher degree (PhD, DPhil, etc) | | | | | 0 |
| Other | | | | | 0 |
| No answer | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| | | | | | |
| Religion | | | | | |
| Christian | | | | | 0 |
| Jewish | | | | | 0 |
| Muslim | 4 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 29 |
| Hindu | | | | | 0 |
| Sikh | | | | | 0 |
| Buddhist | | | | | 0 |
| No religion | | | | | 0 |
| Other | | | | | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Language | | | | | |
| English | 1 | 6 | | 6 | 13 |
| Welsh | | | | | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| Punjabi | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Guajarati | | | | | 0 |
| Hindi/Urdu | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| Arabic | 1 | | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Kashmiri | | | | | 0 |
| Other: | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Bengali | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Bangla | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Mahusa | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Somali | | | | 4 | 4 |
| | | | | | |
| Media Use | | | | | |
| "Internet" | | 3 | | 1 | 4 |
| "TV" | | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| "Newspapers" | | 4 | | 1 | 5 |
| "Radio" | | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| "Social Media" | | 1 | | | 1 |
| "Magazine" | | | | 1 | 1 |
| "Diasporic media" | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Internet | | | | | |
| Face book | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Twitter | | 1 | | | 1 |
| TV | | | | | |
| BBC | 4 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 19 |
| al-Jazeera | 2 | | 5 | 8 | 15 |
| Euronews | 1 | | | | 1 |
| CNN | 1 | | | 4 | 5 |
| Sky | 2 | 2 | | 7 | 11 |
| Islam channel | | | 2 | | 2 |
| ITV | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Press TV | | | | 3 | 3 |
| CNN | | | | 4 | 4 |
| Channel 4 | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Newspapers | | | | | |
| The Independent | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| The Guardian | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| New York Times | | 1 | | | 1 |
| The Telegraph | | 1 | | | 1 |
| The Sun | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Radio | | | | | |
| Radio 4 | | 1 | | | 1 |

Table 2: Mixed and Monocultural Consumer Focus Group Demographic Data

| | Staffs Mono | Staffs Mixed | London Mono | London Mixed | Total |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Age | | | | | |
| 16-20 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21-30 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| 31-40 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| 41-50 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| 51-60 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| 60 + | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Male | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 14 |
| Female | 6 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| | | | | | |
| Nationality/Ethnicity | | | | | |
| White British | 8 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 19 |
| White Irish | | | | | 0 |
| White other | 1 | | | 3 | 4 |
| Indian | | | | | 0 |
| Pakistani | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Bangladeshi | | | | | 0 |
| Black Caribbean | | | | | 0 |
| Black African | | | | | 0 |
| Chinese | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Mixed | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| Other: | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| Malaysian | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Algerian | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Place of Birth | | | | | |
| UK | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 19 |
| Other | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| | | | | | |
| Residence in UK | | | | | |
| Those born outside the UK have been in residence between 1 and 47 years. Respondents born outside the UK identified as white/other. One respondent born outside the UK identified as white/British. | | | | | |
| Occupation | | | | | |
| In paid employment | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 18 |
| Unemployed | | | | | 0 |
| In education as a pupil | | | | | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| In vocational training | | | | | 0 |
| Student | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| Retired | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Housewife/husband | | | | | 0 |
| Voluntary | | | | | 0 |
| Permanently sick or disabled | | | | | 0 |
| Otherwise not working | | | | | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Education | | | | | |
| Never finished school | | | | | 0 |
| GCSE / 'O' Level / CSE | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 'AS' Level / NVQ | | | | | 0 |
| 'A' Level / BTEC National Diploma | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Bachelors degree (BA, BSc, BEd) | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 11 |
| Masters degree (MA, MSc, MBA, MPhil) | | 5 | 2 | 4 | 11 |
| Professional degree (MD, LLB) | | | | | 0 |
| Higher degree (PhD, DPhil, etc) | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Other | 4 | | | | 4 |
| | | | | | |
| Religion | | | | | |
| Christian | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Jewish | | | | | 0 |
| Muslim | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Hindu | | | | | 0 |
| Sikh | | | | | 0 |
| Buddhist | | | | | 0 |
| No religion | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14 |
| Other | | | | | 0 |
| No answer | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Language | | | | | |
| English | 9 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 22 |
| Welsh | | | | | 0 |
| Punjabi | | | | | 0 |
| Guajarati | | | | | 0 |
| Hindi/Urdu | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Arabic | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Kashmiri | | | | | 0 |
| Other | | 2 | | 3 | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| Media Use | | | | | |
| "Internet" | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 14 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| "TV" | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 12 |
| "Newspapers" | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| "Radio" | 3 | 1 | | 2 | 6 |
| Internet | | | | | |
| BBC Online | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| Guardian Online | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Google | | 1 | | | 1 |
| AOL / MSN | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Twitter | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Wikipedia | | | | 1 | 1 |
| TV | | | | | |
| BBC | | 2 | | | 2 |
| BBC News | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 5 |
| BBC News Channel | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Channel 4 News | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Sky News | 1 | | | | 1 |
| al-Jazeera English | | | | 2 | 2 |
| ITV News | | | 1 | | 1 |
| CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp) | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Newspapers | | | | | |
| Guardian Newspaper | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 6 |
| Times Newspaper | 3 | 1 | | | 4 |
| Daily / Sunday Telegraph Newspaper | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| The Independent Newspaper | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Daily Mail | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| Free London Newspapers | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| The Observer | | | 1 | | 1 |
| The i | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Radio | | | | | |
| BBC Radio 4 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| LBC Radio | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Other | | | | | |
| Friends / Relatives / Colleagues | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Political Party (Conservatives) | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Books | 1 | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| First Choice Media | | | | | |
| Internet | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 11 |
| TV | 4 | 5 | 4 | | 13 |
| Newspapers | 2 | 1 | | | 3 |
| Radio | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |