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All Party Parliamentary Group
on British Muslims



ISLAMOPHOBIA DEFINED

The inquiry into a working
definition of Islamophobia

**Report on the inquiry
into a working definition of
Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred**

The All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims was launched in 2017. The cross party group of parliamentarians is co-chaired by Anna Soubry MP and Wes Streeting MP.

The Group was established to highlight the aspirations and challenges facing British Muslims; to celebrate the contributions of Muslim communities to Britain and to investigate prejudice, discrimination and hatred against Muslims in the UK.

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Foreword

As Chair of the Citizens UK Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life, I travelled round the country hearing evidence as to the extent to which this desirable goal was taking place and as to the reasons why it was not happening in the way many Muslims and others wished. The overwhelming message that the Commission received was that Islamophobia was playing a major role in undermining integration and community cohesion. Much of it is subtle and goes unreported but its impact is no less corrosive for its rarely coming to the notice of wider society.

This is why I greatly welcome this report, which makes an important contribution to the debate as to how Islamophobia can best be addressed. It is well researched and can give all of us food both for thought and positive action.

That action is needed I have no doubt. As a country we owe it to both ourselves collectively and to our Muslim neighbours and fellow citizens to work together to build our common good. Discrimination, prejudice and hatred damage us all and we have to work together to challenge it.

Dominic Grieve QC MP

Foreword

As co-chairs of the all party parliamentary group on British Muslims, we are often asked, being that neither of us is a Muslim, why we lead this group and what our motives are. It may seem prosaic to point out that our motives are a deep and profound commitment to equality for all citizens; irrespective of their race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability, to champion the valuable contribution British Muslims make to our society, and to investigate prejudice, discrimination and hatred against Muslims in the UK.

In our first report, “A Very Merry Muslim Christmas” we drew attention to the fantastic work done by British Muslims over the Christmas period. Muslim-led charities and the huge contribution they make to civil society and social welfare in local communities across the country was the subject of our second report “Faith as the Fourth Emergency Service”. In this, our third report, we look at a subject that deserves our urgent attention: Islamophobia.

In recent years, we have seen British Muslims make huge strides from the first Muslim Home Secretary and Mayor of London, to the first female Muslim minister to stand at the Despatch box in the House of Commons, following in the footsteps of the first Muslim female in Cabinet and minister at the Despatch box in the upper chamber. These few examples demonstrate the huge potential for Muslims to flourish in Britain. But as the London mayoral campaign in 2016 shows, such illustrious examples are only one side of the story.

The year 2017 marked the twentieth anniversary of the seminal report of the Runnymede Trust’s Commission

on British Muslims and Islamophobia, ‘Islamophobia: a challenge for us all’. The occasion of the anniversary, and the follow up report by the Runnymede Trust last year, highlight the extent to which Islamophobia remains a palpable concern among British Muslims when it comes to inequality and discrimination. Across policy domains, from employment, education and criminal justice to housing, healthcare and hate crime, Islamophobia has a significant negative impact on the life chances and quality of life enjoyed by British Muslims.

Some of the costs of inequality and discrimination faced by Muslims were presented in the commendable report of the Citizens UK Commission on Islam in British Public Life, chaired by the Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve QC, ‘The Missing Muslims: unlocking British Muslim potential for the benefit of all’.

Our impetus for conducting an inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred derived from the twin observations of seeing equality rise up the political agenda but Islamophobia remain conspicuously absent or demonstrably relegated as a subject of interest. Twenty years on from the promulgation of the term Islamophobia, we can no longer ignore or deny its impact on our British Muslim communities.

Let us be clear, Islamophobia is rooted in racism and its victims are not just Muslims but also those who are perceived to be Muslims. Its effects are seen in individual behaviours and institutional processes. Whether it is Muslim women who are denied job opportunities because they wear a headscarf, gurdwaras that are defaced because they are mistakenly identified as mosques, or Muslim

students who fail to secure entry offers from Russell Group universities, the effects of Islamophobia are real and measurable.

The normalisation of Islamophobia has long passed the 'dinner table test'. It now presides in such 'banter' as ridiculing Muslim women's dress to draw parallels with letter boxes and bank robbers, and in political disputes that are aggravated using glib tropes of suicide vests. The elision of Islamophobia into everyday bigoted discourse is not only indicative of how low the threshold has fallen, it is, more alarmingly, redolent of its diffusion to the point of evincing conscious and unconscious biases against Muslims.

The Oxford English Dictionary states that a definition is 'The act or process of defining; a statement of the meaning of a word or the nature of a thing.'

In pursuing this inquiry to arrive at a working definition, we have attempted to engage the 'process of defining' through widespread consultation with parliamentarians, experts, lawyers, community activists and victim-led organisations so that we could confidently propose a working definition which serves to give meaning to the word and nature of the thing we call Islamophobia.

We know all too well from the anti-Semitism debate engulfing the Labour party over the summer that both the process of defining - one which does not undermine or marginalise the viewpoints of the

victim group itself - and the meaning attached to the word, exemplified through demonstrable examples, are necessary if bigotry directed at particular sections of our society are to be widely understood and challenged using every available lever in Government, politics, policymaking, media, society and education.

We hope our working definition will be adopted by Government, statutory agencies, civil society organisations and principally, British Muslim communities who have been central to this enterprise and whose valuable contributions have significantly shaped our thinking on this subject.

We further hope that the adoption of this working definition will signal to Britain's Muslims that we, as parliamentarians, will not be resigned to their being missed off or missing from our political, social, cultural, civic and economic life and that we will actively tackle Islamophobia so that British Muslims can thrive and continue to attain new heights long into the future.

Anna Soubry and Wes Streeting

Co-chairs of the APPG on British Muslims.

Executive Summary

A year ago the Runnymede Trust published its twentieth anniversary report on Islamophobia. The report, marking two decades since its seminal publication, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, highlighted some of the changes in process, impact and outcomes relating to Islamophobia which continued to affect British Muslim communities in a negative way. The follow on report with its title, *Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All*, encapsulates the persistence of the corrosive effect anti-Muslim sentiment and behaviours have on Muslims and wider society.

It is not just British Muslims who are impacted by Islamophobia. It is British society at large who, by virtue of normalised prejudice against Muslim beliefs and practice, come to imbibe a panoply of falsehoods or misrepresentations and, consequentially, discriminatory outlooks to the detriment of social harmony and social inclusion.

More than twenty years since the term Islamophobia entered our political and policy lexicon, and almost a decade since its ‘passing the dinner table test’ was raised, this is a good time to stop and survey the progress that has been made in challenging this social evil. It is with this intent, and to deter a further twenty years before substantive progress is made in tackling its blight on our British Muslim citizens, that the APPG on British Muslims opened its inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia in April 2018.

Islamophobia has far surpassed the ‘dinner table test’ espoused by Baroness Sayeeda Warsi in 2011. It is now so prevalent in society and dispersed across institutional, social, political and economic life that it deserves to be recognised at Britain’s ‘bigotry blind spot’.

But no amount of documentation of the evidence of discriminatory outcomes faced by Muslims - in employment, housing, education, the criminal justice system, social and public life and political or media discourse - can satisfy our desire to reverse these results if we cannot begin from the point of an agreed definition.

Muslims have a strong sense of belonging to Britain and of feeling part of British society. In a 2016 survey, 93% of Muslims said they felt they belonged to

Britain, with more than half saying they felt this “very strongly”. In another survey in 2015, 95% of Muslims said they feel loyal to Britain.¹

And religion, as we discovered in our previous report, *Faith as the Fourth Emergency Service*, plays an important part in the lives and identity of most Muslims in Britain. As shown in a wide-ranging report by Ipsos Mori reviewing survey research on Muslims, a strong sense of religious identity sits alongside a strong sense of British identity with Muslims more likely than the British public as a whole to say that their national identity is important to their sense of who they are (55% of Muslims say this, compared to 44% of all adults). Muslims – like other minority groups such as Hindus – often have multiple and overlapping identities, but these aspects are seen as equally important and do not diminish their sense of Britishness.²

According to the Ipsos Mori report, the vast majority of Muslims (94%) feel able to practice their religion freely in Britain, and most believe that Islam is compatible with the British way of life. Five in six Muslims (83%) agree that “it is possible to fully belong to Britain and maintain a separate cultural or religious identity”; and two-thirds (66%) of Britons regardless of religion agree within them.³

And as evidenced in our report last Christmas, *A Very Merry Muslim Christmas*, and mentioned in the Ipsos Mori research, many British Muslims participate in traditional British cultural practices, even those with explicitly Christian origins with three-quarters (73%) sending Christmas cards and three in five giving Christmas presents.⁴

Despite the strong convergence in loyalty to the UK, belonging and participating in national festivals, Muslims harbour grave misgivings about their acceptance in society with three in five (63%) Muslims saying they think there is more prejudice against Muslims than against other religious groups, a perception that is especially widespread among young Muslims and graduates.⁵ This is echoed in a recent report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, ‘Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain’ which found that 70% of Muslims said they had specifically experienced religion-based prejudice.⁶

1 Ballagan, K., Mortimore, R., and G. Gottfried. 2018). A review of survey research on Muslims in Britain. (London: Ipsos Mori Social Research Institute). p 10.

2 Ibid. p. 11

3 Ibid. p. 11

4 Ibid. p. 12

5 Ibid. p. 12

6 Abrams, D., Swift, H., and D. Houston. 2018. Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain. Equality and Human Rights Commission. p. 10.

We heard of a wide spectrum of Islamophobic experiences suffered by British Muslims that were brought to our attention during our community consultations. Examples such as a lit firework that was thrown through a family's letterbox forcing the family to move home, a young Muslim girl whose friends were abused in a shop and told to 'go back to where they came from' because they wore headscarves, a mother who told us of her daughter being bullied in school because she had started to wear the hijab, a man who was fearful of being injured by a taxi driver in the wake of a child sex case involving Asian men from the Newcastle area, and someone who had been spat at, verbally abused, and had eggs thrown at them. Chapter four details many more of the incidents raised with us during our inquiry.

Throughout our inquiry we have heard from experts, academics, lawyers, local politicians, social activists, campaign groups from across the UK, and individuals in Muslim communities in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield, about how instrumental a definition of Islamophobia is to the political will and institutional determination to tackle it.

From hate crimes motivated by anti-Muslim feeling, buttressed by stereotypes and racist caricatures prevalent in social and media discourse, to policies which perpetuate discriminatory outcomes for Muslims, a definition of Islamophobia is vital if we are to take seriously an "explain or change" attitude in response to inequalities faced by our British Muslim citizens.

Notably, there has been no attempt to adopt a definition of Islamophobia by Government despite recognising the significant impact the problem has on British Muslim communities. Policy proposals have variously referred to the issue of anti-Muslim bigotry and its effects, and hate crime actions plans since 2012 have placed emphasis on measuring, tackling and educating about anti-Muslim hatred but the absence of a definition has been noticeable.

While considerable and commendable steps have been taken to adopt a definition of anti-Semitism, commensurate efforts on Islamophobia has been lacklustre with the term being omitted in the 2012 hate crime action plan, its 2014 updated version and in the present Government's 2016 hate crime action plan. This year, in the 'Action against hate, the UK government's plan for tackling hate crime – 'two years on' strategy, Islamophobia appears as a concept although no definition in the document is forthcoming.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Minister for Faith, when asked whether the Government has

a definition of Islamophobia which guides its work in this area responded to say: "The Government do not currently endorse a particular definition of Islamophobia. Previous attempts by others to define this term have not succeeded in attracting consensus or widespread acceptance."⁷ We have taken this advice on board and in the process of this inquiry and have laboured to achieve the widest possible consensus drawing on experts with an established expertise in this area and individuals or organisations whose work with communities offers the qualities of competency and insight.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Home Office, Victoria Atkins MP, when asked by the co-chair of this group whether the Government agreed that the time had come for a proper legal definition of Islamophobia, answered to say "We do not accept the need for a definitive definition."⁸

The APPG has recognised that the lack of a widely adopted working definition of Islamophobia had lowered the threshold and led to an increase in Islamophobia in society to devastating effect. The detectable shift from overt to subtler or respectable, manifestations of Islamophobia - the normalisation of the prejudice to the extent it is rendered almost invisible to many - warrants a definition that can arrest and reverse its present trajectory.

In April 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims launched an inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia. The APPG was clear that the inquiry would be a widely consultative exercise to ascertain a working definition of Islamophobia which could be broadly accepted by British Muslim communities and operate across governmental, public, community and private sector organisations, with the aim of ensuring that any impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life by British Muslims could be adequately addressed and dealt with by the relevant bodies appropriately. As we heard throughout the inquiry, how we define and understand an issue or problem informs how we then respond to it.

The APPG considered whether the term Islamophobia should remain in continued use or whether an alternative term, such as anti-Muslim hatred, should be adopted instead. However, the APPG received an overwhelming amount of evidence across governmental, community, academic, and public and private sector organisations who attested to the cogency and desirability of retaining the term Islamophobia on the basis that it has established itself in the political and policy lexicon, had gained traction over time and was the predominant choice among Muslims to name and describe the hatred

7 House of Lords Hansard, 17 October 2017, Vol 785, Column 486.

8 House of Commons Hansard, 12 March 2018, Vol 637, Column 594.

and hostility targeted at them on the basis of their Muslimness. Islamophobia was the term of choice among British Muslims to describe their experience.

If the events of the past summer have taught us anything, it is that victims demand and deserve the right to give the name to the bigotry which takes a particular aim at them as a collective group, whether with British Jews and anti-Semitism or British Muslims and Islamophobia.

The APPG considered the recent history of definitions of Islamophobia (chapter 3) in line with the written and oral evidence presented to the group. In analysing the quantitative and, mostly, qualitative data, a thread of three key factors emerged: the *process* of Islamophobia, the *actions* that qualify as Islamophobic, and the *impact* of Islamophobia. As a result, the APPG concluded that any definition must include the aforementioned three factors (process, action(s) and impact).

Let us be clear, the aim of establishing a working definition of Islamophobia has neither been motivated by, nor is intended to curtail, free speech or criticism of Islam as a religion. Evidence read and heard by the group clearly delineated between the desirability of criticism, debate and free discussion of Islam as a religion - by Muslims and non-Muslim participants in the inquiry - and the victimisation of Muslims through the targeting of expressions of Muslimness to deny or impair their fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Criticism of religion is a fundamental right in an open society and is enshrined in our commitment to freedom of speech. We also received theological opinion which outlined the long Islamic history and classical tradition of debate, discussion, and dissenting opinions within Islam. No open society can place religion above criticism and we do not subscribe to the view that a working definition of Islamophobia can or should be formulated with the purpose of protecting Islam from free and fair criticism or debate. On the question of what we might understand from fair criticism, we refer in the report to a series of useful tests proposed by Professor Tariq Modood of Bristol University, when it comes to assessing whether what we are dealing with is ‘reasonable criticism’ of Islam and Muslims or a veiled attempt at

Islamophobic speech.

The ‘harm principle’ has guided our deliberations on the appropriate limits to free speech in arriving at our working definition of Islamophobia. The definition proposed here has been developed through conscientious deliberation that has sought to negotiate the tensions arising between freedom of speech and freedom of religion in full recognition that in a democratic society these negotiations are not just possible, as evidenced by the adoption of definitions relating to other forms of group-based hostility such as anti-Semitism, but necessary at a time when Muslim communities in the UK are experiencing heightened levels of Islamophobia.

We recommend the adoption of the following definition following widespread consultation with academics, lawyers, local and nationally elected officials, Muslim organisations, activists, campaigners, and local Muslim communities:

Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Muslim female, Birmingham

“There was a large queue at a local petrol station and a lady in another car got out and accused me of blocking the queue...this then quickly led to her blaming this on my hijab as I couldn’t see where I was going, calling me a Paki etc and a whole lot of verbal abuse. No action was taken by the police as

I was a white revert Muslim, I was told there was no grounds to report the incident. It couldn’t be reported as a race incident as I didn’t belong to any ethnicity other than English/white...no grounds to prosecute on religious/hate crime I could not take it any further!”

Introduction

Britain prides itself on being a liberal and tolerant nation, and rightly so. We have some of the best equalities legislation in the world and are frequently commended for ‘best practice’ in data collection, political will and institutional responses to tackling racism and bigotry in Britain. Our practice has not been simply to tackle racism and discrimination in outcomes but to determinedly advance equality through positive action and the public sector equality duty.

Last year, the Government published the first ever Race Disparity Audit, establishing a website - <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk> - documenting information about the different experiences of people from various ethnic backgrounds based on data collected from across government departments and published in one place.

The Parker Review, MacGregor-Smith Review and the Lammy Review have gone further and examined racial inequality in outcomes in public life, employment and in the criminal justice system respectively. The collective will to explore why people from different ethnic backgrounds fare worse than others was summarised in the Prime Minister’s declaration that agencies “explain or change” the conditions that hinder equality as outcomes for different sections of our society.

The cost to the UK of racial inequality was starkly estimated by Baroness MacGregor-Smith as £24 billion a year. That is the estimated loss to our economy from the under-representation in participation and

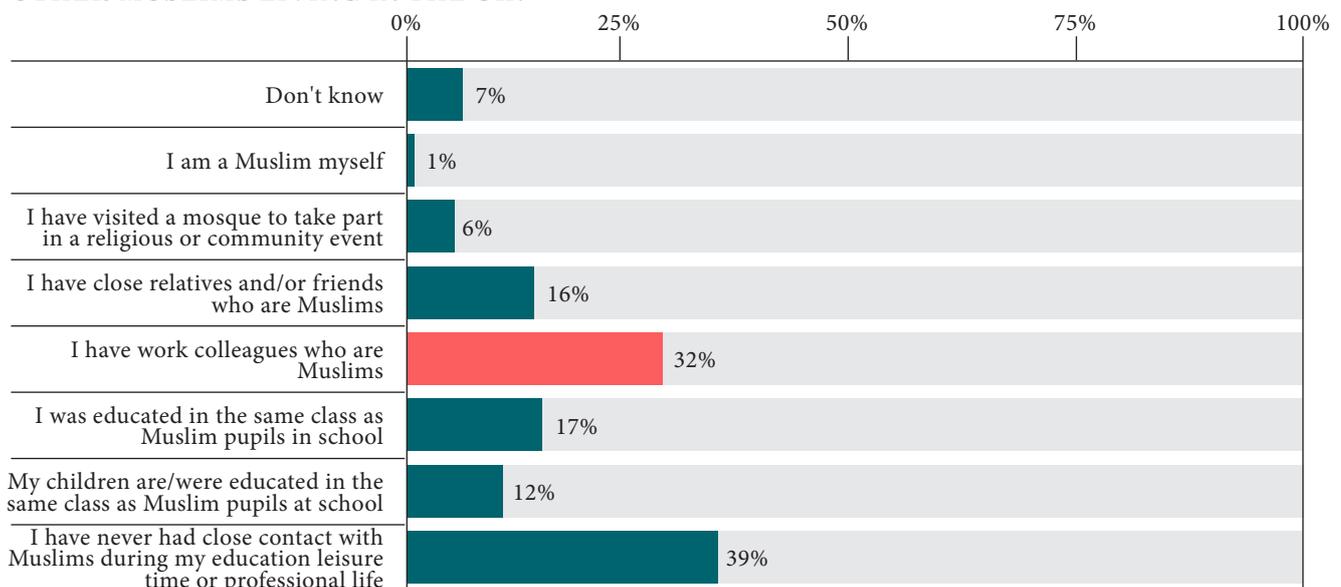
progression of individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in the British labour market. The cost is compounded by the loss to profitability arising from the under-representation of or active discrimination against minorities in business with a McKinsey report on ‘Why Diversity Matters’ finding that “companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.”⁹

We would point to a poll conducted by YouGov for the Muslim charity Islamic Relief in 2015 which shows that the cost to the British economy of the under-representation of Muslims in the workplace is not just lost income and profits but also lost opportunities for promoting and advancing tolerance and respect for Muslims.

As shown in Figure 1, when asked what personal experience individuals had of British Muslims and other Muslims living in the UK, the highest response was among those who said they have work colleagues who are Muslims.

The poll is a useful reminder that business has an important role to play in fostering mutual respect towards Muslims. Baroness Ruby MacGregor-Smith in her review recommended a ‘guide to talking about race’ suggesting ‘Government should work with employer representatives and third sector organisations to develop a simple guide on how to discuss race in the workplace. We would add to this and propose that a working definition of Islamophobia should encourage employers and third

FIGURE 1 - WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS APPLY TO YOU IN RELATION TO YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF BRITISH MUSLIMS, AND OTHER MUSLIMS LIVING IN THE UK?



⁹ McKinsey. (2015). 'Why Diversity Matters'. <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/ourinsights/why-diversity-matters>

sector organisations to make progress on developing a simple guide on how to discuss Islamophobia in the workplace too.

In its report on the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system, the Lammy Review highlighted inequalities experienced by individuals of BAME background from race disproportionality in stop and search to arrests, pleas, sentencing and prisoner experiences where BAME individuals fare worse than white Britons. The economic and social cost of the net over-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system is estimated at £234 million a year. This is in addition to the cost to trust in institutions and policing by consent with the Lammy Review stating “Grievances over policing tactics, particularly the disproportionate use of Stop and Search, drain trust in the criminal justice system in BAME communities.”¹⁰

These reviews and their findings are mentioned here briefly for two reasons: firstly, racism and

discrimination doesn’t just erode the spirit of the equalities legislation we have put in place in the UK, it also takes its toll on BAME communities and wider society in the social and economic costs of discrimination and exclusion. Secondly, while each of the reviews above have shed important light on racial inequalities, there is a notable omission of religion as grounds of discrimination and exclusion, particularly where this intersects with race but also where it forms a further penalty faced by individuals of BAME background.

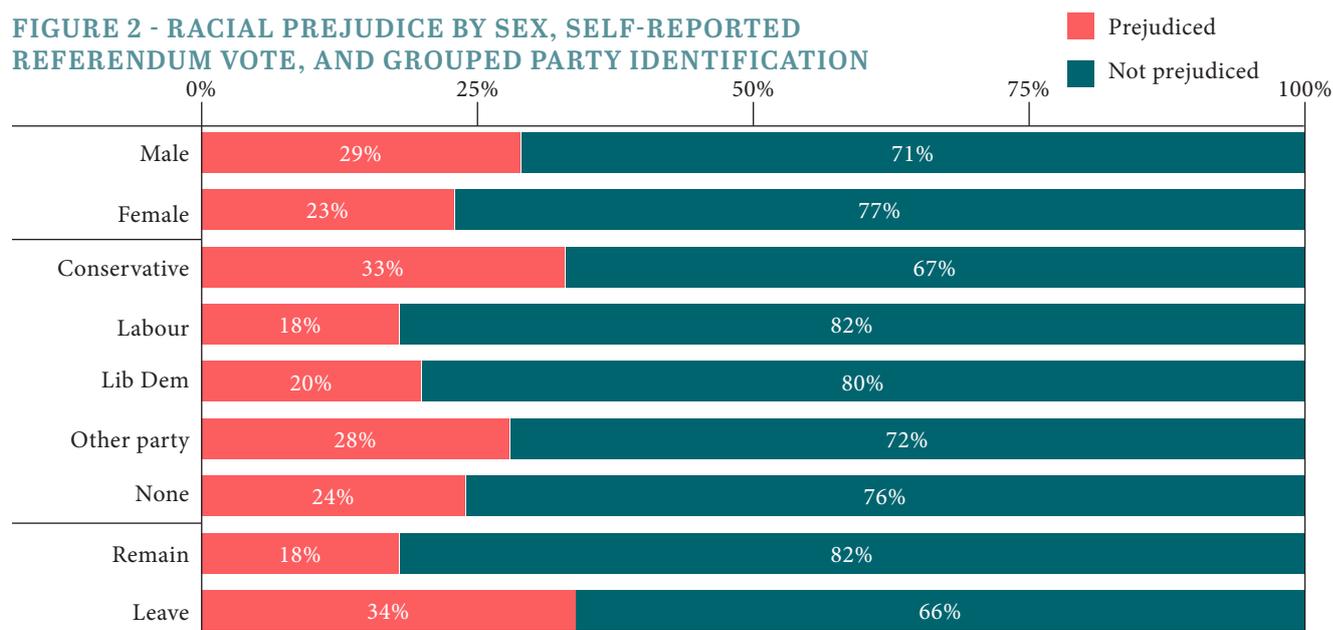
The Women and Equalities Committee in its report on ‘Employment Opportunities for Muslims in the UK’ notes the double penalty faced by Muslim males; race and religion, and the triple penalty suffered by Muslim women, race, religion and gender. Moreover, the report correctly identifies the lack of regard for inequalities faced by Muslims, the recent reviews such as Lammy, MacGregor-Smith and Parker notwithstanding. The report argues, “Despite a welcome focus from the Government on tackling disadvantage, it still

lacks a coherent overarching plan with measurable objectives to tackle the inequalities faced by Muslims.”¹¹

It is for the purpose of giving new impetus to challenging particular disadvantages faced by British Muslims that the all party parliamentary group embarked on an inquiry to establish a working definition of Islamophobia. The evidence we have heard suggests Islamophobia manifests in a wide array of contexts, from casual stereotyping to rampant dehumanisation of Muslims as a collective group and from incidents of workplace discrimination to institutional dynamics which reproduce unequal outcomes for Muslims in policy design and implementation.

Our attempt to make real, tangible gains in the drive for equality is evident and exemplary but it is not enough as any cursory examination of polling and social attitudes surveys in recent years will reveal as to the prevalence of negative attitudes towards British Muslims held by their fellow citizens.

FIGURE 2 - RACIAL PREJUDICE BY SEX, SELF-REPORTED REFERENDUM VOTE, AND GROUPED PARTY IDENTIFICATION



¹⁰ David Lammy, “The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System”, Ministry of Justice, September 2017, p. 17, accessed 07.11.2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf

¹¹ “Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK: Second Report of Session 2016–17”, House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, July 12, 2016, p. 43, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/89/89.pdf>

The British Social Attitudes survey is a useful barometer to measure shifts in social attitudes in the UK over time. In more recent times, analysis of attitudinal data has revealed some important and troubling trends when it comes to the persistence of anti-Muslim sentiments in Britain.

In September 2017, NatCen with the Runnymede Trust published a report titled ‘Racial Prejudice in Britain today’. The report found that 1 in 4 (26%) Britons admitted to being racially prejudiced. Given that the admission is one individuals would not readily make, the figure may well be an underestimation of actual figures. Looking at the figure over time, the report notes “The proportion saying they are racially prejudiced has never fallen below a quarter when people are asked the same question on NatCen’s British Social Attitudes survey which goes back to 1983. It peaked at 39% in 1987 and hit a more recent peak of 37% in 2011.”

The report provides further breakdown of the data showing that men more than women admit to being racially prejudiced (29% compared to 23%). In respect of party political affiliation, 1 in 3 Conservatives were reported as admitting racial prejudice (33%), the highest of all political party groups, compared to 1 in 5 Lib Dems (20%) and less than 1 in 5 Labour (18%). The NatCen report suggests “Being male, a Conservative party supporter and a Leave voter are all associated with a higher likelihood of an individual describing themselves as racially prejudiced.”¹²

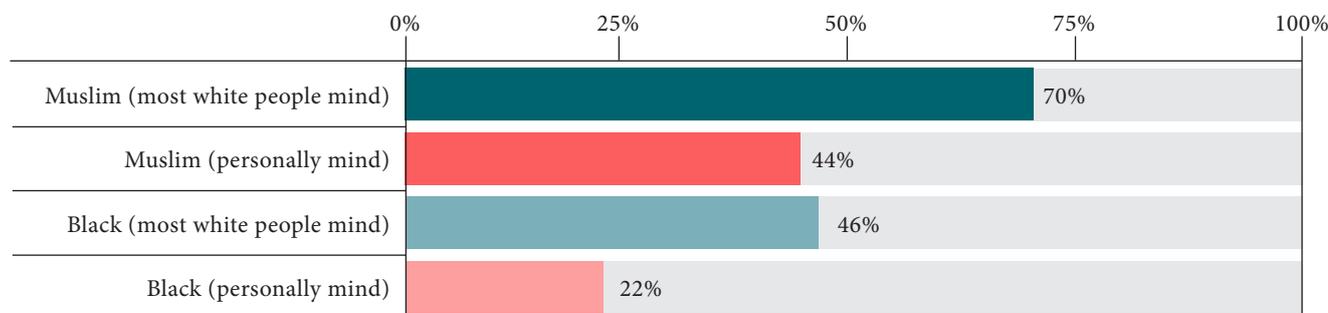
The NatCen report further identifies particular groups affected by racial prejudice noting that the general trend toward social ‘liberalisation’ was not a universal experience among groups in society. For example, in 2013, the survey polled attitudes asking whether individual felt ‘most White people in Britain’, or they ‘personally’ would mind if a close relative married someone of Black, Asian or Muslim background. The responses lend significance to the problem, we would say, of particular prejudice facing British Muslims.

According to the data, more people responded to say ‘most White people in Britain’ and they ‘personally’ would mind if a close relative married a Muslim compared to those who felt either most White people or they personally would feel the same about a close relative marrying someone of Black or Asian background. In 2013, 50% and 46% said ‘most White people in Britain’ would mind if a close relative married someone of Asian or Black background respectively. Of those who would ‘personally’ mind, 21% of respondents said so in respect of an Asian person, and 22% said they would mind if a close family member married a Black person. In contrast, “70% of respondents said that most White British people would mind if a close relative married a Muslim and 44% of respondents said they would mind themselves.”¹³

In a poll conducted by ComRes in October 2018, when asked if a family member marrying a Muslim would be a matter of concern, 38% of respondents said they would be concerned compared to 40% who said they would not be. Five years on from when a similarly framed question was posed by NatCen, there is only a minor fall in the figures which still reflect that around 2 in 5 would be concerned.

Ingrid Storm of Manchester University who has analysed the results from NatCen surveys and detected a particular strain of anti-Muslim prejudice when it comes to attitudes towards marriage to people of Muslim background argues that anti-Muslim prejudice takes two forms; “those who have a general ethnic prejudice disliking Muslims because they are viewed as racially as well as culturally different from whites” and “those who have a specific anti-Muslim prejudice, even if they are otherwise tolerant of ethnic minorities”.¹⁴

FIGURE 3 - DO YOU THINK MOST WHITE PEOPLE IN BRITAIN WOULD MIND/ WOULD YOU MIND IF A CLOSE RELATIVE WERE TO MARRY A PERSON WHO IS MUSLIM/OF BLACK OR WEST INDIAN ORIGIN?



12 Nancy Kelley, Omar Khan, Sarah Sharrock, “Racial prejudice in Britain today”, NatCen Social Research, September 2017, p. 7, accessed 07.11.2018, http://natcen.ac.uk/media/1488132/racial-prejudice-report_v4.pdf?_ga=2.239606529.367617924.1540825729-1731288926.1540825729

13 Ibid., p. 11.

14 “Muslims continue to be less accepted than other minorities in Britain”, Democratic Audit, April 17, 2015, accessed 07.11.2018, <http://www.democraticaudit.com/2015/04/17/muslims-continue-to-be-less-accepted-than-other-minorities-in-britain/>

TABLE 1 - THINKING ABOUT RELIGION AND SOCIETY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS COMES CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?

	Islam is generally compatible with the values of British society	There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society	Neither	Don't know
Jun-18	25%	46%	12%	17%
Mar-18	25%	44%	14%	17%
Nov-17	24%	47%	12%	17%
Jun-17	29%	44%	12%	14%
Feb-17	25%	46%	12%	17%
Oct-16	22%	52%	12%	13%
Jul-16	25%	49%	14%	13%
Mar-16	22%	51%	10%	17%
Feb-16	20%	56%	12%	12%
Jan-16	25%	51%	11%	13%
Dec-15	25%	50%	13%	13%
Oct-15	19%	59%	10%	12%
Sep-15	20%	58%	9%	13%
Aug-15	20%	53%	12%	15%
Jul-15	20%	56%	10%	13%
Jun-15	20%	59%	9%	12%
May-15	19%	58%	9%	14%
Mar-15	22%	55%	10%	13%
Feb-15	23%	52%	12%	13%
Jan-15	23%	52%	12%	13%

The abovementioned ComRes poll further found that 58% agreed with the statement 'Islamophobia is a real problem in today's society' and that almost 1 in 2 agreed with the statement 'prejudice against Islam makes it difficult to be a Muslim in this country'¹⁵ (48%). Surprisingly, the figure is slightly higher than the number of Muslims who agreed with a similar statement in a poll of 1,000 Muslims conducted by ComRes for BBC Radio 4 Today programme in 2015; three years ago 46% of Muslims said that 'prejudice against Islam makes it very difficult to be a Muslim in this country'. On this point, we can fairly say Muslims and their fellow Britons agree. We would further say that this should emphatically not be the case no person of faith should feel that Britain is an inhospitable place to practice their religion.

While Muslims and Britons display similar attitudes when it comes to perceptions of difficulty with being a Muslim in Britain, a different set of polls uncovers startling views when it comes to whether ordinary

Britons believe Islam is compatible with the values of British society. As this YouGov tracker poll shows, around 1 in 4 Britons believes Islam is compatible with the values of British society and around 1 in 2 believe there to be a 'fundamental clash' between the two.¹⁶

Recent data published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission suggests that the lived experience of British Muslims is, and should be, a recognised cause for concern.

According to the EHRC report, 'Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain', 42% of people in Britain said they had experienced some form of prejudice in the last 12 months but a higher number, 70%, of Muslims, said they had specifically experienced religion-based prejudice. The EHRC also finds interesting variations in attitudes towards equality for groups in society and while almost three quarters of survey respondents (74%) agreed that there should be equality for all groups in Britain when it comes to particular groups,

15 "Muslim Poll: Telephone Fieldwork: 26th January - 20th February 2015", ComRes, p. 13, table 13, q. 1, accessed 07.11.2018, http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBC-Today-Programme_British-Muslims-Poll_FINAL-Tables_Feb2015.pdf

16 Tracker: Islam and British values, YouGov. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/02/19/tracker-islam-and-british-values>. Last accessed 10 October 2018.

this figure falls sharply.¹⁷ The study found that: “More people expressed openly negative feelings towards some protected characteristics (44% towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, 22% towards Muslims, and 16% towards transgender people) than towards others (for example, 9% towards gay, lesbian or bisexual people, 4% towards people aged over 70, and 3% towards disabled people with a physical impairment)”¹⁸

Moreover, around a third of British adults felt that efforts to provide equal opportunities had gone ‘too far’ in the case of immigrants (37%) and Muslims (33%) but nearly two-thirds thought that such efforts had ‘not gone far enough’ for people with a mental health condition (63%) or people with a physical impairment (60%).¹⁹ The report suggests that the resistance shown towards improving equal opportunities was greatest for those groups that people considered to be less ‘friendly’, such as Muslims and immigrants.²⁰

Again, the available evidence points to particular forms of prejudice directed at Muslims.

An alarming outcome of these unpalatable facts is the growing number of Islamophobic hate crimes in the UK. In the most recent data on police recorded hate crime published by the Home Office, which disaggregated data on religious hate crimes for the first time, the reality of Islamophobic hate crimes is laid bare.

The Home Office annual report on police recorded hate crime reveals that racial hate crimes continue to account for the majority of recorded hate crime, 76% of all hate crimes recorded in 2017/18 and showing a 14% increase on the previous year.²¹

The greatest proportionate increase was in religiously aggravated hate crimes, which increased 40% from 5,949 incidents in 2016/17 to 8,336 incidents in 2017/18. Moreover, this year the Home Office published the

perceived religion of the victims of religious hate crimes and identified 52% of victims (2,965) as being perceived to be Muslim, with 12% (672) perceived to be Jewish. 21% (1,174) of religious hate crime cases had the perceived religion of the victim recorded as unknown which suggests that the figures on Muslim victims could be higher still.²²

The hate crime data shows that recorded hate crimes have more than doubled over a five-year period but religious hate crimes have risen by five-fold over the same period.

A further point of relevance in relation to race hate crime is drawn from the Crime Survey of England and Wales, figures for which were published alongside police recorded hate crime, and which found that the risk of being a victim of race hate crime was highest for Muslim adults (1.7%) compared to, for example, 0.2% for Christian adults.²³

Other pertinent findings from the hate crime annual release reveals the extent to which Muslims suffer a ‘double whammy’ when it comes to terrorist attacks committed by individuals who erroneously claim a religious justification or motivation for their actions. The Home Office annual report on hate crimes shows that there a discernible trend when it comes to spikes experienced in hate crime after certain trigger events, particularly terrorist incidents. The report notes a peak in July 2013 in racially or religiously aggravated offences following the Lee Rigby murder, and a rise in racially or religiously aggravated offences during the EU referendum campaign. There was a reported 41% increase in racial and religious hate crime following the EU referendum in June 2016. The 2017/18 report notes apparent spikes in racially or religiously aggravated hate crime following the Westminster Bridge attack in March 2017 and a sharp increase in hate crime in June 2017 following the terrorist attacks

Muslim male, London

“Islamophobia is also discrimination in housing, education, employment. Islamophobia is not just conversation, negative discourse, set of perception, it is also the material inequality that Muslims live.”

Muslim male, London

“We need to tackle the dehumanization of Muslims in the media and by political parties.”

¹⁷ Dominic Abrams, Hannah Swift, and Diane Houston, “Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain”, Equality and Human Rights Commission, October 2018, p. 10, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/national-barometer-of-prejudice-and-discrimination-in-britain.pdf>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 11

²¹ “Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017/18 Statistical Bulletin 20/18”, Home Office, October 16, 2018, p. 7, accessed 07.11.2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf

²² Ibid., p.35.

²³ Ibid., p. 26.

in May and June, at Manchester Arena and London Bridge.

Despite the levels of prejudice evidenced in the national surveys, British Muslims evince high levels of loyalty, belonging and social interaction with fellow citizens. In the Community Life Survey published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport last month (October 2018), Asians in the UK were more likely than any other ethnic group to say they felt ‘people from different backgrounds got on together in their local area’, 84% of Asians compared to 83% White, 78% Black, 82% Mixed and 78% Other. Asians were also more likely to feel ‘fairly strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ they belong to Britain than other ethnic minority groups, 84% Asians compared to 82% Blacks, 73% Mixed and 79% Other. The figure for White Britons is marginally greater than for Asians at 86%.

At a time when far right populism is gaining ground in Europe, we can take pride in the weak political standing of far right parties in the United Kingdom and the short shrift given to racists in our politics and public discourse. The electoral demise of the British National Party and its various political and social movement offshoots, from the English Defence League and Democratic Football Lads’ Alliance to Liberty GB and the mainstreaming of anti-Muslim bigotry in the ranks of the near defunct UK Independence Party, are illustrative of the decency and common sense of ordinary Britons who reject divisive narratives about minority groups and repel its protagonists at the ballot box.

But we would be remiss to assume that the weak foothold of the far right in British politics is demonstrative of our succeeding to root out racism and bigotry in our society. As cited in the report by the Citizens UK Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, ‘The Missing Muslims: Unlocking the British Muslim potential for the benefit of all’, ‘A total of 37% of adult Britons would support policies to reduce the number of Muslims in the UK,²⁴ and more than half of Britons (56%) now regard Islam – the religion generally, as distinct from Islamic extremists – as a threat to the UK’.²⁵

Indeed, criminal justice figures reveal that racial and religious hate crimes still account for around 4 in 5 of all recorded hate crime offences and in recent years, we have seen these offences escalate to the most heinous of crimes: murder.

The killing of grandfather Makram Ali outside Finsbury Park mosque in the summer of 2017, the murder of another elderly Muslim male, Muhsin Ahmed in Rotherham in 2015 and the brutal stabbing of Mohammed Saleem in Birmingham in 2013, serve as grave reminders of the perils of deep-rooted Islamophobia in sections of our society. Furthermore, the ‘life-altering’ injuries sustained by Dr Sarandeve Bhabra when he was attacked in a supermarket by an individual seeking revenge for the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby evokes due regard for other minority groups who are targeted for their ‘perceived Muslimness’. Islamophobia affects Muslims directly in relation to their expressions of Muslimness but it also affects other minorities for whom a ‘perceived Muslimness’ can expose them to vulnerability of assault, harassment, discrimination and abuse.

Major incidents duly capture our attention but they are situated within a maelstrom of everyday racism and micro-aggressions which continue to blight the freedom and security enjoyed by British Muslim citizens.

The impact of rising Islamophobia is continuing to have a detrimental impact on the British Muslims ranging from disengagement, disenfranchisement and disaffection with the state, to discrimination in the labour market, to poor housing, lower level of educational attainment, increased rates of poverty, increased rates of mental health, and decreased quality of life and health outcomes.

In recent years, Islamophobic speech and text have particularly been subject to the debate on freedom of speech and the absence of a widely adopted working definition of Islamophobia has further catalyzed the rise of the Islamophobic expression in public life and on social media by individuals and groups across the social and political spectrum from members of the public and right wing groups, to elected officials and senior parliamentarians.

The Missing Muslims report identified the need for robust action in this arena and recommended in its 2017 report “For the Government to adopt a definition of anti-Muslim prejudice, and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to set up administrative systems to look at Anti-Muslim prejudice in the same way other hate crimes are considered.”²⁶

The APPG on British Muslims’ inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia was, therefore, necessary

In a 2018 poll by ComRes, 58% of people said ‘Islamophobia is a real problem in today’s society’

24 Matthew Goodwin, “The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge”, Chatham House, March 1, 2013, accessed 07.11.2018, www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/189767

25 Jack Sommers, “7/7 Bombings anniversary poll shows more than half of Britons see Muslims as a threat”, Huffington Post, July 6, 2015, https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/07/03/77-bombings-muslims-islam-britain-poll_n_7694452.html?guccounter=1

26 “The Missing Muslims: Unlocking the British Muslim potential for the benefit of all”, Citizens UK Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, 2017, p. 26 https://d3n8a8pro7v7hmx.cloudfront.net/newcitizens/pages/1261/attachments/original/1499106471/Missing_Muslims_Report_-_Electronic_copy.pdf?1499106471

and incredibly timely. The inquiry launched in April 2018 and spanned six months, during which evidence from community members, victim groups, public and private sector organisations was submitted, oral evidence sessions were conducted in Parliament, and community consultations were held in London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Manchester.

This report presents the findings of a inquiry into the working definition of Islamophobia. The report begins by analysing

academic literature on Islamophobia in four key areas: the media, online (social media platforms), gendered Islamophobia, and in employment. In doing so, the process behind Islamophobia, actions that qualify as Islamophobic, and the impact of Islamophobia is explored in more depth. In chapter three, the trajectory of definitions over the last two decades are presented with the APPG's deliberations. Following this is our wide-ranging evidence and consultations in arriving at a working definition which are described in detail in chapter four. Victim experiences form the

93% of Muslims say they feel they belonged to Britain, with more than half saying they felt this "very strongly"

basis of chapter five with the inclusion of responses to our community consultation questionnaires and views shared by Muslims during the APPG's community consultation exercises in Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham and London. We conclude with a chapter which further elucidates the definition we have proposed here and its application. We hope

this inquiry and its report, which advances a working definition of Islamophobia will give comfort to victims and critics alike that our business in adopting our definition is not to interfere with the right of individuals to criticise Islam or engage Muslims in critical discussions about their religion, but to marshal the political will and the necessary policy and institutional response to seriously and robustly tackle what we contend is Britain's bigotry blind-spot: Islamophobia.

Muslim female, Wales

"A lit firework was posted through the letterbox of my own home...the incident was reported to the police through 101 but no significant action was taken...there was CCTV on the street however, it was not used to find or prosecute the perpetrator..."

this happened twice but still no security was provided by the police officers. It pushed and motivated my family to move house. Our local MP helped move house but no real justice was received."

Chapter 1 Literature review

There are a number of academics, activists, advocacy groups, and organisations that have articulated concerns of how widespread Islamophobia is becoming in every sphere of life. These include policing (Massoumi et al: 2017, Lammy: 2017), criminal justice (Fitzgibbon: 2012), education (Abbas: 2017 Faure Walker: 2017, Rights Watch UK: 2016), employment (Sadiq: 2013), parenting (Abbas: 2018), banking and finance (Tamimi: 2017), politics (Jones: 2016, Muslim Council of Britain: 2018), and media (Rawlinson: 2016). In its twentieth anniversary report on Islamophobia, the Runnymede Trust examined the multifaceted impact of Islamophobia on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes for British Muslims. The report, an edited collection drawing on a wide range of experts, included analysis of Islamophobia in health, education, employment, civil society and the media, and in discursive frameworks on identity, race and belonging. The report offers a sobering account of the breadth of the problem and the changes, and continuities, in experiences of Islamophobia facing British Muslims twenty years on.

MUSLIMS AND THE MEDIA

Since the tragic events of September 11 2001, the British media's coverage on Islam and British Muslim communities has been significant but deeply problematic in many ways (Sian: 2012, Werbner: 2009, Moore et.al: 2008). Whilst the Rushdie affair had played a significant role in putting British Muslims under the spotlight (Poole: 2002, Sian: 2012), it is since the events of September 11th that reporting on Islam and Muslims has become inextricably linked with themes of conflict, violence and terrorism. A stark and binary narrative has since been perpetuated by the media in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed as a threat to national security and to 'our way of life', with the religious values of Islam depicted as being diametrically opposed to values and norms of 'the West' and 'mainstream society' (Poole: 2002, 2006, Richardson: 2004, Akbarzadeh and Smith 2005, Richardson: 2004, Sardar and Davis 2002, Runnymede Trust, 1997).

A number of studies in recent years have been conducted on the media's reporting of Islam and Muslims in Britain. Prior to 9/11, Poole (2002) analysed articles on British Muslims in the Guardian/Observer, The Times/Sunday Times, The Sun and The Daily Mail between 1993 and 1997. She found that British Muslims were portrayed as being a threat to liberal values and democracy, being involved in crime, as having extremist views, and being largely influenced by Muslims in other parts of the world. Similarly,

Richardson (2004) carried out an analysis into the linguistic and social practices in the reporting of Islam and Muslims in British newspapers over a four-month period in 1997. He discovered four reoccurring themes all of which distilled to the presentation of Muslims as a threat: Muslims being portrayed as terrorists/extremists, as a threat to democracy, as a social threat (particularly to women), and as a military threat. He concluded that British newspapers reframe Muslim cultural 'difference' as cultural 'deviance' through a three-step process that involves separation, differentiation, and negativisation (2004:232).

In light of heightened media awareness post-9/11, such studies have become increasingly important in highlighting the negative ways in which Muslims are represented to wider society through the medium of print and broadcast media.

Moore, Mason and Lewis (2008) analysed 974 articles on Islam in the British press from 2000 to 2008. They found that over time, there was an increase in stories that focused on extremism or differences between Islamic culture and 'the West', whereas stories that focused on attacks on Muslims or problems that they faced decreased. They also conducted a visual analysis on the photographs used in news articles and found a significant usage of police 'mugshots' to portray Muslims, a greater number of pictures of Muslim males compared to females, and a high number of pictures of Muslims engaged in religious practices, such as prayer in congregation.

Similarly, Professor Justin Lewis analysed newspaper reporting of Muslims from 2000- 2008. He argues that Islam is represented as an extreme religion and demonstrated this through statistical analysis which found that in over a third of the articles, 34%, Muslims were specifically linked to the threat of terrorism, in 26% of articles, Islam was portrayed as either dangerous, backwards, or irrational, 14% of articles suggested a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West, and 9% suggested Islam was a threat to the British way of life (Sian et.al: 2012, 232).

In 2011, BBC Radio 4's John Waite presented an edition of the Face the Facts programme in which he examined how sections of the British press were increasing tensions between communities by publishing negative stories about Muslims. Inaccurate reporting and any link to the increased membership of the English Defence League was the subject of the programme with Waite looking at how one recurring story, the 'Winterval myth' - based on the unfounded claim that councils were rebranding or renaming Christmas to appease Muslims, inspired the English Defence League's threat to visit councils across towns and cities in the UK if it did not 'keep the

word Christmas in the annual celebrations'.²⁷

The programme also highlighted how a number of plainly false stories about Muslims had featured in the press. For example, in 2010, The Sun reported a front page story titled 'Al Qaeda Corrie Threat'; claiming that the cast of Coronation Street were an Al-Qaeda target. However, nineteen days later, The Sun published a retraction on page two in which it stated: "We would like to make clear that whilst cast and crew were subject to full body searches, there was no specific threat from Al Qaeda as we reported. We apologise for this misunderstanding." The damage done to community relations, retractions and corrections notwithstanding, is immeasurable.

The media featured heavily in our community consultation events and in chapter five we have highlighted a number of the comments made by individuals reflecting deep concerns which abound in relation to media reporting on Islam and Muslims and its effect on community relations. Such views are particularly concerning because as Gerbner et.al (1986) have shown, the media can have a long-term effect on audiences and the repetition of images and concepts can normalise prejudice over time.

As the report by the Citizens UK Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life noted: "Muslim communities face increasing discrimination, misrepresentation and distorted perceptions of Muslims within popular media narratives."²⁸ Recent examples of egregious misrepresentations include The Sun's '1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis' and The Times' 'Christian child forced into Muslim foster care'. In both cases, the Independent Press Standards Organisation upheld complaints with The Sun article deemed 'significantly misleading'.²⁹ The corrections required to be published by the respective newspapers pale in comparison to the damage done to perceptions of Muslims in British society by reporting which is grossly inaccurate and, one could argue, consciously misleading.

In his report on the culture, practices and ethics of the British press, Lord Justice Leveson made particular mention of the industry's reporting on Muslims and other minorities stating that "The evidence of discriminatory, sensational or unbalanced reporting in relation to ethnic minorities, immigrants and/or asylum seekers, is concerning"³⁰ while adding that though the problem was not spread across the print media, "there are enough examples of careless or

reckless reporting to conclude that discriminatory, sensational, or unbalanced reporting in relation to ethnic minorities, immigrants and/or asylum seekers is a feature of journalistic practice in parts of the press, rather than an aberration."³¹

In specific relation to the print media's reporting on Muslims, Lord Leveson said: "The evidence demonstrates that sections of the press betray a tendency, which is far from being universal or even preponderant, to portray Muslims in a negative light."³²

Moreover, his observation on "whether articles unfairly representing Muslims in a negative light are appropriate in mature democracy which respects both freedom of expression and the right of individuals not to face discrimination",³³ was strongly echoed in concerns and perspectives which were widely aired during our own consultative exercises.

ISLAMOPHOBIA ONLINE

While the growth and expansion of the Internet has created many positive opportunities for people to connect, it has also acted as a double-edged sword (Back et al., 2010) by creating a platform for people spread hate, often under a pseudonym and/or anonymous identity (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Blair, 2003; Citron, 2014; Hodges & Perry, 1999).

Online comments posted on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, blogging sites, chat rooms, and other virtual platforms (Allen: 2014) can be laced with extremist and right wing sentiment (Wall: 2001, Saeed: 2007). Such comments can also appear in the form of racist jokes and stereotypical 'banter' (Weaver: 2013), which add an additional layer of assumed protection for perpetrators who, unwilling to embrace individual responsibility for harmful content, deflect its seriousness by projecting it as 'harmless fun'. Academics have argued that if such incidents are left unregulated and unchallenged, this type of speech can evade censure and can all too easily translate into the normalisation of such behaviour and the possible escalation to physical attacks (Saeed: 2007).

Feldmen et. al (2013: 21) reported that online incidents of Islamophobia made up the majority of reports made to Tell MAMA - a third party reporting centre established to 'measure anti-Muslim attacks'. Of the reports received in the year 2012, 69% were linked to the far right, specifically to the English Defence

27 "EDL accused of council 'blackmail' in Christmas letter", BBC, November 26, 2010, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-11848225>

28 "The Missing Muslims...", p. 26.

29 IPSO upholds complaint that Sun article was significantly misleading, 26 March 2016. <https://www.ipso.co.uk/news-press-releases/press-releases/ipso-upholds-complaint-that-sun-article-was-significantly-misleading>. Last accessed November 9, 2018.

30 Lord Justice Leveson, An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press, 2012. Volume 2, Chapter 6, paragraph 8.51

31 Ibid

32 Lord Justice Leveson, An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press, 2012. Volume 2, Chapter 6, paragraph 8.45

33 Ibid

League (EDL) and British National Party (BNP). Their findings also included the profile of perpetrators of online abuse, which were by in large committed by males, who often made threats of an offline nature in their online abuse. These included threats to burn down mosques and kill Muslims babies (2013: 23). Online comments were mainly anti-Pakistani comments, containing accusations of “rape and paedophilia, incest, interbreeding, being terrorists, and killing Jews” (Feldman et. al, 2013: 23). Awan argues that far right group are using online spaces to create a violent, Islamophobic and racist narrative towards Muslims (Awan: 2016).

While perpetrators are largely anonymous, the prospect of offline incidents stemming from online postings is very real for victims (Douglas et. al: 2005, Hall: 2005). There can be both direct and indirect effects of experiencing hate on the Internet (Awan & Zempi, 2015a; Awan, 2016; Chakraborti & Garland, 2009), which includes experiencing anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation (Awan and Zempi: 2015). The Online Hate Prevention Institute (2013) produced a report that specifically looked at anti- Muslim hatred on Facebook and discovered that Facebook had not removed hate speech and images because they did not breach their ‘community standards.’ This has led to calls from politicians for better structures to deal with online hate and for social media platforms to take a greater onus on tackling online hate (Morris: 2015, Awan: 2014).

The Home Affairs select committee in its interim report, ‘Hate crime: abuse, hate and extremism online’, under its inquiry on Hate Crime and its Violent Consequences, has drawn attention to the role of social media companies over moderating online content and acting decisively and quickly to remove material which breaches community standards. In its report, the committee states: “[I]t is very clear to us from the evidence we have received that nowhere near enough is being done. The biggest and richest social media companies are shamefully far from taking sufficient action to tackle illegal and dangerous content, to implement proper community standards or to keep their users safe...[W]e believe that the interpretation and implementation of the community standards in practice is too often slow and haphazard. We have seen examples where moderators have refused to remove material which violates any normal reading of the community standards, or where clearly unacceptable material is only removed once a complaint is escalated to a very senior level.”³⁴

There are a number of laws under which perpetrators of online hate can be prosecuted. These include charges under ‘racially motivated’ or ‘religiously motivated’ crimes under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Malicious Communications Act 1988,

the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. However, on the whole it has proven difficult to police people’s activity on social media platforms (Awan: 2014). The threshold for criminal prosecution under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 has been cited as reason for the low number of prosecutions which can be successfully brought to trial. There is a greater need for stronger policy in this area especially in light of negative impact of online hate crime on the affected target group and on community cohesion (ACPO: 2013, McNamee et.al: 2010).

GENDERED ISLAMOPHOBIA

A 2017 report by Ipsos Mori, reviewing a raft of survey and polling data on British Muslims, found that prejudice against Muslims is felt to be increasing especially among Muslim graduates and young Muslims (Ipsos Mori: 2017, 8). Survey results demonstrated that 63% of Muslims think there is greater prejudice against Muslims than any other religious group, and 27% said they had experienced discrimination, rising to 34% for graduates and young Muslims aged between 18-24. Furthermore, one in four Muslims (26%) said they worried about being physically attacked (Ipsos Mori: 2017, 8).

Significant to the debate on prejudice and discrimination towards Muslims had been the visibility of Muslim women and the subject of the veil - whether a headscarf or the face veil. Muslim women are feared, and seen as the ‘enemy within’ because they are viewed as not in with the western ideal of womanhood (Perry: 2014). Here, the symbolism of the veil (hijab and/or niqab) is crucial, as it is not only taken as a sign of submissiveness but also as a sign of Islamic aggression (Perry: 2014). Covered women are thus represented as ‘agents’ of terrorism (Perry: 2014) and as warrior terrorists alongside male counterparts who are ready to wage war on the West (Aziz: 2012, Perry: 2014). In this way, the hermeneutics of dress contributes to the way in which Muslims are able to perform and experience public spaces, and life in ‘western’ society. As a result, academics such as Mirza (2009) have argued that the headscarf and/or veil is experienced as a ‘second skin’.

The Missing Muslims report notes that “Muslim women can often face a compounded element of discrimination, owing to their religion, gender and ostensible markers such as the headscarf (hijab) and face-veil (niqab) – as well as a lack of support from within their own communities.” It goes further to suggest that some Muslim women who suffer a lack of success based on religion, “viewed the prospective discrimination as insurmountable, resulting in them removing their hijab to find work.”³⁵

³⁴ ‘Hate crime: abuse, hate and extremism online’, HC609, Home Affairs Committee, 1 May 2017. Paragraphs 25 and 39, respectively.

³⁵ Ibid.

Exacerbating this further is the structural disempowerment Muslim women experience due to the multiple subjectivities they occupy, often being simultaneously affected by their class, gender, ethnic, racial and religious position (Perry: 2014, Aziz: 2012, 25, Bullock and Jafri: 2002, 35, Zine: 2006). Abu Ras and Suarez (2009) highlight the complex nature of Muslim's women's positionality as working to disadvantage them in the educational, financial and social resources (Bianchi et.al: 1996, Essers and Benschop: 2009) thereby increasing their vulnerability to violence. Copsey et. al (2013) found that 58% of the 585 Islamophobic incidents reported to Tell MAMA between 1 April 2012 and 30 April 2013, were against women, of which 80% identified as visibly Muslim. These figures resonate with data from Europe where visibly Muslim women are the victims of street hate crime (Runnymede: 1997). The forms of abuse were found to range from verbal abuse, spitting, having headscarves or face veils torn from them, harassment, aggressive or threatening behaviour, violence and physical harm (Allen: 2014).

Victims of hate crime can experience anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation (Awan and Zempi: 2015). Muslim women's experiences in particular, can shape their sense of ease and belonging (Perry: 2014), which fulfils the intention of the perpetrators to encourage victims to reconsider their place in society, and consider whether to alter their performance of religion and gender in public spaces (Perry: 2014). Gendered Islamophobia then describes the racialised discrimination that Muslim women experience that is rooted in historically contextualised negative stereotypes which perpetuate cycles of exclusion and marginalisation (see also Perry: 2014).

MUSLIMS AND EMPLOYMENT

Academic research has consistently shown that British Muslims face considerably high levels of economic disadvantage than other groups in Britain and experience a 'Muslim penalty' in the labour market which disadvantages them negatively as a group above all other groups. The unemployment rate has been reported as being twice the national average (Garratt: 2016). Amongst those who are employed, British Muslims are severely underrepresented in higher occupations with only 6% holding senior

positions, which is the lowest figure of all religious groups in the UK (Garratt: 2016, Demos: 2015). Furthermore, British Muslims on average earn £350 less each month compared to members of any other religious group (Heath and Li: 2015).

A report by the Government's Social Mobility Commission (Stevenson et. al: 2017) found that widespread Islamophobia, racism and discrimination increasingly punctuate Muslim men and women's professional and career development. This is despite the strong work ethic and high resilience amongst Muslims that result in outstanding academic results. Muslim women in particular are thought to be the least economically active group of women in the UK, with 18% looking after home and family compared with 6% of the overall female population. A number of barriers to success have been identified in the Commission's report (Stevenson et.al: 2017), which include ethnic names that act as a barrier to securing a job interview, Muslim women who wear headscarves being subjected to discrimination in the workplace, teachers expecting less from minority ethnic and/or Muslim students and thus investing less time and fewer resources to benefit their education, and a lack of role models or Muslim staff in schools.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this literature review was to provide a brief overview of the research that has been conducted into the experiences of Muslims in Britain. The studies and research discussed in this chapter demonstrate there to be, at the very least, an unfavourable climate towards Muslims in many social contexts. In order for progress to be made towards greater equality for Muslims, it is vital to undertake better data collection and rigorous data analysis so that evidence-based policies can be proposed which address Muslim inequalities. A more immediate task, which complements this wider strategy, is the adoption of a working definition of Islamophobia that is firmly embedded in the body of literature on racism and anti-racism such that structural inequalities can be systematically lifted.

Muslim male, London

"Islamophobia is felt by the whole Muslim community through institutionalised Islamophobia, through security measures like

Prevent. Islamophobia is felt when I am under scrutiny for possible acts that I don't even think of doing; when I am questioned without reason..."

Chapter 2 - Arriving at a working definition

In this chapter we focus on the trajectory of definitions of Islamophobia that have been proposed over the last two decades and later outline the terms of reference to our inquiry to arrive at a working definition.

TRAJECTORY OF DEFINITIONS

The term Islamophobia is a relatively new phenomenon and entered the policy discourse two decades ago although the term itself has a longer history. As a result, it does not enjoy the longer history and popular acceptance of terms such as racism or anti-Semitism. An early attempt to conceptualise and define Islamophobia was put forward by the Runnymede Trust in 1997 who defined it as:

“a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam - and, therefore, to fear or dislike all or most Muslims.”³⁶

This definition has attracted some criticism due to the methodology employed, namely, a series of binary statements which are classed as ‘open views’ or ‘closed views’ of Islam and which predicate the hostility towards Muslims that is termed Islamophobia. The definition has invited critique for being unwieldy, lacking easy transferability into legal domains, and for oversimplifying open views equating to ‘Islamophilia’ (like of Islam) and ‘closed views’ equating to Islamophobia (dislike of Islam). Criticism has also been levelled at the seemingly unquantifiable nature of the problem as presented by this definition with critics arguing that though useful it is not substantially usable for social scientific purposes.

A different definition building on the early Runnymede one was presented in the report by the Council of Europe, Islamophobia and its consequences on Young People:

“[Islamophobia is the] the fear of or prejudiced viewpoint towards Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them...[taking] the shape of daily forms of racism and discrimination or more violent forms, Islamophobia is a violation of human rights.”³⁷

On the international stage, two further definitions have been put forward. The first from the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance who has defined Islamophobia as,

“a baseless hostility and fear vis-à-vis Islam, and as a result, a fear of, and aversion towards, all Muslims or the majority of them. [Islamophobia] also refers to the practical consequences of this hostility in terms of discrimination, prejudices, and unequal treatment of which Muslims (individuals and communities) are victims and their exclusion from major political and social spheres”.³⁸

The UN’s definition captures similar threads on the notions of fear and hostility of Muslims but it goes further and identifies particular impacts which Muslims suffer as a consequence such as discrimination, unequal treatment and exclusion. The UN definition distinguishes Islam as a religion from its followers, and refers to the practical consequences of Islamophobic actions on victims - that is, Muslims, though the definition delineates the nature of the hostility as being baselessly directed at Islam.

A definition forward by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation’s Observatory on Islamophobia defined the phenomena as:

“an irrational or very powerful fear or dislike of Islam and the feeling as if the Muslims are under siege and attack. Islamophobia however goes much beyond this and incorporates racial hatred, intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. The phenomenon of Islamophobia in its essence is a religion-based resentment.”³⁹

This definition introduces the intersectional nature of Islamophobia by incorporating ‘racial hatred’ as a defining feature of anti-Muslim hostility. It moves some way from the earlier notion of Muslims as scapegoats and frames the definition in reintegrates essential aspects of the early Runnymede definition, ‘fear’ and ‘dislike’. As with the aforementioned UN definition, this too emphasises the practical

Three in five British Muslims think there is more prejudice against Muslims than against other religious groups in Britain

³⁶ Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997) Islamophobia: a challenge for us all: report of the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. London: Runnymede Trust. p. 1.

³⁷ Ingrid Ramberg.(2005). Islamophobia and its consequences on Young People, Council of Europe. p 6.

³⁸ UN Human Rights Council Document No. A/HRC/6/6, 21 August 2007. Available at: <http://www.oicun.org/uploads/files/articles/UNHRC-rep.pdf>

³⁹ Organization of the Islamic Conference (2008) 1st OIC Observatory report on Islamophobia. Kampala, Uganda: OIC. Available at: http://www1.oic-oci.org/uploads/file/Islamphobia/islamphobia_rep_may_07_08.pdf.

consequences faced by Muslims; 'intolerance, prejudice and discrimination'.

Dr Farid Hafez and Dr Enes Bayrakli of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), and co-authors of the annual European Islamophobia Report, argue that Islamophobia is about:

*"... a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilizing 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 generalized for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts, because Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam".*⁴⁰

This longer definition repeats several features of the Runnymede definition, with notions of homogenising, collectivising and thus generalising about all Muslims while adhering to essentialist tropes about Islam and Muslims. Interestingly, the definition captures some aspect of the contextual variants of Islamophobia with its emphasis on the 'fluidity' of image and contexts.

In 2010, the Open Society Institute report on 'Muslims in Europe: A report on 11 EU Cities', defined Islamophobia as *"Irrational hostility, fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims and Islamic culture, and active discrimination towards this group as individuals or collectively."*⁴¹

In 2011, the Center for American Progress (CAP), in report *Fear Inc*, tracing the financial network that contributes to and perpetuates Islamophobia in the US, proposed a definition of Islamophobia as follows:

*"an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from America's social, political, and civic life."*⁴²

Again, core features from the early Runnymede definition reappear with the inclusion of 'fear', 'hatred' and 'hostility'. The CAP definition, as with the UN definition, extends to encapsulate the domains where Muslims suffer unnecessary exclusion due to Islamophobia; in social, political and civic life.

The 'race' paradigm is somewhat absent in these various definitions although their contours point to various forms of structural racism such as stereotypes,

inequality and exclusion from domains - political, social and civic. The OIC definition, by inviting racial hatred into its broad composition, widens the lens on conceptualising Islamophobia as a pathology on Muslims that is both racial and religious in nature.

Erik Bleich has proposed a definition of Islamophobia for the purpose of testing hypotheses on Islamophobia as rising or falling using tools of social science to either verify or falsify claims. He argued Islamophobia is,

*"...as indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims..."*⁴³

Here, Bleich defines the term 'indiscriminate' as differentiated attitudes or emotions. For instance, if a Muslim woman is raised in a country where female circumcision is practiced and grows to hold negative opinions about Islam, as practiced by some Muslim communities, this does not automatically constitute Islamophobia. However, if these negative attitudes and/or criticisms of Islam were used to justify the condemnation of Muslims as a whole, it becomes an indiscriminate attitude that constitutes Islamophobia (Bleich: 2011, 1585).

In 2017, Dr Chris Allen suggested that the definition of anti-Semitism should be used as a template for a definition of Islamophobia. Allen argued that the similarities between the two forms of hate and the fact that anti-Semitism was widely accepted were good grounds on propose an analogous definition. Allen defined Islamophobia as:

*"Islamophobia is a certain perception of Muslims, which may be expressed as hatred toward Muslims. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of Islamophobia are directed toward Muslim or non-Muslim individuals and/or their property, toward Muslim community institutions and religious facilities".*⁴⁴

Allen's definition makes an effort to follow in the footsteps of the definition of anti-Semitism, a term which is more widely understood than Islamophobia and whose manifestations, like with Islamophobia, is directed at individuals who are Jewish, whether actual or perceived to be, their property, institutions and other objects or facilities associated with (or perceived to be associated with) Jews. We found this comparative approach helpful and informative.

In 2017, the Runnymede Trust produced a follow up report to its original report of 1997 titled "Islamophobia: Still A Challenge for Us All." In it, The Runnymede Trust offered a short and long definition of Islamophobia. The short definition is:

40 See <http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/>

41 Open Society Institute report (2010) 'Muslims in the EU: a report on 11 EU cities'. (Hungary: OSI) pg. 18

42 Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, and Faiz Shakir. (2011). *Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*. Center for American Progress. p. 9.

43 Erik Bleich. (2011). What Is Islamophobia and How Much Is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept. *American Behavioural Scientist*, Vol. 55(12), pp. 1581-1600. p. 1581.

44 Chris Allen. *Towards a working definition of Islamophobia*. Briefing paper, July 2017. p 3.

*“Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism.”*⁴⁵

The long definition is:

*“Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”*⁴⁶

The second Runnymede definition takes the clearest steps to embed Islamophobia in anti-racism paradigms and incorporates features of the UN’s definition of racism within its longer definition to signify the structural and other impediments anti-Muslim racism presents to the pursuit of equality for Muslims.

From a legislative perspective, The Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) has defined Islamophobic incidents as:

“any incident which is perceived to be Islamophobic by the victim or any other person...”

Of particular importance with the CPS definition is the term ‘perceived’, which buffers for variations in ‘subjective’ experience.

In light of the trajectory of definitions, for which we have demonstrated there are many, there is a clear need for a working definition that is widely accepted and adopted across public sector organisations, government, and within the legal and policy frameworks, which adequately reflects and captures the experience of Muslims facing Islamophobia in Britain, today. For this definition to operate effectively, it must capture the actions that constitute Islamophobia and its impact on Muslim communities.

70% of Muslims said they had specifically experienced religion-based prejudice

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ADOPTING A DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

In his response to the question of whether the Government had adopted a definition of Islamophobia, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth answered, “Previous attempts by others to define this term have not succeeded in attracting consensus or widespread acceptance.”

We quite agree that both consensus and widespread acceptance have impeded past efforts to promote and adopt a definition of Islamophobia. Hence, this inquiry was initiated for the purposes of addressing these obstacles and facilitating both consensus and acceptance of a definition of Islamophobia. Indeed, within the scope of this inquiry, we heard from many

witnesses what the absence of a definition meant in terms of costs to, and consequences for, victims.

Professor Peter Hopkins and The Centre for Hate Studies (Leicester University) told the APPG that the main consequence of not adopting a definition of Islamophobia is that it would encourage some people to continue to deny that Islamophobia is an issue in society. A concrete definition would enable this to be challenged. Other consequences could include victims not recognizing anti-Muslim acts against them as ‘Islamophobic’ and not reporting instances of discrimination, hatred or exclusion as a result. The NUS told the APPG that not adopting a definition of Islamophobia would be detrimental to all Muslims and those that are perceived as Muslims, as it is pervasive in all aspects of social and public life: from students experiencing Islamophobic abuse on campus to large numbers of Muslim institutions and cemeteries being attacked. In the NUS’s view, adopting a coherent definition would allow for a clear examination and interrogation of what constitutes this form of hate and should be focused on uncovering the root causes of this structural racism experienced by Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. As such, British Muslims would be able to trust the government, which would assist in decreasing the disaffection British Muslims often experience in relation to the government.

Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor explained that the absence of a definition is unhelpful on many levels

including, victims may not receive appropriate support, service providers may not be able to access appropriate support networks to resolve issues and facilitate justice, and result in significant misreporting as incidents of Islamophobia may be treated as racism and vice versa, which can lead to an inaccurate sense of Islamophobia. Dr Nadya Ali (University of Sussex) and Dr Ben Witham (De Montfort University) informed the APPG that the consequences of not adopting are twofold.

The first relates to the difficulty in challenging the pervasive and structured discrimination faced by British Muslims such as hate crime, barriers to accessing public services, and differential employment and educational outcomes facing Muslims, which cannot be identified or challenged without naming these problems as products of Islamophobia.

Secondly, not recognising that Islamophobia is a specifically racial and religious form of discrimination leaves Muslims vulnerable to abuse without recourse to legal or political remedy. This was also echoed in Dr Imran Awan and Dr Irene Zempi’s submission in which they stated, the consequences of not having

⁴⁵ Farah Elahi and Omar Khan, eds. (2017). *Islamophobia, Still a challenge for us all*. (London: Runnymede Trust). p 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

a definition would make it difficult to provide the appropriate resources to understanding and helping victims, and drawing out differences between different victim groups.

Akeela Ahmed, Chair of the Independent Members of the Government's Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred told the APPG, not adopting a definition would expose the concept of Islamophobia to inconsistency in a way that permits it to be rejected by individuals and groups that target and discriminate against Muslims. Akeela Ahmed stressed that a definition with legal power is required, one that could be implemented by the government and the police. The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) said in evidence that in the absence of a definition, there is a lack of clarity as to what one is referring to when one uses the term Islamophobia. A robust definition would enable people to identify whether they have experienced Islamophobia or not. In the absence of such a definition by Parliament, the natural recourse is either criminal law or civil law equivalents, namely religiously aggravated offences and the equality act, which are narrow definitions.

In light of the evidence submitted, the APPG is of the view that not adopting a definition would be detrimental to British Muslims, as it would allow for the continued denial of Islamophobia as a real lived experience, prevent the analysis of incidents around the country, and continue to weaken the way in which Islamophobic incidents are addressed. As a result, the APPG is of the view that a definition is urgently required now more than ever.

METHODOLOGY

As part of this inquiry, we set a number of questions to which we invited written submissions. Statutory agencies and relevant sectors, in education, employment, criminal justice and equalities and human rights, were approached to submit evidence to the inquiry. The terms of inquiry were advertised for a period of eight weeks between mid-May 2018 and mid-July 2018. The questions were as follows:

1. Have you adopted a definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred in your line of work and if so, what is it? If you have not adopted a definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred, please detail any criteria used to assess anti-Muslim bias.
2. What are the consequences of not adopting a definition of Islamophobia or of anti-Muslim hatred, if any? Do we need a definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred?
3. What actions or behaviours are captured by the definition or criteria you employ?
4. a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the definition or criteria you employ?
b) How do the strengths of weaknesses compare to other definitions of group based hatred or hostility eg. racism or anti-Semitism?
5. How useful is the definition or criteria you employ to identifying, quantifying, tackling Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred?
6. What conditions should a working definition satisfy to be functional across sectors?
7. How useful would a scale of intensity or Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred be for measuring the strength of anti-Muslim feeling/anti-Muslim prejudice?
8. How can we reconcile a working definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred with freedom of speech, within a rights-based framework?

A large volume of written submissions were received from organisations and individuals from across the spectrum. Several of those submitting written evidence were later invited to attend oral evidence sessions. Four oral evidence sessions were held in parliament in June 2018. Four public community consultation events were also held, to supplement the evidence solicited by the APPG from experts, academics, community organisations and others. The community consultations were opened to local communities and were held in Manchester, London, Birmingham and Sheffield.

Muslim female, Barnsley

“Swear words were shouted at me and my children from men in cars, this happened five times on different occasions...my son who is seven years old was spat at while in B&Q in Barnsley. I reported the swearing from cars on two occasions as I took down the car registration numbers...the

police visited the perps (sic) both times and said if I had another complaint against them they will be arrested...the police said the young men were white who were remorseful and going to start university so I dropped the case.”

Chapter 3 - Our findings

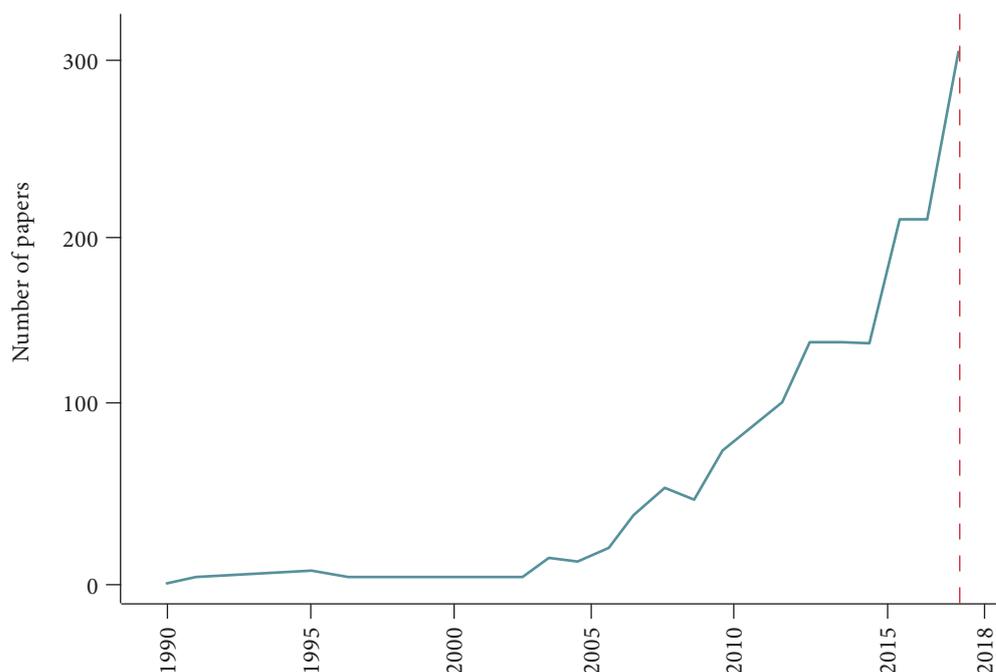
The submissions received by the APPG on British Muslims, as part of our inquiry into a working definition of ‘Islamophobia’, have fleshed out a variety of arguments in favour of the term, signalling that there is an overall agreement that formulating and adopting a legally binding definition of Islamophobia is not just needed, but also possible. The contributors – academics, activists, NGOs, think tanks, experts and practitioners – tend to agree that the term Islamophobia is the most appropriate one, as it encompasses a variety of manifestations and practices that can comfortably be localised within what is generally understood as anti-Muslim racism and anti-Islam discourses. Equally important, as many have pointed out, is the fact that Islamophobia is a broadly adopted term. Coming into mainstream society after the publication of the Runnymede Trust’s report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (1997), the term is already largely accepted across a public of both experts and non-experts alike.

The use of the word Islamophobia has grown exponentially over recent times, and the phenomenon has become a central focus of academic explorations across several fields of inquiry. Researchers from a variety of disciplines such as Sociology, Critical Race Studies, Religious and Sociology of Religion studies, Intercultural Relations, Ethnic and Racial Studies, and a wide range of other specialism, have looked at

Islamophobia with increasing interests, making it a central topic in the academic debate. Bertie Vidgen shows that before 1990, only 6 scholarly papers that dealt with Islamophobia were released. These increased to 33 during the 1990s, but it is only with the turn of the century that we begin to see Islamophobia establishing itself a central subject in the academic debate.⁴⁷

As Figure 4 shows, 310 papers were released in the 2000s, and a staggering 1632 in the 2010s – event though, as Vidgen warns, the decade is not over. This adds to the wide range of academic disciplines that concern themselves with the study of Islamophobia – as shown in Table 2 – a testament to the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. As the submissions received by the APPG evidence, Islamophobia finds its roots in matters of history, culture, politics and society, and it is this intersectionality that compels us to adopt a multidisciplinary approach to assess, evaluate and define the phenomenon. By exploring the different layers that make Islamophobia the broadly understood issue that it has become today, the submissions guide us to a comprehensive definition that accepts no ambiguities and that leaves no dimension unconsidered. In short, the definition draws from the many contributions received putting the right words into a concept that is very familiar in our society.

FIGURE 4



47 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen, PhD student, University of Oxford.

TABLE 2

TOP JOURNALS PRIOR TO 2014

	Journal	Number of papers	Percentage of papers
1	Race and Class	23	2.67
2	Ethnic and Racial Studies	17	1.98
3	Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations	14	1.63
4	Patterns of Prejudice	14	1.63
5	British Journal of Social Psychology	9	1.05
6	International Journal of Intercultural Studies	9	1.05
7	Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	9	1.05
8	Contemporary Islam	8	0.93
9	Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs	8	0.93
10	British Journal of Sociology	7	0.82

TOP JOURNALS SINCE 2014

	Journal	Number of papers	Percentage of papers
1	Ethnic and Racial Studies	21	2.08
2	Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs	20	1.98
3	Patterns of Prejudice	13	1.29
4	International Journal of Intercultural Studies	12	1.19
5	Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations	10	0.99
6	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies	9	0.89
7	Journal of Ecumenical Studies	8	0.79
8	Journal of Muslims in Europe	8	0.79
9	Economic and Political Weekly	7	0.69
10	Identities	7	0.69

As such, as Vidgen points out in his submission, “there is no putting the genie back into the bottle”,⁴⁸ meaning that while a variety of linguistic arguments can be advanced against the lexicalization of the term, the mainstream adoption of ‘Islamophobia’ could indeed be already a signal that it is not the term that is up for acceptance, rather its definition. During the oral evidence session, Professor Tariq Modood confirmed that “we need to ensure there is a definition in place so that people cannot wriggle out of it”.⁴⁹ On a similar note, Paul Giannasi OBE, the cross-government hate crime programme lead, admitted during his oral evidence session that he “wouldn’t say ‘don’t ever use Islamophobia’, because lots of people understand what you say when you do”, while maintaining scepticism about the scope of the terminology and its applicability in criminal justice policy.⁵⁰ The need to retain the term was further discussed by members of the Manchester community, who during the oral sessions argued:

“There is the argument of what is a strict definition, and whether or not people have a right to criticise a religion or not... and then the other side of the argument is, whatever the reason or the history of this terminology of Islamophobia, there is a capital that has developed for two, three decades and it’s

accepted, and it might not be strictly correct, but when people use it, they know what they are trying to say.”

Here, we explore the main arguments advanced by both supporters and opponents of the term Islamophobia, by looking at its many dimensions, manifestations and targets. This includes the institutionalisation of Islamophobia, its reach beyond hate crimes, and also its targeting of expressions of ‘Muslimness’ or those perceived as such. In turn, we examine and contrast the arguments in favour of the term Islamophobia with those that oppose it by drawing on questions of free speech, exceptionalism of Islam and legitimate rights to criticise the religion.

In doing so, we outline the process of reasoning which underpins the working definition of Islamophobia proposed by the APPG on British Muslims.

ISLAMOPHOBIA: MORE THAN HATE CRIMES

What is Islamophobia? Most of the submissions presented to the APPG discuss Islamophobia as a phenomenon that encompasses far more than hate crimes, extending to a variety of different manifestations such as behaviours, casual discrimination, or the well-known conflation of

⁴⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen, PhD student, University of Oxford.

⁴⁹ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood on June 20, 2018.

⁵⁰ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

Islam with terrorism. Guidance Consultancy Ltd, for example, describes it as “A derogatory direct or indirect verbal, written or physically threatening act against a person or group based exclusively due to their Muslim faith religious identity”, fleshing out the broad spectrum of behaviours that can reasonably be seen as Islamophobic.⁵¹ Again acknowledging the wide breath of manifestations that need to be categorised as Islamophobia, Awan and Zempi define it as:

“A fear, prejudice and hatred of Muslims or non-Muslim individuals that leads to provocation, hostility and intolerance by means of threatening, harassment, abuse, incitement and intimidation of Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the online and offline world. Motivated by institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility that transcends into structural and cultural racism which targets the symbols and markers of a being a Muslim.”⁵²

This echoes Equaliteach’s submission, which highlights the fact that,

“It is important that any definition captures the fact that Islamophobia is more than just individual prejudice and includes systemic discrimination against Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from the public sphere. However, we need versions which are accessible to people who are not academics, or specialists in the field.”⁵³

Similarly, and drawing from the Home Office data and a range of surveys, Bertie Vidgen shows how Islamophobia can manifest itself both violently or in less intense forms. For example, in 2016/17 religiously motivated hate crimes increased by 35%, and although the term does not reflect exclusively anti-Muslim hate crimes, those were often driven by “prominent Islamist events, such as Islamist terror attacks”. Beyond hate crimes, however, prejudice against Muslims in British society remains widespread. For example, 42% of English people are suspicious of Muslims, 25% agree that “Islam is a dangerous religion”, and 55% support the racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims by the police. The term Islamophobia, Vidgen argues, is thus able to capture both subtle and explicit manifestations of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim hatred. Although the two do not indicate the same thing, there is little point in attempting to tackle them as separate phenomena:

“Criticisms directed against Muslims often entail (at least implicitly) criticisms against Islam and criticisms directed against Islam are often simply tools for criticising Muslims. Anti-Islamism is not the

same as anti-Muslimism, but the two are intimately connected and both can be considered constitutive parts of Islamophobia.”⁵⁴

That is why the term Islamophobia is not just theoretically sound, but also practically convenient. “Islamophobia”, echoes Kallis reminding us of the need for a broad appreciation of the phenomenon, “unfolds on three levels: thought/prejudice; language; and behaviour/action.... a tripartite understanding of Islamophobia binds together cause, process, and effect along a spectrum that facilitates the escalation and normalisation of anti-Muslim racism.”⁵⁵ As noted earlier, acknowledging Islamophobia’s historical, cultural, political and sociological dimensions allows for a dynamic understanding of the phenomenon, rooted not only in its immediately observable manifestations, but also in the less evident processes that sustain it and normalise it.

This was one of the core themes which emerged during the oral evidence session. Kallis expressed concerns over the normalisation of Islamophobia, as he claimed that “racism has moved so far ahead from hatred ad phobia that it is now everyday attitude and behaviour”. As such, one of the central challenges with Islamophobia no longer relates to its exceptionality, or exceptional manifestations, but to the process of normalisation through which the phenomenon has become so hard to detect. “When something becomes so normalised”, continued Kallis, “it does become invisible”. This is also why, when asked by parliamentarians whether we need a definition of Islamophobia, he answered:

“Yes of course we need a definition, and we need one now. Sometimes definitions can be quite awkward but we’re talking about a phenomenon that is gaining traction for negative reasons and we need to somehow both identify it as a particularly pernicious form of something much bigger and at the same time strengthen its relationship with that ‘much bigger’. I would actually say that this talk about definition is in many ways five or six years too late.”⁵⁶

In his submission, Peter Hopkins distinguishes between “everyday Islamophobia” (ranging from physical assault to being purposely overlooked or excluded), “institutional Islamophobia” (when the manifestation occurs within an institutional context, such as education, local authority or government), and “state Islamophobia” (when the manifestation is driven by the State, either intentionally or unintentionally, through practices that reinforce

51 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Kaleem Hussain of Guidance Consultancy Ltd.

52 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awan of Birmingham City University, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

53 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Sarah Soyei of Equaliteach.

54 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

55 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

56 From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis on June 20, 2018.

the discrimination). Touching upon a key aspect in favour of the adoption of a legally binding definition of Islamophobia, he further argues that losing the term could result in victims “not reporting instances of discrimination, hatred or exclusion” because the act is not recognised as Islamophobic by those who have suffered it.⁵⁷ This is, effectively, evidence of the fact that efforts to define Islamophobia are not mere intellectual exercises, but much needed attempts to tackle a very real issue. Islamophobic incidents, Awan and Zempi remind us, occur in public spaces, on trains, buses, in shopping centres as well as in the workplace – and often in the presence of other people who, however, do not intervene.⁵⁸ Islamophobia is indeed a very real phenomenon, and one in need of a critical clarification and codification, which would only be possible if different views, approaches and experiences come together to inform a broad and legally-binding definition.

Similarly, failing to adopt a broad definition of Islamophobia – and limiting our understanding of it to its most apparent manifestations – would result in the creation of instruments that would only partially tackle the problem. As Akeela Ahmed points out, the “structural nature of Islamophobia” – which concerns “every aspect of a British Muslim person’s life” such as education, employment and representation in the Criminal Justice System – and the “intersectional nature of Islamophobia” – which concerns its intersection with racism and sexism – would not be captured if we were to understand and define Islamophobia solely as religious hate crime. In her submission, other examples of casual Islamophobia are outlined, for example with pupils commenting “it was Muslims, it was Muslims” when a fire alarm went off in a secondary school in the outskirts of London.⁵⁹ The National Union of Students (NUS) adds to this by fleshing out other, more hidden manifestations of Islamophobia. Their study revealed that 40% of the surveyed Muslim students would refrain from “engaging in a high-profile position in their students’ union” because of the “negative portrayal of Muslims”.⁶⁰

Such perspectives are echoed in the Ramadhan Foundation’s submission, which describes a more all-encompassing Islamophobic environment: “verbal, physical, online abuse... negative stories in the media... unlawful discrimination in employment”, all fall within the broader phenomenon of Islamophobia.⁶¹

Again showing the breadth of Islamophobia, Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor describes it as a

“Prejudicial attitude or behaviour, expressed towards an individual or individuals on account of their Islamic belief or a presumption that they may have Islamic beliefs, which is expressed in writing, speech or action and which results in unfairness or injustice towards them as perceived by these individuals.”⁶²

This argument finds a strong root in real world scenarios. Benefiting from his experience in tackling hate crime, Paul Giannasi pointed at the inherently Islamophobic tropes that are applied in the context of criminal justice:

“When someone is guilty of a rape or of grooming gangs, it’s only mentioned if they’re Muslims, it wouldn’t be mentioned if they’re Christians. When Andrew Breivik kills lots of people because of racist sentiments, we see him as a disaffected loner with mental health issues. But when it’s a Muslim lad that does the same activity, we see it as a fundamentalist ideology that the communities are responsible for. And I think that’s a societal challenge of being able to see somebody in the same context regardless of the background.”⁶³

Tahir Abbas’s submission goes even further, as he explains Islamophobia as “discourse, an action, an outcome, a perception, an experience”, further grounding Islamophobia in the idea that it has become “all too easy to speak ill of Muslims and Islam without reservation, and without basing it on any verifiable ‘truths’.” Abbas identifies 12 types of Islamophobia, which locate themselves within both cultural or institutional racisms. This categorisation, reported here in full, shows the full extent of Islamophobia as it encompasses a variety of manifestations that make Islamophobia a cultural phenomenon reinforced by structural, or indeed institutional constructs, that stigmatise, marginalise and discriminate against Muslims.

1. Crime: Hate crime against Muslims/ criminalisation of Muslims
2. Cultural: Orientalism and “failed multiculturalism” discourses
3. Gendered: “Dangerous’ brown men, “vulnerable” brown women
4. Ideological: Political left and the right are hostile

57 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Peter Hopkins of Newcastle University.

58 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awan of Birmingham City University, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

59 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government’s Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

60 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Ilyas Nagdee, Hareem Ghani, and Ayesha Ahmed, of the National Union of Students (NUS).

61 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Mohammed Shafiq of the Ramadhan Foundation.

62 Written evidence submitted to the APPG in British Muslims by Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor of Coventry University.

63 From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

to Islam/Muslims

5. Institutional: Organisations, rationalisation and normalisation lock in Islamophobic groupthink
6. Intellectual: Influential right-leaning and left-leaning thinkers in denial
7. Media: TV, print and social media and the press barons
8. Political: Populism, nationalism and neoliberalism driving mass public sentiment
9. Religious: Christian, Jewish, Hindu and others hostile towards Muslim minorities
10. State: Law, policymaking, judiciary, executive
11. Structural: Education and employment outcomes for Muslim groups; housing and health inequalities
12. Xenophobic: Resistance to immigration and the limits of ethnic boundaries

This classification opens another important point. Islamophobia is not just “an individual matter”, rather, it is “part and parcel of a wider social, historical, political and cultural discourse that continues to evolve and grow”.⁶⁴ It is not just hate crimes, or visible violence, but a cultural, historical, and political trajectory that has led to the formation of an ecosystem in which anti-Muslim racism festers and manifests itself. As representative of the Sheffield community discussed in their oral evidence session: “We all know that Islamophobia is not just a matter of concern for the criminal justice system and for hate crimes. That is far too simplistic. It’s steeped in every facet of society”.

Speaking to the APPG, Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor argued that Islamophobia captures a diverse range of actions or behaviours, from name-calling to hijab-pulling, as well as unfair media coverage.⁶⁵ Significantly, she added that the term further captures the feelings articulated by many Muslims of being under siege, being unable to voice dissent of any form, and regularly censoring what they say. The Sheffield community added in this regard:

“We should be focusing on what is the purpose of defining Islamophobia... practically definitions don’t make a difference. A definition that is well defined, well described, capable of achieving parliamentary support such that it could, in its ultimate manifestations, be put into statute so that the law can be upheld around these things, that’s really

important. But actually, it also underpins education, it also underpins normative statements about what is acceptable and what isn’t, and it also deals with these complex issues about your freedom to live as you wish.”

This is why the term Islamophobia is so important, as it is the only one that is capable of encompassing all the nuances that illustrate specific encounters with Muslim populations and Islam within this historical, cultural and political space. In this regard, Awan and Zempi write:

“Muslim men have emerged as the new ‘folk devils’ of popular and media imagination, being portrayed as the embodiment of extremism and terrorism, whilst Muslim women have emerged as a sign of gender subjugation in Islam, being perceived as resisting integration by wearing a headscarf or face veil. Such stereotypes provide fertile ground for expressions of Islamophobia in the public sphere. Following this line of argument, Islamophobia manifests itself as an expression of anti-Islamic, anti-Muslim hostility towards individuals identified as Muslims on the basis of their ‘visible’ Islamic identity.”⁶⁶

The ‘visible’ markers of identity were also highlighted by Tell MAMA in its submission to the APPG which stated: “The targeting of Muslim women due to their overt religious identity demonstrates how the hijab has become an essentialised way to see “Muslimness”, which, in turn, ‘others’ Muslim women through a process where their visible identity is seen to embody all the ‘problematic and threatening about Islam and Muslims’.”⁶⁷

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Romy Hasan disagrees with the notion that the term Islamophobia can be used to indicate such a broad variety of anti-Muslim sentiments. Indeed, he contends that publicly held views such as “Muslims create problems in the UK” are not Islamophobic, but are rooted on a pragmatic assessment of Muslim beliefs and practices. Because Islam also incorporates “a set of practices”, this criticism should not be seen as being based on a racist discrimination against Muslims, but on a legitimate concern about what Islamic precepts and provisions entail.⁶⁸ Echoing this position, Southall Black Sisters argue that “the term is riddled with ambiguities and conflates too many issues since it implies not just hatred of Muslims but of the religion itself”. This, they continue, can bring to an overly wide application of the term Islamophobia,

Most Muslims believe that Islam is compatible with the British way of life

⁶⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tahir Abbas of LSE.

⁶⁵ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor on

⁶⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awan of Birmingham City University, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

⁶⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Tell MAMA.

⁶⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Romy Hassan of University of Sussex.

which can be extended to any type of “offense of religious sensibilities”.⁶⁹

Tania Saeed disagrees with the above positions, and argues that the stereotypization of Muslim practices can and should be categorised as Islamophobia: “Islamophobia reduces a diverse community of Muslim citizens to a monolithic category that is associated with violence and fear”, and that leads Muslims to be “considered suspect by virtue of being Muslims”. In addition, she points at the current social and political context as a key contributor in the rationalisation and standardisation of fear and hatred of Muslims, which consolidates stereotypes based on Muslims’ “degree of religiosity”.⁷⁰ Assessments about Muslims based on generalised and stereotypical assumptions about their faith, their religious identity, or their practices, need to be categorised as central parts of an Islamophobic discourse. In this regard, Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, one of the contributors who took part in the oral evidence sessions, claimed in her research that “a lack of religious literacy means that many staff appear uncomfortable about challenging Islamophobia”.⁷¹ A definition could therefore provide the ideal framework to successfully address and tackle religious stereotypes.

Saeed contends that the term ‘Islamophobia’ is the right one to adopt exactly because it is the only one that is “wide enough to capture a range of experiences, and narrow enough to inform implementable policies”.⁷² This is indeed crucial, because a new and legally binding definition of Islamophobia has to also capture “low-level hatred and negative attitudes that would not be classed as crimes by police”, but which would still be categorised as manifestations of anti-Muslim racism.⁷³ As the experience with anti-Semitism has shown, these racisms go far beyond what can be captured as criminal acts. They encompass a whole range of behaviours – spanning from conspiracy theories to micro-aggressions – that do not meet the criminal threshold but are either precursor to criminal acts or, at the very least, create the ideal environment for anti-Muslim racism to fester and criminal acts to grow from it.

This echoes the argument advanced by Anas Sarwar MSP, through which he emphasised the need to go beyond criminal acts when assessing the impact that Islamophobia has across society: “Given the range of sectors that Islamophobia impacts on, the vast majority of which is not criminal, it must be appropriate for adoption in the classroom, college and university campuses and workplaces across the

country”.

The Chair of the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia in the Scottish Parliament, Anas Sarwar MSP, further weighed into the debate by expressing support for the adoption of a legally binding definition of Islamophobia. In his response to the consultation by the APPG, he contended that “defining Islamophobia will help to demonstrate to our diverse communities that we as lawmakers recognise Islamophobia exists and that it will be challenged”. This effectively adds another level of reasoning to the debate. Adopting a definition of Islamophobia not only identifies a widespread phenomenon, but sends a positive message to all those communities and individuals who suffer from it.

Elaborating on this, he further contended: “It is important that any definition of is credible, accepted by diverse Muslim communities, respected by institutions and fair minded individuals or groups and unambiguous in law.”⁷⁴

LAW AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Among legal contributors to the APPG inquiry were the Law Commission, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Islamophobia Response Unit, a voluntary sector organisation which works with victims to address instances of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of religion and/or race.

THE LAW COMMISSION

The Law Commission told us about a detailed review into hate crime offences it conducted in 2014. The remit for the project was to examine the case for extending the aggravated offences in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and stirring up offences in the Public Order Act 1986 to apply equally to the five protected characteristics of hate crime: disability, gender identity, race, religion, and sexual orientation. While all five protected characteristics are covered by the enhanced sentencing regime, the aggravated offences regime applies only to race and religion, and the stirring up of offences apply only to race, religion and sexual orientation, and not disability or gender identity.

The first recommendation of the report was that the enhanced sentencing system could be put to better use, particularly with regard to transgender identity, sexual orientation and disability. The second recommendation was to conduct a comprehensive review of the aggravated offences regime to extend to

⁶⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel of Southall Black Sisters.

⁷⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

⁷¹ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Jacqueline Stevenson on June 26, 2018.

⁷² Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

⁷³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government’s Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

⁷⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Anas Sarwar MSP, of the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia.

disability, sexual orientation, and transgender identity. The Law Commission placed greater emphasis on the latter three protected characteristics, indicating that religion and race were adequately protected. However, the Commission informed us that it is currently reviewing offensive online communications, the report for which will be published later this year. As part of this review, the Law Commission informed us it will be examining how well the Malicious Communications Act 1988 deals with offensive communications; how the Communications Act 2003 deals with online communications; what 'grossly offensive' means and whether this poses difficulties in legal certainty; whether the law requires proof of fault or intention in prosecuting offensive online communications; whether there is a need to update definitions in the law which technology has rendered obsolete, or confused, such as the meaning of 'sender'; and how other parts of the criminal law overlap with online communications laws.

The Law Commission's forthcoming report will have particular relevance for dealing with Islamophobia online. From the report published in 2014, what does materialise is the significance of a working definition of Islamophobia for broader social understanding of anti-Muslim racism before the criminal law is invoked. As we heard from Professor Salman Sayyid, the purpose of a definition is not just to inform the application of the criminal code, it is also required in order to bring about a transformation in social etiquette. As with considerations of diversity in the legal profession and its effect on the dispensation of justice, or the perception of justice being seen to be done, the subject of a lecture by the former President of the Supreme Court Lord Neuberger to the Criminal Justice Alliance,⁷⁵ social etiquette based on an agreed definition of Islamophobia can buttress the operational aspects of the criminal law when it comes to prosecuting Islamophobic crimes.

THE CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE

The CPS in written evidence did make an effort to address the APPG's terms of inquiry. The CPS informed us that they do not have a specific definition of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred and that when dealing with incidences of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred, it applied the statutory framework contained in s.28 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and s.145 of the Criminal Justice Act.

Under this framework, an offence is religiously aggravated if: immediately before, during or after the commission of the offence, the offender

demonstrated towards the victim hostility based on the victim's membership (or presumed membership) of a religious group or; the offence was motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a religious group based on their membership of that group. However, the CPS informed us that there is no definition of 'religion' nor is there a definition of 'hostility'.

On the subject of free speech and the criminal law on incitement and public order offences, the CPS told us, "we have to balance the rights of an individual to freedom of speech and expression against the duty of the state to act proportionately in the interests of public safety, to prevent disorder and crime, and to protect the rights of others."⁷⁶

IMPRESS

The APPG heard from IMPRESS, a Leveson-compliant independent self-regulatory body for the press in the UK. While IMPRESS did not directly address the terms of inquiry in its written evidence submission, it told us about its Standards Code in great detail.⁷⁷ Its Code includes a clause on discrimination, which prohibits incitement to hatred against all groups with protected characteristics. While IMPRESS has not adopted a definition of Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred, it has adopted a press standard on religious discrimination. IMPRESS also told us that it balances freedom of expression with other rights and interests, reflecting the spirit of equalities legislation. It does this by exercising its code when journalism that is likely to incite hatred against religious believers, rather than simply criticizing religious belief, the latter of which does not breach the code.

IMPRESS stressed that it had developed specific clauses on hate speech and religious discrimination in response to the issues brought to light in the Leveson Inquiry, which heard a substantial amount of evidence from individuals and rights-based organisations relating to the discriminatory treatment of women, Muslims and minorities in the press. Clause 4 of the IMPRESS Standards Code states that publishers "must not make prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person on the basis of that person's age, disability, mental health, gender reassignment or identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation or another characteristic that makes a person vulnerable to discrimination;⁷⁸ publishers must not refer to the protected characteristic unless it is relevant to the story; and publishers must not incite hatred against any group based on that group's

⁷⁵ "Fairness In The Courts: The Best We Can Do", Address to the Criminal Justice Alliance 10 April 2015 by Lord Neuberger, President of the Supreme Court, accessed 07.11.2018, <http://criminaljusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/The-Best-We-Can-Do-Lord-Neuberger-at-the-CJA-100415.pdf>

⁷⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by the Crown Prosecution Service.

⁷⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Jonathan Heawood, Chief Executive Officer of the Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS).

⁷⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by IMPRESS.

protected characteristic that makes the group vulnerable to discrimination.” IMPRESS stated that it has not specified which types of hate speech or discrimination are covered in the code, as it is not possible to list them all.

IMPRESS also defined ‘hate speech’ to be that which is intended to, or is likely to, provoke hatred or to put a person or group in fear. The disputed words must be more than provocative, offensive, hurtful, or objectionable. It includes, but is not limited to, speech that is likely to cause others to commit acts of violence against members of groups or discriminate against them.

ISLAMOPHOBIA RESPONSE UNIT (IRU)

The APPG also heard from the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU), a voluntary sector organisation which offers legal advice and support to victims of Islamophobia and religious discrimination.⁷⁹ They told us that acts of Islamophobic discrimination are analysed through the prism of the Equality Act 2010, which outlines four civil offences:

1. Direct discrimination: treating one person worse than another person because of protected characteristic.
2. Indirect discrimination: when an organisation puts a rule or policy or a way of doing things in place, which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one.
3. Harassment: treating a person in a way that violates his/her dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
4. Victimisation: treating someone worse because the person is taking action/or perceived to be taking action under the Equality Act.

The IRU deals with cases where the relevant protected characteristic is religion – specifically Islam.

The IRU presented a number of common examples of discrimination cases they had handled for Muslim clients that speak to the above-mentioned civil offences. These include: not getting sufficient time to pray five daily prayers, not getting sufficient break time to pray the Friday afternoon prayers (slightly longer than the daily prayers and, for Muslim males, must be prayed in congregation at a set time); not being provided adequate prayer spaces by institutions such as schools, even where a significant proportion of users are Muslims; Muslims who wear the hijab or have a beard coming into conflict with uniform policies; being name-called, bullied or harassed using Islamophobic language. The key test for the IRU when there is a complaint of Islamophobia, it explained in

its submission, is to identify whether the incident is an offence that falls under the Equality Act; is there clear precedent or guidance that accurately fits the criteria of the facts of the case; and is there evidence to substantiate the complaint.

In its written submission, the IRU told the APPG that it currently turns away dozens of cases due to the absence of a definition of Islamophobia and the narrow conception of civil offences in the Equality Act. A robust definition of Islamophobia on the other hand, would enable individuals to identify whether they had experienced Islamophobia or not and would enable organisations that support victims to more clearly substantiate the basis of a complaint and evidence the nature of religiously-motivated discriminatory practice which produced a discriminatory outcome. For example, it is notoriously difficult to prove discrimination during the application, selection and interview process, however we know from data on the unequal outcomes faced by Muslims in the labour market, and as captured in the Women and Equalities Committee report, ‘Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK’, that it clearly does happen.⁸⁰

Remedies such as name-blind applications, diverse interview panels and unconscious bias training for recruitment professionals have all been suggested as means to tackle institutional processes which yield unequal outcomes for Muslims and other minorities. Buttressing this is, in our view, a definition of Islamophobia which gives meaning and substance to efforts to address conscious and unconscious forms of bias discrimination.

ISLAMOPHOBIA OR A FREEDOM OF SPEECH IMPEDIMENT?

Much of the debate was centred upon the question of whether or not Islamophobia is the appropriate terminology to deploy when describing anti-Muslim racism. Specifically, the conversation among the different submissions focused on the juxtaposition of Islamophobia with other phenomena such as anti-Semitism; its lexical accuracy; and the issue of free speech, with particular emphasis being placed on whether the term is or could be used to silence legitimate criticism of the religion.

The issue of free speech was acutely felt among the submissions, with some suggesting that Islamophobia could become a subterfuge to censor critiques and criticism of Islam. The National Secular Society rejects the idea that any set of beliefs should be protected from criticism, as they argue that “‘Islamophobia’ confuses hatred of, and discrimination against, Muslims with criticism of Islam.” They contend

46% of Muslims said that prejudice against Islam makes it very difficult to be a Muslim in this country’

⁷⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU).

⁸⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU).

that accusations of Islamophobia “have been used to silence debate about (and within) Islam”, as in the case of LGBT activists criticising Muslim clerics’ view on homosexuality, or feminist activists criticising “Islamic views on women”.⁸¹ Southall Black Sisters echoed this position, as they argue that “legitimate expression of free speech should be protected by article 10(1) [of the Human Rights Acts] but may be caught by a definition of Islamophobia”. To them, a condemnation of political Islam; criticism of patriarchal and heterosexual structures inherent in Islam; criticism of Sharia law; gender segregation; criticism of prominent Muslim leaders; promotion of atheism and secularism; all fall within the realm of the right to free speech, which should not be impeded or criminalised by a legally binding definition of Islamophobia.⁸² Zahed Amanullah advances a similar argument, as he states that “a clearly defined indicator of doctrinal critique” needs to be identified to avoid such debates being caught under the realm of Islamophobia.⁸³ On a similar note, Paul Giannasi OBE rejected the term Islamophobia as he stated “it’s about protection of Muslims’ human rights rather than Islam”.⁸⁴

In many other submissions, the notion that the term Islamophobia can lead to impediments to freedom of speech was highly contested. The central argument advanced by many participants in our inquiry is that identifying free or Islamophobic speech would depend on the way in which the debate is formulated, or to put it with Vidgen, “what is at stake here is not whether Islam should be criticised but, rather, on what basis Islam should be criticised.”⁸⁵ As such, giving up the term Islamophobia – and with it the possibility of creating legal instruments to tackle it – simply because of the perceived risk that may limit free speech would be highly misguided. “Freedom of speech comes with a responsibility”, contends Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, as she emphasises the need to “protect the dignity and rights of everyday Muslims” because the consequences of harmful, Islamophobic speech are real and acutely felt by the victims.⁸⁶ In this regard, it is useful to remember that the real-world impact of Islamophobic speech was already acknowledged by the 2017 Home Affairs Select Committee on hate crime, which, as Vidgens reminds us, recommended that “the Government should review the entire legislative framework” around online

hate speech, harassment and extremism (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2017).⁸⁷

Tania Saeed argues that, in making the distinction between Islamophobic or free speech, one would simply need to look at whether the speech “is intentionally demonizing a religion, or a diverse group of people, inciting hatred against a group”, which would thus entail assessments being made on a case to case basis and rooted in established “common sense” parameters.⁸⁸ This is echoed by Vidgen, who argues that in both “blatant Islamophobic hate speech” and “subtle Islamophobic hate speech”, the issue relates to the “expression of negativity against all Muslims” (emphasis added).⁸⁹ For Nadya Ali and Ben Witham, resorting to the debate over freedom of speech is but an excuse to legitimise “anti-Muslim racism”. Echoing John Stuart Mill, they argue that “freedom of speech ends when it causes harm to others”. Ali and Witham further their concern about the boundaries between Islamophobia and free speech by arguing that “there is no ‘good faith’ criticism of Islam”. Central in their argument is the concept of inseparability of race and religion, whereby an attack on the religion cannot be separated from an attack on the race because both concepts are constructs adopted “as a means of categorising colonial subjects”.

As such, the recourse to the notion of free speech and a supposed right to criticise Islam results in nothing more than another subtle form of anti-Muslim racism, whereby the criticism humiliates, marginalises, and stigmatises Muslims. One, real life example of this concerns the issue of ‘grooming gangs’:

“Participants reported being told that ‘Mohammed is a paedophile’, for instance. This comment does not, in a strictly grammatical sense, have the victim themselves as subject, but is rather an example of the ‘criticism of Islam’ as it is actually articulated and experienced. Yet, clearly, it is aimed at (and can achieve) harm to individual Muslims, and is not rooted in any meaningful theological debate but rather in a racist attempt to ‘other’ Muslims in general, associating them with the crime our society sees as most abhorrent of all. This strategy has been actively pursued by far right groups including the BNP and EDL but has also been indulged - especially, as our previous research has shown, in relation to ‘grooming gangs’ - by mainstream politicians of all of our main

81 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Stephen Evans of the National Secular Society.

82 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel of Southall Black Sisters.

83 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Zahed Amanullah of the Institute of Strategic Dialogue (ISD).

84 From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

85 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

86 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor of Coventry University.

87 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

88 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

89 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

political parties.”⁹⁰

Similar viewpoints are present in the submission from the NUS, in which it is argued that discussions on Islam actually need to be encouraged to dispel myths about the religion, and they would only fall into the realms of Islamophobia if the debate was to move “into dehumanising, collectively vilifying or targeting Muslims”.⁹¹

Islamophobia is by no means conceptualised in an attempt to silence debates about Islam, but to understand the framework within which the debate can take place. That is why, for example, Giannasi’s stance that “anti-Muslim sentiment is more relevant because I don’t think it’s about Islam”, appears misinformed. Claiming that “it’s important to say ‘this is not saying that any religion has rights, this is saying that we all have the right to believe or not believe and live life free from abuse’”, Giannasi effectively, however involuntarily, sheds a light into what Islamophobia attempts to do: it does not give rights to a religion to be removed from legitimate debates, rather, it gives rights to Muslim to hold their beliefs free from abuse.⁹²

Professor Tariq Modood presented a helpful series of tests which he set to determine whether what we are dealing with is reasonable criticism of Islam or Muslims or Islamophobia. According to Modood, the following five tests should be applied:

1. Does it stereotype Muslims by assuming they all think the same?

Does the criticism(s) seem to suggest that all or most Muslims have this blameworthy characteristic and that this feature defines Muslims, indeed drowns out any worthy characteristics and ignores contextual factors?

2. Is it about Muslims or a dialogue with Muslims, which they would wish to join in?

Does the mode of criticism consist of generalising about a group in a way that tends to exclude them rather than treat them as conversational partners who share common concerns?

3. Is mutual learning possible?

For example, one may criticise some Muslims for sexual conservatism or puritanism but is one willing to listen to those Muslims who think that contemporary societies like Britain are over-sexualised and encourage sexually predatory and undignified behaviour?

4. Is the language civil and contextually appropriate?

Is the behaviour or practice being criticised in an offensive way and seems to make Muslims the target rather than stick to the issue? (A good analogy is here is how reasonable, contextual criticism of Zionism can become a diatribe against Jewish people as such.)

5. Insincere criticism for ulterior motives?

Does the person doing the criticism really care about the issue or is using it to attack Muslims (in the way that many use feminism and homosexuality)?

If the answer to any of the five tests is a ‘Yes’, then we may be dealing with Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, according to Modood.⁹³

The APPG found these five tests compelling and a useful measure for ascertaining whether contentious speech is indeed reasonable criticism or Islamophobia masquerading as ‘legitimate criticism’.

In his response to the consultation by the APPG, Anas Sarwar MSP argued that a definition of Islamophobia would be highly beneficial to clarify the boundaries between legitimate and Islamophobic speech, as he stated: “In the valid debate of freedom of speech, it is important to define Islamophobia so that it cannot be mischaracterised as restricting the questioning of theology”. In this regard, and considering the conditions that a definition should satisfy to be functional across sectors, Sarwar added:

“It is also important that the law does not creep into the territory of debating the rights or wrongs of different theological viewpoints... The test has to be whether it passes the test with the fair minded majority. In order to do that any definition must not be an attempt to stifle debate or disagreement on theology. It must solely be focused on prejudice and bias focused towards Muslims – the followers of Islam – or those that are misrecognised as Muslims rather than Islam itself.”⁹⁴

Professor Tim Winter, Director of Studies at Wolfson College, Cambridge and the Dean of Cambridge Muslim College, makes a valuable argument evoking the spirit of critical inquiry within Islam too arguing, “Islamic culture in its classical and authentic form values difference, diversity and debate over God’s nature, edicts and purposes.”⁹⁵ To extend the point argued by Sarwar, we would add that any definition must not be an attempt to stifle debate or disagreement on theology within Islam and much as without.

⁹⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Nadya Ali of University of Sussex and Dr Ben Whitman of De Montfort University.

⁹¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Ilyas Nagdee, Hareem Ghani and Ayesha Ahmed of NUS.

⁹² From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

⁹³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood MBE, of the University of Bristol.

⁹⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Anas Swarwar MSP of the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia.

⁹⁵ ‘The Myth of Islamic Uniformity’, Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad (Professor Tim Winter). Undated.

The history of classical Islam is one of internal debate, discussion and dissenting opinion. Moreover, the right to free speech in European democracies, Britain included, is not and never has been an absolute right. Qualifications to the exercise of free speech abound with various restrictions existing, for example, in counter-terrorism legislation, including statements that encourage, either intentionally or recklessly, the commission of terrorist acts and which ‘glorify’ acts of terrorism.

Many of the submissions which we received challenged the premise that the right to free speech is absolute, or that it should be used as a tool to stigmatise, marginalise or humiliate minorities without any legal, or in fact moral, restraints. The right to free speech ends when words and actions begin to “fuel hatred, violence and stimulate antagonistic responses which are at odds with the cohesive society”.⁹⁶ Upon this concept, we heard that a definition of Islamophobia could perhaps be cognizant of the legal elements of “intent” and “recklessness” when determining the boundaries for policing free speech.

Intent and recklessness are broadly used in British jurisprudence: by way of example, most of the provisions contained in the Terrorism Act 2006, such as “Encouragement of terrorism” or “Dissemination of terrorist publications”, rely on this distinction to identify offenders and categorise the offence (Terrorism Act, 2006). A similar rationale applied in this context would allow for the creation of tools that can clearly draw the boundaries between Islamophobic speech and free speech, and by doing so, impede a recourse to a ‘free speech’ defence as a means to legitimise hateful and antagonising speech. When discussing what is a ‘respectful’ way of criticising Islam, Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP suggested in fact that Islamophobic behaviour is laced with intent and recklessness.

“I strongly urge you to recommend a definition of Islamophobia, not least because it allows you to leverage a number of pretty tried and tested legal concepts that are already in place. So if you look at the Terrorism Act 2006, there’s a couple of clauses in there which are sort of widely used. So you know, 2b, it is an offence to intend a member of the public to be directly or indirectly encouraged or induced to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism. It’s also reckless as to whether the members of the public would be directly or indirectly encouraged. So there is a lot of legal history, and tradition and

teaching about focus on the motive. But actually there are some concepts in the Terrorism Act 2006, like it’s an offence to glorify; it’s an offence to incite, but also it’s an offence to be reckless. And so, if you had a definition of Islamophobia, you’re then just able to leverage well-established precedents that prohibit glorification, recklessness or incitement.”⁹⁷

This framework, as Vidgen suggest, would allow for legislative tools to become more effective in tackling Islamophobic speech. So far, guidelines have been enforced “prudently”, which the Law Commission has argued, “has led to the toleration of online hate crime that ought to be prosecuted” (Law Commission, 2014).⁹⁸

Finally, we should not forget that a widely accepted definition of anti-Semitism has “proven that it is possible to protect an ethnic identity and/or religious group without undermining freedom of speech within a rights-based framework”. Akeela Ahmed argued that “It is certainly possible to criticise Islam without inciting hatred toward Muslims, homogenising them and demonising them”.⁹⁹ This is effectively the turning point of the debate, and a useful historical analogy that

Over half (52%) of perceived victims of religion-based hate crime were Muslims

dispels doubts about alleged free speech impediments: if anti-Semitism was successfully codified without impacting on free speech, then Islamophobia should undoubtedly be reserved the same treatment. “The tension between freedom of speech and freedom from discrimination”, writes Kallis, “has been diffused to a significant extent by instituting a stronger aura of what I have elsewhere called taboo around anti-Semitic language and imagery, let alone legislation and action”. Negotiating a “low threshold of taboo” for Islamophobia that is similar to that for anti-Semitism is therefore not only the “most effective short-term defence strategy against the diffusion and continuing normalisation of Islamophobia”, but also something that has been proved to be both possible and much needed to ensure the protection of “those at the weaker end of inherently asymmetrical power relations”.¹⁰⁰

Among other concerns surrounding the term Islamophobia, some have looked at linguistic ambiguities as a reason to oppose the formal adoption of the term. Southall Black Sisters reject the idea that any religious-based discrimination should be treated differently from racial discrimination, first because discrimination against Muslims would be better captured through the “traditional lens of racism”, and second because the conflation of religion with race

96 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Kaleem Hussain of Guidance Consultancy Ltd.

97 From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by the Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne MP on June 27, 2018.

98 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford

99 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government’s Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

100 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

can result in an impediment to challenging religious and cultural values. During the oral evidence session, the group reaffirmed its belief that the entire concept of Islamophobia should be rejected:

“We are not convinced that the concept of Islamophobia would add anything of value to the struggle against racism. SBS accepts there is anti-Muslim racism in the same way that there is racism towards Jewish people, there is racism towards Roma people there is anti-immigration racism, there are so many kinds of racism, but we do not believe that Islamophobia is a socially distinct phenomenon because the causes and consequences of racism are the same.”¹⁰¹

Similar themes emerged during the oral session, with Lord Singh acknowledged the different types of prejudice against Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, or against women through sexism for example, yet opposed the approach claiming it should not be dealt with through compartmentalising prejudices: “There should be ‘hate crime against others’”, stated Lord Singh when asked about his opposition to the term ‘Islamophobia’. He said “there should not be ‘Islamophobia’ or ‘anti-Semitism’, because that polarises the debate that these two communities are suffering and other communities are not suffering at all”. Echoing Southall Black Sisters’ argument, Lord Singh opposed the adoption of a definition of Islamophobia on the basis that it could create a hierarchy among different vulnerable groups and minorities.¹⁰²

In his submission, Romy Hasan also rejects the term Islamophobia, labelling it “highly problematic” and contending it cannot be equated to anti-Semitism. He writes:

“Given that non-Jews are also Semites, applying anti-Semitism solely to Jews is arguably inappropriate but given that this term has long been in use rather than, for example, ‘anti-Jewish prejudice’, it has become accepted as solely applying to Jews. Accordingly, Islamophobia cannot be equated with racism or anti-Semitism: Islam, after all, is an ideology like any other religious or non-religious ideology, as well as a set of practices.”¹⁰³

However, Hasan’s argument sits awkwardly within the debate. Firstly, he defines Islam (a religion) as an ideology – ignoring that the two are separate and have two distinguished meanings – while describing Christianity and Judaism, appropriately, as religions. This shows a concerning degree of inaccuracy or, ever more worryingly, bias. Second, he accepts that

the term ‘anti-Semitism’ is suitable to indicate anti-Jewish prejudice despite not being linguistically accurate (non-Jewish individuals can be Semites, for example), simply because it has become a widely accepted term. Yet, he is opposed to the idea of applying the same rationale to Islamophobia.

To be sure, debates surrounding the suitability of the word ‘Islamophobia’ have also been centred upon linguistic technicalities such as the use of suffix ‘phobia’, which has been contested on the basis that it denotes an irrational fear. Many of the submissions, such as Kallis, concede that the word might indeed be considered “poor” or “misleading”, but do not accept that the term should be rejected simply on that basis, particularly in light of its widespread adoption in society which, he argues, feeds into the “current momentum of political and public discussion”.¹⁰⁴

Taken to extremes, the idea of abandoning the term Islamophobia on the basis of its suffix has become a means for neoconservative or right-leaning spokespeople to reject the entire concept and thus delegitimise the problem. Such has been, for example, one of the main arguments advanced by Douglas Murray, associate director at the Henry Jackson Society and author of *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam*, who has long argued that the fear of Islam is not irrational but in fact, “supremely rational”, because Islam can be both violent and extremist.¹⁰⁵

Rather than deterring us from adopting the term Islamophobia, these arguments should induce us to ponder upon the widespread anxiety that has dominated the West’s conceptualisations and understandings of Muslims and Islam. This is one of Vidgen’s key arguments, which draws from Gottschalk and Greenberg’s (2008) highly influential work in which they describe Islamophobia as a “social anxiety towards Islam and Muslim cultures”. This position is echoed by Saeed (2007) who argues that the Muslims are the subjects or “public anxiety”, and by Taras (2012), who frames contemporary responses to Muslims within a “persisting European anxiety about Orientalism”.¹⁰⁶ In this regard, another interesting contribution weighing in on the debate is that offered in Tania Saeed’s submission. Approaching the debate from a socio-psychological perspective, she writes:

“[Islamophobia] is a socio-psychological phenomenon that ranges from distrust to fear and hatred of the Muslim identity and Islam; the ‘phobia’ is far from an irrational fear, it is informed by a social and political context that rationalizes such fear and hatred of

¹⁰¹ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel on June 19, 2018.

¹⁰² From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Lord Singh on June 19, 2018

¹⁰³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Romy Hassan of the University of Sussex.

¹⁰⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

¹⁰⁵ Douglas Murray, “Forget ‘Islamophobia’: Let’s Tackle Islamism”, *Standpoint*, June 2013, accessed 03.10.2018, <https://standpointmag.co.uk/node/5017/full>

¹⁰⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford

Muslims.”¹⁰⁷

Finally, Chakraborti and Zempi argue that the term Islamophobia should be adopted exactly because the terminology has long been established in the political lexicon. After all, ‘anti-Semitism’ and ‘Homophobia’ are widely used to indicate a variety of manifestations from discrimination, to bigotry, to violence, against Jewish or homosexual individuals, despite not being linguistically impeccable. Similarly, the use of the term Islamophobia is “unproblematic”, as it indicates the same range of discriminatory manifestations as well as well-established, yet again, linguistically imperfect, terms. In this regard, they write:

“As before, if Antisemitism is not deemed problematic as an appropriate name to describe anti-Jewish and anti-Judaic expressions, then Islamophobia should not be deemed problematic either. If homophobia is not deemed to require a single definition to be adopted in order to understand and subsequently respond to it, then Islamophobia should not be deemed to require a single definition either.”¹⁰⁸

During the oral evidence session, Modood furthered the argument in favour of the adoption of the term Islamophobia by highlighting the need to focus on the definition rather than on the word. When asked whether a different terminology would be better to avoid linguistic disputes, he stated:

“The other term is anti-Muslim racism, but the reason why I’ve used Islamophobia is that it took off. If something is there, and already has traction, then we are weakening the political will and capital that has been created over time by saying throw that away let’s start again. The big issue isn’t the term, it’s the content, so I say let’s stay with Islamophobia it’s common enough now and actually this country has led the way and so many others countries are using it as well but let’s make sure that we have clarity and have a definition that can be used by policy makers and legislatures.”¹⁰⁹

RACIALISATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ISLAMOPHOBIA

Dr Omar Khan of the Runnymede Trust explained the reason for advancing a definition of Islamophobia as ‘anti-Muslim racism’ in the Trust’s twentieth anniversary report stating: “Defining Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism properly locates the issue as one in which groups of people are ascribed negative cultural and racial attributes which can lead to a

wide range of experiences, either as an unconscious bias, prejudice, direct or indirect discrimination, structural inequality or hate incidents.”¹¹⁰

As discussed above, Islamophobia is positioned within a social and cultural space that homogenises Muslims and places them at disadvantage vis-à-vis society, on the basis of their belonging to a specific group perceived to carry certain characteristics. The process is known as ‘racialisation’ and, as Massoumi, Miller, Mills, and Aked argue:

“Racialisation describes process by which certain groups become signified as ‘races’ within specific social contexts. European colonisation relied on pseudo-scientific theories of races to categorise people into different racial hierarchies, today we rely on more culturalist explanations. Muslim appearances, behaviours and assumed practices are taken as a sign of inferiority - this is the process of racialisation. If ‘race’ is a fiction created when certain ethnic heritage or cultural practices attach to social advantage or disadvantage, it is hard to see religious identity as ontologically distinct from ‘race’. For good reason then, racialisation is increasingly used to explain Islamophobia as a form of racism.”¹¹¹

The concept of racialisation thus situates Islamophobia within anti-racism discourse which is not however just informed by biological race, but by a culture – broadly defined – that is perceived to be inferior to and by the dominant one. The hierarchy imposed upon this socio-cultural segmentation further contributes to homogenising Muslims on the basis of their real or perceived association with that group, making “racial and religious forms of abuse and discrimination faced by Muslims... inextricable”.¹¹²

During his oral evidence session, Paul Giannasi OBE touched upon the issue of racialisation – and more specifically about the conflation between race and religion – bringing into the debate his experience with hate crimes:

“The perpetrators will see somebody who was different, and lots of victims of anti-Muslim hate crime would be Sikh, Hindu, Christians, but they would be identified as Muslims. And lots of Muslims would suffer racial abuse triggered by them wearing Islamic clothes for instance... If you look at the data that we have disaggregated... In 2011 we found that somewhere between 52 and 59 per cent of victims of religious hate crime – and it was 1820 or so at the time – 52 or 59 per cent were Muslims. But then when

¹⁰⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

¹⁰⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Neil Chakraborti of University of Leicester, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

¹⁰⁹ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood on June 20, 2018.

¹¹⁰ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Omar Khan on June 19, 2018

¹¹¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Narzanin Massoumi of University of Exeter; Professor David Miller of University of Bristol, Dr Tom Mills of University of Aston; and Dr Hilary Aked of University of Bath.

¹¹² Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Ben Whitham of De Montfort University and Dr Nadya Ali of University of Sussex.

you apply that to the Census data, that suggests that Muslims are about a third as likely to suffer from religious hostility as a Jewish person. And we didn't think that that was in any way true, but the reality is that lots of Muslims would report hate crimes as a race hate crime, because we record based on the perception – we would ideally want forces to record both, as the victims perceive it. But if somebody uses racial language and then the victim reports it as a racist crime then it obviously wouldn't appear in religious crimes. So the actual incidents of a Muslim experience or risk of having to experience hate crime is significantly greater than the data would tell us.”¹¹³

The racial and religious dimensions of hostility or discrimination faced by Muslims was also spoken of in the submission by Zulfiqar Karim, the Secretary General of Bradford Council of Mosques. Stating that “an overwhelming majority of Muslims experience ‘double disadvantage’ on grounds of faith and race,” he presented a definition of Islamophobia thus,

“Islamophobia is direct or indirect acts aimed at marginalisation and suppression of Muslim faith identity towards individuals, groups or institutions by ways of:

1. Invoking fear and prejudice against people of the Islamic faith (Muslims).
2. Inciting hatred and violence against Muslims.
3. Direct or indirect discrimination to deny Muslims, because of their faith, legitimate access to opportunities, facilities and services.
4. Denying Muslims the right to practice their faith values, free of harassment, fear of violence against them or fear of incurring discrimination and hatred against them.
5. By creating an atmosphere of mistrust, which aids and abets acts of Islamophobia as defined in this definition – e.g. remarks by individuals and groups that can be made without fear of being held to account. Also use of print, social or electronic media to deliberately malign and create fear and division surrounding the Muslim community.”¹¹⁴

Tariq Modood's definition of Islamophobia encapsulates perfectly the concept of racialisation of

Muslims, as he writes:

“Islamophobia is the racialising of Muslims based on physical appearance or descent as members of a community and attributing to them cultural or religious characteristics to vilify, marginalise, discriminate or demand assimilation and thereby treat them as second class citizens... Islamophobia is a form of cultural racism because while the perception and treatment of Muslims clearly has a religious and cultural dimension it, equally clearly, bears a physical appearance or ancestral component.”¹¹⁵

This, adds Peter Hopkins, translates Islamophobia into an exclusionary process that affects Muslims regardless of whether they are practicing or not – as well as “those mistaken for being Muslim” – effectively strengthening and further legitimising arguments in favour of a wide definition that “overtly illustrate the nuances and complexities of Islamophobia”.¹¹⁶ In turn, this allows greater scope for Islamophobia to be

The risk of being a victim of hate crime was highest for Muslim adults (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2016-2018)

discussed not merely as a social, political, cultural and historical phenomenon, but also as one that exists in a space of gender, class, race and other factors that produce vulnerabilities. In this regard, the intersection

between Islamophobic hate crimes and gender, race and ethnicity, appearance and space is often ignored in the Criminal Justice System.¹¹⁷ This constitutes a serious limitation to the way in which Islamophobia can be understood. As Stevenson points out:

“Racism and Islamophobia are experienced differently by different groups; however, female Muslims encountered high levels of Islamophobia in relation to dress; Black Muslims faced racism as well as Islamophobia and so encounter an additional ethnic penalty; while first generation Muslims faced racism and hostility in relation to their immigrant status.”¹¹⁸

In its submission to the APPG, Tell MAMA stated that victims contacting the organisation “will experience different forms of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim [hatred] because of their religion and ethnicity”. Tell MAMA further noted that “Any definition must consider how racialisation of Muslim identity means, for example, that white converts are verbally abused with racial epithets like ‘P*ki’.”¹¹⁹

¹¹³ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

¹¹⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Zulfiqar Karim DL, Secretary General of Bradford Council of Mosques.

¹¹⁵ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood MBE, of the University of Bristol.

¹¹⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Peter Hopkins of Newcastle University.

¹¹⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awan of Birmingham City University and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

¹¹⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Jaqueline Stevenson of Sheffield Institute of Education.

¹¹⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Tell MAMA.

During the oral evidence session, parliamentarians explored the issue of anti-Muslim racism probing Kallis on whether the process of racialisation could apply to white Muslim converts who did not fit within a specific racial profile. Kallis's answer sheds further light into the conceptualisation of anti-Muslim racism:

“Race is not about phenotype, race exists first and foremost in the eyes of the racist. Race is a group that is defined by the person that makes a generalisation. But we are talking about a racism that is defined by the power, it is asymmetrical so people who have the power, this is a single group, all Muslims however they look like, however the practice, where they come from, how they dress, whatever their political views, they are all part of this phantom imaginary group. Race therefore in the phenotypical sense of the word plays a small part of this discussion.”¹²⁰

Kallis further added that there is a need for a special category of racism against Muslims due “to the conditions of our world, at a time when prejudice and discrimination are directed at people with Muslim backgrounds has become not only pervasive but also increasingly troubling”. Adding to the discussion of Islamophobia as a form of anti-Muslim racism, the Muslim Council of Britain drew the APPG's attention to the UN definition of racism, highlighting the ways in which it operates not simply as an attitude or a prejudice, but by denying people dignity, rights and liberties across a range of political, economic, social and cultural institutions.¹²¹

In short, Islamophobia is not just a racist process that selects its victims on the basis of their physical appearance, but also a process of separation between the dominant, nativist culture, and the culture that is being problematized because of its practices, being them real or perceived. This process thus structures the issue within an inclusion/exclusion framework, as it specifies, argue Awam and Zempi, “who may legitimately belong to a particular national, or other community, whilst, at the same time, determining what that community's norms are and thereby justifying the exclusion of those whose religion or culture assign them elsewhere”.¹²² That is also why, as Saeed puts it, “Muslim identity is reduced to stereotypes of violence and oppression”,¹²³ and the social context that prompts this phenomenon is also what sustains it: “It is the racist who creates the race”, claims Kallis, reminding us of the social and

political responsibilities we bear in the racialisation of Muslims.¹²⁴

We also heard arguments about sectarianism within Muslim communities and whether this was or was not Islamophobia. Professor Tariq Modood spoke about the mis-classification of Islamophobia in cases of sectarian disputes. He told us Islamophobia should be confined to naming the specific process through which Muslims are racialised by non-Muslims, which thus entails categorising sectarian issues under a different terminology. Modood made this case during the oral evidence session:

“I talked about racialising which is when an outsider creates a group, so as an example black people created as a group by white Europeans. Even the Windrush generation that we have been recently talking about, when they came to Britain, they thought they were Barbadians, Ghanaians, Jamaicans, they didn't know they were black. They were told they were black when they arrived in Britain. So I think racialising is something that is done from the outside and sometimes there are aspects of self-racialising, but dividing a group and saying you are not the real thing... I think we have to find some other category for that, it is a fault and it would fail some of my tests, but not specifically in relation to Islamophobia which would fail my tests in terms of equality and intolerance.”¹²⁵

Indeed, it would be misleading to interpret Islamophobia as a tool that can capture, together with the issues of racialisation, issues of sectarianism. As such, it is necessary that issues of sectarianism are understood, and dealt with, as separate phenomena from Islamophobia. Officers of this APPG feel an independent inquiry by government into sectarianism, across all faith communities, may be a possible way forward inviting all faith communities to participate, including British Muslims.

Furthermore, without a definition of Islamophobia that is capable of encompassing this process of racialisation, we risk limiting our chances of identifying Islamophobic discourses. “This means that commentators like Trevor Cavanagh (sic)”, writes Ahmed, “are able to talk about a ‘Muslim problem’ using racialised and Islamophobic language, without it being widely recognised as Islamophobic”.¹²⁶ It also means that far-right groups can retain the freedom to reject accusations of racism because, arguing that Muslims are not a race, they limit “the definition to

¹²⁰ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis on June 20, 2018.

¹²¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims Miqdaad Versi of Muslim Council of Britain (MCB).

¹²² Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awam of Birmingham City University and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

¹²³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

¹²⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

¹²⁵ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood on June 20, 2018.

¹²⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government's Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

biological constructs and thus would argue that their rhetoric is not necessarily racist” (Bridge Institute). Conversely, continues the Bridge Institute,

“The most effective definition to measure and tackle varying forms of abuse would be ‘anti-Muslim racism’ as it could quantify online, face to face, written, verbal, microaggressions towards individuals and use ‘racism’ as the starting point to measure abuse.”¹²⁷

Interestingly, during the oral evidence session, Southall Black Sisters made exactly the argument that because Muslims are not a race, the entire concept of Islamophobia should be discarded, as they stated:

“Islam is not a race and this is a pertinent point, can there be racism against a set of ideas as opposed to people... So even liberals and anti-racists will say Islamophobia is in effect a form of racism, whereas Islamists and those on the extreme wing of the spectrum will argue that it’s the protection of religion.”¹²⁸

The argument, however, appears highly misguided. As noted earlier, Islamophobia cannot be understood in a vacuum, nor should it be decontextualized and removed from historical, social, political and cultural trends that inform – and have informed – similar phenomena. When looking at anti-Semitism, for example, we do not observe prejudice developing solely on the basis of biological features, but one that emerges from ‘set of ideas’ that, through the creation of stereotypes, racialize Jewish individuals for their belonging to that specific group. In the context of anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories have long been acknowledged as a form of anti-Jewish racism, despite them being effectively ‘sets of ideas’ about the Jewish population. Yet, because they form the basis of the process of racialisation whereby Jewish people – or those perceived to be Jewish – come to be victimised, they are broadly accepted as manifestations of anti-Semitism. Likewise, it would be absurd to interpret Islamophobia merely as a form of racism restricted to biological traits, as it would be to imagine the conceptualisation of Islamophobia as a vehicle to protect a religion. Among all the submissions, for example, the agreement that Islamophobia should be considered a form of racism specific to Muslims was evident (Modood, Miller et al, Kallis, Awan and Zempi, Hopkins etc.), yet there was absolutely no indication that the term should also be introduced because of its capacity to ‘protect’ the religion. If anything, many submissions evidenced and supported the idea of enabling criticism of the and pointed at a clear conceptualisation and definition of Islamophobia as the right tool to frame doctrinal debates around Islam

in a manner that does not demonise and de-humanise Muslims.

In this regard, it is also useful to dispel another argument proposed during Southall Black Sisters’ oral evidence session, which concerns the idea that the adoption of a definition of Islamophobia can cause public bodies to be “fearful of intervening in minority affairs for fear of being labelled as Islamophobic and offending cultural sensibilities”.¹²⁹ The claim does not stand to scrutiny for reasons similar to those expressed above. A legally binding definition of Islamophobia is not advocated in an effort to create a protective umbrella that can shield Islam from any form of criticism, rather to demarcate clearly and definitively the boundaries between legitimate criticism and anti-Muslim racism. It is exactly because of the supposed confusion in understanding how to ‘criticise’ Islam without offending ‘cultural sensibilities’ that the case for the adoption of the term Islamophobia finds its strength. Without a clear definition, debates over Islamic practices, precepts, manifestations etc., would be confined to a perennial status of ambiguity in which one party would feel racialised and the other censored.

In addition, considering Islamophobia effectively as “anti-Muslim racism” allows to position the phenomenon within a clearer socio-cultural context informed by both historical and contemporary trends.

As noted above, Islamophobia cannot be separated from anti-Semitism because both phenomena and both terminologies share remarkably similar traits. Kallis contends in this regard that

“While the ideological and cultural components of anti-Semitism are very different from those of Islamophobia, the processes by which hatred is (or has historically been) mainstreamed and facilitates more aggressive language, behaviour, and action are critically similar. The most effective way to strengthen the reach and cogency of any definition of Islamophobia is to restate it as a very modern racialising project, with new arguments but feeding from deep historic stores of diffuse cultural prejudice.”¹³⁰

It is therefore arguable that, although Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are of course culturally and ideologically different, they identify the same type of racism – one based on actual or perceived racial features, ethnic appearances, and cultural practices – as well as the processes and outcomes whereby social majorities “have come to view those groups as external, dangerous, and threatening.”¹³¹

¹²⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Abida Malik of the Bridge Institute.

¹²⁸ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel on June 19, 2018.

¹²⁹ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel on June 19, 2018.

¹³⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Adopting that language, continues Kallis, is as important as giving legal footing to the word 'genocide' was in the post-war years, which recognised "the particular fate of Jews in the Nazi 'new order'." As such, just like genocide indicates "a very particular kind of crime against humanity that required public visibility and recognition in the particular historical context of the mid-20th-century world", so Islamophobia indicates a very specific kind of racism directed against Muslims. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of the term genocide allowed for it to be used retrospectively and thus locate all similar crimes within the same category – a process that would be invaluable for identifying and tackling Islamophobic crimes.

Yet, during the oral evidence session, Southall Black Sisters remarked against the institutionalisation of the term Islamophobia:

"We worry that the institutionalisation of the term Islamophobia would lead to a specific kind of privileging of victimhood. So my victimhood is worse than your victimhood, which creates competitiveness, who are the ultimate victims, and instead of solidarity and alliances being formed it leads to hatred of the other. Minority groups should be working together instead of separating off from each other, and seeing the other religion as the other and that's what we see as a growing trend of otherisation within communities."¹³²

Again, the group proposes a weak argument against a legal adoption of the term Islamophobia. There is no evidence to suggest that by creating a category of Islamophobic crimes, Muslim could be incentivised to perceive themselves as 'ultimate victims', let alone that this odd competition could lead victimised groups to hate each other. The exceptional nature of Islamophobia does not rest upon an issue of ranking, that is, an attribution of value rooted in the level of seriousness of that particular discrimination vis-à-vis other forms of prejudice. Rather, it is based on the historical, social, cultural and political processes that inform the way in which this particular form of racism exists and manifests itself. Resorting again to the institutionalisation of anti-Semitism, there is no evidence in support of the thesis that the Jewish population sees itself as the 'ultimate victim', nor that it is in open competition with other minorities for that status. Even more, the issue has never been debated in those terms, and indeed the adoption of anti-Semitism was never contested for fear it might induce Jewish communities to compete for the title of 'ultimate victims'.

Furthermore, the idea that the categorisation of anti-Muslim racism as Islamophobia could reduce the cooperation between different minority groups seems abstruse. First, again looking at anti-Semitism,

there is no evidence that Jewish communities have become more isolated as a result of the adoption of the term. If anything, the opposite could be argued, since the adoption of anti-Semitism has allowed for legal protection of otherwise vulnerable communities and, consequently, a greater propensity and desire to safely integrate in British society. Second, because by identifying the specific Islamophobic – or indeed anti-Semitic – prejudice, communities can learn about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and narratives, which can lead to greater inter-group cooperation and cohesion.

Interestingly, Southall Black Sisters acknowledged in their oral evidence that "there is a racialisation of religion that is taking place", yet they seemingly refuse to consider Islamophobia as a racialising phenomenon. When asked by parliamentarians whether we need to roll back the accepted definition of anti-Semitism – which indeed creates a special category of anti-Jewish racism – they replied: "To be fair... anti-Semitism has also caused a lot of controversy and concerns", further admitting that they have issues with both terminologies. With the uncompromising stance revealing an aversion to both terms, certain elements of the answer provided displayed the group's little understanding of the meaning of Islamophobia: "Anti-Semitism is not necessarily about Judaism, it's not anti-Judaism unlike Islamophobia which comes across as anti-Islam and that then creates the problems, is it religion, is it people, what is it?"¹³³ Here lays the problem. Islamophobia does not mean 'anti-Islam' and, as such, the adoption of a legally binding definition should not be understood as a means of curtailing criticism of the religion. Islamophobia indicates the process through which Muslims are racialised and become victims of discrimination, abuse and violence on the basis of their 'Muslimness', be it real or perceived. As such, the term Islamophobia does not shield the religion from criticism, but sets the boundaries within which the criticism can be moved without racialising Muslims.

Of course, the process of racialisation of Muslims also stems from practices that have been ingrained within the functioning of nation-states and that, either purposely or accidentally, contribute to compartmentalising and 'othering' Muslims. This process has led many to talk about 'structural' or 'institutional' Islamophobia, in an effort to indicate the state-based barriers that problematize and marginalise Muslims while simultaneously reinforcing the socio-cultural divide between 'Us' and 'Them'.

The term 'institutional Islamophobia' finds its roots in the 1999 Macpherson report, which followed the public inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence and the mishandling of the case

¹³² From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel on June 19, 2018.

¹³³ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Pragna Patel on June 19, 2018.

by both the Crown Prosecution Service and the Metropolitan Police Service. Both public bodies, the report found, were affected by issues of race, incompetence and corruption, which resulted in flawed investigations marred by controversy. Against this backdrop, Sir William Macpherson evidenced for the first time a case for 'institutional racism', intended as a phenomenon that manifests itself "not solely through the deliberate actions of a small number of bigoted individuals, but through a more systematic tendency that could unconsciously influence police performance generally".¹³⁴ Following the ground-breaking report, 'institutional racism' came to be defined as

"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people."¹³⁵

There is also offered the case to favour the term 'Institutional' rather than 'Structural' Islamophobia. While the latter suggests a certain degree of transcendence that places the burden of Islamophobic practices on somewhat abstract constructs, the former clearly points at people and institutions "engaged in practices that discriminate against Muslims". Or as a participant at the Sheffield community consultation event put it:

"Any definition of Islamophobia has to recognise that Islamophobia is perpetuated in political rhetoric and a broad range of policy measures. So, it's perpetuated in counter-terrorism, in community cohesion, in integration, in immigration debates, and worst of all, in the continuous racialisation of criminality."

This clarity also allows to identify not just explicit manifestation of Islamophobia, such as hate crimes, but also "to focus on the policies developed by policy makers and enacted by government which discriminate against Muslims".¹³⁶ Policies that do not directly or explicitly discriminate against Muslims, but that are based on tropes that produce discriminatory outcomes, need to be addressed as a key component of the ecosystem in which Islamophobia is established. Conceptualising Islamophobia along these lines therefore allows for a real assessment of those social and institutional constructs that sustain it, and for the adoption of real policies that can break them.

These arguments echo strongly the 2004 findings of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia set up by the Runnymede Trust in 1996. Drawing from the Macpherson inquiry, the report discusses institutional Islamophobia as "those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce inequalities in society between Muslims and non-Muslims".¹³⁷

Institutional Islamophobia manifests itself in a variety of ways and, as Abbas argues, encompasses issues of socio-economic inequality, such as employment, housing, educational attainment, as well the "rationalisation and normalisation lock in Islamophobic groupthink", which is by all means the institutionalisation of Islamophobia. In this regard, and drawing directly from her experience, Ahmed writes:

"Often I hear from women who will not go to work due to such hostile environment until the news cycle has moved on and these discussions are less likely to take place in the work environment. Similarly, parents report that their children are often subjected to anti-Muslim bullying in the classroom, or when they do sports; but when they make complaints to schools, the matters are brushed under the carpet and/or not dealt with appropriately. In some cases, teachers make comments about Muslim students and/or Islam which are derogatory and there is no recourse for students to deal with these incidents... There are also instances of Islamophobia by voluntary organisations. In particular, I have received reports regarding feminist groups which are actively Islamophobic toward Muslim women who attend their conferences. As a result, Muslim women often go to these conferences seeking empowerment but are instead silenced and marginalised because they were hijab and/or identify with their faith."¹³⁸

Resorting to his experience with Islamophobia in Scotland, Anas Sarwar MSP discussed five levels of institutional Islamophobia, also highlighting the work that the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia has been conducting thus far:

1. Police Scotland/Legal Framework: reporting rates, how they are recorded, how they are handled, barriers to reporting, successful prosecution rates, communication with communities. There is also a consideration with this on the existing legal protections for Muslims and how this compared to other forms of hate crime.
2. Employability: the impact of Islamophobia on

¹³⁴ William Macpherson, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Report of an Inquiry*, (United Kingdom: The Stationary Office, 1999) accessed 01.11.2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf p. 41.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 43.

¹³⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Narzanin Massoumi of University of Exeter; Professor David Miller of University of Bristol, Dr Tom Mills of University of Aston; and Dr Hilary Aked of University of Bath

¹³⁷ Robin Richardson ed., *Islamophobia issues, challenges and action*, (Stoke on Trent, UK and Sterling, USA: Trentham Books, 2004), p. 14.

¹³⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government's Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

access to the labour market, career progression and in employment practices. Within this we are also considering the diversity of the senior leadership of the civil service and public sector bodies.

3. Education: how bullying is recorded, how it is handled, training of staff, creating an equality charter in schools, teaching our shared history and building a more diverse workforce.

4. Women: there is a clear gendered nature to Islamophobia with women being a particular target. Creating a platform for women to share their own experience and to help shape policy priorities.

5. Media: considering how incidents are reported, use of descriptive language and how that perpetuates or challenge Islamophobia. The role of social media.¹³⁹

There is, as such, an enormous institutional responsibility to de-legitimise discriminatory practices that ingrain Islamophobia within the fabric of our society. It would be fruitless to imagine a definition of Islamophobia that has no footing or applicability in our legal system. The Criminal Justice System, notes Ahmed, as well as other governmental bodies such as the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Universities, “require a proper definition and policy on Islamophobia” to ensure that their policies do not discriminate against Muslims. Similarly, “a definition is required that is relevant for businesses, employers and other organisations which can be included in employment and workplace policies”.¹⁴⁰ This would effectively create mechanisms through which Islamophobia can be detected, reported, and sanctioned, a crucial step to eradicate it from society. That is why, as the NUS puts it, the definition of Islamophobia “will see the incorporation of the systemic and institutional ramifications of Islamophobia within the discourse of Islamophobia which is currently occupied mainly by political participation and the like.”¹⁴¹

Research conducted by Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, explored the issue of institutionalised discrimination of religious minorities in higher education settings, pointing at Muslim students as a category that acutely feels the effects of “visible” and “invisible” discrimination”. Among the reasons:

1. Whilst social and ethnic diversity on campus is seen as a cause for ‘celebration’, religious diversity is largely unrecognised and unacknowledged. This can make Muslim students feel invisible, ignored, overlooked, undervalued or disregarded as Muslims.

2. Despite this invisibility, Muslim students also feel highly visible - as a result of prevailing discourses around the threat faced from Islamic fundamentalism on campus.

3. The lack of institutional and/or individual understanding about Islam or of the needs of religious students, and insufficient religious literacy amongst staff groups and student peers, many Muslim students experience intended or unintended racism or Islamophobia. This ranges from casual micro-aggression to overt discrimination, intolerance or even hatred, and is frequently unchecked and unchallenged on campus.

4. The invisibility of religion, alongside the visibility of being Muslim and/or experiences of Islamophobia can threaten Muslim students’ sense of belonging on campus which may, in turn, affect self-esteem, confidence, or integration, and thus has implications for retention and attainment, and for Muslim students’ overall experiences of being a student in UK higher education.¹⁴²

Stevenson further contends that evidence points at increasing discrimination and physical and verbal abuse on campus experienced by religious minorities, especially Muslims, with many recounting incidents of verbal abuse and a few examples of physical abuse, including being spat on or having items of clothing ripped. As she wrote:

“Islamophobia and/or anti-Muslim racism was, across the accounts given, both present and pervasive. Moreover, it was rarely checked and frequently unchallenged. It therefore operated as a form of institutional racism: “So somebody said something stupid about Muslims in class and I looked at the lecturer and she just looked right back and looked so embarrassed because she knew she should say something but she just didn’t know what. So in the end she said nothing although afterwards she apologised to me for that (Roxana, Pakistani heritage, female, 19, undergraduate).”¹⁴³

The adoption of a definition of Islamophobia might, therefore, actually help draw the boundaries between hate speech and legitimate dialogues, through which an educational process can be initiated around those stereotypes and generalisations about Islam that generate fear.

Second, there is a hidden, albeit obvious conflation between Islam and extremism, which is thus far one of the prevalent lenses through which Islam is widely discussed – or even worse positioned – in society. It is

¹³⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Anas Sarwar MSP of the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia.

¹⁴⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government’s Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

¹⁴¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Ilyas Nagdee, Hareem Ghani and Ayesha Ahmed of NUS.

¹⁴² Jacqueline Stevenson, “Muslims Students in UK Higher Education: Issues of Inequality and Inequity”, Bridge Institute for Research and Policy, October 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <http://bridgeinstitute.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Bridge-Higher-Education-report-1-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁴³ Ibid.

the exceptionalisation of Islam – the process through which Islam and Muslims are problematized on the basis of a perceived proximity to extremism – that aids this form of institutional Islamophobia in becoming even more entrenched in our world. As Miller et al argue:

“Neoconservative think tanks are attempting to influence government counter-terrorism policies and have at least arguably had some effect. This suggests that an adequate definition of Islamophobia should also be alive in the activities of think tanks and other policy groups engaged in attempting to influence government policy. These activities are practical means by which policies that discriminate against Muslims are created and implemented.”¹⁴⁴

MUSLIMNESS: EXPRESSIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

Having established that Islamophobia is the best term to conceptually identify the phenomenon; that it does not impede free speech; that it is able to encompass a variety of manifestations; and that it is a form of cultural racism; the submissions focused on identifying the parameters through which this form of cultural racism is applied, or in other words, the perceptions that underpin the Islamophobic logic. The debate around manifestations or perceptions of ‘Muslimness’ is an uncomfortable but crucial one to have, and sits at the heart of a new, working definition of Islamophobia. Indeed, understanding Islamophobia entails not just being aware of how it manifests itself, but also being cognizant of what it actually targets.

Ali and Witham’s explanation of ‘Muslimness’ offers a clear starting point to understand the issue, as they contend that Islamophobic actions and behaviours

“Are predicated on perception of the victims ‘Muslimness’. Such an understanding of Muslim difference combines biological attributes (skin colour) with religious and cultural practices including clothing (hijab, niqab, skull caps, kurtas), eating (halal meat, inhibitions on alcohol and pork) and a strong imaginary about the ‘radical otherness’ of so-called ‘Muslim practices’. These have included (but are not limited to), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage (FM), veiling, a supposed propensity for electoral fraud, the imposition of sharia law, and child sexual exploitation.”¹⁴⁵

This practice underpins the logics behind Islamophobia, and is in turn informed by the process of racialisation discussed earlier. Social processes

and political contexts reinforce the attribution of certain characteristics to a specific group, which is consequently placed under hyper-scrutiny and problematized on the basis of the level of religiosity displayed, that is, the extent to which such characteristics are made detectable. This is assessed not only against visible attributes, such as for example Islamic garments, but also religious practices, such as specific dietary requirements associated with Islam: “victims are often identified or ‘racialised’ as Muslims by abusers”, Ali and Witham write, “due to, for example, south Asian appearance, skin colour, clothing or other markers of ‘race’.”¹⁴⁶ Adding to this argument, Dr Jafari from the University of Strathclyde told the APPG: “Muslim practices such as production, distribution, promotion and consumption of halal certified products and services are increasingly demonized by anti-Muslim organisations and individuals. Muslim beliefs and lifestyle preferences are also equally negatively ridiculed and insulted.”¹⁴⁷

The stereotypization of Muslims strongly echoes Vidgen’s analysis of the tropes used to justify Islamophobia:

- Paedophilia
- Rape
- Terrorism
- Criminality
- Benefits claimants
- Barbarism/being uncivilized
- Sexism and anti-feminism
- Fundamentalist, illiberal or undemocratic¹⁴⁸

Of course, Islamophobia does not manifest itself exclusively when the ‘Muslimness’ is visible. Saeed argues that “Practicing Muslim women who may not be visibly Muslim may encounter Islamophobia in the work place, or in an educational institution because of their religious practices, or encounter instances of Islamophobia where their religiosity is constantly under scrutiny”. This evidences the fact that it is Muslims’ religiosity that informs prejudice, however this is displayed and even if it is not displayed in a visible manner. In this regard, she suggests the implementation of tools that can help detect those factors that inform prejudice against expressions of ‘Muslimness’. Based on a new and comprehensive definition of Islamophobia, she proposes the creation of a survey to explore not just the lived experiences of the victims, but also focus “on the perception of a representative sample of non-Muslim citizens, and

¹⁴⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Narzanin Massoumi of University of Exeter; Professor David Miller of University of Bristol, Dr Tom Mills of University of Aston; and Dr Hilary Aked of University of Bath.

¹⁴⁵ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Ben Whitham of De Montfort University and Dr Nadya Ali of University of Sussex.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Jafari from the University of Strathclyde.

¹⁴⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

their understanding of what Islamophobia means". The survey, which could be distributed in workplaces, educational institutions and neighbourhoods, would help understand the deep nature of anti-Muslim prejudice, or more specifically, that prejudice that stems from the stereotypization and problematization of different 'expressions of Muslimness'.¹⁴⁹

Saaed's argument is widely supported by the literature. Research conducted by Jones, Catto, Kaden, and Elsdon-Baker and which explored popular associations of Islam with, for instance, rejection of science and progress, showed that Muslims are perceived as a social threat even by those who denounce anti-Muslim prejudice. This seeming paradox can only be explained if we account for the way in which processes of racialisation and cultural othering have affected all segments of society, thus resulting in the normalisation – and acceptance – of stereotypical representations of Islam. Considering the multifaceted nature of Islamophobia, it is therefore critical for new research tools to be devised and applied towards the identification of subtler forms of prejudice and stigmatisation. As Jones et al argue,

"This suggests, then, a need for sociologies of race and religion to work more collaboratively. At the methodological level, this might mean incorporating lines of questioning about belief within research instruments designed to track prejudice, and deeper analysis of claims about religious belief when these are used to justify racialized political norms. At the political level, it also means engaging more directly with the argument that Islamophobia should be opposed not just because Muslim identity is rarely wholly voluntary, but also because even voluntarily chosen beliefs can be misrepresented in prejudiced, potentially harmful ways."¹⁵⁰

Islam has indeed long been discussed in contrast to other socio-cultural norms and, in Britain specifically, this has taken the form of narratives centred upon the nebulous concept of 'British values'. Whatever categorisation we might wish to attribute to 'British values' – be it based on morality norms or universal values – those are popularly depicted as irreconcilable with religious, cultural or political agency based on Islamic faith. Even more, contends Abbas, the concept of 'British values' has become "a favourite trope of both the soft and hard right", which use this ideological argument to "excuse their Islamophobia"

or indeed "legitimise it".¹⁵¹

Awam and Zempi's stance in this regard is enlightening as they contend that:

"Islamophobia can be interpreted through the lens of cultural racism whereby Islamic religion, tradition, and culture are seen as a 'threat' to 'British values' and 'national identity', whilst 'visible' Muslims are viewed as 'culturally dangerous' and threatening the 'British/Western way of life'.¹⁵²

In this regard, they further refer to the case of white British converts to exemplify a form of racism based on perceptions of cultural superiority. On the basis of their research into converts to Islam, Awam and Zempi contend that white Muslim women who wear a veil – or indeed any other religious identifier – come to be targeted exactly for their decision to convert to Islam. In the eyes of the abusers, British converts have supposedly betrayed British values and the British way of life. It is within this perceived dichotomy, they continue, that Islamophobia positions itself as a form of "new racism", one that does not stem from "an explicit belief of biological superiority", but that is based on "notions of religious and cultural superiority".¹⁵³ Or, as Kallis puts it,

"Anti-Muslim racism understands and talks about people and communities with Muslim backgrounds as a 'race' – bound together by a cultural-religious code that continues to be seen as allegedly incompatible with – and hostile to – western ideas and ways of life."¹⁵⁴

As Richardson argues in his study on representations of British Muslims in the broadsheet press, the ability of "mainstream white society to regulate the parameters of British society" to include or exclude Muslims involves devising new "tests" which,

"[A]t to exclude Muslims both from the position "British", and also from the debate on what it is to be "culturally British". Two rejectionist strategies are used interchangeably in order that this exclusion be successful: First, Muslims are excluded from the position "British" by virtue of the "Britishness" they are perceived to lack; and second, Muslims are excluded from the position "British" by virtue of the "Islamicness" that they are perceived to have. This second rejectionist strategy obviously has feedback loops into the first, since simple identification with a religion should pose no prima-facie exclusion from being "British". Therefore, in order to function

149 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Tania Saaed of Lahore University.

150 Stephen H. Jones, Rebecca Catto, Tom Kaden, Tom Elsdon-Baker, "That's how Muslims are required to view the world: Race, culture and belief in non-Muslims' descriptions of Islam and science", *The Sociological Review* 1-17, 2018.

151 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tahir Abbas of LSE.

152 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awam of Birmingham City University, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

153 Ibid.

154 Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

coherently as an exclusion strategy, Islam must be presupposed to be fundamentally non-British.”¹⁵⁵

As Professor Tim Winter puts it, in his essay on ‘The Myth of Islamic Uniformity’, “Among the most frequent themes of anti-Muslim rhetoric is the claim that ‘the Muslims’ comprise a single type of humanity whose preferences and behaviour are straightforwardly driven by a simple and uniform religion. Thus have Muslims joined the long and melancholy list of human collectivities who have been reified and essentialised as Dark Others: Jews, Blacks, Irish, Catholics, Roma, and many more. They are the opposite of ourselves; and help to define our identity by telling us what we are not; and to serve this psychological purpose they must be a single kind of thing.”¹⁵⁶

The view that Islam is socially and culturally represented as dangerous, hostile and incompatible with Western – or in the case British – values, is echoed by Awam and Zempi, as they point out that “in the British context, Islam and Muslims have increasingly been seen to be ‘culturally dangerous’ and threatening the ‘British way of life’” by those who subscribe to the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. Crucially, they continue, “it is increasingly Islamic religion, tradition and culture that have been seen as a ‘threat’ to the Western ideals of democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality”, a claim that allows Islamophobia to be attributed a religious component in addition to the racial one.¹⁵⁷ As discussed in Jones et al Islamophobia does not stem exclusively from the association of Muslims with ethnic group membership and correspondent somatic features, but from a criticism of the religion based on cultural racist tropes, which denigrate Islam on the basis of a perceived deviation from dominant values such as democracy, freedom of speech and gender equality. In this regard, it is also worth remembering that anti-Muslim racism is not static but dynamic, as it is dependent upon antagonistic constructions of expressions of ‘Muslimness’ that are in themselves fluid and transformative. Incidentally, this is why Chakraborti et al point out that a definition of Islamophobia “must be flexible and fluid enough to ensure that the changing and transformative nature of

any discriminatory phenomena can be duly captured and identified.”¹⁵⁸

In short, Islamophobia essentialises Muslims, locating them in a homogenous group defined by one, single essence that is continuously depicted and perceived as incompatible, or inassimilable, with western societies. This is, according to Modood, one of the central issues when tackling Islamophobia. It is not just about the most immediate concerns relating to, for example, hate crimes, rather, it is about contesting tropes that reduce Muslims or expressions of ‘Muslimness’ to a single essence. Consequently, an anti-essentialist definition of Islamophobia serves the purpose of

“Showing that various popular or dominant ideas about Muslims, just as in the case of, say, women, gays, etc., are not true as such but are aspects of socially constructed images that have been made to stick on those groups of people because the ascribers are more powerful than the ascribed.”¹⁵⁹

Islamophobia does not, however, stem solely from the degree of religiosity expressed by Muslims, but also from different ethnic groups’ perceived Muslim identity or perceived ‘Muslimness’. Indeed, because anti-Muslim racism stems from ethnic, cultural, or religious tropes, the stereotypization of ‘Muslimness’ – that is, the way in which the public believes Muslimness is expressed – can influence public attitudes towards other ethnic or religious communities perceived to be of Islamic faith. In this regard, the testimony of the Network of Sikh Organisations sheds a light on the impact that cultural stereotypes have in influencing society’s perception of different degrees of ‘Muslimness’:

“In Britain we have seen the attempted murder of a Sikh dentist in Wales by Zack Davies, an individual linked to the now proscribed group National Action. In targeting Dr Sarandev Singh Bhambra, Davies wanted to take ‘revenge’ for Lee Rigby... Disparaging remarks like ‘Bin Laden’ or ‘Taliban’ are a common occurrence for Sikhs with turbans, and we recently saw the conviction of a man calling his Sikh neighbour ‘ISIS slag’ and ‘ISIS bitches’... It is clear that visible

Muslim female, Sheffield

“I don’t wear the hijab, but my friends do. They were told to go back to where they came from and

told they were foreigners. We didn’t report it, to whom and why bother?”

¹⁵⁵ Robin Richardson ed., *Islamophobia issues, challenges and action*, (Stoke on Trent, UK and Sterling, USA: Trentham Books, 2004).

¹⁵⁶ ‘The Myth of Islamic Uniformity’, Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad (Professor Tim Winter). Undated.

¹⁵⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Imran Awan of Birmingham City University, and Dr Irene Zempi of Nottingham Trent University.

¹⁵⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Neil Chakraborti of University of Leicester.

¹⁵⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tariq Modood, MBE, of the University of Bristol.

differences are a motivating factor in such incidents. This is as true for Muslim women in hijabs as it is for orthodox Jews or Sikhs.”¹⁶⁰

In short, political and social contexts inform public anxieties about Muslims, who are consequently identified and problematized on the basis of their real or alleged identification with that group and perceived or actual manifestations of religiosity.

As Professor Salman Sayyid and Abdoolkarim Vakil argue, “Muslimness, like Jewishness or Englishness in common expression. It describes not so much any person or actual group than a family of overlapping and flexible features by which in a given situation something is seen as having the quality of being Muslim. Such features can range from the names people use to the clothes they wear, from the languages they speak to the foods they eat – or don’t eat. These features are not fixed but rather historical and contextual – some are long enduring, others more recent. As with all stereotypes, it is not their truth that is at stake but their currency. Islamophobia is more broadly encompassing than ‘hatred’; in some contexts it may be individual and intentional, in others institutional and routinized; it is more visible in incidents, but it is grounded, and experienced, in more everyday forms and embedded in social structures. It is these many shades of targeted expression that Muslimness captures.”¹⁶¹

Of course, Muslims are not the only victims of this process of racialisation. Jewish communities have suffered from the same form of discrimination – for example with stereotypes about the Jewish population controlling governments and media – until ‘anti-Semitism’ categorised anti-Jewish conspiracy theories as illegal. But for Muslims, who are accused of wanting to overthrow liberal governments, or establish Islamic law in Western societies, the protection offered by a legal system lacking a clear and multi-layered definition of Islamophobia is insufficient.¹⁶² Muslims are popularly associated with conspiracy theories such as ‘Eurabia’ – which imagines Muslims as wanting to ‘Islamise’ and ‘Arabise’ Europe – and ‘Entryism’ – which imagines them as wanting to infiltrate our political system and overturn it from within. To this day, these conspiracy theories go unchallenged because they are not recognised as crimes, and because we are still to adopt a legally binding definition of Islamophobia that recognises the phenomenon as a whole.

Furthermore, as Abbas writes, “both radicalisation and

Islamophobia thrive because of the wider workings of structural and cultural racism.”¹⁶³ This is why failing to adopt a definition of Islamophobia leads to vicious circle in which no community wins and our society becomes more and more fragmented. Muslims risk a continuous marginalisation and stigmatisation, while the current Islamophobic environment will continue to provide the perfect incubator for extremist ideas cemented within the far-right ideology.

Conversely, adopting a definition Islamophobia allows for an acknowledgement of the broad range of phenomena that ought to be categorised within it, which can in turn provide us with the right legal tools to eradicate it from society. Terminologies such as “anti-Muslim hostility or discrimination... anti-Muslim sentiment”, suggested by Giannasi during his oral evidence session,¹⁶⁴ retain an element of incompleteness that does not fully capture the deeper nature of Islamophobia. Conversely, as Vidgen argues, “negativity against Muslims is therefore a suitable moral, conceptual and empirical basis for defining Islamophobia in that it captures its essence; actions and beliefs which treat Islam and Muslims as undesirable or inferior”¹⁶⁵. Such a position is broadly felt among the different submissions, a testament to how important it is to tackle every manifestation of Islamophobia. Kallis, for example, suggests that a definition of Islamophobia

“Should be inclusive, capturing the widest possible gamut of human targets and offending discourses / attitudes / actions. It should straddle potentially inflexible conceptual categories, such as race and culture and religion, recognising that anti-Muslim racism understands and talks about people and communities with Muslim background as a ‘race’ - bound together by a cultural-religious code that continues to be seen as allegedly incompatible with -

Muslim male, London

“I was stopped at Heathrow airport. The policeman said that they targeted me because of my attire. This has happened to me so many times. I cannot report it because the police do not see this as Islamophobic behaviour.”

¹⁶⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Lord Singh of Wimbledon and Hardeep Singh, of the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO).

¹⁶¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Salman Sayyid and Abdoolkarim Vakil of Leeds University and King’s College London, respectively.

¹⁶² Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Akeela Ahmed MBE of the Government’s Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

¹⁶³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Tahir Abbas of LSE.

¹⁶⁴ From oral testimony to the APPG on British Muslims by Paul Giannasi OBE on June 26, 2018.

¹⁶⁵ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Bertie Vidgen of University of Oxford.

and hostile to - western ideas and ways of life.”¹⁶⁶

Tell MAMA told us that any definition of Islamophobia “should, primarily, centre the voices and experiences of Muslims” adding that the organisation would “welcome further understanding of this issue in the hope that the debate can move beyond semantics whilst ensuring that fundamental rights are taken into consideration.”¹⁶⁷

Taking into account how the term Islamophobia has been used thus far, Chakraborti et al remind us that

“The Centre for Hate Studies prefers and duly recommends the adoption of the term Islamophobia not least because it has been established in the public and political lexicons for almost two decades and is how those experiencing discrimination, bigotry and hate on the basis of their perceived or otherwise Muslim-ness refer to it.”¹⁶⁸

Having heard a wide cross-section of viewpoints from academic experts, parliamentarians, lawyers, community activists and, importantly, voices from within British Muslim communities, the APPG upon consideration of the vast body evidence presented to us, proposes the following working definition of Islamophobia:

**ISLAMOPHOBIA IS ROOTED IN RACISM
AND IS A TYPE OF RACISM THAT TARGETS
EXPRESSIONS OF MUSLIMNESS OR
PERCEIVED MUSLIMNESS.**

¹⁶⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

¹⁶⁷ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Tell MAMA.

¹⁶⁸ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Neil Chakraborti of University of Leicester.

An INDEX to Tackle Islamophobia

Among the questions prepared by the APPG to discuss the spectrum and applicability of a working definition of Islamophobia, one suggested the creation of an index that attributes values to manifestation of Islamophobia on the basis of their degree of severity. Specifically, the question asked “How useful would a scale of intensity or Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred be for measuring the strength of anti-Muslim feeling/anti-Muslim prejudice?”, and the responses it attracted were varied and often discordant.

Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, for example, embraces the idea as she argues that it would allow Islamophobia “to be classified with regards to its severity, relevant legal frameworks and the broader context within which the act of discrimination takes place”. Indeed, her work had already led to the creation of an index to measure the severity of religious discrimination, in which 7 different categories were identified:

1. Religion or belief naivety.
2. Religion or belief prejudice
3. Religion or belief hatred
4. Religion or belief disadvantage
5. Religion or belief direct discrimination
6. Religion or belief indirect discrimination
7. Religion or belief institutional discrimination¹⁶⁹

Other organisations, such as FOSIS and the Bridge Institute, support the creation of an index to measure the targeted abuse towards Muslims over time. FOSIS, for example, contends that it would be very useful especially in providing guidelines and examples to teachers, doctors and employers, as well as in clarifying the different forms of Islamophobia and thus leaving no uncertainty as to what is and is not Islamophobia.¹⁷⁰

Tania Saeed does not oppose the creation of an index, but only if constructed as “part of a larger survey that includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches to measuring Islamophobia”. Through her research, Saeed was able to identify different forms of Islamophobia based on the lived experiences of 40 individuals who took part in her research, but she argues that “a more representative sample will be needed for a policy implementation”.¹⁷¹

Peter Hopkins, opposes the idea of the index because “this runs the risk of particular Islamophobic incidents being regarded as more or less serious than others and potentially therefore more or less worthy of attention”.¹⁷² In addition, echoed organisations such as MEND and the NUS, an index could also result in certain forms of Islamophobia becoming more acceptable than others, which would then nullify the lived experience of individuals who have suffered from it.

Chakraborti et al also place the emphasis on potential negative repercussions of an index, identifying three key issues. First, they argue that since “it is not deemed necessary to measure the strength of racism, disablism or homophobia for instance”, indexing manifestations of Islamophobia would not make the phenomenon equitable to other forms of discrimination. Second, they claim that such a categorisation would create “further unnecessary confusion, complexity and contestation” of all manifestations of Islamophobia. Third, they suggest that “scale can only ever be subjective and therefore something that could not be used or applied consistently.”¹⁷³

Aristotle Kallis offers a more ambiguous answer, as he contends that an index might be “counter-intuitive... as it would presumably have to make distinctions between language and action”, but at the same time he accepts the idea that the index could also allow to measure “the dramatic process of deepening anti-Muslim racism that has been going on for years in many European and other societies”.¹⁷⁴

Unfortunately, too few submissions explored the question of indexing Islamophobia, which leaves the APPG with too little information to be able to provide a comprehensive and critically informed view over the issue. Even so, the diversity of opinions expressed offers a useful insight into the complexity of the question, highlighting the need for the APPG to explore this particular section in greater detail at a later stage.

¹⁶⁹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor of Coventry University.

¹⁷⁰ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Sara Mir of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS).

¹⁷¹ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Dr Tania Saeed of Lahore University.

¹⁷² Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Peter Hopkins of Newcastle University.

¹⁷³ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Neil Chakraborti of University of Leicester.

¹⁷⁴ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Aristotle Kallis of Keele University.

Chapter 4 - Community Consultation findings

In order to ensure the inquiry engaged with Muslim communities, the APPG undertook four community consultations in four cities in the UK: Manchester, London, Birmingham and Sheffield. The four events were very well attended by a range of community members including police officers, academics, community activists, students and young persons, councillors and local Members of Parliament, members of the public, and victims of Islamophobia, some of whom shared their experience with officers of the group. Some of the community consultation events were also attended by agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service, senior police officers, local council officials and by interfaith groups. Among equality organisations presenting their work at these events were the Runnymede Trust (Manchester) and Hope Not Hate (Birmingham). Anonymous victim forms were also made available to attendees during the community consultations to solicit direct contributions from victims of Islamophobia.

The focus of this chapter are the views expressed during the community consultations. We have included findings from the community consultation exercises in this report to give voice to the many victims of Islamophobia who shared their experiences with us and to reinforce the reasons for embarking on this inquiry for a working definition of Islamophobia. As the examples illustrated below will show, Islamophobia is experienced in a myriad of different forms and affects individuals in a wide variety of circumstances.

ISLAMOPHOBIC ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY VICTIMS

From the numerous victim forms we were able to collect, we found a number of themes which served to reinforce the evidence presented to us by academic experts and community activists. We found that the racialisation of Muslims has palpable consequences with both Asian, Black and white convert Muslims being targeted for abuse on grounds of their Muslimness. We also found that age-old stereotypes and tropes about Islam, such sexual profligacy and paedophilia or Islam and violence, and their modern-day iteration in the 'Asian grooming gangs' or 'Bin Laden' labels re-emerge in discourses and dispositions which heighten vulnerability of Muslims to hate crimes. We further observed what we would regard as situations which are exemplary of Islamophobia being Britain's bigotry blind spot with Muslims often faced with incidents occurring in

public where by-standers or witnesses are unmoved to intervene and speak up against abuse directed at Muslims. Several of these incidents are summarised below to give a snapshot of the stories shared with the officers during the community consultation events.

One Muslim female wrote of the verbal abuse she faced at a petrol station during the morning school run, in Birmingham:

There was a large queue at a local petrol station and a lady in another car got out and accused me of blocking the queue...this then quickly led to her blaming this on my hijab as I couldn't see where I was going, calling me a Paki etc and a whole lot of verbal abuse. "No action was taken by the police as I was a white revert Muslim, I was told there was no grounds to report the incident. It couldn't be reported as a race incident as I didn't belong to any ethnicity other than English/white...no grounds to prosecute on religious/hate crime I could not take it any further!"

Another Muslim female wrote of an incident at her home in Wales where a firework was posted through the letterbox of her home:

"A lit firework was posted through the letterbox of my own home...the incident was reported to the police through 101 but no significant action was taken... there was CCTV on the street however, it was not used to find or prosecute the perpetrator...this happened twice but still no security was provided by the police officers. It pushed and motivated my family to move house. Our local MP helped move house but no real justice was received."

We heard of a mosque in Birmingham which allegedly had a pig's head and pig's blood sent to it:

"Someone emailed the mosque website suggesting that pigs heads and blood had been placed in a proposed site for a Muslim country...we reported the incident to the police but they couldn't find the perpetrator. The police advised that the land was checked and nothing found. We had no one else to turn to."

One Muslim male in Birmingham had been subjected to verbal and physical abuse, including at his place of work where he claims he was asked if he "was Bin Laden":

"I have been spat at on the street when I wore a prayer hat...I've witnessed people calling Muslims devils...at work I was asked if I was bin laden??? (laughable)...I was asked to explain Rochdale cases, and "if you all

are like that"...my daughter was called the Taliban... the list goes on."

Another Muslim male in Birmingham told us of an incident in which he was called "a terrorist" for not giving way to another driver:

"A driver felt that I did not let him join the traffic along a dual carriage. He followed me into a petrol station. I had my two young children in my car. In front of my children he shouted "YOU TERRORIST, YOU SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ME WAY AND LET ME IN" (to join the lane)...I did not report the incident but I did try to engage and talk to the driver but he drove away."

A Muslim female from Barnsley told of abuse she frequently experienced including on occasions when she was out and about with her children:

"Swear words were shouted at me and my children from men in cars, this happened five times on different occasions...my son who is seven years old was spat at white in B&Q in Barnsley. I reported the swearing from cars on two occasions as I took down the car registration numbers...the police visited the perps (sic) both times and said if I had another complaint against them they will be arrested...the police said the young men were white who were remorseful and going to start university so I dropped the case."

One Muslim student in Sheffield told us about an experience on public transport where the victim was subjected to verbal and physical abuse and no-one intervened to stop it:

"Whilst using public transport, I was receiving verbal abuse, about my appearance and dress code. As I turned I was then provoked with pieces of paper being thrown towards me, the transport was in fact surrounded with members of the public of many races yet nobody thought to end the abuse. It then came to a point where I was made to exit a couple of stops early for both mine and others' safety."

One individual in Sheffield told us that someone spat at him in his car whilst he was driving:

"My car window was spat at by a passenger in driving vehicle. I did not report this."

At our event in Sheffield, we were told of a number of incidents which occurred following the trial of a group of Asian men convicted of child sexual exploitation,¹⁷⁵ including this case of an individual terrified by a taxi driver in Darlington although it is not clear to us whether the individual who related the incident was a passenger or pedestrian:

"The incident in the taxi in NE Darlington took place after the Newcastle CSE [child sexual exploitation] trials. Taxi driver drove his car dangerously and carelessly, frightening me. I reported it to my manager at work."

One female who attended the Sheffield event told us about some of her friends, who wear headscarves, who were abused in a shop:

"I don't wear the hijab, but my friends do. They were told to go back to where they came from and told they were foreigners. We didn't report it, to whom and why bother?"

One Muslim father told us about his son who had been physically assaulted. He was critical of the response from police and prosecution service though details of the assault itself were not provided to the APPG.

"My son was beaten up in 2012. Police and prosecution did every little about it and so I don't have any trust in S Yorkshire police. I feel neglected by them."

We also heard from a participant in the Sheffield community consultation of a young girl who was attacked on the bus, it was claimed, for wearing a headscarf.

"My daughter was attacked on the bus for wearing a headscarf. She ran off the bus and was followed and beaten up outside of my home. They were her friends but couldn't understand why she started wearing it. I reported it to the school and only one of the pupils involved was excluded. My daughter was depressed, she feared school and never returned...the school should have supported my daughter not left her feeling isolated. I felt frustrated...children need to be educated at school to not bully and respect diversity."

These narratives demonstrate a wide range of incidents and circumstances in which Muslims were subjected to abuse, intimidation or assault. From being called derogatory names such as terrorist and 'Bin Laden', to being spat at, attacked for wearing a headscarf, to more extreme forms of inflicted harm, such as having a lit firework posted through the letterbox. The places where abuse occurred ranges from the home, the mosque, roads, shops, public transport to schools. During our consultations, victims stressed the importance of a working definition of Islamophobia to the task of tackling the problem and holding individuals to account for conduct that is abusive, discriminatory, intimidating, or violent and which is targeted at expressions of Muslimness.

A striking aspect of the anonymous victim testimonies was the impact on the mental health of victims which often included feelings of isolation, having nobody to turn to, feeling neglected by the police and the sense that there was no point in reporting the crime, avoiding public spaces, having to move house or school or jobs to put an end to the abuse. This element of the victim testimonies indicated the importance of capturing the impact of Islamophobia within the definition.

¹⁷⁵ Lizzie Dearden, "Grooming gangs abused more than 700 women and girls around Newcastle after police appeared to punish victims", The Independent, February 23, 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/grooming-gangs-uk-britain-newcastle-serious-case-review-operation-sanctuary-shelter-muslim-asian-a8225106.html>

At our consultation in London, we heard from victims who stressed experiences ranging from individual abuse to institutional Islamophobia. We heard from victims who had suffered verbal and other abuse but who witnessed no remedial action from the police, and others who highlighted how a lack of representation and accountability within institutions can compound the problem of identifying Islamophobic incidents and having robust procedures in place to tackle it whenever and wherever it occurs. As one participant put it to us: “We need institutional change. Definition needs to accommodate institutional practices.”

One participant at the London consultation told us:

“There are grave concerns about Transport for London (TfL) not having representation for BAME and Muslim drivers around its table. United Private Hire Drivers (UPHD) have constantly been refused representation compared to the other five unions that are represented and are able to voice their concerns at TfL.”

Another participant told us how inflammatory or Islamophobic speech by politicians can elide into attacks on minorities when institutions, such as political parties, are reticent to deal with the problem of hate speech:

“In the current political environment, hate crimes against all minorities will increase and the ignorant will become more vocal if politicians are not held accountable.”

Another participant spoke of the inequalities experienced by Muslims which emanate from institutional Islamophobia.

“Islamophobia is also discrimination in housing, education, employment. Islamophobia is not just conversation, negative discourse, set of perception, it is also the material inequality that Muslims live.”

One man told us of sustained abuse he had experienced and his losing faith in the police after nothing was done to stop it.

“On different occasions, I have been spat on, verbally abused, have had eggs thrown at me, physically attacked, and on one occasion someone tried urinating on my residence. I reported it to the police

for the first few times, but no action was taken so after that I stopped reporting it to the police.”

Another person told us of instances when he had been stopped at airports and the futility of reporting the issue because it is not seen as Islamophobic. He said:

“I was stopped at Heathrow airport. The policeman said that they targeted me because of my attire. This has happened to me so many times. I cannot report it because the police do not see this as Islamophobic behaviour.”

The anonymous forms allowed space for individuals to share further information with the APPG which went beyond victim experiences, providing some scope for individuals to speak about the impact of Islamophobia on Muslims as a group.

One individual told us, “Islamophobia is felt by the whole Muslim community through institutionalised Islamophobia, through security measures like Prevent. Islamophobia is felt when I am under scrutiny for possible acts that I don’t even think of doing; when I am questioned without reason...”

Another told us that a definition was necessary so that actions that are Islamophobic can be dealt with to restore confidence to Muslims and wider society that it will not be tolerated. We were told,

“We need to ensure there are consequences for people engaging in such abuse as a deterrent – the first way of de-normalising Islamophobia.”

Another person iterated the same stating: “We need a strong zero policy tolerance on Islamophobia.”

As we heard from participants, adopting a definition is only the start of a process. We heard from individuals who said,

“A definition that clearly states an accountability to institutions, and that keeps vulnerable members (women and elderly) safe. Essentially we need a definition but we need to understand how it will help and what it will do.”

“After the definition has been defined, we need it to instil confidence in the Muslim community to report incidents that are taking place.”

Muslim female, Sheffield

“My daughter was attacked on the bus for wearing a headscarf. She ran off the bus and was followed and beaten up outside of my home. They were her friends but couldn’t understand why she started wearing it. I reported it to the school and only one of the pupils involved was excluded. My

daughter was depressed, she feared school and never returned...the school should have supported my daughter not left her feeling isolated. I felt frustrated...children need to be educated at school to not bully and respect diversity.”

We also heard from various people who asserted a different point of outlook to the majority of views we encountered which emphasised Islamophobia as their preferred word to describe the targeting of Muslims for their real or perceived Muslimness. For example, one individual who came to a community consultation event told us,

“You have to return to basics in order to have a working definition that is applicable to everyday life – all walks of life. You HAVE to begin by eliminating the term ‘Islamophobia’, it conjures up fear of Muslims. It subconsciously reinforces the idea of fearing Muslims. Them and us. It should be anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic.”

Some individuals mentioned the importance of educational institutions to build awareness of Islamophobia and training for statutory sector employees, to challenge institutional Islamophobia. We heard from one participant who said, “We need more education in schools and communities.”

Another told us, “Training statutory sector workers as teachers, social workers, others all using Islamophobic language and subtle behaviours, which family/community do not feel they can challenge.”

This was coupled by individuals who spoke about the impact of Islamophobia experienced in educational settings. In Birmingham, we heard from a participant who raised the Trojan Horse affair,

“Let’s not forget that we are standing in a city where the so called Trojan Horse affair happened. People are frustrated here because they have been vilified and victimized for being Muslim. Those schools involved in the so called Trojan horse affair were some of the top performing schools and now those schools have below average GCSE attainment levels. That’s Islamophobia. Disempowering an entire Muslim community, taking away their futures, their hopes and aspirations, making them feel no matter what they do it doesn’t count. The conservative government is responsible for that and we have not seen any justice, but day by day, Birmingham further sinks into a black hole. Crime levels have shot up, community disengagement and distrust has increased. Those students in those schools have been prejudiced, they can’t get jobs, they can’t get into colleges, they are riddled with anxiety. We are witnessing the loss of a generation, of a community right now, right here.”

Others told us of the effects of the Prevent statutory duty on schools and the recent incident in a Newham school regarding the wearing of headscarves by young girls,

“Any definition must cover such scenarios as head teachers referring students to counter-terror police because a Muslim boy wants to grow a beard or wear

a prayer cap, or punish for wanting a prayer room. Also OFSTED questioning the wearing of hijab. Any definition must not only be based on an individual being victimized because of their faith, but also any comments which victimize and defame the Muslim community in general.”

We also heard of the role of communities and interactions between people of different background to tackle the problem as a shared concern. Participants told us, “We need community cohesion and community integration to prevent Islamophobia” and “Closer workings between different communities trying to understand different religions and their teachings.”

Another participant suggested the importance of engaging the white majority on the subject of Islamophobia in order to make progress in tackling the scourge. It was said to us that, “We need to have these discussions in established white communities to drive change.”

Muslims are more likely than the British public as a whole to say that their national identity is important to their sense of who they are

The media was another area which came in for stern criticism with individuals telling us, “Media outlets need to

be held accountable. Fines for media organisations and make it easier for people to report anti-Muslim racism.”

We also heard from individuals who told us,

“Double standards by the media need to be called out such as always calling a brown person who commits a crime as a terrorist, but a white person as having mental health issues.”

“We need to tackle the dehumanization of Muslims in the media and by political parties.”

The community consultations enabled the engagement and expressions of thought from a cross section of British Muslim communities. Common themes that emerged from discussions included the dehumanization of Muslims, accountability for media, Islamophobia extending beyond words and into material inequality being felt through employment and housing, and the definition being more than just words but rather, making a real difference at the grass roots level with individuals, whether Muslim or not, better equipped to challenge Islamophobia when confronted by it. Broadly speaking, the community consultations reinforced the need for a working definition that has practical implications.

Conclusion

The contributions we received as part of our inquiry and the expert witnesses from whom we took evidence have been carefully and constructively engaged in order for us to arrive a working definition which addresses many of the principal factors which have shaped this debate over the last two decades.

We concur with those academics whose work has highlighted the importance of three key factors at play when it comes to Islamophobia: process, actions and impact. We have attempted to incorporate all three dimensions in our proposed working definition to signify racialisation as the process, racism as the actions and the undermining of expressions of Muslimness as the impact.

Furthermore, in advancing a definition of Islamophobia, we are consciously aware and alert to the possibility, indeed probability, of a hostile reaction from certain quarters. As we heard from some of those from whom we took evidence, “Any formulation that seeks to redress embedded disadvantages and injustices will be contested. Likewise, any definition of Islamophobia will be challenged. One could replace ‘expressions of Muslimness’ with ‘Muslim identity’, or ‘Muslim’ and it would not alter the thrust of the objections, nor the fact that it would be questioned. The only definition of Islamophobia that is likely not to be questioned is one that does not challenge anything; that is, one that does not deliver change or even the hope of something better.”¹⁷⁶

In undertaking this inquiry, we are resolved to deliver something that will positively change conditions for Muslims in British society and offer hope of something better. British Muslims are British citizens and it is our firm belief that adopting a definition of Islamophobia will demonstrate to Britain’s Muslim communities that we, as politicians and we together as a society, recognise the impediments to the flourishing of Muslims in Britain and will take steps to demarcate the healthy preservation of expressions of Muslimness consistent with the law, fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Having heard a wide cross-section of viewpoints from academic experts, parliamentarians, lawyers, community activists and, importantly, voices from within British Muslim communities, the APPG upon consideration of the vast body evidence presented to us, proposes the following working definition of Islamophobia:

ISLAMOPHOBIA IS ROOTED IN RACISM AND IS A TYPE OF RACISM THAT TARGETS EXPRESSIONS OF MUSLIMNESS OR PERCEIVED MUSLIMNESS.

The proposed definition of Islamophobia can be illustrated by a range of guidelines and examples rather than a list of essential features, which we feel would confine a prescriptiveness to its understanding to the detriment of contextual and fluid factors which continue to inform and shape manifestations of Islamophobia.

We found the IHRA explanatory notes and examples both helpful and informative and it inspired much of the thinking of Parliamentarians engaged in this process of proposing a working definition of Islamophobia. The explanatory notes provided under the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism could, in all fairness, be adopted in their entirety to Islamophobia.

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic ‘threat’ posed by Muslims or of a ‘Muslim takeover’.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the ‘Ummah’ (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of

¹⁷⁶ Written evidence submitted to the APPG on British Muslims by Professor Salman Sayyid and AbdoolKarim Vakil of Leeds University and King’s College London, respectively.

an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.

- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, eg loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammed being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being ‘sex groomers’, inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

The examples below, which further illustrate ways in which Islamophobia is experienced do not exhaust the phenomena but give shape to its effects from physical violence (a, b, c) to verbal abuse and intimidation (d, e), and from socio-economic discrimination and exclusion (f, g), to the entrenching of racism in our broader civic life (h and i).

We have used a number of incidents widely reported in the press in order to exemplify some of the forms of expression of Muslimness which are targeted and the type of incidents which qualify as Islamophobia. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is indicative of the breadth of Islamophobia in our society.

A. MAN TRIED TO KILL MUSLIM WOMAN AND 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL AS ‘REVENGE’ FOR TERROR ATTACKS.¹⁷⁷

On September 20, 2017, Paul Moore attempted to murder a Muslim woman and a 12-year old girl in revenge for the Parsons Green terror attack. Prosecutors concluded that both victims had been attacked merely on the basis of the colour of their skin and perceived Islamic faith. The APPG’s definition of Islamophobia is reflected in the nature of this tragic attack, in which two innocent Muslims were targeted on the basis of their perceived Muslimness. The racialisation suffered by the victims, both non-White and with garments clearly indicating their faith, added to the Islamophobic trope whereby Islam becomes associated with terrorism and violence. This specific example of Islamophobia sadly sheds a light

on some of the worst kind of physical manifestations of Islamophobia.

B. “WE DON’T LIKE MUSLIMS OVER HERE’ - WOMEN TIED UP AND TORTURED MAN.¹⁷⁸

Two women from Guisborough brutally tortured a Muslim convert, tying him up, hitting him with a hammer, and beating him while one of them shouted at the victim “We don’t like Muslims over here, you know. I f***ing hate them”. The women were convicted of religiously-aggravated assault, with the CPS concluding that the attack was fuelled by the women’s hostility to the victim’s faith. While revealing the damage that anti-Muslim violence causes, the attack also reflects the broader dimensions of Islamophobia. The victim in this case was a convert, and was therefore assaulted not on the basis of his race but merely on the basis of his religion. The vile comments made by the women reflects the ‘othering’ or ‘displacing’ of Muslims from their local and national contexts with taunts of not being wanted in this country.

C. MUSLIM MOTHER ‘ATTACKED FOR WEARING HIJAB’ AS SHE WENT TO COLLECT CHILDREN FROM LONDON PRIMARY SCHOOL.¹⁷⁹

A Muslim woman was assaulted on her way to a primary school, where she had gone to pick up her children, by three women who pulled her hijab and started beating her and insulting her. While the woman did not suffer any serious injury, the emotional impact of the attack is considerable. The woman, who was visibly Muslim - she wore the hijab - was belittled and humiliated by the assaulters who asked her if she was ‘hot’ in her headscarf. The story offers yet a pertinent example of the victimisation of Muslim women whose expression of Muslimness is captured in their form of dress. The incident further relays some of the locations where incidents occur, that is, in public spaces such as on the streets or outside a school.

D. “PUNISH A MUSLIM DAY LETTERS”.¹⁸⁰

In 2018, Muslim institutions and individual Muslims, including parliamentarians, began to receive letters titled “Punish a Muslim Day”; the letter contained various instructions to ‘punish’ Muslims. The letters,

¹⁷⁷ “Man tried to kill Muslim woman and 12-year-old girl as ‘revenge’ for terror attacks”, The Independent, March 2, 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/leicester-muslim-attempted-murder-woman-girl-revenge-uk-terror-attacks-a8236391.html>

¹⁷⁸ “Guisborough friends jailed for attack on would-be soldier”, The Northern Echo, August 14, 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/16397452.guisborough-friends-jailed-for-attack-on-would-be-soldier/?ref=twtr>

¹⁷⁹ “Muslim mother ‘attacked for wearing hijab’ as she went to collect children from London primary school”, Evening Standard, June 5, 2015, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/muslim-mother-attacked-by-group-of-women-for-wearing-hijab-as-she-went-to-collect-children-from-10300208.html>

¹⁸⁰ ‘Punish a Muslim day’ letters: London police urge communities to unite against threats”, Evening Standard, April 2, 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/police-urge-londoners-to-unite-as-thugs-threaten-spate-of-hate-crimes-on-punish-a-muslim-day-a3803881.html>

which were sent to locations primarily in Leicester, Bradford and east London – although widely shared on social media – invited ‘participants’ to carry out attacks against Muslims such as verbal abuse, removing a woman’s head-scarf (hijab), physical assault (using acid as a weapon), and attributed a ‘score’ on the basis of the type of attack committed. The example shows unequivocally that hatred against Muslims takes many forms and that, although it is a type of racism, it develops on the basis of a person’s belonging or perceived belonging to the Islamic faith. It also homogenises Muslims on the basis of tropes rooted in popular culture, such as visible identifiers, but also perceptions of Muslimness. In addition, the letters served the purpose of cementing the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims in society by calling on individuals to engage in acts of violence against fellow citizens.

E. “RACISTS LEAVE PIG’S HEAD ON MOSQUE’S DOORSTEP.”¹⁸¹

In August 2017, a hate crime was committed in Northern Ireland when attackers left a pig’s head at a mosque and painted Islamophobic graffiti on the walls. The religiously motivated attack, served the purpose of intimidating local Muslim communities by assaulting their place of worship with racist graffiti and insulting their faith by leaving a pig’s head inside their mosque. This example illustrates some of the most perceptible expressions of Islamophobia, where the target is a building or institution associated with the Islamic faith, where the instrument of attack is something seen to be ‘anti-Islam’ and the act itself a form of intimidating behaviour towards Muslim communities.

F. MOTORISTS FORK OUT £1,000 MORE TO INSURE THEIR CARS IF THEIR NAME IS MOHAMMED.¹⁸²

An investigation conducted by The Sun in January 2018 revealed that the country’s top companies that provide car insurance would give far lower quotes to drivers with a typical English-sounding name like ‘John Smith’, and far higher quotes to drivers with a typical Muslim-sounding name like ‘Mohammed Ali’. Basing the study on a controlled comparison – whereby all variables were the same except the names – the investigation found that the same type of insurance would cost several hundred pounds more depending on the name stated in the application. This form of Islamophobia manifests itself in a subtler way,

as it does not result in violence perpetuated against Muslims but in the crystallisation of practices that contribute towards socio-economic discrimination and exclusion of Muslims. This example echoes the discussions around ‘institutional Islamophobia’ clarifying the way in which structural anti-Muslim racism impacts the lives of Muslims and leads to unequal outcomes.

G. STATE COMMISSION SAYS ‘ISLAMOPHOBIA, DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM’ PREVENTING MUSLIMS FROM SUCCEEDING IN UK JOBS MARKET.¹⁸³

Research released by the Social Mobility Commission in 2017 showed that Muslims are, overall, far less likely to succeed in the labour market than any other faith group due to rampant Islamophobia, discrimination and racism. The research pointed at many instances of discrimination suffered by Muslim men and women, who are deprived of the opportunity to reach their potential because of structural barriers. Muslim women, for example, reported that “wearing the hijab at work was an additional visual marker of difference that was perceived and experienced as leading to further discrimination.” Again falling within the category of institutional Islamophobia outlined in this report, this case sheds light into the widespread and structural dimension of Islamophobia. Islamophobia does not need to manifest itself violently to be considered as such, as many expressions of Islamophobia severely impact the life of Muslim individuals by limiting their participation in Britain’s public life and by curbing their ability to succeed.

H. ISLAMOPHOBIA IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR MUSLIMS - AND NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS IT IS ALSO AN ISSUE FOR PEOPLE OF OTHER ETHNICITIES AND RELIGIONS.¹⁸⁴

Research conducted at Newcastle University investigated the extent in which Islamophobia impacted other faith groups on the basis of their perceived expression of Muslimness. Focusing on the experience of Sikhs, South Asians, Eastern Europeans and black young people, the research found that many had been abused for being perceived to be Muslim. Nearly all Sikhs interviewed reported being mistaken for Muslims. While showing, as the research notes, the extent to which Muslims are being scapegoated in our society, this example clarifies ways in which Islamophobia can develop merely on the stereotypical construction of Muslimness – not on

181 “Racists leave pig’s head on mosque’s doorstep”, Metro, August 24, 2017, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://metro.co.uk/2017/08/24/racists-leave-pigs-head-on-mosques-doorstep-6876285/?ito=cbsshare>

182 “Motorists fork out £1,000 more to insure their cars if their name is Mohammed”, The Sun, January 22, 2018, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/motors/5393978/insurance-race-row-john-mohammed/>

183 “Britain’s Muslims face workforce discrimination: report”, Al Jazeera, September 7, 2017, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/britain-muslims-face-workforce-discrimination-report-170907145307858.html>

184 “Mistaken for Being Muslim”, Newcastle University Press Office, March 2, 2017, accessed 07.11.2018, <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/press/articles/archive/2017/03/islamophobia-otherethnicgroups/>

the actual Muslim identity of the target. This is why we believe that stressing the impact of perceptions of Muslimness is critical to provide a comprehensive explanation of the many ways in which Islamophobia can manifest itself.

I. MEN JAILED OVER BACON TIED TO BRISTOL MOSQUE DOOR HANDLES.¹⁸⁵

On 17 January 2016, two men and two women were involved in an incident at the Jamia Mosque in Totterdown, Bristol. The mosque is one of the largest Muslim places of worship in the south west of England and one of the first to be opened in Bristol, in 1968. The two men and women tied a St George's flag to the fence of the mosque and draped bacon on the door handles of the mosque, while shouting racial abuse at elderly worshippers inside. Scrawled on the flag were the words 'NO MOSQUES' in large letters. When the group were asked by a passerby why they were putting the sign up, one of the men replied, "We don't want no more mosques here." Kevin Crehan and Mark Bennett were jailed for 12 months and nine months, respectively, for religiously aggravated public order offences. Alison Bennett, the wife of Mark Bennett, was given a six-month sentence, suspended for two years, and Angelina Swales was handed a four-month sentence, suspended for two years, also for religiously aggravated public order offences. All four individuals pled guilty to the charges. The case entails a number of tropes characterizing Islamophobic behaviours, from the deliberate use bacon and a sign stating 'no mosques', to the symbolism of the St George's flag and the word 'here' when referring to mosques in the local area. The 'here' can mean both Bristol, the local area, but also Britain, when taking into context the English flag. The verbal abuse shouted at worshippers inside the mosque is a further layer to the display of Islamophobic actions this particular incident connotes.

¹⁸⁵ "Men jailed over bacon tied to Bristol mosque door handles", BBC Bristol, July 20, 2016, accessed 13.11.18 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-36846555>

Acknowledgements

The APPG would like to thank every individual, organisation, community-based participant, and parliamentarian who submitted written evidence, gave oral evidence, or participated in the community consultations.

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Our community consultation events were hosted by fellow officers and members of the APPG, Afzal Khan MP (Manchester), Shabana Mahmood MP and Liam Byrne MP (Birmingham), Gillian Furniss MP and Jared O'Mara MP (Sheffield) and Naz Shah MP. We thank them all for their tremendous support with what was a significant aspect of our inquiry; contributions and perspectives from local communities.

The APPG pays tribute to the many victim-centred organisations and initiatives which work with individuals, local communities, government and statutory agencies and third sector organisations to champion the rights of victims for redress of grievance and advocate for better protection for

people of Muslim background, or perceived Muslim background. We hope our report and the proposed working definition demonstrably improves your ability to support victims and raise awareness of and effectively challenge Islamophobia.

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The views and conclusions expressed in this report, unless expressly attributed to other individuals or organisations, are those of the Officers of the APPG. The APPG takes full responsibility for its conclusions and analysis.

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Appendix 1 - Written evidence

The following individuals and organisations sent written evidence to the inquiry:

AVOW - Advancing Voices of Women (Against Islamophobia)	of Aston, and Dr Hilary Aked, University of Bath.	Humanities, Professor of Modern & Contemporary History
Akeela Ahmed MBE, Chair of The Government's Cross-Department Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred	Dr Omar Khan, Director, Runnymede Trust	Professor Dr. Thijl Sunier, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Aliakbar Jafari, Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society	Dr Romy Hassan, University of Sussex, Senior Lecturer at the Science Policy Research Unit	Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, Sheffield Hallam University Head of Research, Sheffield Institute of Education
Anas Sarwar MSP, Labour Member of Scottish Parliament & Chair of the Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia	Ilyas Nagdee, Black Students' Officer & Hareem Ghani, National Women's Officer & Ayesha Ahmed, Public Affairs Officer, National Union of Student (NUS)	Professor Neil Chakraborti, University of Leicester, Head of Department, Department of Criminology
Asim Qureshi, Research Director, CAGE	Jonathan Heawood, Chief Executive Officer, The Independent Monitor for the Press (IMPRESS)	Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
Bertie Vidgen, University of Oxford, DPhil Student at the Oxford Internet Institute	Josh Smith, Researcher, Demos	Professor Salman Sayyid, University of Leeds, Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies and AbdoolKarim Vakil, King's College London
Dr Abida Malik, Director of Research, Bridge Institute	Kaleem Hussain, Director, Guidance Consultancy Ltd	Professor Tahir Abbas, Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics
Dr Ben Whitham, De Montfort University, & Dr Nadya Ali, University of Sussex, School of Global Studies University of Sussex	Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Director) and Hardeep Singh (Deputy Director), The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO)	Professor Tariq Modood, MBE, FBA, FAcSS, FRSA, Politics and Public Policy, University of Bristol
Dr Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, Coventry University, Research Fellow in Faith and Peaceful Relations, CTPSR	MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development)	The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Birmingham, Hodge Hill
Dr Tania Saeed, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Assistant Professor	IRU (Islamophobia Response Unit)	Safa Mir, Vice President of Student Affairs, Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS)
Dr Imran Awan, Birmingham City University, Associate Professor in Criminology, Deputy Director - Centre for Applied Criminology & Dr Irene Zempi, Nottingham Trent University, Lecturer in Criminology	Mick Conboy, Hate Crime Stakeholder Manager, Operations Directorate, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)	Sarah Soyei, Head of Strategy and Development, EqualiTeach
Dr Myriam Francois, Research Associate, SOAS	Miqdaad Versi, Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)	Stephen Evans, Chief Executive Officer, National Secular Society
Dr Narzanin Massoumi, University of Exeter, Lecturer in Criminology, Professor David Miller, University of Bath, Professor of Sociology, Bath University, Dr Tom Mills, Lecturer in Sociology, University	Mohammed Shafiq, Chief Executive Officer, Ramadhan Foundation	Zahed Amanullah, Head of Networks and Outreach, Institute Strategic Dialogue (ISD)
	Paul Giannasi, Head of the Cross-Government Hate Crime Programme, Department for Communities and Local Government	Zulfqar Karim DL, Bradford Council of Mosques
	Pragna Patel, Director, Southhall Black Sisters	Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks)
	Professor Aristotle Kallis, Keele University, School of	

Appendix 2 - Oral evidence sessions

The following witnesses gave oral evidence to the inquiry

TUESDAY 19 JUNE 2018

Dr Omar Khan, Director of Runnymede Trust
Dr Abida Malik, Director of Research Bridge Institute
Zahid Amanullah, Network Outreach ISD
Sarah Soyei, Equaliteach
Lord Singh, House of Lords
Pragna Patel, Southall Black Sisters
Jonathan Haywood, IMPRESS
Akeela Ahmed, Cross-Government Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred

WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2018

Miqdaad Versi, Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain.
Professor Tariq Modood, University of Bristol
Dr Irene Zempi, Nottingham Trent University
Professor Aristotle Kallis, Keele University

Dr Nadya Ali, University of Sussex
Dr Ben Whitham, De Montfort University
Josh Smith, DEMOS

TUESDAY 26 JUNE 2018

Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, University of Sheffield
Paul Giannasi, Head of the Cross-Government Hate Crime Programme, Department for Communities and Local Government
Professor Tahir Abbas, Visiting Fellow at London School of Economics

WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018

Ilyas Nagdee, National Union of Students
The Rt. Hon. Liam Byrne MP
Anas Sarwar, former MP for Glasgow Govan and member of the Scottish Parliament
Professor Neil Chakraborti, University of Leicester

Appendix 3 - Community consultation participants

The following individuals and organisations attended the community consultation events:

13 JULY 2018, MANCHESTER

Amna Abdullatif, Vice Chair, Manchester BME Network

Dobir Miah, Prevent policy team, Manchester City Council

Fiona Worrall, Director of Neighbourhoods, Manchester City Council

Gemma Rice, Inclusion and Community Engagement Manager, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Haytham Alhamwi, Rethink Rebuild Society

Heather Fletcher, Muslim-Jewish Forum

Kabir Ahmed, Chairman, Manchester Council for Community Relations

Khalda Ali, Sahell Women's Project
Martin Goldman, Chief Crown Prosecutor, North West Region

Mohammed Ullah, Muslim Chaplin, The University of Manchester

Mona Mohammed, Head Teacher, Manchester Islamic High School for Girls

Nasima Begum & Hasina Chowdhury, Manchester Bangladeshi Women's Organisation

Nasrulla Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Manchester Council for Community Relations.

Rob Potts, Assistant Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police

Saima Alvi, British Muslim Heritage Centre

Shazia Awan, Community Safety Team, Manchester City Council

Siema Iqbal, Manchester City Council Women's Network

Zubaida Haque, Research Associate, Runnymede Trust

Zulf Ali, Chief Executive Officer, Kashmir Youth Project

15 AUGUST 2018, SHEFFIELD

Azizum Akhtar, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance

Barrister Zaiban Alam, Bank House Chambers

Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner

Dr. Lee Crookes, University of Sheffield, University Teacher, Widening Participation Officer, Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Gill Furniss MP, Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough

Gul Nawaz Hussain QC, Joint Head of Chambers, Bank House Chambers

Hafeas Rehman, Pakistan Muslim Centre

Jared O'Mara MP, Sheffield Hallam

Jeni Vine, Sheffield Cohesion Advisory Group

Professor Jawed Siddiqi

Shakoor Adalat, Vice Chair, Rotherham 12 Defence Campaign

Steve Watson, Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police

Zlakha Ahmed, Apna Haq

30 AUGUST 2018, BIRMINGHAM

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Panel member

Shabana Mahmood MP, Panel member

Rt Hon Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, Panel member

Mahmooda Qureshi, Hope Not

Hate UK, Panel Member

Inspector Mustafa Mohammed, West Midlands Police, Panel Member

Councillor Shafique Shah, Birmingham City Council

Councillor Mohammed Idrees, Birmingham City Council

Dr. Chris Allen, Leicester University

Mohammed Saleem, Halal Council UK

Dr Katherine Brown, Birmingham University

Inspector Nawaz Hanif, West Midlands Police

Samia Yasmin, PhD Student Aston University

17 SEPTEMBER 2018, LONDON

Dr. Zahid Iqbal, Executive Officer, Minhaj ul Quran International UK

Fadel Soliman, Director, Bridges Foundation

Jas Athwal, Leader, Redbridge London Borough Council

Louis Tarjuman, London Refugee Community Network

Mohamed Omer, Board Member & External Affairs, Gardens of Peace

Samayya Afzal, Community Engagement Manager, Muslim Council of Britain

Shabnam Chaudri, Detective Superintendent, London Metropolitan Police Service

Shah Mahmud, Community Engagement Coordinator, Newham Council

Yusuf Patel, Community Engagement Officer, Policy, Performance and Equalities Team, Redbridge Council

Appendix 4 - Islamophobia / Anti Muslim hatred questionnaire

Anna Soubry MP, Chair and Wes Streeting MP, Co-Chair

Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred Questionnaire

Have you ever experienced an Islamophobic incident (hate crime, verbal abuse or other instance of religiously motivated anti-Muslim behaviour)

.....

When did the incident occur?.....

Where did the incident occur?

Please briefly describe what happened:

Did you report the incident; and if so, to whom?

Was any action taken against the perpetrator?

Did you seek any other help, if so from whom? (For example, local mosque)

.....

.....

In your view, what could be done to prevent Islamophobic/Anti-Muslim Hate incidents?

Would you like to add any other comments? Please use the box below:

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