Research paper

How do a right and left-wing newspaper represent Muslim women through language? (2015-2019)

A discourse analysis study on *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*

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Abstract

How Muslim women have been represented in the media is a common topic for debate. This research paper analyses and compares a right and left-wing newspaper that represents Muslim women through their language. Previous research has shown a common trait of representing Muslim women as victims or associating them with war and crime.

Interestingly, how *The Telegraph* represented women in the chosen newspaper articles appeared to be less positive than *The Guardian*. But with that being said, inclusive elements do not automatically indicate positive representation. Overall, both papers did not appear to represent Muslim women unfairly, resulting in the opposite expectation of the findings of this paper.

Introduction

The research area of the paper is based on the question, "How do a right and left-wing newspaper represent Muslim women through language?" The intention is to closely look at the type of language the media uses when reporting on Muslim women in print. This will be done by analysing articles in *The Guardian* as an example of a left-wing paper and *The Telegraph* as an example of a right.

This study is unique in the sense that it is very specific to a certain group and looked at a specific time frame (2015-2019). It is hoped to gain an insight into how the media's language choices differ or may be similar. The main aim is to analyse how these papers' attitudes towards Muslim women may have changed over time.

The area of research is suitable for academic study as it has never been done with this specific time scope. This study is specific to Muslim women rather than Muslims in general. Qualitative analysis will be used to conduct this research.

Literature review

Five different research papers were studied, all with a similar focus on how print media portrays Muslim women:

In Laura Navarro's (2010) research, she reflects on the role the mass media plays in the social context of Islamophobia. This research gathers the results of many other researchers which proved that there is a dominant hegemonic lens when it comes to how Muslim women are represented. Navarro first focuses on the main representations of Muslim women in the western media to highlight the main characteristics of their image.

Navarro shares what she synthesised from other studies. The first being "Muslim women: Victims of their own culture and a threat to ours." Navarro found that the characteristics historically used to describe Muslim women are not the same used to describe Muslim men. Of these characteristics, ignorance and submission were the main two, especially when associated with Moroccan women, according to a study by Eloy Martin Corrales (2020).

From her findings, Navarro states that the Western mass media tend to construct the image of Muslim women mainly centred around passiveness and victimisation. The same media, according to her, also portray a somewhat positive image of "liberated Muslim women." According to her research, the media representations she studied promote a "reductionist perception of Muslim women as victims of "the male chauvinistic violence" of Islam.

These views which Navarro calls "orientalist representations", also add to existing prejudices such as considering that women are submissive because they wear an Islamic veil. She also states that journalists have a responsibility to not make these perceptions worse and that it is more important to highlight the heavy effect of the issues she states in her research.

In their research, Kerry Moore, Paul Mason and Justin Lewis (2008) base the media coverage they analysed on three pieces of research. The first being a content analysis of 974 newspaper articles about British Muslims in the British press from the year 2000 to 2008. The second was a series of case studies of stories about British Muslims in the British press. Their findings suggested that the coverage of British Muslims has increased significantly since 2000, peaking in 2006 and remained at high levels in 2007 and 2008. They also found that the rise was partially explained by the increase in coverage directed at terrorism and stories related to terrorism.

They found that 36% of stories about British Muslims overall were about terrorism. This was particularly clear after the terrorist attacks in the U.S and the U.K in 2001 and 2005. In recent years according to this study, there has been a growing importance of stories that focus on religious and cultural differences between Islam and British culture. They also found that the coverage of attacks or problems has

gone down and that in most of the coverage of British Muslims, there is a focus on Muslims as a threat.

The researchers also noticed that the language used when speaking about British Muslims demonstrated the negative contexts in which they appeared. It was found that "four of the five most common discourses used about Muslims in the British press associate Islam/Muslims with threats, problems or in position to dominate British values." The most common nouns used according to this study when speaking about this particular group were: "terrorist," "extremist," "Islamist," "suicide bomber," and "militant." The adjectives most used were "radical," "fanatical," "fundamentalist," "extremist," and "militant."

Bandar Al-Hejin's (2015) research was formed as a way to investigate how Muslim women are represented in two online resources: the BBC and Arab News. Two questions were asked to find out the results:

1) What are the semantic macrostructures that tend to be associated with Muslim women?
2) What are the discursive strategies employed in the representation of the hijab and do these reflect on Muslim women?

The results demonstrated that news coverage of Muslim women was geographically disproportionate as 53% of the BBC's reporting was restricted to only seven out of forty-eight Muslim majority countries. They also found certain words were usually associated with Muslim women: "War" and "Crime". There was also the acknowledgement that Muslim women who wear the hijab by choice were associated with the following attributes:

- Suffering from false consciousness
- Refusing to integrate into western societies
- Ignoring the communicational needs of others
- "Flouting" security procedures designed to prevent crime and terrorism
- Endorsing fundamentalist values
- Expressing aggression and militancy
- Stubbornly going beyond the requirements of their religion
- Performing a disservice to the cause of women's rights

Negativity was rarely associated with "rationale", "progressive" and "moderate" Muslim women who oppose the hijab. The research concluded by pointing out that many BBC articles displayed a pattern of mentioning the hijab in contexts that did not seem relevant.

In Saifuddin Ahmed's (2017) research, he used a meta-analysis of 345 published studies to examine the media's role in the construction of Muslim and Islamic identity. His findings suggested that a large majority of studies covered Western countries, whilst Muslim media have been neglected. There was also an identification of the lack of comparative research and the lack of visuals. The

research found that most studies investigated the themes of "migration", "terrorism", and "war."

The meta-study also revealed that Muslims tend to be negatively framed, while Islam is dominantly portrayed as a violent religion. Out of the 39 countries under investigation, nineteen countries had fewer studies. The U.S was the most researched country in the world with ninety-nine studies. The U.K, with 70 studies was the next most researched followed by Australia. The research it was found, was mainly focussed on Europe. Only 9.56% of the studies included Muslim audiences or pro-Muslim institutions such as *Al Jazeera*, *Al Hayat* and others.

Most of the three studies focussed on Arab news networks' coverage of Middle East wars or compared the coverage of Western and Arab networks. A large proportion of studies investigated how Muslims and Islam are portrayed. They found that there was a change in patterns of representations of Muslims and Islam in the mainstream media since the attacks of the 11th September 2001. After this event, media portrayals of Muslim and Islam worldwide were mostly negative, with Muslims and Islam being framed within the context of religious extremism and a clash of civilisation and cultures.

There was also a change of themes, volume and stereotypical references to Islam and American Muslims within the U.S. *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* were "unfavourable" in their representations, with the common themes being that Muslims are "terrorists", "extremists", "fundamentalists" and "radicals". Studies outside of the U.S also showed that the 9/11 incident influenced a rise in indirect discrimination against Muslims. They found that the identities of Muslim women were excluded from the overall construction of women in most nations. In the conclusion, Ahmed states that the 9/11 incident acted as a catalyst and had a massive effect on the Western world's perception of Muslims and Islam.

A critical discourse analysis study was carried out by Sajad Kabgani (2012) as an attempt to analyse *The Guardian.* He used Van Leewen's (1996) critical discourse analysis framework to carry out his research. The focus of the study was the representation of Muslim women in non-Islamic media. Kabgani found that there were indications that Muslim women are depicted as "active actors" of the Muslim community. They represented themselves as determined in their beliefs and as independent individuals who were in search of the "resurrection" of women's identity.

Kabgani also found that *The Guardians* total portrayal of Muslim women was a positive one. According to the author, "the prevalence of the lack of critical thinking" among them was the clearest drawback of all Muslim women. The article aimed to uncover the "hidden ideologies involved" in the webs of discursive practices.

Muslim women were chosen as the target of the analysis as they are considered to play a pivotal role in constructing an Islamic society. Another reason was what

Kabgani called the "new status" of Islamic countries after September 11th, 2001. This created major changes in the international relationships specifically between Islamic countries and Western ones.

Aras Abdalkarim Amin (2017) writes about the significance of discourse analysis in his research article, *'An Overview study of the significance of discourse analysis language.'* He mentions,

> "Discourse analysis is one of the most important means by which language is analysed objectively and comprehensively."
> He also states that discourse analysis, "utilises various language tools to achieve the required aims. It uses all the linguistic levels of language when analysing a given piece of language. Consequently, it is considered an efficient means used in the analysis of language in an objective way that leaves no doubts about what such a piece of language intends to convey."

More on this research method will be explored in the next chapter.

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and elaborate on the research method as intended to use for this paper. Each paper will be analysed for elements from Van Leeuwen's (1996) critical discourse analysis framework. This will be to identify whether or not their language has created changes in attitude towards Muslim women throughout 2015-2019.

Van Leeuwen (1996) explains some of these elements selected (1996, pp 32-69) as follows:

Exclusion - Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes about the readers for whom they are intended. Exclusion includes 63 two other sub-categories termed as:

Backgrounding: this term refers to a less radical exclusion; the excluded social actors may not be mentioned concerning a given activity.

Some examples of **inclusion**:

Genericisation and Specification: The choice between generic and specific reference is another important factor in the representation of social actors; they can be represented as classes or as specific, identifiable individuals. Genericisation may be recognised by a plural without a definite article.

Indetermination and Determination: Indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as specified and anonymous individuals or groups; determination occurs when their identity is, one way or another, specified.

Individualisation: When social actors are referred to as individuals

Functionalisation and **Identification**: Functionalisation occurs when someone is referred to in terms of something they do. Identification is when a social actor is specifically identified.

The question researched asked, *"How do a right- and left-wing U.K newspaper represent Muslim women through language?"* The answer to this question would hypothetically result in a deeper understanding of the attitude each paper has towards Muslim women.

The choice of language in the case of such newspapers must be acknowledged as something of great importance. With approximately 14.5 million individuals reading, *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* has a readership of 16.7 million, their combined influence is immense, according to statists.com.

The two audiences of these U.K newspapers combined is up to 31.2 million people, and their attitude towards a subject heavily relies on what they read. The choice of the newspapers' language is accountable for the images and impressions it leaves its audiences with. This qualitative method was selected as being the most appropriate for the research as it aligns well with the question. In wanting to assess and identify an attitude within a text, the most logical route would be to analyse the language of the text.

Throughout this paper, it was examined how language functions in each paper and how it creates meaning with Muslim women. By analysing this type of discourse, an understanding was gained of both papers and how they inform their audiences. Close attention was paid to how the two papers tried to create doubt, build trust, etc.

As a British Muslim woman living in the U.K, assessing and researching such a question was an insightful experience. Furthermore, as an undergraduate journalism student, looking at how two U.K newspapers with different political views on the same topic articulated themselves was very interesting.

Findings

The representation of Muslim women in *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* (2015-2019).

Using Van Leeuwen's (1996) framework, inclusive and exclusive elements were addressed in both newspapers in chronological order. Contrary to the expected findings, the level of inclusion present in all articles from both papers heavily outweighed the exclusive. This was an interesting observation as it showed how inclusive elements do not necessarily mean positive representation or attitude.

 2015

The Guardian:
"As a Muslim woman, I was never fearful in Britain. But today I'm afraid." – Masuma Rahim
(01/12/2015)
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/01/muslim-woman-britain-paris-attacks

The Telegraph:
"Muslim women in 2015: 'Islamic State bitches "or Great British bakers"

(31/12/2015)
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/muslim-women-in-2015-islamic-state-bitches-or-great-british-bake/

The first paper analysed was an opinion piece by a guest writer in *The Guardian* with the headline,

> "As a Muslim woman, I was never fearful in Britain. But today I am afraid."

I found more than one inclusive element throughout this piece, a positive effect in this case as it represented the Muslim woman well. Of them, a specification was recognised as the author was represented as a specific, identifiable individual throughout, giving the social actor a sense of importance. In identifying the Muslim woman from the very start of the article, it showed the opportunity given to her in allowing her to voice to be heard.

Personalisation was another inclusive element seen in this piece, adding to the effect of how Miss Rahim was represented. The paper focussed on Miss Rahim as an

individual, seen in how she narrated most of the piece. This was shown in the regular use of the personal pronoun "I":

> "I have despaired at much of what I have seen and heard over the past 15 years."
> "I suppose that's progress,"
> "I have felt increasingly ill at ease," etc.

This once again reiterates the social actor's importance and demonstrates the opportunity given to her to voice her opinions. Furthermore, no exclusive elements about the focussed social actor were found, a positive effect on this particular piece.

With that being said, it could be argued that the other social actors mentioned were somewhat backgrounded, not fully highlighting the importance of what they were involved in. This can be seen from the brief mention of their names, "Lee Rigby," "Charlie Hebdo," and the group, "Boko Haram" arguably minimising their importance. Perhaps this was intended to ensure that the main social actor remained Miss Rahim.

In a lifestyle feature by a regular *Telegraph* freelance contributor piece written in the same year, Shelina Janmohamed expressed her views on the state of conditions and environment for Muslim women. Janmohamed often uses the person pronoun "I" throughout her piece, having the same effect mentioned above when it comes to the social actor voicing their opinion:

> "I had burgeoning hope that this was the year Muslim women would finally arrive on the world stage,"

The language demonstrates an element of personalisation, allowing readers to relate more to the writer. However, there is a level of genericisation present – generically referencing Muslim women:

> "Eight Muslim women were elected in Parliament,"
> "Jeep, Apple and Android all featured Muslim women," etc, the level of specification and individualisation cannot be ignored, making the generic referencing easy to overlook.

The presence of specification could be said to be highlighting the paper's acknowledgment of each individual Muslim woman's importance as it represents them as individuals rather than generalising:

> "Ameenah Gurib-Fahim was sworn in as the first woman President of Mauritius,"
> "The Vice President of Tanzania is also now a Muslim woman, Samia Suluhu,"
> "British Blogger Hana Tajina," and "Larcycia Hawkins.
> A political science professor at Wheaton College."

In specifically referring to and identifying these Muslim women, *The Telegraph* is seen as recognising the positive impact Muslim women have had on society. Moreover, in mentioning their roles in society, this also determined the presence of functionalisation, another element of inclusion also having a positive effect on how the paper represents Muslim women.

Janmohammed when referring to the perpetrators, also specifically identifies them:

> "We read about 24-year-old Sana Ahmed Khan; 'Britian's first female suicide bomber.'"

She does not background or suppress them, demonstrating a balanced approach to the matter being addressed in the article. She expands on the dangers of radicalisation and its effects on society, as well as the effects of viewing all Muslim women through one lens, reiterating *The Telegraph's* stance when it comes to this particular matter at hand:

> "Being a Muslim woman in 2015 is full of conflict. You can face fierce hatred, especially if you wear a hijab - but you're still seen as oppressed by your gender."

Both pieces by the two papers represented Muslim women as having a voice through each author. This was seen through the inclusive elements mentioned, as well as their stance in giving a Muslim woman the opportunity to speak.

2016

The Guardian:
"Cameron 'stigmatising Muslim women' with English language policy"

(18/01/2016)
https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/18/david-cameron-stigmatising-muslim-women-learn-english-language-policy

The Telegraph:
"David Cameron: More Muslim women should 'learn English' to help tackle extremism"

(17/01/2016)
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/12104556/David-Cameron-More-Muslim-women-should-learn-English-to-help-tackle-extremism.html

The 2016 news report by *The Guardian*, was written with an informative tone making it less personal to the reader. The main social actor throughout the piece is represented as being David Cameron although the article is centred around a matter concerning himself and Muslim women. These two social actors and the way in which they are represented were compared using Van Leeuwen's (1996) framework.

For example, Cameron is frequently referred to using his surname,

> "Cameron stressed that he was not blaming those who could not speak English,"

This demonstrates individualisation when it comes to this particular social actor. Individualisation highlights a social actor in a text by recognising them as an individual. There is also a level of specification seen from the very start of the news report having a similar effect as the reader is made aware of who the main social actor being spoken about is,

> "David Cameron has been accused of stigmatising Muslim women."

In the context of Muslim women, genericisation can be seen as taking place, arguably having the opposite effect of highlighting and spotlighting them. For example,

> "But he highlighted 38,000 women," and another example, "after two and a half years, they should be improving their English."

In the first example, rather than highlighting individual experiences of the Muslim women being spoken about, they are referred to as a group under the noun phrase, "Muslim women". In the second example, Muslim women are once again genericised through the use of the pronoun "they." Both are examples of the paper highlighting David Cameron as the social actor.

In this particular news report, another inclusive element from Van Leeuwen's framework known as functionalisation was also recognised. This element occurs when a social actor is referred to in terms of something they do; in this context, Muslim women being a part of a particular religion. In the case of David Cameron, functionalisation also takes place as seen in this quotation,

> "Announcing the plans on Monday, the prime minister suggested the language classes for Muslim women could help stop radicalisation."

One could argue that the article balances out how it represents both social actors further on. This can be seen through opposing views on the same matter being presented to the reader. For example,

"Cameron stressed that he was not blaming those who could not speak English because "some of these people have come from quite patriarchal societies and perhaps menfolk haven't wanted them to speak English.""

This was in comparison to the view of Andy Burnham,

"Andy Burnham, the shadow Home Secretary, said Cameron risked "doing more harm than good.""

This may be interpreted as the paper's way of not being biased, acknowledging both sides of the argument. You could say in leaving the reader to make up their own mind on the matter, the paper does not control the narrative. But with that being said, the lack of individual examples of Muslim women going through this experience creates the effect of "us" and "them" representing them as an "other" possibly implying that it is never legitimate to write about a generic group without specifying individuals.

Similar to the 2016 news report by *The Guardian*, the news report on the same topic heavily focussed on David Cameron as the social actor. Individualisation was recognised as it was in the piece by *The Guardian*,

"Mr Cameron has privately suggested that one of the main reasons young men are vulnerable to radicalisation is the "traditional submissiveness of Muslim women.""

Another example of individualisation once again highlighting the social actors importance in the text:

"It comes after Mr Cameron asked Louisa Casey, the Director General of the Governments Troubled Families unit."

Functionalisation can also be seen in this example, representing Casey and Cameron as identifiable individuals and acknowledging their occupations thus recognising their impact on society,

"Ms Casey is expected to set out the framework for a new 'cohesive communities programme'."

As mentioned above, when referring to the news piece on the same matter by *The Guardian*, there was a lack of mentioning Muslim women as identifiable individuals. This when compared to the recognition of the other social actors present, does not represent Muslim women in the same light as them.

2017

The Guardian:
"Woman photographed in hijab on Westminster Bridge responds to online abuse"

(24/03/2017)
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/24/woman-hijab-westminster-bridge-attack-victim-photo-misappropriated

The Telegraph:
"Muslim woman on bridge during Westminster attack speaks out after becoming target of Islamophobes"

(24/03/2017)
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/24/muslim-woman-bridge-westminster-attack-speaks-becoming-target/

In this piece, the article title instantly displayed genericisation,

> "Woman photographed in hijab on Westminster Bridge responds to online abuse."

The noun "woman" offers no specified identity, referring to the social actor generically. This is seen further on as the news report continues,

> "Muslim woman shocked,"
> "The picture shows the woman wearing a hijab and looking at her phone,"
> "*Tell Mama* said the woman was distraught,"
> "The woman has requested that the media stop circulating the image," etc.

Interestingly enough, one could say this generic reference is a positive attribute of the paper which will be expanded on further down. Other social actors on the other hand are individualised,

> "A photo of the Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood performing CPR."

In acknowledging and mentioning the social actor's position, this demonstrates the element of functionalisation, inclusivity being a positive attribute in this social actors case. In the instance of another social actor, personalisation was also seen,

> "She sent her gratitude to Jamie Lorriman,"
> "Earlier, Lorriman, who had been seen taking photographs," etc.

The frequent use of the personal pronoun "she" when referring to the Muslim woman stands out against the individual Jamie Lorriman being identified. It

demonstrated the paper's intention to keep her identity anonymous. Even though her identity is not revealed, how often the news report mentions her does not indicate any exclusion in her case. Rather, it appears that due to the sensitive nature of the piece, deducted from the semantic field of 'distress': "distressed," "shocked," "dismayed," "horrific," "distressful," "fear," and "concern," the woman's identity was not disclosed for her own benefit, an indication of a positive attitude shown by the article.

The Muslim woman's identity was not revealed but nor was she backgrounded. Her voice can be said to be heard throughout the majority of the news report,

> "I'm shocked and totally dismayed at how a picture of me is being circulated on social media."

Even though not many inclusive elements are present in this article, the lack of exclusivity as well as the way in which the Muslim woman is represented cannot be said to be negative.

Similar to the stance on the same matter taken by *The Guardian*, this *Telegraph* news report's level of inclusivity can be recognised through the heavy usage of quotations by the social actor – once again arguably giving the Muslim woman a voice,

> "To those individuals who have interpreted and commented on what my thoughts were in that horrific and distressful moment,"

> "I then decided to call my family to say that I was fine," and "My thoughts at that moment were one of sadness, fear and concern."

I recognised impersonalisation in this piece – shown in how the social actor's identity was not disclosed,

> "A photograph of a woman in a hijab walking along Westminster Bridge,"
> "In defence of the woman,"
> "The look on the woman's face,"
> "I feel so sorry for the woman in the picture," etc.

The reasons for keeping her identity hidden may be for the same reasons above, working in the social actor's favour. This could be seen as a suggestion of how discourse analysis is a limited tool of analysis as it does not often take context into account.

Like in the news piece by *The Guardian,* in the case of other social actors, individualisation and specification were identified,

> "Jamie Lorriman, who took the photo, spoke out."

The Telegraph adopted a very similar stance as *The Guardian* on this matter, demonstrating inclusive elements indicating a positive and an arguably sympathetic stance towards the Muslim woman.

2018

The Guardian:
"Boris Johnson or the burqa? It's a false choice-both dehumanise Muslim women"

(14/08/2018)
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/14/boris-johnson-burqa-dehumanise-muslim-women

The Telegraph:
"Boris Johnson's burka comments left Muslim women feeling 'threatened' says minister"

(09/08/2018)
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/08/09/boris-johnsons-comments-burkas-left-muslim-women-across-country/

In this opinion piece by a *Guardian* columnist, the main social actor appeared to be Boris Johnson, adopting a very similar stance to the 2016 articles. This is seen not only in the number of inclusive elements recognised when mentioning him, but also in how much he is spoken about, For example,

> "Boris Johnson's anti-Muslim 'jokes' were not a dog whistle."

In comparison to the number of times Muslim women are mentioned as well as inclusive elements in relation to them, Boris Johnson heavily outweighs. Of these inclusive elements; specification in how he is referred to specifically,

> "No one is nagging Johnson,"
> "Johnson is under "disciplinary investigation",
> "Johnson aims to normalise rudeness," etc.

I also recognised individualisation and identification in relation to this social actor, seen in how he is referred to an identifiable individual. This highlighted his importance and his presence throughout the read. Any inclusive elements were searched for when it came to Muslim women, and individualisation and identification were recognised in their case too. For example,

> "Shazia Mirza shows how people of every heritage…"

"A female comedian of Pakistani heritage," etc.

The entire piece expresses the views of author Polly Toynbee who identifies as a "Vice President of Humanists U.K," showing functionalisation and importance in her case. The author of the article can be said to sometimes background Muslim women though, shown in the less frequent mention of them throughout in comparison to other social actors.

I recognised this in the following examples where the author presumably criticises rather than endorses Muslims and their chosen practices,

> "The risk is that liberals are silenced on critising religion, Islam in particular."
> "Humanists never seek to ban anyone from practicing any archaic superstition."
> "Comparing the niqab to a KKK hood."
> "Comparing the niqab to a dustbin liner and a letter box," and "What could be more dehumanising than the niqab and the burqa?"

Backgrounding occurs when the social actor(s), (in this case Muslim women), are not mentioned in relation to a given activity. In the first example, this occurs in the way that Muslim women are not mentioned anywhere when speaking about their religion. In the second example, this happens once again; in referring to Islam as an "archaic superstition," which is an arguably biased ad disrespectful remark

In not mentioning Muslim women once again, this backgrounds them, representing them in a negative light rather than positive. In expressing her opinion so freely and frequently, the spotlight is taken up with her opinions, backgrounding any other social actor throughout the entire piece.

To compare the language used in *The Telegraph* in the same year, there was not much exclusivity taking place. This is interesting due to *The Telegraph* having more negatively impacting exclusive elements when it comes to speaking about Muslim women so far. Boris Johnson is once again a social actor in this news piece. Like in the 2018 news piece mentioned above by *The Guardian,* there were some inclusive elements when it came to him being spoken about.

I saw individualisation instantly from the fact his name was mentioned,

> "Boris Johsnon's comments about burkas left Muslim women feeling "threatened."

Further individualisation as well as functionalisation was recognised when the author referred to other social actors such as,

> "Tracy Crouch, the Civil Society Minister,"
> "Meanwhile, Ruth Davidson, the leader of The Scottish Conservatives."

I felt the need to compare this to the levels of inclusivity when speaking about Muslim women. In their case, the main form of inclusivity took the form of genericisation,

> "He argued that while Muslim women should be free to wear the niqab and burkas,"
> "Ms Crouch said Muslim women," etc.

Once again and similar to both 2016 pieces spoken about earlier, it could be argued that in this news report, Muslim women are seen as being backgrounded arguably minimising their importance. This can be seen in how they are rarely mentioned even though the piece is posed as being about an issue concerning them. This was recognized in the way other social actors were mentioned and specified.

2019

The Guardian:
"Most UK news coverage of Muslims is negative, major study finds"

(09/07/2019)
https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jul/09/most-uk-news-coverage-of-muslims-is-negative-major-study-finds

The Telegraph:
"Everyone loses from the desperate attempt to paint Britain as an Islamophobic country"

(21/06/2019)
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/06/21/everyone-loses-desperate-attempt-paint-britain-islamophobic/

In a 2019 news article about UK news coverage of Muslims, there were some inclusive elements in the mentioning of "Miqdaad Versi," the first being identification. The quotation,

> "Miqdad Versi of the Muslim Council of Britain," also demonstrates functionalisation, which is the occurrence of a social actor being referred to in terms of what they do.

There was specification in the specific identification of the individual, magnifying her presence in this piece. Inclusive elements do not always indicate positive

representation as mentioned earlier, but so far it has had a positive impact on the groups representation. Genericisation could be argued to be occurring throughout the news report as well. This can be seen in for example,

> "The New Statesman, Observer and Guardian were the least likely to portray Muslims in a negative light,"

> "British television stations, which are regulated for balance by the broadcasting code, were substantially less likely than newspapers to portray Muslims in a negative light."

With that being said, the stance of the entire news report appears to be in defence of Muslims in general. This was recognised through the voice of Miqdaad Versi of the Muslim Council of Britain, who may be viewed as a representative and voice for Muslims. Throughout the read, Versi defends Muslims against the way in which they are portrayed in the media,

> "You need to ensure that when you write a negative story it is fair and reflective and doesn't generalise all Muslims."

 The very subject and regular use of his opinions heavily weighing in favour of Muslims results in Muslim women also being spoken about positively,

> "The way that the media reports on Islam and Muslims plays a role in Islamophobia."

In mentioning the importance of representing Muslims correctly and carefully, this hints towards the attitude of the newspaper. In acknowledging the mistakes made by the media, there is a level of responsibility being taken. On the other hand though, as it is a statement made by a Muslim in the first place, perhaps this takes the credit away from the paper, minimising the impact of the statement. Even though the inclusive elements are mainly present in the case of Versi, no negatively impacting exclusive elements are recognised in the case of Muslims/Muslim women.

In the same year, *The Telegraph* released an opinion piece by a regular *Telegraph* freelance contributor about Islamophobia in Britain. Some of the social actors in this piece were recognised as being Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt, but no Muslim individuals being mentioned,

> "Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt must be careful not to walk into a trap."

This inclusivity arguably made it appear as though the social actors mentioned are threatened with being outsmarted somehow . In specifically speaking about the concept of "victim hood" when it comes to Islam and Muslims, the writer mentioned,

> "Underneath the modern grievances of Islamophobia, transphobia, ageism and much else, resides an ideology and a victim-narrative of groups pitted against one another."

It was interesting to see that throughout the piece, Muslims/Muslim women could be argued to be backgrounded, seen in how they are not mentioned as much as the other social actors nor in relation to their religion. For example,

> "Islam is now the second largest religion in Britain."

Genericisation was also recognised in relation to Muslims,

> "With nearly four million Muslims living across the country," in how Muslims are referred to generically.

Differentiation can also be seen in those examples, a negatively impacting inclusive element on the group. The opinion piece contained bold statements such as:

> "Such free discussion must not in any way be prevented because it has been labelled "Islamophobia," and "It is not "Islamophobic," but in the interest of Muslim women, to question the Koran's prescriptions."

As it is an opinion piece, such openly expressed statements were expected. That is not to say that the type of statements should be overlooked. The attitude of this piece is neither for or against Muslim/Muslim women, but it holds extremism accountable for the rise of anti-Muslim sentiment. It could be argued that the entire piece provides a middle ground for how different religions/people should co-exist,

> "The desperate search for victim hood is not only wrong on it own terms, but prevents all of us from rejoicing in the liberties that surround us."

But perhaps providing individual opinions of Muslims/ Muslim women on the same matter could have provided more of a balanced account throughout.

Conclusion

One has to be circumspect with drawing conclusions on both papers on the basis of only a few articles. Considering some were news articles, some opinion pieces and features, drawing a generalisation of all would be incorrect. The evidence of this paper does not strictly allow for generalisations about both papers' overall stances or attitudes which is always a limit with discourse analysis.

Even though similar studies have been carried out, such as that of Sajad Kabgani who too found similar results to those of this paper, no other research has been carried out on the sources of data chosen for this paper. It was found that the stance on the way in which Muslim women are represented through language was quite similar in both newspapers.

The findings of Kabgani's study were against the original hypothesis of whether or not Muslim women are portrayed in a special way. While he expected to find a negative depiction of Muslim women in non-Islamic media, the findings did not confirm it. Overall, it was not concluded that all Western media in the topic Kabgani was analysing that a "substantial" comparison study is necessary.

Overall, what was found in this study was against the hypothesis mentioned at the start of this research paper. At first, I believed that for anything to be foregrounded, specified or contain inclusive elements, this had to mean this was something positive, whilst backgrounding and any other exclusive elements meant bad representation. But through analysing each newspaper, I later discovered that these elements are heavily dependent on the context.

With the exception of the opinion pieces such as the one by Polly Toynbee, there was not found to be a purposeful agenda in wanting to give Muslim women a negative representation. The pieces dating from 2015 up until 2019 appeared to have very similar attributes in the way they did not completely ignore one social actor if another was involved (such as discussing the Prime-Minister alongside Muslim women). There did not appear to be any drastic changes made in the language used by both papers over the time period either.

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