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EUROPEAN  
**ISLAMOPHOBIA**  
REPORT  

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2015

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ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

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ISBN : 978-605-4023-68-4

Layout : Erkan Söğüt

Printed in Turkey, İstanbul by Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2016

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# INTRODUCTION

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

In June 2014, the website for reporting hate crimes to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) went public. In 2014, only five states officially reported on hate crimes against Muslims, whereas civil society reported in 21 countries. Still, for the majority of the 57 member countries of the OSCE, there is no official information available. Furthermore, if one were to assess the quality of these state reports, it becomes apparent that the collected data does not always rely on a comprehensive systematic collection.

Since Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism has become a growing threat in European societies, we – the editors – felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite: from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in specific - this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia.

## **Contribution of this report**

The national reports in the EIR look at significant incidents and developments in each country during the period under review. The authors look at the employment sector: has there been any discrimination in the job market based on the (assumed) Muslimness of a person? They look at education: has Islamophobic content become part of any curricula, textbooks, or any other education material? The political field in a narrow sense is also a central aspect of the EIR: has Islamophobia played any role in politics, from election campaigns to political programmes to personal statements, etc., be it on a regional or national level? Authors also take a close look at a central force where Islamophobia has spread: the media. Which media events have focused on Islam/Muslims in an Islamophobic way? The justice system is also featured in the national reports: are there any laws and regulations that are based on Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle? Cyberspace as a central space for spreading hate crime is also examined: which web pages and initiatives have spread Islamophobic stereotypes? In addition, central figures in the Islamophobia network are discussed: which institutions and persons have, among others, fostered Islamophobic campaigns, stirred up debates or lobbied for laws?

Since the EIR is not content with pointing a finger at the problem, the reports also look at observed civil society and political assessment and initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia in the aforementioned fields. This will empower politicians and NGO activists, who want to tackle the issue. Since the EIR is not a purely scholarly work, at the end of every report, authors offer policy recommendations for politics and NGOs. An executive summary at the beginning and a chronology at the end of every report give the reader an overview on the state and the development of Islamophobia in the respective countries.

Since the single reports share broadly the same structure, the EIR offers the possibility to compare Islamophobia in these countries. Despite the fact that the data in specific fields is not available in an identical way for all countries, the report still facilitates an impulse for identifying research gaps.

Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, or Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in specific.

## **What is Islamophobia?**

Although the term 'Islamophobia' has become widely recognised in the Anglo-Saxon world and has become established in academia as can be seen by the numerous conferences, journals, and research projects dedicated to it, in many European countries, there is still a great amount of opposition to the term. One can understand the opposition expressed by the public not merely as an academic debate, but, in fact, as a sign of the hegemonic power of Islamophobic prejudices. Acknowledging this situation,

at the heart of this project lies the following working definition of Islamophobia:

“When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. As Anti-Semitism studies have shown, the etymological components of a word do not necessarily point to its complete meaning, nor to how it is used. Such is also the case with Islamophobia studies. Islamophobia has become a well-known term used in academia as much as in the public sphere. Criticism of Muslims or of the Islamic religion is not necessarily Islamophobic. Islamophobia is about a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed ‘we’. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static ‘Muslim’ identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts as Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam”.

### Central findings

That Islamophobia works without Muslims and tells us more about the anti-Muslim racists than it tells us about Islam and Muslims, can best be seen in the eastern region of Europe. In countries like Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, or Latvia, where only a small number of Muslims live, Islamophobia functions as a successful means to mobilise people. People not only greatly overestimate the country's Muslim population but, although Muslims have not committed any violent acts in most countries in the name of Islam, they are still often deemed violent and are considered to be terrorists.

It could be observed that both attacks in Paris, which happened in 2015, became a discursive event that shaped the debates on Islam and Muslims throughout Europe. Above that, the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ was a central topic, which many actors linked to the issue of Muslims invading Europe. For example, the leader of the Hungarian Fidesz’ parliamentary club Antal Rogán warned of a future ‘United European Caliphate’,<sup>1</sup> while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to return to their Christian spirituality and make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned ‘impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture’.<sup>2</sup> This strong Islamophobic rhetoric is not restricted to the extreme right. In fact, the *refugee-migration-Islam-terrorism nexus* became the standard argument justifying a number of domestic and international measures. The social democrat Czech President Miloš Zeman claimed the influx of refugees into Europe was masterminded by Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood as “an organised invasion” to “gradually control Europe”.<sup>3</sup>

1. Károly Villányi, “Azt akarjuk, hogy unokáink egy európai kalifátusban éljenek?”, *Magyar Idők*, 14.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, <http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/azt-akarjuk-hogy-az-unokaink-egy-europai-kalifatusban-eljenek-5035/>.

2. “L. Simon: Szaporodjunk!”, *Népszabadság Online*, 05.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, [http://nol.hu/video/lSimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm\\_source=mandiner&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=mandiner\\_201601](http://nol.hu/video/lSimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201601).

3. Agence France-Presse, “Integrating Muslims into Europe is ‘impossible’, says Czech president”, 18 January, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/integrating-muslims-into-europe-is-impossible-says-czech-president> (accessed 8 March, 2016)

## Policy Recommendations

Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia. Here we have summarised some of the important policy recommendations from the national reports.

- Islamophobia should be acknowledged as a crime and should be included in all national statistics throughout Europe.
- Hate crime legislations should be adopted in all European countries that acknowledge one's religious identity as being a basis upon which one may be targeted.
- In order to collect data about Islamophobic incidents, victims registers must be introduced in all European states.
- In order to help the victims of Islamophobic attacks, counseling services for victims must be established in all European states.
- Journalists, lawyers, Police (security officials) and legal authorities in all European countries should be educated by qualified personnel in regards to Islamophobia.
- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with information to combat Islamophobia, especially in the direction of the creation of a consciousness of the illegality of hate crimes.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in the respective countries which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.
- Civil society actors must also push for legislative change in the context of school enrolment policies so that all members of the respective societies are treated fairly when accessing education.
- Governments must draft a policy that ensures that the rights of religious minorities to manifest their faith are respected in education and the workplace; this must not be left to the preferences of individual boards of management or principals.
- Discrimination on the job market towards Muslims and especially Muslims who wear veils is a widespread phenomenon. This should be recognised and seriously addressed by better legal regulations and the creation of a relevant consciousness.
- Civil society actors must engage with media actors/outlets in terms of the publication and broadcasting of standards in order to reduce/minimise the use of racialising discourses vis-à-vis Muslims and other minority communities.
- The civil rights violations experienced by women wearing headscarves should be addressed by lawmakers and politicians.
- An independent media watchdog should be established in order to monitor media reports in real time in all respective countries.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN  
**UNITED  
KINGDOM**  
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

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ARZU MERALI



## THE AUTHOR

**Arzu Merali** is a writer and researcher based in London, UK. She is one of the founders of Islamic Human Rights Commission (an NGO with consultative status with the United Nations, set up in 1997) and heads its research section. She has authored various academic and journalistic articles, reports and books on human rights and social justice issues, including and especially Islamophobia. Her latest publications include *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK* (2015) with Saied R. Ameli and 'La cooptación del feminismo islámico en el euro-islam y La pérdida de La Liberación' in *Tabula Rasa*. No.21: 91-109, Julio-Diciembre. She has presented her work at various fora including the United Nations. Merali is a permanent faculty member of the Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles and Liberation Theologies summer school. She focuses on Islamic Feminism, human rights and grammars of human dignity. Arzu Merali, MA Cantab. and Kent, arzu@ihrc.org

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**To cite this report:** Arzu Merali (2016): *Islamophobia in United Kingdom: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UK faced a difficult year, marked by what many perceived as a downward turn in race relations, seeing in particular, a demonstrable rise in Islamophobia. The general election in May saw the Conservative Party returned with a majority (it had previously been in government in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats). The party had *inter alia* campaigned on a platform of securitisation and anti-immigration.

Events during the year that had impact on the environment of hatred included terror related incidents: the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo office, and the attacks in Paris in November; the attacks on British tourists in Tunisia and various Daesh / ISIL related events. The reportage, opinions from the commentariat and political elites, and policy related announcements following these events contributed to an anti-Muslim climate. Other issues that raised Islamophobia or intersected with its rise included the so-called migrant crisis, the continued fall-out from the Trojan Horse affair and the rise of Daesh/ ISIL.

The legal climate was marked by the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which made it a statutory requirement for public sector workers, e.g. doctors and teachers, to refer people they thought to be extremists to the authorities. This requirement made the previous policy of PREVENT, introduced in 2005, law. With no concrete definition of extremism, referrals have been reported as being based on misconceptions and prejudices.

Media representation of Muslims continued to be problematic, with continued conflation of Islam, Muslims and terrorism, misogyny, sexual deviancy and disloyalty. In order to deal with the repercussions of increased Islamophobia a number of civil society initiatives were undertaken, including campaigns to end anti-terror laws, interfaith initiatives and the building of community alliances.

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2015 saw a major political shift in the United Kingdom. The general election of 2015 saw a surprise victory for the Conservative Party (May), followed by the equally unexpected and overwhelming victory of Jeremy Corbyn MP, a well-known socialist, as leader of the opposition Labour Party (September). Both events have had an impact on the situation vis à vis the playing out of anti-Muslim rhetoric, and political mobilisation around issues of civil rights, human rights, citizenship and law, which will be discussed below.

Muslims continued to be discriminated against and experience hostility and hatred as a racialized group within the context of a liberal nation state. The roll back of the welfare state and the continued implementation of austerity measures, as well as proposed increases in university fees and the scrapping of student grants all had an impact on Muslim communities, who are still mainly a working class community<sup>1</sup>.

## SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

2015 was marked by a predominance of security discourse and policy, framed before but 'justified' post hoc by political and media actors. Events that fed the securitisation narrative were not always UK-based; both the killing of staff at the Charlie Hebdo in January and the Paris attacks of November caused political reverberations in the UK which had an impact on Muslims. In particular, the killing of the staff at Charlie Hebdo caused much media furore and a reversion to anti-Muslim tropes regarding free speech. Notably (see Civil Society etc. responses below), there was small but significant dissent over this narrative from sections of academia and press. However, overall, the representation of Muslims in the media and political discourse exhibited deterioration as perceived by Muslims. (Ameli and Merali, 2015).

Similarly the attacks in Paris in November led to a spiral of negative commentary from certain mainstream media outlets that had an impact on the representation of Muslims in the UK (see below). The killing of British tourists in Tunisia in June led to a tightening of security at public events, e.g. the British Open Tennis Championships ('Wimbledon')<sup>2</sup>. Securitisation and profiling in the current era often go hand in hand, and increased securitisation around the issue of so-called Islamist terrorism has had an impact on Muslim profiling. The discourse of securitisation has legitimised individual attacks at the street level, as

1. Ali, S. (2015) *British Muslims in Numbers*. London: MCB

2. Green, C. (2015) Wimbledon 2015: Security tightened for tennis tournament following Tunisia attack – The Independent. [Online] Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-2015-security-tightened-for-tennis-tournament-following-tunisi-a-attack-10352672.html>

well as the implementation of policies and laws that justify differential treatment of citizens based on their ethnicity/religion<sup>3 4</sup>.

The continued rise of Daesh/ISIL has also contributed to a slew of negative opinion from media commentariat, as well as from political circles.

The so-called ‘Migrant Crisis’ was another key event that lasted almost the entire year; at various time the mingling of anti-Muslim sentiment and anti-refugee migrant sentiment could be witnessed. According to Ameli and Merali<sup>5</sup> the demonization of refugees is a parallel process which borrows from Islamophobic tropes, but which is not targeted solely against Muslims, rather being part of an anti-refugee and migrant discourse. According to Goodfellow<sup>6</sup>:

“This dehumanisation fits in well with the Government’s xenophobic policies, which are pursued in the name of balancing the books. Last year in the face of evidence that advised them to do otherwise, the Government decided they would no longer support any search and rescue operations for migrants and refugees drowning in the Mediterranean. By mid-April over 1,500 people had died.”

Whilst there was and continues to be significant support and sympathy for refugees from sections of society, the process of dehumanisation (as outlined below) is part and parcel of the process of hate representation which allows policies like the stopping of rescue missions or the bombing of countries to take place.

The general election saw a majority Conservative government returned to parliament. Already credited with ratcheting up anti-Muslim tension through the lens of security whilst in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, the Conservative party manifesto contained measures that could be classified as anti-Muslim in their impact and reach (see below), accompanied by further political speech which targeted Muslims as inimical to ‘British values’. The mantra of ‘British values’ became a recurring anti-Muslim trope which had an impact on education, media and political security policy. Indeed, the process of the ‘casting out’ of the Muslim subject, outlined by Razack<sup>7</sup> proceeded at such a pace that Prime Minister Cameron was able to label the new leader of the

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3. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

4. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E. & Merali, A. (2013). *Once Upon a Hatred: Anti-muslim Experiences in the USA*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

5. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

6. Goodfellow, M. (2015) “The Migrant Crisis” The real issue here is here is inconvenienced British holidaymakers – Media Diversified. [Online] Available at: <http://mediadiversified.org/2015/07/30/the-migrant-crisis-the-real-issue-here-is-inconvenienced-british-holidaymakers/>

7. Razack, S.H. (2008). *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

opposition, Jeremy Corbyn, as a ‘terrorist sympathiser’ for his opposition to the bombing of Syria by the UK, proposed in the wake of the Paris attacks. Despite calls for an apology, the prime minister has refused to retract this statement. This shift in discourse is so extreme that an establishment figure can be maligned in the same way as a member of a marginalised community, showing how Islamophobic rhetoric has been instrumentalised and normalised in the UK today. Whilst it has been extremely effective in closing down political spaces for Muslims, this rhetoric has in actuality closed down a great deal of space for dissent according to cause. The reach of Islamophobia beyond the Muslim community will be highlighted elsewhere in this report.

This narrative of exclusion is part of the *longue duree* of history and has been part of European cultural identities, however its latest manifestation has in part been instrumentalised by neo-conservative circles. It has been argued<sup>8</sup> that in the UK the Henry Jackson Society is deeply embedded in this process. Whilst claiming to be a bipartisan think tank HJS’s activities are distinctly neoconservative:

- Promoting a strongly pro-Israel agenda;
- Organising anti-Islam activities, focusing particularly on British Muslim students;
- Advocating a transatlantic military and security regime;

Furthermore, the evolution of HJS into a right-wing think tank also indicates that it does not exist for the public benefit; it has increasingly embraced an illiberal approach domestically towards British Muslims in particular. This trend is particularly pronounced in its support for limiting the civil liberties of Muslim charities in the name of the ‘War on Terror’.

The impact of the Trojan Horse affair of 2014 continued to be felt, even though a parliamentary committee confirmed that despite allegations there was no evidence behind the claims that there was an Islamist conspiracy to take over schools in Birmingham. The narrative of British values that arose as part of this

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8. Griffin, T. et. al. (June 2015). *The Henry Jackson Society and the Degeneration of British Neo-Conservatism: Liberal Interventionism, Islamophobia and the War on Terror*. London: The Cordoba Foundation.

affair dovetailed with the prevailing tropes of the security discourse.<sup>9</sup>

The dilemma faced by Muslims in the UK can best be summed up by the findings of a BBC poll in February, 2015. Ninety-five percent of one thousand Muslims polled in the survey stated they feel loyalty to Britain and 93% agreed that Muslims should obey British laws. Yet nearly half of them (46%) felt that it was difficult being a Muslim in Britain because of prejudice against Islam<sup>10 11 12</sup>. This finding mirrors repeated research which highlights the conflicted reality of Muslims who show high levels of loyalty, yet experience worsening treatment<sup>13 14</sup>.

Street Islamophobia, including a rise in hate attacks (from 14% in 2010 to 18% of Muslims surveyed in 2014<sup>15</sup> and the rise of far-right street movements, continued to be an issue. Rallies were held against mosque developments and existing Muslim spaces, including places of worship and schools, as well as the development of new Muslim spaces. A case in point has seen more than £500,000 spent on policing in one year in Burton on Trent, where multiple demonstrations were held by numerous far-rights groups against a proposed mosque<sup>16</sup>.

9. According to Richard Adams (Adams, R. (14 October 2014) Jewish schools complain over 'hostile' Ofsted inspections – The Guardian. [Online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/14/jewish-schools-complain-ofsted-inspections> Accessed: 12.08.2015) 21 Birmingham schools were dragged into the heart of a cabinet row over how to tackle extremism. It began with a letter sent to Birmingham city council in November 2013. The letter, quickly dubbed the “Trojan horse”, purported to be a plan of attack sent from a Birmingham circle of Islamist plotters to counterparts in Bradford, advising them how to carry out a similar takeover of Bradford schools, by hijacking boards of governors in state schools in mainly Muslim areas and forcing out opposition.

The letter was detailed and refers to events in Birmingham going back many years. But it is widely thought to be a fake or hoax. The letter then bounced around inside Birmingham city's administration, then was passed onto the West Midlands police and back again. Eventually someone forwarded it to the Home Office, which forwarded it to the Department for Education. And there it rested, until February 2014, when it became public through leaks to the media.

The affair has led to a number of separate inquiries: three were ordered by the education secretary, Michael Gove, including the Ofsted inspections of 21 schools. Investigations were also held by the Education Funding Agency, with a separate inquiry into extremism led by the former Met police anti-terrorism chief Peter Clarke. The fourth inspection was a city-wide inquiry being conducted by Birmingham city council.

The definition of extremism used in this affair was dangerously wide, and led to schools, some of which had been previously ranked as outstanding, falling foul of new inspections; as a consequence they were downgraded and led to mass and often forced personnel changes. This was despite the fact that none of the enquiries found anything bar a single incident in one school which could be considered of concern. The accusation of extremism and the ‘evidence’ of Muslim self-organisation at the level of parent-governor was seen as worthy of labelling and dismantling.

10. COMRES (undated). Available at [http://www.comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme\\_British-Muslims-Poll\\_FINAL-Tables\\_Feb2015.pdf](http://www.comres.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme_British-Muslims-Poll_FINAL-Tables_Feb2015.pdf)

11. BBC (25 February 2015). Most British Muslims ‘oppose Muhammad cartoons reprisals’. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31293196>

12. IHRC, (26 February, 2015). ‘Muslim loyalty findings belie community’s ‘fifth column’ stereotype’ accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11369-press-release-muslim-loyalty-findings-belie-communitys-fifth-column-stereotype>

13. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2004a). *Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or Both? Obligation, Recognition, Respect and Belonging*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

14. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

15. *ibid*

16. *ibid*

The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTS) became law after a speedy reading in parliament in February. The main provision was the legal imposition of a five-year sentence for public sector workers who failed to refer those that they suspected to be extremists. This requirement covers inter alia doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers and nursery workers. It effectively made law the already highly criticised PREVENT strategy. It is this event that perhaps best depicts the experience of Muslims in 2015; the report examines how this has contributed to the creation of a hate environment, whilst simultaneously impacting hate representation and hate policy<sup>17</sup>.

## THE LAW AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

### Employment and the Law

A study by Ameli and Merali<sup>18</sup> compared data from 1,700 respondents in 2010 and 2014. The experience of discrimination at work was found to be at 40.9%; the largest group of 17.8% stating they experienced discrimination rarely. Whilst those who claimed that discrimination was always low (never over 0.6% of the total sample for any age range), the fact that such a significant group experiences this nevertheless bodes ill for those in employment (as opposed to self-employed). In terms of the age range, those between 30 and 44 had the highest experience, with more than half of 30-34 year olds and 35-39 year olds experiencing job discrimination of some sort. Every category, except those who experience it “always”, has seen an increase in experience.

Work status was also a significant variable in this regard. Just under or over half of all respondents who were employed, self-employed or unemployed felt that they had experienced work-related discrimination. Whilst the largest category (or the second largest category) of each variable was the ‘rarely’ experience, it is notable that those who stated they were employed were more likely to say ‘sometimes’ in other categories, suggesting again, like the findings above, that for those employed the workplace is a problematic arena.

Experiences proffered by respondents of discrimination and those who complained about it highlight the problematics of systems in which anti-Muslim hatred is not recognised or is reproduced as victim complaints<sup>19</sup>.

The authors contend that discrimination and hate attacks occur in a certain context. To illustrate, a case litigated by IHRC Legal (which was ultimately successful) involved a young waitress. A few months into her employment the owners of the

17. Ameli, S. R. Merali, A. and Shahghasemi, E. (2012). *France and the Hated Society*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

18. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

19. *ibid*

restaurant began subjecting her to regular and repeated verbal abuse – the outbursts were apparently sparked by negative media coverage of Muslims.

She was called a terrorist and a member of Daesh/ISIL, subjected to insulting comments about Allah (God) and Prophet Muhammad, Muslims were referred to as ‘bedouins’ and it was claimed that all Muslims are fanatics and forced people to convert to Islam.

The waitress was also reported that she could not eat or bring halal meat to the accommodation arranged by the employer, and that she must eat the meat which the employers provided; in particular, she was told to eat pork. To aggravate her grievances, the abuse was perpetrated in front of other staff<sup>20</sup>.

Experiencing discrimination at work 2010 and 2014		
	2010	2014
Never	71.9	59.1
Rarely	6.2	17.8
sometimes	6.5	13.6
Often	4.5	7.1
Always	10.9	2.4
Total	100	100

The problem of Islamophobia at work (as with educational settings and other public settings) is compounded by the issue of double discrimination, that is, those who suffer discrimination do not report it for fear of experiencing further discrimination. Double discrimination can be explained as:

“... the additive and adverse effects of multiple factors.... Firstly, when conflating two indicators or signifiers of social exclusion and discrimination, such as ethnicity and gender... or religion and ethnicity...; and secondly, when describing processes of discrimination, for example, where a victim of a crime reports it to the police and experiences further discrimination at the hands of the police.”<sup>21</sup>

Examples which support the 2015 findings were supplied by respondents in the qualitative part of their questionnaire e.g.

“-being told I cannot work at my place of work if I wore the hijab because parents wouldn’t feel safe leaving their children with a hijabi.”

“Intheworkplacebeingleftoutandshunnedandspokenoverthetopofbycolleagues... I did not complain about individual instances because I was not aware racism was a criminal offence. I also have no confidence in institutions and perceive them to contain racists at various levels, including management and director.”

“...I went for a few job interviews after I became Muslim and was rejected outright because of my hijab (even after having a phone interview and being given the job over the phone.)”

20. IHRC (28 July, 2015). ‘IHRC Legal Fund secures first anti-Muslim discrimination victory’ accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11503-press-release-uk-ihrc-legal-fund-secures-first-anti-muslim-discrimination-victory>

21. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E. & Merali, A. (2013). *Once Upon a Hatred: Anti-muslim Experiences in the USA*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

A study using the Office of National Statistics data (with a sample of 500,000)<sup>22</sup> found that Muslims are facing the worst job discrimination of any minority group in Britain, finding they had the lowest chance of being in work or in a managerial role.

Muslim men were up to 76 percent less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age and with the same qualifications. And Muslim women were up to 65 per cent less likely to be employed than their white Christian counterparts. This effect has been described as the ‘Muslim penalty’<sup>23</sup>.

Whilst in 2004 the UK introduced anti-discrimination-at-work laws which covered the issue of religious discrimination (under an EU Directive), no legal aid is available to potential litigants. Additionally, the onus is on potential litigants to prove discrimination, unlike cases brought under the Race Relations Act 1976 (which covers by dint of case law, Jewish, Sikh and to a lesser extent Rastafarian communities), where the defendant needs to prove that they did not breach the act.

Thus the law, whilst excellent on paper is (a) impractical and (b) sets out a different legal regime for Muslims from other minority religious groups.<sup>24</sup>

## Education and Law

The educational setting in the UK has seen a vast shift around the issue of Muslims. Hitherto hailed as an exemplar, the UK’s ‘multicultural settlement’ in previous decades was perceived as accommodating identity rather than obfuscating it or demanding assimilation. However, a combination of the CTS measures, the existing the PREVENT regime prior to CTS and the fall-out of the Trojan Horse affair have all led to this aspect of education almost entirely wiped out as a concept.

In early 2015, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan revealed that her department would expand the role of “counter-extremism” in schools. The increased focus on ‘extremism’ followed multiple inquiries into the so-called ‘Trojan Horse’ affair that revolved around an alleged plot by Muslim extremists to take over 21 Birmingham inner-city schools.

None of the inquiries discovered hard evidence of any such plot and the disproportionate attention the case drew was largely perceived as being a personal Islamophobic agenda being pursued by the then-education secretary, Michael Gove. As a result of the allegations, other Muslim schools around the country were also investigated, again without conclusive results.

However, the lack of evidence did not prevent the government from using the allegations as a pretext for raising scrutiny of Muslim-managed schools nor

22. Nabil and Johnston, 2014 cited in Dobson, R. (2014) British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group, according to research – The Independent. [Online] Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group-9893211.html> Accessed: 03.12.2014

23. Heath, A. and Martin, J. (2010). ‘Can religious affiliation explain ‘ethnic’ inequalities in the labour market?’ in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 36, Iss. 6, 2013

24. Ameli, S. R., Elahi, M. & Merali, A. (2004b). *Social discrimination: Across the Muslim divide. British Muslims’ expectations of the government*, Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

from treating any signs of Islamic values as proof of ‘extremism’<sup>25</sup>. Whilst the primary targets of the witch-hunt that occurred subsequent to the so-called Trojan Horse affair were Muslim governors, teachers at schools with a Muslim majority and the schools themselves, it is notable that Jewish schools have become caught up in the anti-Muslim discourse, finding themselves also marked out as extremist and thus failing new governmental and OFSTED criteria focusing on ‘British values’.<sup>26</sup> The end of 2014 saw the government issue advice on the Promotion of British Values as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, and 2015 saw that the impact of this programme continued in cross-cutting ways with the rolling out of PREVENT and the provisions of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015.

One school was judged as not having taken the necessary steps to protect pupils from “extremist influences and radicalisation”, in failing to take action over a pupil who had posted on social media that fellow students shouldn’t attend a school-leaving party because it involved music. Staff and parents at one of the Birmingham schools under investigation were told by teachers that they would be reported to police under the PREVENT strategy if they questioned whether an alleged new uniform policy excluded the hijab.

The impact of PREVENT can be seen in cases like that of a 15-year old school student who was referred to the police for handing out leaflets calling for the boycott of Israeli goods, and for asking a dinner-time supervisor if the food being served came from Israel. His story, later taken up by Al-Jazeera<sup>27</sup>, also includes details of his treatment once he was visited by the police who asked him if he supported ISIS. His response - that he was a Shia Muslim - did not register with the police officer as a denial<sup>28</sup>. The discursive praxis of PREVENT may be one of, if not the most significant, the factors in the rise of ‘street-level’ hatred against those perceived to be Muslim, as well as in normalising differential treatment of communities of colour and culture using the rhetoric of community cohesion and British values (as a challenge to and heralding the end of state sanctioned multi-culturalism)<sup>29</sup>.

The impact of this practice on education and the effect of it becoming law through the CTS has raised serious concerns amongst Muslims and civil rights ad-

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25. IHRC (30 January 2015). ‘Schools anti-extremism drive is an attack on Muslim rights’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11348-press-release-schools-anti-extremism-drive-is-an-attack-on-muslim-rights>

26. Adams, R. (14 October 2014) Jewish schools complain over ‘hostile’ Ofsted inspections – The Guardian. [Online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/14/jewish-schools-complain-ofsted-inspections> Accessed: 12.08.2015

27. Hooper, S. (23 July 2015). ‘Stifling freedom of expression in UK schools’ accessed at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/07/stifling-freedom-expression-uk-schools-150721080612049.html>

28. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

29. *ibid*

vocates, as well as some teaching and lecturers' unions. Additional measures have been proposed by the government or have been implemented. In March the then Con-Dem coalition proposed new guidelines (under CTS) that: "Universities must take seriously their responsibility to exclude those promoting extremist views that support or are conducive to terrorism"<sup>30</sup>.

The anti-terrorism laws, notably the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, have been instrumental in creating not only a hate environment, but in solidifying in law a state of reasonable fear on the part of Muslims that they are under pervasive surveillance. The analogy of the Stasi state pertains, whereby under the CTS Act public servants, be they teachers, lecturers, nursery school staff, doctors etc., are under a duty to report anyone they believe to be an extremist. The issue is further compounded by the fact that no concrete definition of what 'extremism' might be is proffered, leaving such referrals open to the subjective vagaries of those making the references<sup>31</sup>.

In this environment at least two cases of questionnaires allegedly seeking to establish whether a child could be deemed an extremist have been circulated<sup>32 33</sup>. Children at the predominantly Muslim Buxton School in Leytonstone, East London, were issued with questionnaires soliciting their views on a range of issues and hypothetical cases designed to tease out any "extremist" tendencies<sup>34</sup>. After distributing a similar questionnaire, Greenleaf Primary, in the same London borough, released the names of 7 children they had identified as a result of the questionnaire as being at risk of radicalisation. The questionnaires asked a series of highly loaded questions which seem to be based on a perception of extremism and radicalisation held by right-wing neo-cons. Those questionnaires asked pupils aged between 9-11 if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements such as 'It is better to be a dead hero than live impassively', 'If a student was making fun of my race or religion I would try to make them stop even if it meant hurting them' and 'God has a purpose for me'. They were also asked to tick three boxes with which they identify, choosing from British, Muslim, student, artist, athlete, Christian or young<sup>35</sup>.

30. IHRC (2 March 2015). 'New laws should not be a licence to discriminate against Muslims.' Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11370--uk-new-laws-should-not-be-a-licence-to-discriminate-against-muslims>

31. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

32. IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism'' Accessed at: <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism->

33. IHRC (1 December, 2015). 'IHRC appalled by primary school 'extremism' questionnaire'. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11573-press-release-uk-ihrc-appalled-by-primary-school-extremism-questionnaire>

34. IHRC (22 May 2015). 'Outrage over Muslim schoolchildren being profiled for 'extremism'' Accessed at: <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11441-press-release-uk-outrage-over-muslim-schoolchildren-being-profiled-for-extremism->

35. IHRC (1 December, 2015). 'IHRC appalled by primary school 'extremism' questionnaire'. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11573-press-release-uk-ihrc-appalled-by-primary-school-extremism-questionnaire>

Referrals to deradicalisation programmes have risen exponentially since the reporting of people suspected of extremism became an official requirement for public bodies on July 1. The figures show that there were more referrals between June and August than for the whole of 2012/13 – the first year the scheme was introduced across England and Wales. The number is also more than double the level of referrals recorded in the first three months of 2014/15. Approximately 40% of the referrals were of people under the age of 18. Moreover, during the same period, of the 796 individuals reported to the Channel programme for possible intervention, only about one-fifth have required intervention in the form of deradicalisation sessions. These figures were compiled over a period when schools and educational institutions were closed for the summer break. The likelihood is that referrals would rise even further once school reopened in September<sup>36</sup>.

There is paucity of research on the content of textbooks, however key incidents have come to public attention over the year. A worksheet issued in North Larnarkshire states ‘they [the Palestinians] have turned to terrorist methods for over 30 years’. It then gives the example of ‘SUICIDE BOMBINGS’ as a terrorist activity. This establishes the connection that all Palestinians are terrorists, and potentially also that all Palestinians are suicide bombers<sup>37</sup>.

At the same time, the National Union of Teachers was forced to pull a resource pack it had produced on Palestine after pressure from pro-Israel groups<sup>38</sup>.

## Politics and Law

As detailed above, there has been conflation between anti-migrant rhetoric and anti-Muslim rhetoric, both in the run-up to the general election and subsequently. However, aside from issues emanating from the so-called migrant crisis, the UK saw anti-Muslim hate policy and hate representation<sup>39</sup> coalesce to help foster an environment of hate.

The Department for Communities and Local Government played a particularly prominent role in fostering a sense of Muslim otherness through speech and policy. In January, the communities secretary, Eric Pickles, wrote a letter to the UK’s over 1000 mosques in which he demanded they do more to counteract religious extremism. The very fact that the government singled out Muslim leaders as the recipient of these letters suggests to us that the government believes that Muslims are at best not committed to the fight against so-called religious extremism and at worst aid-

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36. IHRC (14 October, 2015). ‘Deradicalisation programme is demonising Muslims’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11540-press-release-uk-deradicalisation-programme-is-demonising-muslims>

37. IHRC (5 March 2015). ‘Scottish council urged to drop anti-Palestinian school worksheet’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11375-press-release-uk-scottish-council-urged-to-drop-anti-palestinian-school-worksheet>

38. Elgot, J. (6 August 2015) ‘NUT defends controversial teaching kit featuring life of Palestinian children’. Accessed at: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/aug/06/nut-defends-controversial-teaching-kit-featuring-life-of-palestinian-children>

39. Ameli, S. R. Merali, A. and Shahghasemi, E. (2012). *France and the Hated Society*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

ing and abetting the perpetrators. This was a simple regurgitation of Islamophobic tropes on Muslim disloyalty and enmity to so-called British values.<sup>40</sup> Only a month later the DCLG became embroiled in a row created by an article by Andrew Gilligan in the right-wing broadsheet *The Sunday Telegraph*. The article accused Baroness Warsi, a co-founder of the Cross-Government Working Group on anti-Muslim hatred, of presiding over the infiltration of Muslim ‘radicals’ into the committee. It then goes on to quote the DCLG defending itself against the allegations saying: “We are very clear that we will not fund or engage with groups which promote violent or non-violent extremism. All individuals represented on the cross-government working group on anti-Muslim hatred are committed to the peaceful integration of all communities.” According to IHRC:

“the article’s charge of “entryism” or loading committees and parties with one’s own supporters is a tactic that is often used by bigots to attack minority groups and prevent them from exercising their fundamental rights in society. For the government to accept it as gospel instead of swiftly condemning it suggests that the government too is using the pretext of extremism to exclude Muslims from policymaking.”<sup>41</sup>

The introduction of the Counterterrorism and Security Act into law at the beginning of the year, discussed above, contained many serious issues of concern, including a category of ‘thought crime’, in the introduction of local panels to prepare a plan for those at risk of so-called radicalisation. Not only will those targeted have no way of challenging the panel’s decisions, it is staggering to think that the government believes it has the right to determine what others are allowed to think and believe and impose “de-radicalisation” plans on those who disagree with the government’s notions of acceptable beliefs. The government also now has the power to seize passports of those it suspects are travelling for terrorist purposes. This has implications for innocent travellers who are now liable to be detained at ports if they ‘look like a terrorist’ or are travelling to destinations, such as Turkey or Lebanon, that are deemed to be staging posts for terrorism. The government’s own data shows that the existing Schedule 7 stop-and-search powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 have relied on profiling and led to a disproportionately high number of non-whites and Muslims being detained. Since 2001 some 70% of all arrests under anti-terrorism legislation have been of non-whites.

The introduction of temporary exclusion orders which prevent people deemed to pose a risk to the UK’s security from entering is also worrying. Exclusion orders taken on the basis of mere suspicion could lead to individuals being arrested in foreign coun-

40. IHRC (19 January 2015) ‘Govt letter to Muslim leaders betrays Islamophobic premise’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11340-press-release-govt-letter-to-muslim-leaders-betrays-islamophobic-premise>

41. *ibid*

tries and treated as suspects of terrorism. The law smacks of an abdication by the government of its responsibilities and an abandonment of judicial oversight and safeguards, with the consequence that it could place British citizens at risk abroad<sup>42</sup>.

In the run up to the general election, the Conservative party (which later won a majority to form the new government) included a xenophobic assault on the Muslim community in the Conservative election manifesto under the issue of security; this had little relation to the alleged fight against terrorism. The proposals included plans for a review of Shariah councils in England and Wales to examine whether they were compatible with British values, orders to ban groups that did not reach the current threshold and labelled as extremists and civil “extremism disruption orders”, similar to ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders), which impose curfews and other non-custodial punitive sanctions against individuals. They also outlined their intention to initiate a review of supplementary schools, which are currently unregulated, ostensibly to “protect children from extremists”<sup>43</sup>. By the end of the year, these and a focus on home schooling were also included in the policy under consultation and formulation<sup>44</sup>.

The focus on Shariah courts, or Muslim mediation councils, is a trope that has appeared in the past<sup>45</sup>, and exemplifies not just inequality between faith communities (Bet Din courts for Jews and the Synod for the Church of England are both courts constituted under British law), but subalternises Muslims in a way that delegitimises their aspirations as minorities who are in conformity with the experience of other minorities or religious groups. Even the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, was widely castigated by media commentators for stating in 2008 that it was inevitable that there would be Shariah courts in the UK which litigated on civil matters for Muslims<sup>46</sup>.

In November 2015, Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, paid a state visit to the UK. The double standards on ‘extremism’ were apparent to many commentators who noted that Modi had hitherto been banned from the UK for his extremist views and allegations of his complicity in the 2002 Gujarat massacres of

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42. IHRC (13 January 2015b) Proposed Counter Terrorism and Security Bill: An Orwellian Possibility. Accessed at: <http://www.ihr.org.uk/publications/briefings/11330-proposed-counter-terrorism-and-security-bill-an-orwellian-possibility>

43. IHRC (23 March 2015). ‘Home Secretary should be ashamed of playing Islamophobia card’. Accessed at: <http://www.ihr.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11393-press-release-home-secretary-should-be-ashamed-of-playing-islamophobia-card>

44. McTague, T. (19 December 2015). ‘Nicky Morgan orders review on home schooling amid fears children having minds ‘poisoned’ by radicalised parents’. Accessed at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/nicky-morgan-orders-review-on-home-schooling-amid-fears-children-having-minds-poisoned-by-a6779886.html>

45. Ameli, S. R., Merali, A. (2006). *Hijab, meaning, identity, otherization and politics: British Muslim women*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

46. BBC (7 February 2008). ‘Sharia law in UK is ‘unavoidable’ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7232661.stm>

Muslims<sup>47</sup>. On the basis that criticism of UK foreign policy is perceived as extremist, yet Modi, who perhaps best embodies the term extremist, is feted, it appears that legitimate dissent was the target of UK government policy. Likewise, General Sisi, the leader of the coup against the elected president, Morsi, of Egypt, also paid a state visit to the UK in November.

This type of discourse and policy impacts lower down the political system. In one reported case, Manchester City Council was called upon to discipline a councillor who was found guilty of breaching the council's code of conduct after allegations of racism and Islamophobia were levelled against him. An official investigation into Councillor Mark Hackett found that he had abused and intimidated his victim, a Muslim man, who along with his Christian wife, had volunteered to help at an event organised by Manchester Stop the War Coalition (STWC) called, "Remember the Children of Gaza". Cllr. Hackett responded to an email request by the victim to support STWC activities by accusing the victim and his supporters of supporting Hamas and Daesh/ISIL and suggesting that the councillor's attendance would invite attacks against his own person and family; this correspondence was copied to all other Labour councillors. The councillor then sent another malicious email in which he suggested that the volunteer had played a "possible role in the abduction of the Salford taxi driver in Syria" and also a "possible role as Islamic State sleeper in Salford". In yet another email he elaborates on this idea: "You may think I am being over cautious and alarmist but look at the Salford Taxi Driver betrayed to IS and abducted by them by someone (sic) in Salford presumably"<sup>48</sup>.

In July, David Cameron made a speech setting out the government's five-year strategy for tackling 'extremist ideology'; here he stated: "the root cause of the threat we face is the extremist ideology itself." This speech emphasised once again the government's focus on non-violent extremism, which, as the Trojan Horse affair demonstrated, can be defined as widely as any type of religious conservatism, e.g. gender segregation, praying in school/work etc.<sup>49</sup>. This speech followed on from Cameron's 'Munich 2' speech in June, when he addressed a security conference in Slovakia, and warned of the so-called dangers posed by those who "quietly condone" the extremist ideology of Daesh/ISIL militants and stressed the importance of tackling radicalisation at its source. The implication, quickly seized upon by members of the media and other politicians, is that Muslims in the UK somehow covertly supported Daesh/ISIL. This was followed by an article in the *Telegraph* in which Cameron

47. IHRC (13 November 2015). 'Modi visit exposes UK double standards'. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11561--press-release-uk-modi-visit-exposes-uk-double-standards>

48. IHRC (21 September 2015). 'Manchester City Council must take action against Islamophobic councillor'. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11525-press-release-uk-manchester-city-council-must-take-action-against-islamophobic-councillor>

49. IHRC (21 July 2015). 'British government is in denial over extremism'. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11493-press-release-uk-british-government-is-in-denial-over-extremism>

stated that Britain could only defeat extremism by standing up for British values of “peace, democracy, tolerance and freedom” and being more intolerant of intolerance – rejecting anyone whose views condone the Islamist extremist narrative and create the conditions for it to flourish”. He was joined by the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who stated that there should be no rejection of using the words “Muslim” or “Islamic” when describing the terrorists responsible for extremist attacks. “That just lets too many people off the hook,” he said. “If we deny any connection between terrorism and religion, then we are saying there is no problem in any of the mosques; that there is nothing in the religious texts that is capable of being twisted or misunderstood; that there are no religious leaders whipping up hatred of the west, no perverting of religious belief for political ends”<sup>50</sup>. These tropes of inherent Muslim violence and disloyalty were prominent in political discourse throughout the year and punctuated output from the right-wing (and some left-wing) commentariat<sup>51</sup>, legitimising both a state of inequality vis a vis Muslims, while increasing securitisation and demonisation.

In October yet more plans were announced by the government to tackle so-called extremism. Under the strategy, the government will intensify the campaign against extremism by creating a raft of laws aimed at stemming at source what ministers believe is a terrorism conveyor belt that starts with the radicalisation of individuals<sup>52</sup>. This is despite the now well-established debunking of the conveyor-belt theory by academics like Arun Kundnani<sup>53</sup> and people like former proponent Marc Sageman<sup>54</sup>.

New policies proposed by the government included creating blacklists of ‘radicals’ and ‘extremist’ groups and making them subject to banning orders. Public sector organisations would be forced to blacklist those on the list. The plans also included new powers to close mosques and bolster powers available to Ofcom, the media regulator, to sanction channels that broadcast so-called extremist content or gave a platform to ‘hate preachers’.

Again such policies and proposed measures creates a drip feed of demonisation and criminalisation into existing facets of society. A Palestine Solidarity Committee/Friends of al-Aqsa demonstration in support of Palestine was called in October; two

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50. IHRC (29 June 2015). ‘Cameron just doesn’t get the terrorism problem’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11474-press-release-uk-cameron-just-doesnt-get-the-terrorism-problem>

51. Sayyid, S., Law, I., & Sian, K. (2013). Analysis of integration policies and public State-endorsed institutions at national/regional levels: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds (CERS/ULeeds). Accessed at: [http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerance/media/WP2/WorkingPapers%202\\_UK.pdf](http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/tolerance/media/WP2/WorkingPapers%202_UK.pdf)

52. IHRC (19 October, 2015). ‘Anti-terror laws are a war on Muslims’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11544-press-release-uk-anti-terror-laws-are-a-war-on-muslims>

53. Kundnani, A. (2013) *The Muslims Are Coming*. London: Verso

54. Breen-Smyth, M. (2015). Presentation at the Prevent Conference, organised by IHRC and CAMPACC, July 2015, London, UK.

protestors, one carrying a Hizbullah flag and one wearing a green bandana, claimed to be related to Hamas, were asked by organisers to remove said items. The protestors eventually left the demonstration, but it was claimed that they were arrested at the request of the organisers. Whilst the PSC has denied this, the two men, who were initially arrested for breach of the peace, found themselves questioned under anti-terrorism laws and their homes were raided. The PSC gave a comment to the pro-Israel Jewish News newspaper stating: “it actively discourages protesters from flying Hamas or Hezbollah flags. “We ask that those present respect the Palestinian national flag, and use only this flag,” a spokeswoman said”<sup>55</sup>. The two men were charged according to the article less than a month after police had confirmed that flying a Hizbullah flag did not constitute an offence. As Kundnani<sup>56</sup> observes, the discourse of radicalisation impacts wider than the supposed targets; Muslim civil society, as well as civil society at large, are inadvertently and sometimes deliberately complicit in the process, as they have been pushed into a corner:

“Everyone who rejects the game of fake patriotism falls under suspicion, as opposition to extremism becomes the only legitimate discourse... the spectacle of the Muslim extremist renders invisible the violence of the ... empire. Opposition to such violence from within the imperium has fallen silent, as the universal duty of countering extremism precludes any wider discussion...”<sup>57</sup>

The appointment of former Henry Jackson Society member William Shawcross for a further three-year term as head of the Charity Commission continued to stoke anti-Muslim tension, with an increased focus on Muslim charities. According to the charity newsletter *Third Sector*<sup>58</sup>, according to an anonymous source, Shawcross has “a very ideological view of charities as doing good ... He’s by far the most ideological of all the people who have been in this role.. His letting forth to *The Times* was very revealing - talking about sanctions against charities and taking a sideswipe at Muslims having a victim mentality. It’s clear from his history that he’s a neo-conservative, so I think he can’t look at Muslim charities in a dispassionate way.”

The politicisation of the police force is another issue that raised concern; in particular the comments made by a senior Metropolitan police officer Mak Chisty on radicalisation. Chisty claimed in May that authorities needed to move into ‘the private space of Muslims’ because “it is in these private spaces where this (extremism) first germinates”. Chisty goes on to describe the types of views that would qualify as extremism. They include Muslim children considering Christmas to be “haram”, or

55. Oryszczuk, S. (21 October 2015). ‘Police confirm two arrests for flying Hezbollah flags’. Accessed at: <http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/police-confirm-two-arrests-for-flying-hezbollah-flags/>

56. Kundnani, A. (2013) *The Muslims Are Coming*. London: Verso

57. *ibid*

58. Cook, C. (28 September 2015). ‘Profile: William Shawcross, chair of the Charity Commission’. Accessed at: <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/profile-william-shawcross-chair-charity-commission/governance/article/1365006>

to individuals criticising and boycotting Marks and Spencer<sup>59</sup> 60.

The effect of these policies and representation *inter alia* is to push Muslims further away from the concept of citizen. As such, polls like those regarding the candidature for mayor of London in 2015, saw 1 in 3 respondents in London (a city itself with a 65% majority non-English population) state that they felt uncomfortable with the idea of a Muslim mayor (at the time two candidates for party nominations were Muslim, at the time of writing the Labour Party candidate is Muslim)<sup>61</sup>.

A further poll found that 55% of people polled accepted the claim that: “There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society”<sup>62</sup> A further dissection of the results in terms of political affiliations shows little improvement: “Among Tory supporters, this gap increases to 68 percent who say ‘clash’ versus 17 per cent who think ‘compatible’. Ukip supporters look almost unanimous on the issue (89 per cent ‘clash’ versus 4 per cent ‘compatible’) while roughly half of Labour supporters take the negative view (48 per cent ‘clash’ versus 27 per cent ‘compatible’) and Lib Dems are divided (38 per cent ‘clash’ versus 39 per cent ‘compatible’)”<sup>63</sup>.

Respondents to a 2010 survey<sup>64</sup> and 2014 survey<sup>65</sup> were asked whether they had witnessed political policies that negatively affected Muslims, whether they felt politicians did not care about Muslims and whether politicians condoned anti-Muslim acts. In all categories those agreeing with or seeing examples of the above rose between the two surveys.

### **The Media and the Law as Mutually Constitutive**

The themes of anti-Muslim representation<sup>66</sup> 67 68, as summarized by Ameli and Merali, referring additionally to Progler and Poole, revealed the following prevail:

59. Dodd, V. (24 May 2015). Jihadi threat requires move into ‘private space’ of UK Muslims, says police chief. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/24/jihadi-threat-requires-move-into-private-space-of-uk-muslims-says-police-chief>

60. IHRC (26 May 2015). ‘IHRC addresses Metropolitan Police over anti-Muslim statements’. Accessed at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11443-press-release-uk-ihrc-addresses-metropolitan-police-over-anti-muslim-statements>

61. Yougov / LBC cited in 5Pillars (2015) Poll: One in three Londoners feel “uncomfortable” about the Muslim mayor. [Online] Available at: <http://5pillarsuk.com/2015/08/13/poll-one-in-three-londoners-feel-uncomfortable-about-muslim-mayor/>

62. Faulkner Rogers (30 March 2015). ‘The majority of voters doubt that Islam is compatible with British values’. Accessed at: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/03/30/majority-voters-doubt-islam-compatible-british-val/>

63. *ibid*

64. Ameli, S. R., Mohseni, E., Shahghasemi, E., Rahimpour, M. (2011). *Getting the message: The recurrence of hate crimes in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.

65. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

66. *ibid*

67. Progler, Y. (2008) *Encountering Islam: The Politics of Knowledge and Scholarship*. Penang: Citizens International

68. Poole, E. (2011) Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims Before and After 9/11: The UK Context. *Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition*, 4(2), 49-62.

The sexual groomer, paedophile, predator (reference the Rotherham and Oxford scandals), harking back to the idea of the seraglio. Tied to this is the idea of perverse and extreme violence, sexual depravity, misogyny and disloyalty. All of these feed into the idea of inferiority to a Western, i.e. white British majority, but also to that of an inherent lack of values, a deficiency that can never be overcome. Privot<sup>69</sup> argues that gender equality is one such idea; this is used to define a sense of identity of the 'European' against the 'Muslim' and has dovetailed with the reporting of stories surrounding even education and gender segregation as an aspiration in schooling for many Muslims.

Tied to this is an obsession with the veil, in particular face veils. The face veil continues to be discussed through the prism of security, gender equality and British values.

Despotism<sup>70</sup>, was another longstanding trope that was regurgitated in the reporting of Islam and Muslims, tying them to images of Daesh/ISIL. In a piece in which he claims radicalisation should be seen as a form of child abuse<sup>71</sup>, London mayor Boris Johnson writes again about 'Our values', setting them against Islamic ones (earlier in the piece he refers to British values again). By associating paedophilia and FGM with Islamic radicalisation he further catalyses the imagery of the Muslim as sexual predator. This can be said to characterise most negative reporting of Muslims.

## CONCLUSION:

### Policy Recommendations for Politics and CSO's / Best Practices

The following recommendations come from an overview of the findings of Ameli and Merali<sup>72</sup> as suggested by respondents, as well as a review of civil society initiatives.

### Education, Interfaith and Awareness Raising

Many respondents stated that the general public required education. There have been many civil society initiatives that show the efficacy of such an approach, notably the so-called 'tea and biscuits with the EDL' episode, where members of a mosque in a northern town invited in protestors from the right-wing street movement, the EDL. The EDL members accepted the invitation and ended up also playing football with the members of the mosque. Other initiatives like the MCB's National Open Mosque Day are further such good practice. Likewise, many interfaith programmes already exist, and more should be organised. However, the independence and diversity of such programmes must be preserved and enhanced.

69. Privot, M. (11 November 2014). 'Islamophobia, a foreseeable consequence of ultra-liberalism?' Accessed at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/michaël-privot>.

70. Proglor, Y. (2008) *Encountering Islam: The Politics of Knowledge and Scholarship*. Penang: Citizens International

71. Johnson, B. (2014) *The children taught at home about murder and bombings – The Telegraph*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10671841/The-children-taught-at-home-about-murder-and-bombings.html>.

72. Ameli, S.R. & Merali, A. (2015) *Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

However, if there is to be a far-reaching cultural shift in the understanding of Islam and Muslims, the onus for education rests with institutions, notably the government.

### **Media Regulation and Self-Renewal**

This recommendation emerged after the Leveson Inquiry Report<sup>73</sup> which called for the setting up of a more powerful independent press watchdog. Whilst the new watchdog, the Independent Press Standards Organisation, is indeed more powerful and has the ability to fine up to 1% of a newspaper's turnover (capped at £1 million) as well as having interventionist investigatory powers, newspapers are free to opt out of the system.

As with its predecessor, the code it implements is vague, if not exclusionary, on issues of generalised demonisation. An individual who is maligned can bring a case, but what about the issues of stereotyping, encoded ideas of inferiority, etc.?

The issue of dealing with structural inequalities and systemic racist discourse remains untouched, with regulatory mechanisms, such as they are, still working within the framework of a post-racial society, as opposed to issues of institutional racism being dealt with.

Ameli et al<sup>74</sup>, have called for a sea change in the UK media that can only be internally driven. This is not simply a question of equal opportunities in terms of Muslim representation as professionals in the media, though this is required. This involves a cultural shift in the thinking of media institutions. With regard to the UK, Ameli et al<sup>75</sup> argued that a sea change in reporting and cultural activity has already transformed media practice on issues of anti-Semitism, anti-Catholic prejudice and sexuality, as well as in other prejudices

### **Denunciation of Islamophobic Structures, Policies and Acts**

Organisations that work on issues of anti-racism, community cohesion, faith relations and human rights need to be prepared to take a much stronger stand in speaking out against these ways of thinking and publicly denounce those who adopt such a discourse, even if, as is increasingly the case, those who do so are speaking from a position of sound 'liberal' or 'left-wing' credentials as Kundnani argues<sup>76</sup>. Cases in point relate not only to the operation of stereotypes and misrepresentation in news media print, audio/visual and digital, but also the reproduction of demonised

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73. (29 November 2012) 'An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press: report [Leveson]' <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc07/0780/0780.asp>

74. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

75. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

76. cited in Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

discourse in film and literature. Critiques of demonised discourse cannot exist in academia alone, and the implications of demonised representations of peoples and countries by filmmakers and writers perceived to be progressive must be denounced.

### **Community Alliances**

There ought to be stronger relationships between Muslim organisations and groups that have campaigned against racism and prejudice in the media. Although such alliances will present challenges to both parties, they are a prerequisite for bringing about change, as Kundnani states<sup>77</sup>. This goes without saying; however, much can be learned from past and ongoing campaigns.

### **Monitoring of Demonised Representation**

Such monitoring can and must work on a variety of levels, including in academic institutions, by community organisations and major civil society organisations (perhaps in partnership) and by media outlets themselves. This monitoring process should be done in earnest with a view to assessing the levels and ways Muslims are demonised in order to avoid innocent and negligent repetition of such tropes. As Joseph and D’Harlingue<sup>78</sup>, in their study on the Wall Street Journal’s Op-eds, point out: “[G]iven the power of these representations on other fields, such as politics, we suggest that the WSJ, whether inadvertently or intentionally (investigating intentionality is not our subject), contributes to the demonization of Islam and Muslims.”

This reference to Joseph and D’Harlingue is pertinent in particular (as this was their focus) to the writings of the commentariat. It can have wider application to ‘simple’ reporting, e.g. in the case of Trojan Horse.

Monitoring needs to work towards identifying how to transform the structure from one that participates in oppression to one that challenges it. While the initial onus of this must be on broadcasters and those responsible for media representation of Muslims, government needs to be involved in this process, commissioning studies if necessary or facilitating the requisite debate around alienation and the impact of media on the process, in the hope that this will generate more than just a superficial self-analysis by media producers<sup>79</sup>.

### **Community Agitation for a Fair Media**

Many such projects already exist, and the authors emphasise the following actions: writing letters of complaint, letters to the editor, submitting alternative opinion pieces and such; these are essential components of this process. However, the authors

77. *ibid*

78. Joseph, S. and D’Harlingue (2012) The Wall Street Journal’s Muslims: Representing Islam in American Print News Media. *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, 1(1), 131-162.

79. Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. & Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission

contextualise these actions as important as follows:

- To foster a feeling of confidence among the community.
- To empower the community and its members to interact and protest at a time when immense pressure is put on Muslims and wider dissident voices to be silent.
- To ensure that media producers are aware that they are under scrutiny and that they are failing to meet the standards expected of them.

At the same time, it is important that community groups and organisations that run such campaigns also become familiar with and raise awareness of the structural issues that surround the media and its problematic role. They must not inadvertently foster an idea that the media is structurally sound and it is solely the lack of Muslim voices or interaction with the media that causes misrepresentation of Muslims to occur.

A related recommendation to civil society is to interact and seek training from organisations and academics that have a shared understanding of the structural issues involved. It is also important that organisations and activists target the way politicians, the judiciary and security and law enforcement agencies use the media.

Campaigning for the End of the Anti-Terror Laws; Seeking Parity in the Consultation Process; Boycotting Prevent

In February 2015 a campaign was launched calling for the abolition of all anti-terror laws in the UK on the grounds that sufficient criminal laws already existed to prosecute perpetrators of any criminal acts of political violence. Launched by way of a letter to the Guardian and followed by a conference on Prevent, the campaign was co-organised by IHRC and CAMPACC<sup>80</sup>. The campaign argues that sufficient laws exist under the existing criminal laws of the country to prosecute any terrorist act. The many anti-terror laws that have been enacted, in this analysis, are not only not necessary, but serve to demonise the Muslim community.

This campaign has galvanized diverse parts of civil society. Actors involved see both the institutionalisation of Islamophobia in these laws, but also the curtailment of civil liberties that can in theory and have to some extent, in practice, impacted much more than the Muslim community in curtailing legitimate political activism and dissent.

This campaign, and also the cessation of taking part in government consultations, which are simply rubber stamping exercises, on the part of civil society organisations<sup>81</sup>, are difficult but increasingly more necessary stances that civil society must adopt.

Additionally, momentum is required to boycott the Prevent strategy. Currently, certain unions and union figures are discussing ways in which this can be systematically done.

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80. Levidow, L. et. al. (5 February 2015). Groundless Anti-Terror Laws Must Go. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/feb/05/groundless-antiterror-laws-must-go>

81. IHRC (13 January 2015) IHRC to end participation in anti-terror laws consultations. Available at: <http://ihrc.org.uk/activities/press-releases/11331-press-release-ihrc-to-end-participation-in-anti-terror-laws-consultations>

## Reimagining Citizenship and Acceptable Behaviours

The double standards that Muslims face in their treatment is a recurring theme of this research. From failures to address Islamophobia as a form of racism, to the failure to ban far-right rallies or enact laws that effectively protect from discrimination, there is a litany of grievances being expressed, despite the demonisation of the Muslim grievance.

Nevertheless, it has also been noted that complaints about foreign policy in qualitative responses have fallen off in comparison to previous years, and this begs the question as to whether the climate of fear induced by frequent anti-terror laws and ubiquitous praxis under PREVENT has resulted in a greater muting of Muslim complaints, beliefs or thoughts.

Whereas hate-filled newspaper inches, twitter feeds and multiple other platforms are justified under the aegis of the so-called British value of ‘free speech’, critique expressed otherwise by non-Muslims becomes ‘dangerous’ and in need of being silenced if expressed by a Muslim.

This reimagining comes from law, but also from government practice. De Menthon<sup>82</sup> recommends that:

“It will be more productive for the government to build trust, and address the needs of the Muslim community in the interest of social justice, rather than through the lens of anti-terrorism.

“In order to do this, Islamic grass root organizations must be involved in procedures implemented by the government. The government should prioritise addressing Islamophobia and Institutional anti-Muslim discrimination within mainstream agencies such as within central government, local authorities, health services, police and others.”

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Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism poses a growing threat to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia.

As the leading think tank in Turkey, SETA felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions, from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe, have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in particular -this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The European Islamophobia Report (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia. Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in particular.

## About SETA

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.



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