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Islam in the British broadsheets: how historically-conditioned orientalist discourses inform representations of Islam as a militant monolithic entity

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ISLAM IN THE BRITISH BROADSHEETS: How Historically-conditioned Orientalist Discourses Inform Representations of Islam as a Militant Monolithic Entity

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ABSTRACT

From the Iranian revolution in 1979 to the London underground suicide bombings on the 7th of July 2005, the image of Islam as a militant anti-Western faith featured dominantly in the global mass media. This thesis examines the claim that the Western media representation of Islam, the second largest religion in the world with over one billion followers, is predominantly negative and demonizing. Current debates attribute this demonizing and reductive representation to the historically polarised relationship between Islam the West. Central to this argument is that the Western media in general, and the press in particular, tend to report an incomplete fragment of a rather complex situation, and represent the acts of Islamic militant movements and groups as an archetype of Islam.

Few researchers used qualitative means to address the issue of representation of Islam in the media. This thesis investigates the representation of Islam in three British dailies, selected for their political different standpoints, and asks to what extent this representation is influenced by the historically conditioned Orientalist discourses that seek to construct and maintain hegemonic perceptions of Islam.

The thesis argues that Islam and Muslim societies are a highly diverse reality, which is not confined only to extremism, confrontation, violence, terrorism and antagonism towards everything Western and challenges the monolithic approach that reinforces blanket generalisations, stereotypes and views of Islam/Muslims, based on the common perception of Islam as rooted in the West's self-definition as the negative 'Other'.

Using discourse analysis, the research seeks to deconstruct the selected news reports in order to highlight what was actually covered, and how news stories were framed and knowledge of Islam was generally produced through discourse(s) and point out that such representations are informed by specific relations of power.

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INTRODUCTION

The media are entangled in everyone's life, and they function as the informational complex linking several aspects of our society. The last two decades have witnessed remarkable events related to the Arab and Muslim world in general, and the rise of militant Islam in particular. Islam, Muslims, Arabs, the Arab world and the Middle East have featured prominently in the mass media as the result of a series of events, starting with the Rushdie affair and the first Gulf war in 1991, and ending with the September 11th attacks and the subsequent war on Afghanistan and Iraq.

When referring to Arabs I mean Arabic speaking people who inhabit the Arab Peninsula and countries that constitute the larger Arab world: the population of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the Gulf states, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian occupied territories and the Arab communities in other countries of the world. Muslims, however, are those who profess the Muslim faith and who are living anywhere in world, whether in the Arab/Muslim world or beyond. It is important to note here that not all Muslims are Arabs, neither all Arabs are Muslims –there are Arab Christians and Arab Jews. By the 'Muslim world' I mean the group of countries where Muslims constitute the majority of population in regions such as Southwest Asia, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. As for the Middle East, I mean the area between Europe and East Asia: countries of South West Asia west of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and North East Africa, the Asian part of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian occupied territories, Iraq, Jordan, Iran as well as countries of the Arabian peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sultanate of Oman, Yemen, Libya and Egypt. The term will often be used in this research in a cultural sense to mean the group of lands or societies in that part of the world predominated by Muslim cultures. It is an area widely believed since last century to be a scene of political instability and wars involving Muslim countries: the Arab-Israeli wars, the Suez Crisis 1956, the Iraq-Iran war 1981-1988 (first Gulf war), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait 1990, the

liberation of Kuwait (the second Gulf war) in 1991, Afghanistan war in 2001 and Iraq war 2003.

The following events were significantly influenced by the mass media: the Rushdie affair in 1989, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the second Gulf war in 1991, the first bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993, the campaign of violence by the Algerian Islamic Armed Group (IAG) in 1995 and 1996, the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan in 1996, the Luxor massacre of foreign tourists in 1997, the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the eruption of the second Palestinian *intifada* in 2000, the September 11th attacks in 2001, the US-led war against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan shortly afterwards, the US-led war against the Saddam Husein regime in 2003 as well as the subsequent insurgency in Iraq, the 7 July 2005 series of co-ordinated suicide attacks on three London underground trains and a bus during the morning rush hour and the failed suicide attacks on other three London underground trains and a bus two weeks later.

The most significant role that the media play in this respect is agenda-setting and representation. Agenda-setting involves the ability of the media to tell people what issues are significant. Central to the concept of agenda-setting is the argument that the media is powerful and influential in constructing and presenting images to the public. The concept of agenda-setting was introduced by Bernard Cohen (1963), who argued that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people how to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think" (Cohen, 1963: p. 13). Central to Cohen's concept of agenda-setting are the argument that the press and the media do not reflect reality, but rather filter and shape it, and the argument that the media's concentration on certain issues leads the public to view these issues as more important than others.

As Part 2 (Chapter 3) will explain, representation is the use of language to say something meaningful about the world, or to represent the world meaningfully to others (Hall, 1997: p. 15). Language, according to Hall, may be used to reflect an

already existing meaning; however, it may also be used to express language users' personally intended meaning. Meaning may further be constructed in and through language. There are two distinct versions of the later constructionist approach to meaning and representation: the production of meaning through language, or the semiotic approach; and the production of meaning and knowledge through discourse, or the discursive approach. In the case of media representation, it could be argued that because media texts are intentionally written, constructed, framed, and sometimes backed up by visual images, they represent reality. It follows that media texts are, in essence, a representation of the text producer's concept of reality and existence, wrapped in a set of signs and symbols in order to be received by an audience. The audience, in turn, relies on the media for perception of reality, i.e., to make sense of reality. In this sense, the media have a significant impact on the way we look at the world. How Islam and Muslims are represented in the media in general, and in the British press in particular, is a case in point: what people read, see and hear in the media influences and shapes their opinions about Islam and Muslims.

The Western media in general, including the British press, are accused of tending to build a particular image of Islam, by portraying it as a threat to the West, and to the global liberal values and tenets of the modern world. However, the portrayal of this negative image of Islam in the Western media, it is argued, takes place by conflating Islam with Islamic militancy, in relation to acts of violence committed by Islamic militant groups. It is also argued that this conflation is used to construct a particular image of Islam, and to associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism, violence, extremism and antipathy to the West.

The Western media is one of the institutions that are believed to be producing and reproducing knowledge of Islam through discourse. Representing Islam in this way would reflect how knowledge is set to work through discursive practices, in order to portray a particular image of Islam, by drawing on the pre-existing corpus of knowledge that was constructed and produced by Orientalist discourses.

Islamic militancy is allegedly interpreted from different perspectives: each interpretation of this phenomenon hypothetically manifests a particular discourse that represents and, consequently, constructs and helps constitute the situation from specific angles. The media arena is one of the scenes in which the militant version of Islam is treated with a range of communication modes, including several genres, different connections, priorities and constraints. Accordingly, the image of Islam will differ with each of these modes, and therefore cannot be viewed as a uniform global image, as might commonly be perceived.

Current debates about the representation of Islam in the media in general suggest that there is an alleged demonisation and distortion of Islam by the West. Islam is allegedly treated by the media as a threat to West, its culture and values in general. Barbara Roberson (1998) argues that, in the late twentieth century, Western concerns about the perceived Islamic threat began with the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, which she believes overturned a staunch and strategically important ally of the West: the Shah of Iran. She also suggests that the perceived Islamic threat is essentially a counterfeit issue that involves stereotypical misperceptions and a casual commitment to analysis. She further argues that terrorism, violence and the extremist pronouncements of militant Islamist groups elsewhere are projected, not only on to Islamists in Europe, but on to Muslims in general, without regard for the differing circumstances of Muslims, or the differences between them. In this way, the Islamic threat takes on a generalised form (Roberson, 1998: p. 116). It follows that the media play the key role in reinforcing this generalisation.

Islam in the British press, I would argue, is represented within a framework of the negative stereotypical images set out in Chapter 2 (Islam and Islamic fundamentalism in Western discourses). These images are usually portrayed in connection to events related to controversial Muslim figures and clerics, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Osama bin Ladin, Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, Abu Hamza Al-

Masri, Omer Bakri; and to Islamic militant groups viewed unfavourably, such as Al-Qaida, Taliban, the Egyptian Islamic Group and the Algerian Islamic Armed Group.

In the past two decades or so, the media in general, including the British press, have focused on the rise of the increasing tide of militant piety that has swept through considerable parts of the Middle East. *Islamic fundamentalism*, *Islamic terror* and *Islamic extremism* are some of several labels used to refer to this phenomenon. Those involved in the acts of violence carried out by the different Islamic militant groups are referred to as *Islamic terrorists*, *Islamic fanatics*, *Islamic extremists*, and so on.

The rise of *Islamic militancy* in the last three decades has been the primary component in the construction and portrayal of the image of Islam in the British press. The events that the media and the British press have always focused upon, as major components in the construction and subsequent portrayal of the image of Islam, can be divided into three main categories. First, the Iranian Revolution, and the alleged involvement of Iran in supporting terrorism, have since 1979 often been used as major themes around which the image of Islam has been constructed in the British press (Abdel-Latif, 1999: p. 7). However, the beginnings of the wave of militant piety in the region could arguably be traced to the late 1960s, as a reaction against secular modernity following the perceived failure of secular enterprises such as socialism and Pan-Arabism. The second category includes the violent acts and excessive practices committed by Islamic militant groups in some Muslim countries (countries where Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority of the population), especially in the last two decades. This category of events include violent acts and excessive practices, especially during the 1980s and 1990s, committed by movements such as *Al-Qaida*, the Algerian "Islamic Armed Group" (IAG), the Egyptian "Islamic Group" and the *Jihad* Organisation, the Palestinian *Hamas* and *Jihad* movements and the former ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The third category of events, used as a theme around the image of Islam is constructed, includes violent acts and threats, by Islamic militant groups and figures, that transcend the boundaries of the Muslim world. Examples of such events include the

death threat issued by Ayatollah Khomeini against the novelist Salman Rushdie in 1989, the Paris Metro bombings in 1996, the repeated threats of Osama Bin Ladin against Western and American interests around the world, culminating in the simultaneous bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the attack on the US destroyer "USS Cole" in Eden seaport in October 2000 and the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11th 2001.

The UK media in general is blamed for allegedly fanning the flames of "*Islamophobia*", and for hindering Muslims' integration into the social fabric of the country and, thus, encouraging discrimination against Muslims. As Elizabeth Poole wrote:

> In the search for a good story, journalists have tended to overlook Muslims with more moderate opinions in favour of radicals who give sensational sound bites, Muslim leaders say.... The representation of Islam in the press coverage of some British newspapers is viewed as reductive and reflecting a generally negative image of the religion and the societies associated with it. (Poole, Arab Media, May 2001)

Van Dijk's concept of 'production and reception processes' enables us to understand the media contribution, which significantly circulates this unfavourable image of Islam and Muslims to the public mind, within the framework of the relationship between the three levels of news text production: i.e., the processes of structure, production and comprehension, in connection with the wider social context within which they are integrated (van Dijk, 1988: p. 2).

Roberson (1998) describes this process as a "conscious exercise in image creation" by the media for tactical political purposes, to produce what the Runnymede Trust report of 1997 described as *Islamophobia,* which it viewed as a prevalent problem in contemporary western societies. In the report, the Runnymede Trust defined the phenomenon of Islamophobia as "unfounded hostility" towards Islam, and the "practical consequences" of such hostility, such as unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals. The report classified some views towards Islam as "closed", and stated that

> Closed views see total difference between Islam on the one hand and the non-Muslim world, particularly the so-called West, on the other. Islam is "Other", with few or no similarities between itself and other civilisations and cultures.... Claims that Islam is totally different and "Other" often involve stereotypes and claims about "Us" (non-Muslims) as well as about "Them" (Muslims), and the notion that "We" are superior.... "We" are civilised, reasonable, generous, efficient, sophisticated, enlightened, non-sexist.... "They" are primitive, violent, irrational, scheming, disorganised, oppressive.... Closed views see Islam as violent and aggressive, firmly committed to barbaric terrorism, and implacably hostile to the non-Muslim world. (The Runnymede Trust, 1997: p. 3)

The "closed" views consider Islam a monolithic entity, and lump Muslims and Islam(s) together as one unified and colossal bloc. According to Esposito (1995),

> Monolithic Islam has been a recurrent Western myth which has never been borne out by the reality of Muslim history. Indeed, when convenient, Western commentators waste little time in emphasising the division and fratricidal relations of the Arab and Muslim world, its intractable instability ... yet when equally convenient, Islam, the Arabs, and the Muslim world are represented as a monolithic bloc poised against the West. (Esposito, 1995: p. 201)

As Part 2 (Chapter 1) will explain, the media uses a particular discourse to propagate this image, and it makes it work effectively by appealing to common sense and by making gross stereotypes seem natural. Such stereotypes are created and invoked in particular political, economic and social contexts. Robert Ferguson (1998) argues that the process of naturalising is the process by which particular social relationships, often related to subordination and power, are created and presented as natural, rather than as an outcome of complex historical processes and interactions between individuals, groups, classes and power blocks (Ferguson, 1998: p. 156).

Ferguson (1998) also argues that the ideological import of specific messages in newspapers is prone to be imbedded in implicit discourses as much as in explicit ones, especially when the media is dealing with what is considered normal and commonsense. The appeal to normality, and the establishment of politically and culturally acceptable behavioural patterns, he argues, often form the foundation for

ideological arguments that are made at the expense of individuals, groups or nations deemed to be "others" (Ferguson, 1998: p. 154).

In the same context, Ferguson argues that the media use representations of normality to provide views that are in fact questionable. These representations, he suggests, can serve to assert ideological positions, mainly by appealing to the reader's common sense and a notion of normality. The power of dominant stereotypes lies in the fact that they originate from a consensus, in the sense that they fit with the dominant ideology and society's power relations. Consequently, we may not notice negative stereotypes, nor be aware of them as stereotypes, because they are often naturalised and formulated in a way that makes them appear commonsensical. Therefore, to deconstruct media texts, it is important to denaturalise and expose the "taken-for-grantedness" (Fairclough, 1995) of the ideological messages involved in media texts.

BACKGROUND

In recent decades, *Islamic militancy* has become the focus of many studies and researches in the intellectual and academic circles concerned with Islamic resurgence, as a prevalent cultural and political phenomenon in modern Islam. It has also become a topic of increasing interest to the media, as a result of the resurgence of what is generally referred to as *political Islam*. The rise of this phenomenon has extended beyond the boundaries of nations with Arab and/or Muslim majorities into Western countries, such as the UK, France and the USA, where Muslims communities constitute a minority.

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 was undertaken in the name of religion, and its calls for an Islamic revival reverberated throughout the region. In December 1979, the then Soviet leadership decided to send its troops to Afghanistan in support of the former Afghan president Babrak Karmal. This triggered a sense of solidarity in many Muslims, and throughout the 1980s volunteer fighters flocked to Afghanistan in thousands to fight alongside the Afghan rebels against the Soviet troops. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, hundreds, if not thousands, of the so-called Arab-Afghans (Arab volunteer fighters who joined the Afghan rebels in fighting the Soviet troops) returned to their countries of origin, and called for a new Jihad war to topple the ruling secular governments in countries such as Egypt and Algeria, and to establish Islamic states in their place.

There then occurred rapid international and regional developments that had profound direct and indirect effects on Middle East politics: Ayatollah Khomeini issued his famous religious edict (fatwa) against the novelist Salman Rushdie in February 1989 over the *Satanic Verses*; Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990; the second Gulf War to liberate Kuwait began in February 1991; and later the same year the disintegration of the former Soviet Union took its final shape. Throughout the decade, Islamic militant groups, such as the "Islamic Group" (*Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiya*) and *Al-Jihad* in Egypt, and the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front)

and Islamic Armed Group (IAG) in Algeria, carried out campaigns of violence against the Egyptian and Algerian authorities respectively. This violence extended as far as the USA, and struck at the heart of New York, when the World Trade Centre was bombed in late February 1993. The Taliban movement seized power in Afghanistan in September 1996 and imposed a notoriously strict version of Islamic rule. In November 1997, the Egyptian "Islamic Group" claimed responsibility for killing 58 Western tourists at Queen Hatshepsut temple in Luxor, Egypt. The remnants of Arab-Afghans leaders established Al-Qaida in Afghanistan as an "Islamic International": the group later claimed responsibility for bombing the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and the American destroyer "USS Cole" in the port of Eden, Yemen, in October 2000. However, the turning point came when Al-Qaida, led by Usama bin Ladin, carried out the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington.

These events, which were attributed to Islamic militant groups and individuals, were indeed committed in the name of Islam. They involved both death threats, as in the Khomeini religious edict against Salman Rushdie, and bloody violence that claimed the lives of non-combatant, unarmed and defenceless individuals. But how have they been dealt with and represented in the news media? To what extent has this representation been influenced by historically conditioned Orientalist discourses that seek to construct and maintain hegemonic perceptions of Islam? Also, is the representation of these events and militant Islam extended to representations of Islam in general as a faith, an identity and a way of life?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine whether the press coverage of violent events committed by Islamic militant groups has been accurate and impartial. However, it has often been argued that the Western media in general, and the press in particular, tend to report an incomplete fragment of a rather complex situation, and represent the acts of Islamic militant movements and groups as an archetype of Islam. It has also been argued that these discourses approach Muslim societies by considering them alone, and charting their histories, values and

peculiarities in isolation from other societies. It is also often argued that these discourses start from some supposed particularism, derived from Islamic political virtue, and from the Arabs themselves as a nation: these discourses, it is argued, treat Middle Eastern people and countries as something special, mysterious, and unknowable. Orientalist discourses, it is argued, establish a set of binary oppositions, in which the plenitude of the West is contrasted with the perceived deficiencies of the Orient, and they consistently identify Islam in negative and antithetical terms. They also establish a pre-supposed essential dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient, which reinforces the perceived basic difference of the West *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world.

The development of relations between Islam and the Christian West has gone through numerous phases. Relations between the two have unmistakably been tense and uneasy, but they have not always taken the form of Crusade and Jihad: alongside the development of trade, there had also been exchanges of ideas. However, the concept of the Orient, which was inextricably related to Islam, has been dominated by Orientalism, a Western approach to the study of the Islamic Orient in general and Islam in particular.

Christianity was, of course, central to the idea of Europe, which was premised on defining Islam as its *Other*. Therefore it is not surprising that Europe's medieval vision of Islam continued to influence the Christian Western consciousness, despite the increasing awareness of, and acquaintance with, the world of Islam in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. In the light of this situation, Islam and the Orient continued to be viewed as outsiders, even after a new understanding of the Islamic Orient was gained. The reason for this attitude, it is argued, lies in Orientalism representing Islam on the basis of a set of classical principles rather than actuality.

After the Muslim world came under the direct influence of the European colonial powers, a number of Islamic movements and groups, both militant and moderate,

emerged to counter what they perceived as a new Western "colonial Crusade". This new and vigorous reaction by the Muslim world was seen as a direct response to Western modernity, as incarnated in the values and ideas carried by those whom the anti-Western Islamists called "new Crusaders".

As I have indicated in the introduction, *Islamic militancy* may be viewed and interpreted from various angles. Each interpretation of this phenomenon employs a particular discourse that represents and, consequently, constructs and helps constitute the situation on the basis of specific attitudes, as we will see in the analysis in Part 2, Chapter 2.

The objective of this research is to investigate the historically conditioned ways in which media discourses in the West represent Islam. I intend to conduct this investigation by examining how the representation of *Islamic militancy* is used as a vehicle to maintain specific perceptions of Islam, by constructing a particular image of it; and by examining how the discourse involved in constructing this image is influenced by the historically-conditioned contemporary Orientalist discourses that seek to construct and maintain hegemonic perceptions of Islam. This media-constructed image of Islam and Muslims, it could be argued, is more often than not a negative one, based mainly on stereotyping, generalisations and conflation, be it deliberate or unintentional. This despite the fact that *Islamic militancy* is a single aspect of a rather complex situation, and only one phenomenon in a highly diverse Islamic world that is far from monolithic or homogeneous.

I intend to achieve the primary research objectives by investigating the *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent* coverage of four events: the Khomeini death sentence religious edict (*fatwa*) against the novelist Salman Rushdie in 1989, the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan in 1996, the Luxor killing of foreign tourists in Egypt in 1997 and the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. Selection of these three daily broadsheets, or what is called the quality press, is based mainly on their political standpoints: *The Guardian*

is left of centre, *The Independent* is supposedly non-aligned, and *The Times* is right of centre.

The Independent

The Independent began publication in October 1986. It was created by Andreas Whittman Smith, Stephen Glover and Matthew Symonds, all previously journalists at the *Daily Telegraph*. *The Independent* is the youngest daily broadsheet, although it has abandoned the broadsheet format and is now published in what the paper prefers to call a "compact issue". It is currently produced by The Independent News and Media. The paper was created at a time of turmoil in British journalism, caused by Rupert Murdoch's conflicts with the print trade unions. *The Independent* was created with an establishment fund of £21 million (Curran & Seaton, 1995: p. 121) and it was able to recruit some staff from the Murdoch broadsheets. *The Independent* achieved a circulation of more that 400,000 in 1989, by attracting a number of liberal readers from *The Guardian*, but by 1998 its circulation had fallen below 100,000. The paper invested heavily to improve circulation and, although it failed to regain its 1989 figures, circulation and readership did increase significantly, reaching 262,588 (Monday-Saturday) and a readership of 728,000 in June 2004.

Their reporting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been the general criterion used to evaluate British newspapers, their attitude towards the Arab/Muslim world and Arabs/Muslims in general. Pro-Israel activists accuse *The Independent* of alleged anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian coverage, and even of anti-Semitism. For instance, a cartoon in *The Independent* (27 January 2003) portrayed the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, eating Palestinian children. This angered Israel supporters, who alleged that it recalled the old blood libel accusation of anti-Semites. The UK Press Council refused to criticise the cartoon, on the grounds that it was an expression of free speech. Robert Fisk is one of the prominent Independent journalists reporting events in the Arab/Muslim world, where he is the paper's Middle East correspondent. He covered the Iranian revolution, the Iraq-Iran war,

and the second Gulf war. He also reported the US-led war in Afghanistan in 2001, the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003. Fisk is viewed as a controversial journalist, and is often accused of sympathy with Islamic militants, and of pro-Arab/Muslim bias in his reporting.

The Guardian

It was founded in 1821 by a group of businessmen and was originally called *The Manchester Guardian*. It became a daily newspaper in 1855. Its editor for 57 years (1872-1929) was Charles Prestwich Scott, who made the *Manchester Guardian* a noted newspaper. "Manchester" was officially dropped from the paper's title in 1959, when it became *The Guardian*. In 1964 it moved to London.

In her book **Disenchantment: *The Guardian and Israel*** (2004), the Israeli journalist Daphna Baram traces the history of *The Guardian* from the days of Charles Prestwich Scott's editorship. Scott's friendship with the prominent Zionist Chaim Weizmann helped instigate the 1917 Balfour declaration. C. P. Scott introduced Weizmann to David Lloyd George, who was the British prime minister from 1916 to 1922. In 1917, Scott declared in an editorial that without a national home in Palestine the Jews would never be safe. Scott wrote that the rights of the Palestinians should be respected, but he described them as "at a low stage of civilisation". Scott's involvement was part of his political interests, but his successor as editor, William Percival Crozier, was recruited into the Zionist movement (Baram, 2004: p. 54). Unlike Scott, who attempted to separate his political assistance to Chaim Weizmann and his group from his everyday editorial work, Crozier turned *The Manchester Guardian* into a tool of Zionist advocacy. During Crozier's editorship, many questions were raised about Zionist influence on the *Manchester Guardian*'s objectivity, because by that time the Arab national movement had become active (Baram, 2004).

Baram (2004) argues that *The Guardian*'s Zionist enthusiasm lessened over the years mainly because of changing circumstances in the Middle East, and the plight

of the Palestinians in exile—the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982—and living under occupation in Gaza and the West Bank. *The Guardian* was able to attract a significant number of anti-war readers, many of whom are Arabs and Muslims, during the US-led Afghanistan war in October 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

The enthusiastic and friendly relationship between the early Zionists and the paper, since its days as the *Manchester Guardian,* lessened over the years and has recently involved bitterness. The paper that played a central role in establishing the state of Israel, and in 1917 published a leader by C. P. Scott saying that "without a national home in Palestine the Jews would never be safe", was, decades later, to publish the following editorial:

> Jenin camp looks like the scene of a crime. Its concrete rubble and tortured metal evokes another horror half a world away in New York, smaller in scale but every bit as repellent in its particulars, no less distressing, and every bit as man-made. (*The Guardian*, 17/04/2002)

Its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often infuriated Israel supporters, who view such coverage of the Middle East conflict as anti-Israeli, and accuse it of anti-Semitism. It could be argued that *The Guardian* has, over the years, experienced a considerable change of attitude toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular, and the Middle East in general, both of which are inextricably linked in many ways.

The Times

The Times was founded in 1785 as *The Daily Universal Register,* by John Walter, the first editor of the paper. It became *The Times* in 1788. In the nineteenth century, it was the first British paper to send special correspondents abroad, but had none stationed in the Arab or Muslim world. The paper's first main coverage of, and concern with, Middle East affairs occurred during the events that led to the end of the British Mandate in Palestine in May 1948, and the ensuing guerrilla fighting. In 1956, during the Suez crisis, this turned into a full-scale war between Arab military

units from Iraq, Syria, Transjordan and Egypt on one side and Israeli military units on the other (Baram, 2004: p. 79).

The Times' editorial line seemed to support the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, who supported the 1956 Anglo-French invasion of Egypt. The paper even urged the British government to take a military approach to the Suez crisis. However, despite its initial support for a military solution to the Suez crisis, *The Times* later admitted that the military option had resulted in grave risks to the British government's approach (Baram, 2004: p. 95).

The Times in fact took straightforward positions in situations in which *The Guardian* was hesitant. *The Times*, for instance, published a story about the demolition of Palestinian villages weeks after the Six Day War in June 1967. The story had been written by Michael Adams of *The Guardian,* but was published by *The Times* because *The Guardian* was hesitant about publishing it. On another occasion, after the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, *The Guardian* rejected an advertisement by The Committee for Justice in Palestine, a Jewish anti-Zionist group, because of boycott calls, and strong criticism of *The Guardian* and strong animosity towards it, in Zionist circles, because of the newspaper's reporting during that war. To his surprise, John Ryan, the executive editor at the time, learned that *The Times* would run the advertisement, obviously not fearing any possible attacks or denunciation from Zionist circles (Baram, 2004: p. 135).

Both *The Times* and *The Guardian* were critical of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Baram (2004) shows how *The Times'* position, and its news stories from its reporter in Beirut at the time, Robert Fisk, drew fire from Jewish Zionist organisations. In August 1982, the newspaper published a leader saying that "Israel's policies made it impossible just now to be her friend" (Baram, 2004: p. 161).

However, it is a common perception among Muslims that the Western media, including the British press, depicts negative images of Islam and Muslims, and portrays Islam as a threat to Western interests, thereby producing, reproducing and sustaining the ideology necessary to dominate Muslims (Poole, 2002: p. 17).

I will investigate coverage of these events by conducting discourse analysis using a combination of methods, so as to highlight the different aspects of both the schematic form and the thematic content of news texts. This will enable me to highlight any possible involvement of issues of power and ideology in the process of representation. My analysis of selected news reports will examine both the surface and the deep structures, drawing on the works of van Dijk, Foucault, Fairclough, Kress, Hodge and Fowler, whose analytical frameworks and approaches to discourse in general, and media discourses in particular, illustrate in depth the different applications, features and characteristics of discourse.

The basic concern of the research is to reveal what the selected news reports in the three newspapers actually say, on the basis of a number of questions. In my thesis, these questions will be central in highlighting what the selected news reports actually say:

- In what ways do the media in the West represent Islam?
- What factors are involved in influencing the patterns, trends and attitudes adopted in the press coverage of events related to *Islamic militancy*?
- Are these trends, patterns and attitudes influenced in any way by the historically conditioned Orientalist discourses that arguably seek to construct and maintain hegemonic perceptions of Islam?
- Does the press coverage of events related to *Islamic militancy* suggest in any way that violence, turmoil and instability reflect the nature of Islam? In other words, does the coverage of these events involve conflating mainstream Islam with *Islamic militancy*?

- The press represents and, therefore, constructs and helps constitute reality from specific angles: from what angle(s) do the selected three newspapers represent mainstream Islam?
- Is there any selective approach or one-sidedness involved in representing only violence rather than other aspects of the whole story?
- What factors lie behind such an approach?

There are indeed some influential works on the representation of Islam in the Western media, such as Edward Said's *Covering Islam* and *Orientalism*, and Elizabeth Poole's *Reporting Islam*. Said's works concentrate mainly on how US policy makers and the media have dealt with the Middle East and Iran since the overthrow of Mohammed Reza Pahlevi. They demonstrate that the US media and establishment have produced an image of Islam and Muslims based on prejudice, inaccuracy and ignorance. Poole's work, however, focuses primarily on the media representation of British Muslims. However, she draws on Said's *Orientalism* and sheds light on the various discourses and institutions that constructed and produced the Orient. These three works are not of course the only contributions I came across while reviewing the literature relevant to Islam in the media in the field of the representation of Islam in the media. However, they are mainly concerned with addressing how the media disseminate an unfavourable image of Islam and Muslims, and how this trend provides Western media consumers with a fictitious enemy. My research is intended to be a more specific work that contributes to the academic debate and the general literature of the representation of Islam in the Western media, by examining how three important British daily broadsheets represent Islam and Muslims monolithically, as a result of covering violent acts committed by Islamic militant movements and groups.

In this research, I intend to approach Islam and Muslim societies as a highly diverse reality, which is not confined only to extremism, confrontation, violence, terrorism and antagonism towards everything Western. This perspective, which essentially reinforces the highly diverse and disparate reality of the Muslim world/societies in

several respects, will challenge the monolithic approach that reinforces blanket generalisations, stereotypes and views of Islam/Muslims, based on the common perception of Islam as rooted in the West's self-definition as the negative 'Other'.

I plan to achieve this objective by using a combination of discourse-based approaches to unveil meanings that are crossbred and wrapped in the selected news reports, and to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance and the bias involved. This process will necessarily involve deconstructing the selected news reports through discursive means, in order to reveal what was actually covered, and how news stories were framed, and knowledge of Islam was generally produced, through discourse(s). In doing so, I will look at Islam as a diverse religion with numerous internal differences that result from disparate interpretations of the Islamic faith. There are indeed proponents of some radical interpretations that embrace confrontation, bloody violence and antagonism towards the West. However, it is inaccurate to lump together all the highly diverse Muslim societies as radicals, supporters of terrorism, anti-modern and anti-Western.

The research is divided into three parts. Part one consists of two chapters that deal with the historical background, and how Islam is viewed in Western discourses. The first chapter sheds light on the historical background of the relation between Islam and the West, and looks at the numerous phases of the conflicting relationship between Islam and the West, from the very first encounters through to the climax of military and intellectual confrontations. The chapter also examines the circumstances and situations that led to the emergence of Orientalism and Orientalist discourses about the Orient and Orientals in general, and about Islam in particular.

This chapter views the emergence of Orientalism and Orientalist discourses in the light of the early and modern Western interest in the Orient. It looks also at how the different phases of the relationship between Islam and the West show that the Orient

is not a merely geographical concept, but rather a produced construct through which European ideas of superiority and hegemony were, and still are, reinforced.

This chapter also considers how contemporary Orientalist practices are related to historical Orientalism, power relations and contemporary politics, and how the phenomenon widely known as *Islamic fundamentalism* has, in recent decades, become the focus of many studies and researches in intellectual circles and been widely circulated in the global media, as a result of the resurgence of so-called "political Islam". This phenomenon is viewed using different interpretive frameworks, each of which manifests a particular discourse. However, in order to understand a discourse, its characteristics, mechanisms and strategies, it is necessary to look closely at the social, political and historical conditions behind its emergence, production and consumption.

The final part of the second chapter deals with the treatment of Islam by the Western media. The focus, however, is on the British press coverage of events between 1989 and 2001, and highlights how events involving acts of violence committed by Islamic militant movements and groups have become the most journalistically covered archetype of Islam in the British press.

Part two has five chapters: the first deals with theoretical issues about discourse and discourse analysis, as a body of theories and methods for social research. It brings together the different approaches to and conceptions of discourse and discourse analysis as well as the traditions of thinking in which these conceptions have emerged, such as the structuralist, the post-structuralist, the Marxist and the post-Marxist. The chapter also highlights the premises and theoretical perspectives of these approaches, and their methodological guidelines and tools for empirical discourse analysis.

The chapter also explains, on the basis of the theoretical issues involved in analysing discourse, the combination of methods to be used in analysing the surface

and deep structures of the selected news texts by drawing on relevant analytical frameworks and approaches to discourse in general and media discourses in particular to illustrate in depth the different applications, features and characteristics of discourse.

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 deal with the analysis of each case study. Chapter 3 has four parts, each of which deals with one of the four selected events.

Part three, the last part of the research, features the conclusion and the findings of analysing the selected news reports.

PART 1

CHAPTER 1

Islam and the Christian West
Historical Background

In the seventh and eighth centuries, the unity of the Mediterranean was disintegrated by the Muslim armies' invasion of North Africa, Spain, Sicily and southern France, which expanded the territories of Islam beyond the *Hejaz* and central and southern Arabia. The conquest was not only military: in the conquered lands, conversion to Islam took place on a large scale (Hourani, 1991: p. 7). The heartland of the Christian faith thus came under the direct control of the Muslim conquest, which the inhabitants of those lands saw as an Arab Muslim aggression.

The Muslim presence in those conquered lands, which were believed to belong rightly to Latin Christendom, lasted for nearly eight centuries, until 1492, when it ended with the expulsion of Muslims from their last stronghold, Grenada. The driving force behind the expulsion of Muslims from Spain was the *Reconquista*, which was one of the phases of the conflict between Islam and the Christian West, a conflict dominated by a European trend towards the formulation of a common Christian identity to protect Christianity in the face of the foreign dominance of the Muslim occupiers (Lewis, 1993: p. 137).

There was indeed some sort of association between Europe and Christianity at that stage of the conflict, but the only specific and precise identification of Europe and Christendom was the statement by Pope Urban II, who, in his renowned Crusade speech in Claremont, in the late eleventh century, said that the geographical location of the communal identity of eastern and western Christians was to be found in Europe and Vienna (Trevor-Roper, 1978: p. 106).

Before Muslim rule in Spain ended in 1492, and at a time when the identification of Europe with Christendom had become usual, there occurred a further Muslim threat

to the world of Christendom. This time it came from the Ottoman Turks, who advanced rapidly into Eastern and central Europe. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottomans controlled Asia Minor, the Balkans and the island of Crete, and they threatened even Vienna (Trevor-Roper, 1978: p.180).

Throughout most of its different phases, the relationship between Islam and the Christian West has been one of Crusade and *Jihad*, characterised by conflict, attack and counter-attack, hatred, fear, ambiguity, remoteness and distrust. Over the centuries, the Christian tradition viewed Islam as a disturbing movement that awakened bitter passions because it laid claims to the same territory as Christianity (Djait, 1985: p. 13).

According to Djait (1985), the first Muslim conquest by the *Saracens* and, later, the Turks, and the subsequent conflictual relationship between Islam and the Christian West, provided the driving force behind the counter-attack against the Muslim presence in the conquered lands that were considered an integral part of Latin Christendom. The beginnings of this counter-attack were, to some extent, influenced by the emergence of an ad hoc Christian identity that came about in response to alien rule, and to the presence of the new enemy in territories believed to be strictly Christian.

This uneasy and conflicting relationship provided the inhabitants of the conquered Christian lands with a prevailing but distorted image of the religion of Islam, and of its prophet Muhammad. The success of the Muslim conquests was not considered as an evidence of truth, but as a challenge to the truth. The first Western European confrontation with the challenge of Muslim power, in Spain, Sicily and Southern France, was characterised by a lack of real and adequate knowledge of the new enemy. Fear and ignorance were widespread and produced a number of myths about Muhammad, Islam and Muslims. In some of these, Muhammad was a magician and in others he was a cardinal, whose conflict with the Roman Church over becoming

pope had led him to flee to Arabia to found his own church there. Muslims were also considered idolaters who worshipped a false Trinity (Watt, 1972: p. 73).

These were some of the ideas that produced the prevalent image of Islam, and continued to influence the Christian Western consciousness for centuries after the invasion of Spain and Sicily. Central to this image was the argument that Islam was a false religion and a movement of violence, devised from the beginning to facilitate aggression and degeneration. Western Europeans had been invaded by Germans, Slavs and the Magyars, but in general they considered the Muslim invasion of Spain and Sicily a barbaric one.

The relationship between Islam and the Christian West has gone through numerous phases, but the medieval image of Islam continued to dominate Western European thinking and consciousness until the late eighteenth century, and, to a considerable extent, it has not yet lost its influence (Djait, 1985: p. 16). If we put these different facets of the relationship between Islam and the Christian West into a historical context, we can distinguish five historical phases, each with its own different developments, on both sides: Muslim expansion into Spain and the *Reconquista*; the Crusades and the emergence of the Ottomans; Post-Medieval Europe and Islam; Colonial Europe and the Muslim countries; the movement of independence in the Muslim countries.

Both the *Reconquista* and the Crusades were movements intended to free Christian domains from Muslim dominance, at a time when the Christian West was on the defensive; as was its identity, which developed in response to a set of socio-historical processes that shaped its self-awareness. By the time of the last three historical phases in the relationship between Islam and the Christian West—post-Medieval Europe and Islam, colonial Europe and the Muslim countries and the movement of independence in these countries—the balance of power and knowledge had shifted in favour of Europe: Islam had ceased to pose a threat to the Christian West, either militarily or intellectually.

The identity of Europe went through huge and rapid transformations, which had their impact on its relationship with Islam, as part of its relationship with other worlds. The West, itself a historical construct, started to construct an *Other* within the framework of its relationship with the other worlds at large, and in the context of its relationship with Islam in particular.

1. The Muslim Expansion into Spain, Sicily and Southern Italy

This historical period started in 711, with the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, and later Sicily, southern France and Italy. By 715, Muslims occupied almost all the major towns of Spain (Watt, 1972: p. 2). By 902, the Muslim armies had completed the occupation of Sicily, including Palermo, Messina and Syracuse, but by the end of the century they had been driven from the Italian mainland. The invasion of those lands, which were considered to belong to Latin Christendom, was carried out under the banner of *Jihad*, in the sense of extending the territories of the Muslim empire beyond the *Hejaz* and central and southern Arabia, with the aim of subjecting the inhabitants, who were mostly Christians and Jews, to Muslim rule. The populations were granted the status of protected individuals, but were to pay tax to the ruling Muslims under an agreement of protection, which applied to all non-Muslims who lived in Muslim countries. The protected people were entitled to freedom of worship, provided that they paid the tax in question (Netton, 1992: p. 71).

This situation made clear that Muslims considered Spain part of their extended empire, and its inhabitants as non-Muslims living in Islamic territories. The invasion of Spain, Sicily, southern France and Italy indeed resulted in an Islamic presence in the lands of Latin Christendom, whose peoples never became reconciled to the invading Muslims. There were variant reactions to this foreign presence, and to the imposition of Arabic language and culture in these lands, at the expense of local identities.

The military situation remained relatively stable until the early eleventh century, when a process of gradual disintegration began: by the recapture of Toledo in 1085, and then of the strongholds of Muslim rule in Cordova in 1236, Seville in 1248, and finally Granada in 1492. This military response, which led to the recapture of Spain from Muslim rule, came to be known as the *Reconquista*.

Reconquista has been attributed to the fervour of the Catholic faith in some parts of Muslim-occupied Spain. The initial moves towards establishing independent mini-states in the aftermath of the invasion of Spain by the Muslim armies was, accordingly, viewed as a religious-driven tendency towards freedom from alien rule, and the assertion of their European Catholic Christian identity. This was a clear indication that Islam was considered a religious enemy not only by the Spanish, but also by their fellow Christians, who later took part in the struggle to free the Christian lands from the rule of the invading Muslims (Armstrong, 1991: p. 27).

The *Reconquista* benefited from the upheavals in the Muslim empire caused by the conflict over power, but the Christians, too, were far from united. However, a sense of being allied against the enemies of Christianity developed, as did the awareness of a new concept of identity that grouped the allies together against the Islamic presence in Spain, where the members of Catholic Christendom faced the threat of Islam to European Christianity. There was a sense of call-up and mobilisation that allied all Europeans with the Spaniards in undertaking the *Reconquista*. The progress of the *Reconquista* supports this argument: the key role in recovering Spain from the Muslims was played by Ferdinand III of the union of Leon and Castile (Armstrong, 1991: p. 28).

2. The Crusades and the rise of the Ottomans Empire

As Muslim authority in Spain was beginning to disintegrate, in the second half of the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks appeared on the scene and paved the way for the later Ottoman invasion of parts of Europe, which renewed the Islamic threat to

Latin Christendom. This new threat to the Christian powers drove the Latin West to undertake the counter-offensive of the Crusades (Saunders, 1965: p. 141).

The calls for the Crusades were not confined to conquering Jerusalem, but included the defence of Europe, which had come to be identified with Christendom and to be considered the Christian continent. Following the fall of Constantinople, in 1453, the calls for joint defence gained a fresh and greater momentum, to defend such concepts as "our Europe", "Christian Europe" and *Respublica Christiana*. These concepts reflected the Christian sentiments that associated Europe with Christendom, and their search for a communal Christian identity with Europe as its geographical location.

The idea of fighting in the name of Christianity can be dated back to the ninth century, when *Agobard* of Lyons described the meaning of the sword given by the Pope to emperor Constantine as the "subjugation of barbarous nations so that they may embrace the faith and widen the frontiers of the kingdom of the faithful" (Watt, 1972: p.49). Monastic reformists of the tenth century also stated that the duty of the Christian with respect to the heathens was to "compel them to come in by the sword". Moreover, according to Watt (1972), it was commonly held that the Christian individual should take his part in a defensive war.

In the late eleventh century, the influence of the reforming Popes in the development of the Crusading movement was evident. Central to this movement was the search for a communal identity between Christians. There was a call to cease feuds within Catholic Christendom, and to direct efforts towards fighting its enemies, i.e., heretics, infidels and the enemy of the Church and the Papacy, both inside and outside the Christian lands. The Muslim presence, which was considered a foreign occupation of lands belonging to Latin Christendom, was, of course, the key reason for the call for this holy war: Islam had been considered the first enemy of both Christian Europe and the Christian Church since the invasion of Spain and

Sicily, and the attempts to control southern France and Italy, as well as the later threat of the Ottoman Turks.

Given the geographical knowledge prevailing in the twelfth century, it was also widely believed that Muslims controlled more than half of the world. Moreover, many in the conquered Christian lands came into direct contact with the cultural superiority of the Arabs, and the Muslims' strong belief in the superiority of their religion. This experience gave rise in European Christians to the need for a sense of community or a communal identity, to enable them to face the Muslim threat to their property rights in the Iberian Peninsula, and to recover the lands unrighteously seized by the invading Muslim armies.

The idea of the Crusades, as a just war intended to recover Christians' lands from the invading Muslims, began to gain momentum with the disintegration of the political unity of the Islamic Caliphate, and the rise of a Christian self-awareness that was coupled with the drive to create a communal identity among European Christians. This produced a communal mode of thought, which is represented in the conventional unity of Christendom in its strife with the challenge posed by Islam.

Both the *Reconquista* and the Crusading movement emerged as responses to this new trend. Whereas the former as a response to the Islamic presence in Spain, the latter is thought to be a reaction involving the idea of the just war against the Muslim occupation of both the holy Christian lands and the Iberian Peninsula, where Christians had had property rights long before the Muslim invasion.

The driving force behind the *Reconquista* and the Crusades was generally viewed as a combination of the growth of religious enthusiasm, the continuing zeal for the Catholic faith, and the Christian self-awareness that produced a strong wish for freedom from alien rule. Implicit in all these factors was the Western European Christians' determination to assert their European Christian identity *vis-à-vis* the presence of Islam on the frontiers of Christendom. Those who ought to carry out

this duty were meant to be the Christians, who considered themselves to be fighting against the enemies of Catholic Christendom.

3. Post-Medieval Europe and Islam

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Muslim presence in Spain had come to an end, after great rebellions over national identity: Islam as a religion came to be identified with the Ottoman Empire. In line with the new expansion of knowledge in Europe, there was an increasing interest in studying Islam on the part of some western intellectuals, but the medieval vision of Islam never ceased to exist, even though the European consciousness was no longer at war with it.

The post-Medieval era witnessed the most remarkable transformations in European history. Christendom gave way to Europe, both as a concept and as an identity. These transformations yielded an expansion in intellectual awareness, and the importance of Islam diminished as a result of the then new religious controversies posed by the Reformation and counter-reformation. However, Islam remained relevant to the religious concerns of European thought at the time: we should recall that the systematic study of Islam in Western Europe began in the sixteenth century. By the time Christendom gave way to Europe, the incoherent and unreasonably informed view of Islam had given way to this new systematic tradition, even though the latter was not completely devoid of the medieval vision of Islam.

The expansion in knowledge marked the end of what came to be known as the Middle Ages, and the beginning of the modern age. This era also marked the beginning of a worldwide expansion, known as the Age of Exploration, which led eventually to European domination of the world (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 282). One of the most important aspects of the European expansion in knowledge consisted of the advances made in art, learning, science and scholarship, together known as the Renaissance.

Europe's lack of knowledge about the outside world, and its loss of contact with it, had come to an end by the end of the Middle Ages. The physical barriers to the East, as well as the mental barriers, as represented in Europeans' insufficient knowledge of the outside world, and how they conceptualised it, were the main factors behind Europe's long incarceration prior to the post-Medieval era. The sources of knowledge about the outside world were mainly classical, Biblical, legendary and mythological (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 289).

In the face of the Islamic challenge in the Middle Ages, argues Hall (1992), Europe had been identified with Christendom. However, following the Age of Exploration, and the consequent expansion in knowledge, awareness and conquest of the outside world, the countries of western Europe began to think of themselves as a distinctive single entity, in contrast to these new and different worlds. Only then did a new sense of identity begin to take shape.

During the period of confrontation with the Muslim presence, the concepts of "Europe" and "Christendom" were synonymous. According to Hall (1992), the cultural identity of Europe was initially considered Christian, but in the post-Medieval era the concept of "Europe" began to be identified in geographical, political and economic terms. This important development led to the formation of the idea of "the West", which was characterised as modern and secular, but not to the extent that the so-called West completely lost its Christian origins and ties.

This new identity was reinforced in Europe's various encounters with the new worlds. One such encounter involved the relationship between Europe, with its distinctive new identity, and the world of Islam. With this identity in mind, and in the context of thinking about the different others, Europe divided the world into Occident and Orient (Said, 1995: p. 4).

In terms of this division, the world of Islam was classified as part of the broader world of the "the Orient". Even after the expansion in awareness of and knowledge

about the outside world, which helped bring about its new identity, Europe continued to view Islam as an all-powerful rival and a religio-cultural challenge (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 291).

4. Colonial Europe and the Muslim countries

Of the European colonial powers searching for raw material sources, lands, cheap labour and markets outside Europe, France and Britain dominated considerable parts of Asia and Africa. Some of these lands were, and still are, inhabited by overwhelming majorities of people who give credence to the Muslim faith. On the basis of the *Other*-based European division of the outside world into Occident and Orient, which reinforces the distinctive and unique identity of the West *vis-à-vis* the rest, the Muslim world is perceived as forming a sizeable part of the so-called Orient. The Muslim colonies in the Orient in particular were meant to remain under direct European responsibility, not only because they were remunerative, but also, according to Said (1995) argument, because they were underdeveloped, backward and in need of Western European guardianship.

The early modern interest in Islam and the Muslim world can be dated to the late eighteenth century, when the East—India, Japan, China, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Holy Land—was discovered anew by French and British scholars (Said, 1995: p. 13). By the beginning of the European colonial expansions in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the colonial powers' division of the world on the basis of a new order, European scholars had begun to show a more vigorous interest in Orientalist studies in general, and in studies of the Arab and Islamic world in particular.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the transition to imperialism was complete, and the conflict between the colonial powers, over occupying new areas, and the re-division of areas already occupied, was at its apex. In the context of this conflict, the Orientalist movement undertook a new approach to Arabic/Islamic

studies, particularly to the Islamic philosophical tradition (Murowwa, 1988: p. 111-112).

As a result of Western colonial expansion, most Arab and Muslim countries came under the direct control of European colonial powers. A conflict also arose between these powers over sharing the Near Eastern and Middle Eastern Muslim countries occupied by the Ottoman Empire. The abolition of the Ottoman *Caliphate*, and the dismemberment of its empire after the First World War, meant that almost all the Near and Middle Eastern countries were subject to European colonial dominance.

This stage was one of the most important and crucial phases in the relationship between Islam and the West, a relationship that was a consequence of the major changes and developments produced by the great social, economic, political and intellectual transformations of the previous three centuries. With the ascendancy of the European West and the gradual decline and retreat of the Muslim threat, the relationship between the two unmistakably became one of power and knowledge.

5. The movement of independence in Muslim countries

European expansionist attitudes towards the Arab Islamic countries required a corresponding approach to influence the Arabic culture, in terms of dominating its modern orientations in order to realise two objectives: first, the intellectuals of capitalist Europe had to influence the bourgeoisie of the region, by means of relating the imperialist cultural and ideological orientations intended for that bourgeoisie to the overall imperialist socio-economic orientations intended for the whole region. Second, there was a need to uphold imperialist dominance of the Arab Islamic world through the establishment of ideological and intellectual foundations, which were to be built on the basis of the region's culture and national heritage (Murowwa, 1988: p. 112). This objective required the recruitment of intellectuals and ideologues affiliated with this bourgeoisie in order to bolster these foundations on the basis of what had been yielded by Orientalist studies.

After the French invasion of Egypt in the late eighteenth century, the countries of the Near East and the Middle East came under the direct dominance of European colonial powers; this, Said (1995) argues, corroborated a hegemonic relationship based on knowledge and power. The various colonial institutions, established in the aftermath of the Western European onslaught, predictably sought to reinforce this hegemonic relationship.

Though Christianity was central to the idea of Europe, the politics of colonialism were basically secularised. Nevertheless, many in the colonised Arab Muslim states perceived the Western colonial attack as an aggression by a Christian world of Crusaders. It is evident that the bitterness of the bloody past and the present hegemony was, and still is, alive in the consciousness of many, who started to develop their own common ground to encounter this hegemony.

As Muslim societies came under the direct influence of the Western colonial powers, a number of Islamic movements emerged to counter what they viewed as a new attack by the Christian Western adversary. The vigorous counteraction in the Muslim countries, manifested in the rejection of everything Western, was in essence a direct response to Western modernity, incarnated in its perceived alien values and in the ideas carried by those whom the anti-Western Islamists considered new Crusaders. Islam was, thus, perceived by Muslim fundamentalists to be on the defensive, in the attempt to safeguard its identity, and the integrity of its social world, and against what was viewed as the Western Christian enemy. It could, therefore, be argued that the resurgent Islamic rejection of Western values and ideas was a significant aspect of its relationship with the Christian West.

These movements can be viewed in the light of the means they adopted to realise the proposed *Islamic enterprise*. While some opted for presumably peaceful means to attain their objectives, a number of other movements decided to adopt violence against Western interests, and against what they considered as "Western-type secular regimes" in the Muslim world, in order to create, instead, Islamic states

based on the notion of the "sovereignty of God" (*al-hakimyya lillah*), which rejects all the political and legal foundations of modern nation-states. Both the Sunni and Shiite movements argued that their aggressive attitude is self-defence, forced on them by the hegemony of what they describe as 'today's Crusaders', 'world superiority' or the 'Great Satan'—a phrase frequently used by Khomeinists and Iranian-backed groups to refer to the USA. These movements came to represent what is widely known as *militant Islam*.

These movements can be viewed as a direct response to the tremendous impact colonialism and Western hegemony had on Muslims everywhere. Politically speaking, many Muslims found themselves under non-Muslim alien rule as a result of colonialism. Many felt that their cherished set of values and ideas, and the old balance of classes in their societies, had been significantly disrupted and disordered by the introduction of Western systems and products. A widespread feeling, to varying degrees, of anxiety and instability was produced by this new situation.

Taken together, the first Muslim expansion in Christian domains, followed by the *Reconquista* and the Crusades, then the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor and the Balkans, and the spread, afterwards, of European power during the last two centuries, created the attitude and atmosphere of suspicion and antagonism that characterised the relationship between the two sides (Hourani, 1980: p. 20).

In the aftermath of the incipient victories of the *Reconquista* and the Crusades, Christian scholars produced a distorted image of Islam. Christianity was then central to the idea of Europe, which has, since then, been premised on defining Islam as its *other*. The different Europes that grew out of the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and imperialism created extensive traditions, ideas and transformations, but the medieval image of Islam, and the *Other*-based relationship with Islam, continued to dominate, and never lost its influence on European and Western Christian thinking and consciousness.

If the idea of Eurocentrism conditioned Europe's outlook on other worlds in the wake of the discoveries and the era of expansion, from the second half of the nineteenth century imperialism started to shape and condition its outlook (Djait, 1985: p. 18). Central to Europe's outlook and attitudes towards Islam and the Muslim societies at large was the medieval image and the *Other*-based relationship invigorated by Orientalism and its discourses that produced and constructed the so-called 'Orient'.

6. Emergence of Orientalism and the Orientalist Discourses

6.1 The Orient

Different definitions and various conceptions have been attached to the Orient and Orientalism, but the latter has always had a multiplicity of meanings (MacKenzie, 1995: p. xii). When the East was discovered anew by French and British scholars in the late eighteenth century, the term *Orient* was used to refer to India, Japan, China, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Holy Land. In popular European thinking, the Orient was a land of wonders and exotic beings, inhabited by cruel and primitive people. This picture was, to large extent, fed by Europe's long confinement during the Middle Ages, and its inability to produce a coherent and reasonably knowledgeable view of the outside world in general, and the so-called Orient in particular.

Unlike the other worlds newly discovered—in the minds of the Europeans, at least—during the age of Exploration, the Orient used to represent to Europeans a world they had already encountered in the conflict ignited by the Muslim invasion of Spain and Sicily, and the later Ottoman expansion in the Balkans and Asia Minor. However, as with the other worlds, most early European knowledge of the Orient was, as MacKenzie (1995) argues, originally drawn from classical knowledge, religious and biblical sources, mythology and travellers' tales.

The growth of the economic, military, intellectual and political superiority of the Western world meant that contacts and encounters with the Orient expanded

alongside the expansion of the West's political, economic and cultural interests in the Orient as a whole, and in the Arab Islamic Orient in particular.

Throughout the different phases of the relationship between Islam and the Christian West, from the invasion of the Iberian peninsula, Sicily and southern France to the present day, this so-called Orient proved to be not a mere "part of the earth east of a given point" (Brown, 1993: p. 202), but a produced construct over which European ideas of superiority and hegemony were, and still are, reinforced. The inhabitants of this Orient were not identified as citizens of a particular country, even after the emergence of the notion of the 'nation-state': they were lumped together as '*Orientals*'.

This Orient came to be identified mainly with Islam, and on that basis it was constructed and produced as an object of knowledge, to depict backwardness and inferiority, in contrast to the civilised West and European superiority. As an object of knowledge, argues Said (1995), this Orient became a subject to study in the academic field, displayed in museums and came and, most importantly, came to represent Europe's most striking image of the Other. This same Orient became the place of the oldest and richest European colonies: historically and culturally, it is the source of European civilisations and languages, as well as its religio-cultural rival.

6.2 Early and Modern Interest in the Orient

The very first interest in the Orient was religious-related. In the early fourteenth century, the Church Council of Vienna established a number of university chairs to promote the understanding of Oriental languages and culture. Trade, religious and military rivalries were the major driving force behind this early interest (Turner, 1994: p. 37). This initiative to promote and obtain knowledge of the Orient was originally intended to be academic, and thus confined to languages and culture; but, in the late fifteenth century, Vasco da Gama's discovery of the Cape route to Asia partly helped to expand knowledge of some societies of the Orient.

Earlier sources of common knowledge about the other worlds, including the wider Levant and the Islamic Orient, did exist, but these were mostly centred on pre-medieval and Medieval classical sources, religious and biblical sources, and mythology and travellers' tales (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 298). In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, detailed studies of the Orient and its societies were published in Europe. Britain and France, and later Germany, contributed to this institutionalisation and development of knowledge of the Orient, by establishing societies and academic centres concerned mainly with the study of the societies, languages, religions and culture of the Orient.

On the basis of the territories that were allocated to it, this Orient extended from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to South-east Asia, and encompassed lands inhabited by different peoples with various ethnographic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. When first initiated, these studies were intended to account for the whole Orient with its distinctive multiplicity, but there was more focus on Islam and the Islamic societies than on the other aspects.

With the expansion of European consciousness, interests and power, interest in the Islamic Orient attracted several Western thinkers, writers and intellectuals, and many members of the educated public. There was, for instance, an interest in Confucian China and Buddhist India, but, as has already been indicated, the scholars of the Christian West treated the Middle Eastern Arab and Muslim Orient as far more different than the other parts. It could be argued that the reason for this was the long history of military, religious and cultural rivalry between Islam and the Christian West, which bound up the entire history between the two in ways very different from those that linked Europe with the Far East, or with the New World that emerged after the voyages of discovery.

The development of this particular scholarly interest in the Middle Eastern Orient is inextricably linked to the colonial enterprise of the European powers, and their interest in the area in the last two centuries, especially that of Britain and France. In

most such scholars' works on the Orient, the term came to be principally identified with the lands inhabited overwhelmingly by Muslim societies. The significance of Islam and the Muslim societies, and the interest of Western scholars in both, can be explained by two factors. First, more than any other religion in the Orient, Islam, which can arguably be viewed as a monotheistic and a prophetic religion, has very close theological and historical ties with Christianity (Turner, 1994: p. 38), the religion of those who initiated the first concerns with the Orient. Second, unlike the other religions of this Orient, Islam was viewed by Western Europe as a conquering movement and a foreign power that had occupied Christian lands for nearly eight centuries. In its later stages, Islam was perceived, as Volney believed, as a barrier against colonial expansion in the Middle East, and a force to fight a war against. With the exception of Islam and some limited native protests in the Far East, the Orient did not, until the nineteenth century, challenge European power and dominance. It was only the then Arab and Islamic Orient that rivalled Europe and challenged it politically, militarily, religiously and, at times, intellectually (Said, 1995: pp. 73-74). Therefore the Arab and Islamic Orient, Said argues, was very different from, and far from synonymous with, the term *Orient,* as used by many European scholars, writers and thinkers to refer to the Asiatic East.

6.3 The scope of Orientalism

6.3.1 The Orientalist archive

From the point of view of pure knowledge and scholastic interest, Orientalism can be defined as the study of the languages, literature, arts, social life and cultures of the societies of the wider Orient, the assumed purpose of which is to contribute generally to human knowledge, as in almost all other academic traditions and fields of study. Since the beginnings of the early European interest in the Orient, however, the studies that considered these aspects of the Arab Islamic Near Orient were relatively larger in form and different in content compared with the studies that dealt with the rest of the Orient.

The accumulation of knowledge about this part of the world produced a huge archive of information held in common, and strung together by the ideas and values that Orientalists set out, in order to approach, understand and explain this specific part of the Orient (Said, 1995: pp. 41-42). However, Orientalists used this particular archive to define, construct and use this construct for their own definitions and explanations of the several elements involved in this study.

From the point of view of pure scholarship and the search for knowledge, Orientalism has been defined as "the study of the languages, literature, religions, thought, arts and social life of the East in order to make them available to the west" (MacKenzie, 1995: p. xii). There did, of course, exist an academic interest in the different aspects of the Orient, but given the special place of the Orient in the European Western experience, and the military and religio-cultural threat the Arab Islamic Orient posed to Europe, Orientalism could not easily be reduced to mere scholastic knowledge of the Orient. Nor could this knowledge be considered simply an innocent and discourse-free account of the Arab Islamic Orient, when we take into consideration that Western Europe had certain purposes, objectives, motives and interests in this part of the Orient.

Western writers, thinkers and intellectuals, whether sociologists, poets, travellers, historians, novelists, economists, officials, colonial administrators, political scientists, anthropologists or philosophers, dealt with the Orient in various ways. Some had direct experience of the Orient; others dealt with it, allegedly, on the basis of this particular academically-based designation for Orientalism, but related to the experience of both is an epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident (Said, 1995: p. 2). Taking this approach into account, Orientalism could not, of course, be thought of in a neutral sense: it could obviously not be viewed in isolation from the West's historical relationship with Islam and the Islamic world; neither could it be looked at in isolation from the overall Western colonial enterprise and European expansionist politics in the Arab Islamic Near Orient, nor in isolation

from the tendency to reinforce the European identity and the West's superiority over the East.

Knowledge of the Orient was conceived of in terms of comparativeness, based on the different characteristics of the Occident and the Orient, i.e., *us* versus *them,* with the concept of the so-called *Other*, in this case the Orient, as a background on which the various differences were drawn. Underlying this distinction is the reinforcement of Western uniqueness and superiority: there is a contrast between the rational Occident and the irrational Orient, the democratic Occident and the despotic Orient, the dynamism of Western industrialised civilisation and the alleged stagnation and backwardness of the Orient (Rodinson, 1988: p. 66). The most important aspect of Orientalism, however, lies in this reinforcement of European identity, which, in turn, corroborates the relationship towards the *Other*, or between *us* and *them*, i.e., between the Occident and the Orient, which came to represent Europe's striking image of the *Other*. Approached in this way, the Arab Islamic Orient in particular was portrayed as symbolising several types and systems of deficiencies and absences, against the uniqueness of the West, its distinctive identity and its identity-centred culture and civilisation.

It is the use of Orientalism as an archive of knowledge, which reinforces the superiority of Western European culture and the uniqueness of Western civilisation, that gives it its fervour and might against the Orient. This particular approach highlights the hegemonic nature of Western European culture and ideas over the presumably backward and inferior Orient, which, according to Hall (1992) argument, lacks all the ingredients that makes the West superior in several respects. Within the theoretical framework of this hegemonic approach, there does exist a basic distinction and an evident contrast, between the superior West and all the other supposedly inferior non-European peoples and cultures. Orientalism in this specific sense is used as a means to define Europe, by contrasting it with and distancing it from the images and ideas of the Orient: the definition of both the Orient and

Europe on this basis underlies European domination, restructuring and authority over the Orient.

One of the most significant facets of Orientalism is that it is based on power, for the relationship between the Occident and the Orient was, and still is, a relationship of power and dominance. The massive archive of Orientalism on the Orient includes assertions that the Orientals are incapable of governing themselves. It has been argued that, throughout the many years of their history, they were not able to establish a rational rule of their own; therefore they could not rationally and credibly govern themselves (Said, 1995: p. 33). The argument of the Orientals' alleged inability to govern themselves implicitly justifies their need for someone else to assist them in governing themselves. Since the Orient was perceived to be deficient in this respect, the Occident, in a self-appointed fashion, committed itself to the task of assisting the Orient to rule itself rationally.

Max Weber's account of Oriental society and Occidental society, which underlines the characteristic uniqueness of the West, was based on the contrast between the two: the dynamic system of the former *vis-à-vis* the stationary system of the latter. In Weber's view, Oriental society lacks rational law, a modern state and the necessary autonomous urban institutions (Rodinson, 1988: p. 72), i.e., the positive ingredients of Western rationality, all of which are implicitly believed to be necessary prerequisites for the establishment of any civilised and enlightened society. The absence of rational law in the allegedly deficient Oriental societies implies the presence of arbitrary laws, which presumably entails despotism and absolute political power in these societies.

The very description of the Orient and Oriental society as deficient, and as symbolising a system of absences, illustrates the tendency to regulate the Orient and its societies and reflects, in turn, the power relation manifested in the dominating attitude of the West towards the Orient—itself a creation of this dominating dichotomous attitude. This authoritative way of describing the Oriental societies is

based on the corpus of knowledge, or, rather, the archive, that the Occident has accumulated about the Orient. Having such knowledge to describe and regulate an object clearly indicates dominance and superiority over this particular object: knowledge in this sense implies Europe's awareness and acquaintance with the prevailing situation of Oriental societies, characterised presumably by the deficiencies and absences of the aspects and conditions of Western rationality (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 297).

With the development of Orientalism as a system of knowledge, an archive of information about the Orient and an institution concerned with studying it, searching it and providing knowledge about it, European consciousness was exposed to a more systematic source of information about its former military adversary and the former religious and cultural competitor of Christian Europe. Central to the qualitative and quantitative emergence of European knowledge and scholarship about this particular part of the Orient was an increasingly unprecedented strong sense of European identity, fed by burgeoning internal cohesion and increasing external conflicts and contrasts with the outside worlds, following the wave of European expansions in the external worlds (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 289).

6.3.2 Constructing the Islamic Orient

After its establishment as a system of knowledge about the wider Orient and its identification with the Arab Islamic Orient, Orientalism produced a huge archive of information about the latter and its people. This archive fed the European consciousness and collective memory with almost all of what can be said about this specific part of the Orient and its societies, as seen, imagined, understood and interpreted by Orientalists. This tendency to identify the Orient with the Arab Islamic lands, involving all the characteristics of those lands and the behaviour attributed to their peoples—the Orientals—had an impact on the mentality and the collective memory of Europeans at large, both of which had already been influenced by the historically conflictual relationship between Islam and Christian Europe, and by the Medieval vision of Islam.

The huge archive that produced the Islamic Orient, as an object of knowledge, particularly the Arab Islamic Orient of North Africa and the Near East, was held together, according to Hall (1992), by means of a set of ideas and values. These ideas and values set out to supply this Orient and its societies with certain characteristics that were used to define and construct them both, on the basis of the difference between the Occident and the Orient. Orientalism could best be viewed as a discourse of difference drawn upon the contrast between the Occident and its societies, on one side, and the Orient and Orientals on the other: Orientalism is a discourse of dominance based on the superiority and advancement of the *Occidental* West *vis-à-vis* the inferior and static *Oriental* East. It is a discourse of hegemony based on the superiority of Western culture over other non-European cultures. This particular tendency, to distinguish between the Occident and the Orient, led to the creation of the us-versus-them attitude and mentality, the approach and behaviour towards the Eastern cultures that were, and still are, influenced by the knowledge provided by the discourse of Orientalism.

The system of differentiations determined by the cultural and intellectual distinction, and by the perceived privilege and distinctive status, of the European West against the Arab Islamic Orient, all demonstrate the relationship of Occidental power over the Orient. The Orientalist discourse is used both to bring these power relations into being and to manage them; within this context, the discourse of Orientalism is used to regulate, define and construct the Orient on the basis of assuming knowledge over it. The process of subjectificating this Orient by constituting knowledge about it, within the context of its relationship with Europe, involves a significant element of power, as no power relation could exist without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge (Clark, 1997: p. 2).

6.4 Influence of the Orientalist discourses

Building on Said's seminal work and Foucault's theory of discourse, it could be argued that the perceptual framework of Islam in the British press is based on a set

of historically based perceptions and stereotypes embedded in the Western collective imagery, as a result of the historically conditioned Orientalist discourses.

Orientalism is a discursive formation, or a field constituted through the operation of several discourses, in the sense that it does not simply reflect 'real' distinctions between people, but creates them. It mobilises a classificatory system and manufactures these distinctions on the basis of a certain representation of this difference, and subsequently uses this typology to determine whom it seeks to study, and the best research methods to employ (Hall, 1997: p. 44). Orientalism as a discursive formation is argued to involve

- Approaching the Muslim societies, as Said (1995) argues, with a set of preconceived ideas, supplying members of these societies with mentality, genealogy, histories, values and peculiarities in isolation from other societies.
- Starting from some presumed particularism derived from Islamic political virtue and the Arab themselves as a nation, according to Said
- Treating the Middle Eastern people and countries as something special, mysterious and unknowable, without attributing these characteristics to any universal criteria (Kabbani, 1986: pp. 6-7)
- Establishing a set of binary oppositions, in which the plenitude of the West is contrasted with the lack of the Orient
- Identifying Islam, accordingly, in negative and antithetical terms
- Establishing what Said (1995) calls the essential dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient
- Reinforcing the difference of the West from the rest of the world

Consequently, for the some of the media's accessible audience, especially those who have a common belief that news is immediate, authoritative, authentic and realistic, the reality of Islam would generally thought to be obscured, and arguably perceived on the basis that it is

- A single monolithic entity, stagnant and unable to cope with new realities.

- A separate "*Other*" lacking any common values with other cultures and unable to influence or be affected by them.
- Inferior *vis-à-vis* the West: Islam as a religion is negatively viewed as fanatical and socially repressive; Muslims are perceived as irrational and uncivilised; Muslim countries are classified as associated with despotism, irrationality, material backwardness and impoverishment. (Kabbani, 1986: p. 18)
- Inherently violent and aggressive, supportive of terror and involved in what Francis Fukuyama called a "clash of civilisations".
- A political ideology used for military and political objectives (The Runnymede Trust, 1997: p. 3).

Applying Foucault's approach to discourse, it could be argued that the objects of the Orientalist discourses did not emerge suddenly, but were the result of age-old interactions and historical processes involving Islam and Christian Europe, and Islam in Christian Europe. For most of the Middle Ages, and in the early part of the European Renaissance, Islamic armies occupied and threatened parts of Europe. The conflict between the two culminated in the Crusades, which began in the eleventh century, and ended with the removal of the remnants of the Islamic presence from Spain in the late fifteenth century. However, even after the removal of Islam from the European domains, the decline of the Muslim world and the ascendancy of Europe, fear of Islam remained (Said, 1997: p. 5). Coming to terms with Islam and the world of Islam, from the point of view of the European Western experience, brought about a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident.

This style of thought facilitated the creation of an archive of knowledge about Islam, the Muslim world (the Orient) and Muslims (the Orientals), that was threaded together by a cluster of ideas and values that depicted a particular construct of the Orient and the Orientals. As Said (1995) argued, the discourses and institutions that constructed and produced the Orient as an object of knowledge, drawing on an

accumulated archive of information that represented the so-called Orient, is a mere construct that existed only in the minds of Westerners. To understand the systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage, represent and produce the Orient in several aspects, from post-Enlightenment Europe to the present day, Said argues that it is necessary to examine Orientalism as a discourse.

As defined by Said (1995), Orientalism is a style of thought based upon the ontological and the epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident", in which Western culture and societies are essentially and inherently superior to Eastern ones. To identify Orientalism, he employed Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as an ideological framework within which a scholarship takes place and the argument that disciplines do not only create knowledge, but also generate power. He also argues that discourse in Foucault's theoretical framework is not only about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, at what time and with what authority. Discourses typify meanings and social relationships and constitute both subjectivity and power relations. Thus, Said looks at Orientalism as a discourse, i.e., a corpus of knowledge that helped produce European Imperialism and facilitate Western control of Arab/Muslim nations in the Orient. According to this notion, all representations within discourse are influenced by language, institutions and cultures.

I will use Foucault's notion of discourse to look at the media, including the press, as an institution producing a certain type of knowledge set to work within discursive practices to regulate the conduct of others and decide what is believed to be knowledge and what not knowledge by means of presenting and representing events in a particular way and, consequently, defining certain ways of talking about these events. My argument is that the media systematically form and constitute the objects of the events they represent rather than identify them.

Said's theoretical approach will be used for understanding the production of knowledge about the Arab/Islamic Orient in the West according to three key

arguments. First, Said's argument that Orientalism provided the means that helped European colonial powers control the Orient. Second, Said's argument that Orientalism helped Europe define its self-image and reinforce its identity against that of the Orient. Third, his argument that Orientalism produced inaccurate and misinformed descriptions about Arab and Islamic cultures.

Said draws fundamentally on Foucault's constructionist approach to discourse, arguing that Orientalism as a discourse is a mechanism and a systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically scientifically and imaginatively. The Orientalist discourse, Said argues, defines and produces Orient-related objects of knowledge, and governs the ways in which these objects can be meaningfully talked and reasoned about by the West. The existence of the professional terminology and practice created by the former generations of Orientalists, and inherited by modern Orientalism, dominated discourse about the Orient and established a body of texts that brought about a discursive identity of the Orient making it unequal to the West.

If we take Orientalism as an example of how knowledge is set to work through discursive practices, it could be argued that the Orient is in essence an object of knowledge constructed and produced by various discourses and institutions. It is important to note here that the usage of the word 'Orient' includes the Far East, but Said's usage of the term is confined to the Middle East, particularly the territory occupied by an overwhelming Muslim majority. Drawing on Foucault's notion of discourse, Said argues that understanding the systematic discipline through which European culture managed and produced the 'Orient', in several aspects, requires the examination of 'Orientalism' as a discourse.

Orientalism that Said dealt with is historically and materially defined: the eighteenth century is considered the starting point of Orientalism, and it can be discussed and analysed as a site for producing knowledge about the Orient. Applying Foucault's tradition to the example of Orientalism, as developed by Said, suggests that

Orientalism emerged as a particular type of knowledge at a specific historical point - the eighteenth century- and was stamped, according to Said, with specific relationships of power, i.e., Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient. Recasting Orientalism on the basis of Foucault's notion of 'discursive formation' reveals that Orientalism is constituted through the operation of various discourses evident in the history of European representation and intellectual appropriation of the Orient, through a uniform framework of analysis expressed in a number of disciplines, with power playing a central role in the whole process.

Contrary to Foucault's argument that the individual text or author counts for very little, Said believes in the definitive imprint of individual writers on the archive of texts that constitute a discursive formation such as Orientalism. From his close textual readings, Said concluded that the unity of the huge body of texts about Orientalism is due in part to their mutual references, because Orientalism, he notes, is a system for borrowing and citing from and between works and authors. For instance, Said remarked that members of the later generations of Orientalists, such as Nerval, cited Edward W. Lane's work on the manners and customs of modern Egyptians to help in describing village scenes in Syria in one of his works about the Orient.

If we take into account the theory of discourse, for the purpose of analysing the Orientalist discourse, it would then be possible to point out that European ideas, as represented in the Orientalist discourse, are hegemonic. It could also be argued that the Orientalist discourse has an archive bound together by commonly held ideas and values that are deployed to construct a particular image of the Orientals. Moreover, the Orientalist discourse, according to Said's (1995) contention, made possible the strength of European culture and identity, by contrasting and counterbalancing itself against the Orient.

Stuart Hall outlines how the discourse of "the West and the Rest" uses crude and simplistic distinctions, and constructs an over-simplified conception of difference: "Discourse as a system of representation represents the world as divided according to a simple dichotomy—"the West and the Rest" (Hall & Gieben: 1992: p. 276). Thus, the West is represented as homogeneous although it includes diverse European cultures; moreover, all of these western cultures are presumably united by their fundamental difference from the non-western world. The West is typically equated with progress and rationality, and the "Rest" with backwardness and superstition. Hall argues that the concept of discourse is governed by power, because it is power that makes things true:

> Discourses always operate in relation to power - they are part of the way power circulates and is contested.... When it is effective—organising and regulating relations of power (say, between the West and the Rest)—it is called a "regime of truth". (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 299)

Hall (1992) also argues that in transformed and reworked forms the discourse of the West and the Rest still inflects the language of the West, its image of itself and "Others", its sense of "Us" and "Them", its practices and relations of power towards the "Rest". He further emphasises that this discourse has made a significant contribution to the contemporary languages of racial inferiority and ethnic superiority.

7. Islam in the view of the European thinkers

In light of the new scholastic momentum in Enlightenment Europe, there was an increasing interest in studying Islam, but that new look was not completely divorced from the innate discernible tendency to see Islam as a threat and a movement of violence, and Muslim society as lacking the ingredients of enlightenment and progress. The influence of medieval prejudice and its analogous way of thinking was evident in this supposedly new view of Islam presented by some post-medieval scholars. However, that new look could also be viewed as a new appraisal based on newly emerged concepts and attitudes as well as on some older approaches to Islam as a religious force.

The themes that the European thinkers employed in connection with the Islamic Near Orient can be broken down into four main categories:

♦ Political structure and the ruling system

♦ The Muslim character as well as the prevailing social and moral practices, customs and traditions

♦ Theology and the relationship between Islam and Christianity

♦ Islamic intellectual production

7.1 Islamic despotism and the absence of civil society

There was a remarkable French intellectual contribution to the studies of Islam with the emergence of Orientalism as an academic tradition in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The most eminent early contribution was by Voltaire, who was mainly concerned with the religious aspect of Islam. His account of Islam, as Clark (1997) argues, focused on it as a religion of action and power, and on its prophet as a messenger who exploited the naiveté of his followers, and used military force to expand his power.

Voltaire also attributed the backwardness of Muslim society to a religious structural defect, and to the lack of fair laws and a reasonable constitution. These factors, in Voltaire's view, disabled the Muslim society, but Muslims, he believed, could emerge from their sorry state if their despotic governments were to adopt fairer laws and a better constitution.

Implicit in Voltaire's account of the backwardness of Islamic society is the contrast with enlightened and civilised Western European society, which was governed by rational laws and reasonable constitutions. He also represented Islam as a religion of action, and its prophet—Mohamed—as a man who used military force and the naiveté of his followers to impose his power. Again, Voltaire's account of Islam reveals a contrast between the persuasive character of Christianity and its peace-loving prophet, and the violence of Islam and the imposture of its prophet. Voltaire

arrived at his particular view of Islam at a time when most European writers and intellectuals had already started to think independently of the machinery of the state and the church as a dominant institution.

Volney was another French intellectual who criticised society and the state in Islam. His critical account of both the state and society in Islam led to a critical view of Islam as a religion. His experience with the Islamic Orient was the result of a long journey he took to that part of the Orient, and especially of his experience in Syria and Egypt. Volney's critique and experience of Islam and the Islamic Near Orient attracted even Napoleon, who quoted Volney on the barriers to French hegemony in the Orient, and specifically the Near Orient (Said, 1995: p. 81).

Volney's remarks about Islam and its prophet were typically critical: he talked about a perceived violent nature of Islam and its prophet who, he argued, built his empire by the use of violence and military power; for Volney, Mohamed preached nothing but murder and carnage. Most important was his account of the Quran, which, he claimed, failed to mention both the duties of individuals in society and the principles of the art of governing people. Moreover, he argued that the Quran states nothing that could constitute a legislative code, apart from four or five ordinances governing polygamy, slavery, inheritance and divorce. For Volney, the logical result of this situation is an institutionalised absolute despotism (Djait, 1985: p. 25).

Napoleon's citing of Volney's view that Islam, England and the Ottomans represented a barrier to French expansion in the Orient, and that it would be necessary to fight a war against them (Said, 1995: p. 81), is of great significance because it highlights how the Western image of Islam was involved in the dynamics of European expansionist politics at that time. Volney's remarks about the lack of a reasonable legislative code in the Quran, together with the absence of any principles regarding the art of governance and individuals' duties, imply an alleged absence of the notion of civil society. This represents an age-old point of contrast between European societies and the Orient (Djait, 1985: p. 26).

Volney asserted that the spirit of the Quran had produced all the social and political institutions that undermined Oriental society, and played a key role in its decadence. This same spirit, and the social and political institutions it produced, corroborated, in Volney's view, despotism in the Arab Islamic Near Orient society.

A tendency to reductionism is evident in Volney's account: he had simply reduced the Quran to a legislative code, with a few laws regulating "polygamy, divorce, slavery and inheritance rights of close relatives" (Djait, 1985: p. 25), or, in other words, self-indulgence. In Volney's argument, the various processes and factors that may have caused the decadence of Oriental society were all reduced to the arrival of Islam, the main cause of this retrogression.

The reference to despotism in the societies of the Orient can also be traced to Montesquieu, who argued for the necessity of an intermediary institution, i.e., civil society, between rulers and individuals, as a means of maintaining a progressive political system (Turner, 1994: p. 25). The absence of this intermediary institution in Oriental societies was responsible, he argued, for the prevailing despotism, arbitrary laws and absolute political power in these societies. The topic of despotism appears constantly in European social sciences whenever there is discussion of the Orient: the prevailing despotism of Oriental societies has always been explained by the absence of the fundamental political freedoms, which are considered a necessary precondition for the establishment of any democratic and enlightened system of rule.

Despotism in the societies of the Orient was also identified with the Oriental societies' lack of the preconditions of social change and development into modern societies, as was argued by such prominent European sociologists as Max Weber and Karl Marx. In Marx's "Asiatic Mode of Production", the societies of the Orient were said to have lacked the dynamic class struggle required for the necessary transformations and social change. The Orient's lack of the preconditions of social

change and development into a modern society, as argued by Marx, reflects an evident contrast between the socio-economic stagnation of the East and the revolutionary and changing character of Western society (Turner, 1994: p. 24).

The view of the Orient as a symbol of despotism, and as a system of deficiencies lacking the necessary preconditions for developing into a modern society, clearly reflects the Orientalist discourse strategy of concentrating on difference in order to highlight the pre-eminence of Western society, with respect to those aspects presumably lacking in Oriental society. This tendency also reinforces the fact that Orientalism is a discourse of difference that persistently constructs and defines the Orient.

7.2 The Muslim Character

The European travellers who visited the Islamic Orient portrayed Muslim character, which was basically meant to reflect the characteristics, habits, lifestyle and customs of the *Orientals*, as part of the overall picture of the whole Orient. One of the most prominent European travellers to the Orient was Chateaubriand, whose account of the Orient was, to a large extent, influenced by the medieval vision of Islam. For Chateaubriand, obsequiousness, cruelty and fanaticism were inherent characteristics of the Islamic character, by virtue of the structure of the barbarous history of Islam, which had already been identified with violence and despotism. The Medieval vision runs deep in Chateaubriand's account of Islam, because, since its first encounter with Christian Europe, Islam had arguably been associated with violence and aggression. In contrast to Christianity, as a religion of peace and tolerance spread by persuasion and reason, Islam was believed to have been spread by the power of the sword, which conquered the lands rightly belonging to Christians, and forcibly converted their people. Chateaubriand's account of Islam was essentially no different from what medieval European thinkers had written about, such as prophet Muhammed's "so numerous followers who could compel others by the use of military force to become Muslims" (Watt, 1972; p. 74).

Descriptions of the Islamic or Oriental character led to the creation of labels such as the 'Oriental personality', the 'Arab mind' and the 'Islamic spirit'; and to concepts of the so-called limitations of mind, and inherent inertialism as common factors in all Muslims. Part of this approach is based on the distinction some Orientalists made between Indo-European and Semitic languages, whose perceived limitations are alleged to have a negative impact on the minds of their speakers. This notion suggests the lack of inventiveness, organic quality, creation and invention in the Semitic mind. Arabic, the language of many Muslim societies in the Orient, is of course included in this sort of classification. This Sanskrit-versus-non-Sanskrit classification depicts perceived Orientals' and Arabs' mental abilities as allegedly lacking the Europeans' analytical and creative ways of thinking; the perceived inherent default in the Orientals' mind and way of thinking implicitly applies to their intellectual, cultural and philosophical production and, in turn, to their overall way of life.

Djait (1985) argues that the French Orientalist and philosopher Ernest Renan went further, by holding Islam responsible for hindering the Oriental mind and blocking the development of science in Middle Eastern countries. Indeed, Renan went even further, by claiming that the Arab race, like all Semitic people, was interested neither in science nor in philosophy, because it was trapped 'within the tight circle of prophecy and poetic enthusiasm' (Djait, 1985: p. 44).

8. Christian theology and the relationship between Islam and Christianity

8.1 Islam: the religion of violence and the sword

The issue of violence is a major aspect of the relationship between Islam and Christianity: the use of force is associated with the Islamic religion and is commonly considered one of its major characteristics. This perceived inherent violence of Islam has always been associated with its persistent refusal to engage in sensible debate (Daniel, 1993: p. 22).

Since its first encounter with Christian Europe, Islam has been associated with violence and aggression. Violence-related types of behaviour, such as robbing, killing and destroying adversaries of *Allah* and *Mohammed* in every way, and persecution of non-Muslims, were all widely believed and supposed to be an ordinance of Islam. European popular thinking at that time was influenced by what had been propagated about the aggression of Islam. Developed within this thinking were images of an Orient full of primitive and cruel Orientals: an image greatly influenced by a vision of a zealously religious and belligerent Islam. With this image in mind, European popular thinking was unable to see Islam as anything other than a warlike religion of violence and aggression, whose message was imposed by savage force (Armstrong, 1992: p. 227).

Perceived Islamic-related despotism and the absence of civil society imply the assumed aggressive and violent nature of Islam: arbitrariness, as a major characteristic of despotic rule, presumably involves violence and aggression against the subjects, thus the perceived Islamic violence is not only directed against the adversaries of *Allah* and *Mohammed*, or the non-Muslims, but also against Muslims themselves who live under a despotic rule, and whose societies lack the so-called ingredient of Western rationality.

Inaccuracy compounded with prejudice, and aversion coupled with antagonism, were some of the main reasons for portraying violence as inherent in Islam. In contrast to true Christianity, which is characterised by love and forgiveness, Islam has often been portrayed as a religion of legalistic demands and merciless vengeance, and is usually described as the "religion of the sword". The inherent violence and bloody history of Islam were thought to have been instituted by its own messenger, who had allegedly ordered his followers to kill whoever refused to convert to Islam during the conquests. His perceived warlike nature and inclination to violence are often highlighted by the several invasions he led, and the many others he ordered his followers to undertake, as well as the hundreds his successors undertook to spread Islam and subdue non-Muslims in the name of *Jihad*.

8.1.1 The concept of *Jihad*

The controversial concept of *Jihad,* which strictly understood means religious war or "Holy War", is often seen as the source of the warlike militancy of Islam. It was widely supposed and understood by Christian Europe and the West at large to mean the coerced conversion of non-Muslims by the force of the sword; it was also often defined as a *Quranic* injunction to kill, and portrayed as a clear manifestation of the inherently aggressive and violent nature of Islam as a religion. The particular concept of *Jihad* has often been placed within the tradition of portraying negatively the assumed hostile and bellicose character of Islam.

Muslim scholars and thinkers do not view the concept of *Jihad* in this way: i.e., as a means to expand Islam or as a licence to kill those who refuse to convert to it. They argue that the mission of Islam has to be carried out by peaceful means rather than by aggression and support their argument by noting that the Christians and Jews of the conquered lands in early Islam used to live peacefully along with Muslims, and were allowed to practice their religion in a highly tolerant atmosphere characterised by peaceful coexistence. The interpretation of Jihad varies and is as diverse as Islam itself: it is viewed as warfare allowed only for defensive purposes; it is also understood as an entirely spiritual struggle by Muslims against their souls' evil propensities; and some radical interpretations present it as an imperative obligation, binding on every Muslim, to install an Islamic system of rule in countries with Muslim majorities (Matani, 1983: pp. 108, 111). Such an interpretation forms the core ideology of Islamic militant movements like Al-Qaida.

In the colonial era, when the vast majority of the Muslim world came under European rule, some Muslims reconsidered the concept of *Jihad* from the point of view of defending Islam against foreign domination, but no European colonial power was expelled from the region as a result of *Jihad.* Even the Algerian liberation war against French colonial rule, which was dubbed *Jihad* and whose

fighters were called *Mujahideen*, was spearheaded by secularist freedom fighters and eventually yielded a secularist national government, not a theocracy.

The post-Cold-War world has many radical and secessionist nationalist movements, but following the collapse of the USA-USSR bipolar system, the main focus was on the perceived extreme violence of Islamic radicalism. The phenomenon of violence is thought to be instigated by radical pan-Islamist extremist movements and organisations, both within Muslim countries and abroad. The Islamic militant movements represent a small minority of Muslims, but the media often portrays their violent acts as part of the so-called Islamic threat and of a perceived battle between Islam and Western liberalism. This struggle is sometimes seen as on the same scale as the struggles against communism and Nazism. This contemporary view of the militarism of Islam is built upon the foundation of classical Orientalism, which views the Orient, and consequently Islam, as something to be feared, because war, according to this view, is allegedly inherent in Islam, inscribed in its teachings and a fact of its civilisation. The Quranic concept of *Dar Al-Harb* (the world destined to become Muslim by Arab conquests) has often been cited as a proof of the inherent militarism of Islam. It has always been claimed within this context that the evidence of the centrality of *Jihad* and militarism in Islam is not only theological but also historical, as military invasion was alleged to be the sole vehicle for preaching the Islamic faith, by war rather than sanctity, over vast areas in the first century after the emergence of Islam.

The preaching of Islam at the point of the sword highlights the Orientalist-based dogma of the absolute and systematic difference between Islam and the rational West. There is an obvious contrast here between Christianity, which was preached by kindness, peace and morality, and Islam, which was believed to have been spread by invasion and conquests—*Jihad*. It is often said that the Crusades were launched in defence of Christianity and the Christian lands invaded by the Arab Muslims, and that in Christianity war is against the teaching of the Gospel, whereas in Islam war is portrayed by some as a sacred duty on all its followers, who are alleged to have

been taught to believe that followers of other faiths are their enemies and must be destroyed by declaring *Jihad* on them.

8.2 Islam and self-indulgence

Central to the medieval vision of Islam was its alleged moral laxity: the plurality of wives, the regulations that governed marriage, divorce and remarriage (Daniel, 1993: p. 185), concubinage and the sexual life of Prophet Mohammed. Medieval theologians used all these views to exemplify the moral character of Islam. More scandalous to the European Medieval thinkers, who were mostly theologians, was the Quranic depiction of Paradise, in which Muslim true believers were promised several maidens as a reward in the afterlife. Polygamy in Islam was considered a pretext used to justify lust and was considered contrary to reason, and to natural and divine laws, as was the right of the husband to divorce whoever, however and whenever he wanted. Regarding the promise to Muslims to indefinitely lie with maidens in Paradise, the medieval theologians argued, according to Daniel (1993), that carnal people, such as the followers of Mohammed, could not be easily moved except by promises of carnal delights.

The medieval debate about the moral character of Islam implies a contrast between its supposed self-indulgence and the asceticism of Christianity. The moral aspects of Islam, which were believed to be contrary to both natural and divine laws, have always been a crucial part of Christian attitudes towards Islam and Muslim societies. Quoting the Quran obscurely, Christian scholars attacked Islam as a religion that encouraged sexual laxity, and Mohamed as the prophet who furnished his followers with a kind of religion that enables them to both serve God and enjoy the pleasures of life (Armstrong, 1992: p. 230). A misinterpretation of some Quranic verses, whether out of ignorance or deliberately to serve the purposes of Christian criticism, was employed frequently to accuse Islam of permitting and encouraging unnatural intercourse between people of the same or the opposite sex, apparently by the command of its prophet. This particular accusation was first adopted by medieval Christian clerics and theologians, some of whom were interpreters of the

Quran, who asserted that the authorisation of all kinds of illicit sexual intercourse was an integral part of the Islamic moral theory. All attacks against Muslim ethics of sex were based on scriptural grounds and were intended to maintain that Islam, in essence, is built upon a substructure of sexual licence that contradicts both divine and natural laws (Daniel, 1993: p. 185). Daniel argues that such views of the moral character of Islam, along with others, formed a significant part of the Christian attitude towards Islam, and hence to Muslims and Muslim societies.

8.3 Sexual imageries

The Christian attitude towards Islam and the Islamic societies, based on views and perceptions of Islamic moral question, inspired a number of post-medieval European travellers and novelists who later dealt with the Orient. In the process of formulating it by giving it shape and identity, these scholars construed the Orient as a place of sensuality, and uniformly associated with sexual fantasies (Yegenoglu, 1998: p. 25): the so-called Oriental woman or, to be more precise, the Oriental female, was represented as a symbol of sex and a source of pleasure and unable to represent herself, her emotion, her presence or her history. The Oriental female, like the Oriental male, was considered in isolation from the whole community, and was perceived to be dominated by the irrationality of the senses, in which she existed as a willing creature of unlimited sensuality. Though most such views associating the Orient with sexual fantasies and irrational sensuality were held by European writers and novelists who emerged after the Enlightenment and the de-Christianisation of Europe, there are traces of a contrast between the sensuality of Islam and the rejection of luxury and sensuality by Christianity (Turner, 1994: pp. 98-99). The contrast between the two entails a systematic difference between the rational and humane Occidental West and the irrational and aberrant Oriental East.

Thus, the representation of the *Otherness* of the Orient involved sexual modes of differentiation, as well as cultural differences. Representative images of the Oriental woman were not confined to the texts of novelists: a huge archive of paintings and photographs, portraying the sexy and almost naked Oriental female body, were

accumulated by a number of Europeans, especially French photographers, who visited Egypt and the North African countries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Yegenoglu (1998), these representative images of the Oriental woman illustrate the nature and extent of the sexual dimensions involved in the process of reinforcing the *Otherness* of the Orient through the cultural and sexual aspects of differentiation.

While the post-Christian West is often viewed as having liberated itself from its Christian past—the denial of luxury and the rejection of sensuality— Islam is more often than not viewed as a sexually repressive religion (Armstrong, 1992: p. 230).

8.4 The consequent image of Islam

Christian thinkers questioned the authenticity of Mohamed's prophecy and considered his character to be contrary to what they expected to find in a prophet (Hourani, 1980: p. 24). Moreover, he was not considered the seal of prophets, as allegedly stated in the Quran, and his followers –Muslims– were deemed heathens and heretics. According to this same medieval vision, Mohammed, unlike Jesus, offered no miraculous signs to prove the truth of his teachings. Apart from the character of Mohamed, Islam was referred to in Christian writings as a threat, and represented as a faith that lacked the ability to engage in rational debate and interaction.

Fear and ignorance, as well as the lack of a reasonably informed view of Islam in medieval Europe, produced an obviously prejudiced account of both Islam and its prophet Mohamed. It was not until the twelfth century, when the Quran was first translated into Latin, that serious study of Islam began. Even those early studies were carried out within a Christian framework of thought, and were not devoid of the prejudice originally created by the historically conflicting relationship during the previous four centuries.

This Christian-based medieval image of Islam strongly influenced the European consciousness, and continued to do so even after the growth of universal intellectual curiosity, which was marked by the huge knowledge expansion in post-medieval Europe, and Christianity's loss of its ideological monopoly.

As the ascendancy of Europe replaced the dominance of the Church and its monopoly of Christianity, and despite the emergence of the Ottomans, Islam was no longer a primordial enemy of Christian Europe. Western intellectuals looked anew at Islam and the Orient, but they were unable to rid their views of Islam of the dogmatic past, as manifested in the preconceived vision inherited from that confrontational past. The scholarly impartiality that tended to represent Islam as a false religion, and its prophet as an impostor, had an impact on Western consciousness, which was reduced Islam to fallacy, polygamy, fatalism and, recently, fanaticism, extremism and terrorism.

The tendency of some European scholars to belittle Islam and its followers, and to discredit their prophet, produced a negative attitude to Islam in the West and general lack of authentic knowledge about it as a religion. These negative attitudes facilitated the propagation of a massive collection of false notions about Islam, and the seemingly critical debate about Islam, conducted by some European scholars, was in essence an attack in the guise of an intellectual debate based on and archive of false evidence, distorted information and preconceived negative attitudes. This archive, created mainly by Christian theologians, was meant to protect Christians against Muslims and to discourage rather than to inform (Lewis, 1993: pp. 85-86). The Church enthusiastically welcomed such discrediting of both Islam and its prophet, even by primordial secularist enemies who publicly declared their disagreement with it. Pope Benedict XIV praised highly one of the works in which the French philosopher Voltaire attacked Islam, despite Voltaire's anti-religious attitude to the Church itself.

According to Rodinson (1988), most of the attack on Islam in medieval Europe was theologocentric and emanated from theologians and church people in general, but in post-medieval and post-Christian Europe most of the attack was taken over by secularist intellectuals, including such renowned Enlightenment philosophers as Voltaire, Montesquieu and Dante, as well as several other writers, novelists and travellers. However, liberation from the Christian past and the theologocentric legacy did not remove the earlier influences and prejudices of the past, to the extent that the distorted image and negative attitudes to Islam and Muslim societies seem to form part of popular culture.

Western intellectual treatment of the Arab Islamic Orient was conducted in a spirit that was far from objectivity and scholarly impartiality, for the Orientalist pursuit of knowledge and interest in this part of the Orient were inextricably tied to the colonial and imperial powers. The Orientalist discourse, as a major component in this relationship, proved to be associated with agenda far broader than mere scholastic traditions. The Orientalist discourse's purpose in creating a specific image of the Orient was to establish and distinguish the *Other*, in order to define the West's superiority and absolute difference against a uniform, eternal and fearful *Other* that ought to be brought under control.

Regardless of the purposes behind it, we should not deny that the quest of the Orientalist movement preserved a considerable body of the Arab Islamic heritage from loss and extinction. Another positive aspect of the Orientalist movement was the publication and translation of this heritage into a number of European languages, though the translations often involved inaccuracies, deliberately or otherwise (Murowwa, 1988: p. 108). However, objectivity in studying Islam, and sympathy with it against frequent attacks, remained marginal in comparison with the dominant current of European thought.

To sum up, these images played a significant role in creating the historical and cultural catalogue of negative perceptions and assumptions about Islam and the

Muslim character. The images in question cover different aspects of life and, consequently, make it easy for those who have the power to propagate public conceptions about Islam and Muslims, such as journalists and authors, to choose relevant images that fit specific purposes related to popular culture such as news, which provides Western public opinion with a considerable part of its knowledge, assumptions and perceptions about Islam and Muslims.

CHAPTER 2

Islam and Islamic Fundamentalism in Western Discourses

The term *Islamic fundamentalism* has in recent decades become widely used in intellectual and scholarly circles, and in the global media, because of the occurrence of a series of events and incidents that are viewed by some as a movement of Islamic revival, but are represented by others as an Islamic resurgence. This phenomenon is sometimes labelled *Islamic militancy* and at other times *political Islam* and even *Islamic extremism*. Though the Orientalist tradition rarely used the term *fundamentalism* when discussing the Islamic ideology, contemporary scholarship labels the rise of the movements of political Islam '*Islamic fundamentalism*'. Religious fundamentalism is, however, a phenomenon that exists across religions: it is present in Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, amongst others. In this sense it is not specific to Islam, and Islamic religious fundamentalism represents only one example among others that manifest a common feature of our contemporary world.

This phenomenon, which I will refer to throughout the research as *Islamic militancy*, is related to the emergence of several Islamic militant movements. It surfaced out of different experiences of colonialism, but the West is often accused of portraying Islamic as a single monolithic entity, conflating militant Islam with mainstream Islam, and of viewing Islam as the new enemy and threat, despite the longstanding historically polarised relationship between the two parties. It is argued that this particular attitude towards Islam is necessary for the West, both to reassert its power over the Muslim world and, at the same time, to construct and affirm its own identity. Consequently, the media in the West, it is also argued, tend to demonise Islam by portraying it as a threat to Western interests and to the liberal values of the modern world.

1. The question of terminology

The movements of Islamic resurgence are often described as *Islamic fundamentalist movements*. The phenomenon itself is dubbed *Islamic fundamentalism*. However, when we take into account the different aspects of this phenomenon, and the fact that these movements were in essence more motivated by societal and political matters rather than by mere religious beliefs, it will become clear that the term *fundamentalist* does not properly describe it.

It is true that the common theme of the movements of Islamic resurgence is the fusion of religion and politics, and the necessary elimination of the separation of the public and religious spheres, as a prerequisite to restoring Islam's role and mission in both the state and society (Faksh, 1997: p. 5). However, apart from this common factor, the current Islamic resurgent movement is neither homogeneous nor monolithic. The movement is also viewed as a movement of revivalism, hence the label *Islamic revivalism*, but a revivalist movement might well advocate traditionalism, modernism or fundamentalism—sole adherence to the fundamentals of Islam—or even pragmatism. An Islamic resurgent movement could, thus, advocate one or more of these courses to varying degrees, according to the influence of religious and political underpinnings on its principles and objectives.

There are evidently various categories of Islamic movements, despite common principles, and this makes it difficult to find an inclusive term to describe them. Islamic movements are neither homogenous nor unified, nor are they even monolithic social movements; different Islamic movements, whether mainstream or militant, have varying purposes and various objectives, but most of them seek covertly or overtly to establish an Islamic government or state.

2. Islamic fundamentalism in contemporary discourses

Western scholarship and the world of academia as well as the media have all shown a significant interest in Islamic fundamentalism. In general, Islamic fundamentalism refers to a wide range of political and ideological movements, from conservative to

allegedly extremist, in different Muslims societies. These movements assume that a revived and politicised Islam will offer practical solutions to various political, cultural, and even economic problems of the modern world. Some scholars and media circles often represent Islamic fundamentalism and Islam as an ideology capable of rivalling capitalism and democracy for global dominance. They sometimes go even further, and claim explicitly and implicitly that Islamic fundamentalism represents a genuine future threat to the civilised modern world and the prevailing world order. Islamic fundamentalism has sometimes even been portrayed as both a product, and a rejection, of the project of modernity. Samuel Huntington argues that the main characteristics that distinguish the West from the rest of the world, including Islam, are related to civilisation, and that the post-cold war conflict will be a clash of civilisations (Huntington, 1997: p. 212). Islamic fundamentalism is also viewed as a force shaping the world from North Africa to South East Asia; but within that force, it is claimed, there are contradictions and tensions that could break it apart. Proponents of this view argue that the heartland of Islam, which lies at the crossroads of three continents, has been under a constant cultural, political and religious offensive by the West since the time of the Crusades.

The alleged Islamic resurgence and the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist movements are also thought to have been fuelled and stimulated by the oil boom in some Arab Muslim countries during the mid-seventies. These countries were believed to have considerably increased their own wealth and power, and that of many other Arab Muslim countries. This had enabled them, it is argued, to invert the relations of domination and subordination *vis-à-vis* the West. It is believed that this new wealth led Muslims to turn their back on Western culture, and to assert the position and importance of Islam in non-Islamic societies. The new petrodollar was seen as evidence of the new Islam, just as the Western wealth is seen as the evidence of Western culture.

The political and militant versions of Islamic fundamentalism are also thought to have been caused by the concept of fusing religion and politics in Islam, as well as

by the integrity of the Islamic *Umma* as a trans-ethnic and trans-national entity (Hunter, 1998: pp. 36-37).

The rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements and the resurgence of Islam in general can be viewed from different angles. Each interpretation of this phenomenon manifests a particular discourse, but the overall interpretation of the main causes behind its rise can be divided into three main categories, each with its own discourse(s).

First, there are discourses that attribute the rise of this phenomenon to Islam's specificity, rather than to the social, economic, cultural and political dynamics of the Muslim societies, and the transformations produced by economic development and increasing contacts with the outside world. This argument looks at Islam as having inherent characteristics that reinforce the differences between the West and the world of Islam, and these produced, as Hunter (1998) argues, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which rendered Islam incompatible with modernism. This trend in contemporary scholarship may be considered a continuation of the old Orientalist tradition, hence the terms *Neo-Orientalism and Neo-Orientalists*. This discourse also emphasises the continuing existence of the potential confrontation with Islamic resurgence, given the long history of confrontation with the civilisation of the West. Due to this on-going confrontation, it has been argued, the Islamic world has gone through successive stages of revival and resistance, response and rejection, which eventually resulted in the eruption of the current resurgence (Voll, 1994: p. 380). This particular interpretation of the current resurgence can be placed within the context of the continuities of history: the perceived confrontational nature of the Islamic resurgence in this sense is viewed as a reaction to Islam's ancient rivalry with the West's Judeo-Christian heritage, its secular present and the advance of both worldwide. Within the context of this same argument, the Muslim reaction, according to Voll (1994), becomes increasingly combative and views the conflict as with the enemies of God. Emphasising various perceived differences between the West and the world of Islam, this approach assumes an inevitable clash of

civilisations, and the impossibility of any prospect of peace and co-existence between the two.

Secondly, other discourses recognise the presence of these characteristics, but do not attribute the current resurgence, in its various forms, to them . Nor do they view Islam as incapable of change and adaptability to certain aspects of Western liberal ideology. Unlike the first category, these discourses do not see an eventual conflict between Islam and the Western world, as a result of the alleged incompatibility of Islam with the concepts of Western liberal ideology, as an aspect of Western civilisation. In this context, argues Hunter (1998), the wave of Islamic resurgence in recent decades can be explained by reference to a combination of socio-economic and politico-cultural factors, rather than by Islam's perceived peculiarities. In other words, these discourses interpret the rise of Islamic fundamentalism within a context that takes into account the historical, cultural, political and even the economic circumstances and developments experienced by Islamic societies.

A third approach views different types of fundamentalism, including Islamic fundamentalism, as a direct product of the modern world. Unlike the first approach, this approach does not interpret the rise of Islamic fundamentalism within the context of the continuities of history, but rather places it within a broader approach to world history, according to Hunter (1998): the key argument of this approach is based on the assumption that fundamentalism, both as a psychological mindset and as a historical movement, has been primarily shaped by the modern world, i.e., if there had been no modernity, fundamentalism would not have existed.

The relationship between Islam and the West is deeply involved in the discourses used by contemporary scholarship in viewing, reviewing, interpreting and representing Islamic fundamentalism. One common factor between Orientalist discourses and the discourses of contemporary scholarship is the tendency to emphasise the difference between the West and the world of Islam. Conflation is another common characteristic shared by the discourses of the Orientalist tradition

and the discourses of those who view Islamic societies as monolithic, and look at Islamic fundamentalism as a manifestation of assumed inherent characteristics that arguably make Islam incapable of change and adaptation to certain aspects of the Western liberal ideology.

Power is the most important dimension in the present and past state of affairs of the relationship between Islam and the West. The disproportionate balance of power between the two enabled the West to exercise a tremendous influence over Muslim countries. Both the advocates of Islam's inherent anti-modernist characteristics, and those who attribute the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements to politico-economic and socio-cultural causes, recognise the peculiarity of the relationship between Islam and the West, and the centrality of the question of power to this relationship. But each has different views of the causes of the rise of this phenomenon, and of the future of the relationship between the two.

Thus, the rise of Islamic fundamentalist movements and the resurgence of Islam in general are viewed from different angles. Each interpretation manifests a particular discourse, but Islamic fundamentalism, as represented in the media, is a product of the different discourses of contemporary scholarship, some of which, I would argue, are influenced by the Orientalist discourse.

2.1 Neo-Orientalism and the clash of civilisations

The concept of the 'clash of civilisations' was first introduced by Bernard Lewis before the collapse of the former Soviet Union, but was later reintroduced and popularised by Samuel Huntington, in the immediate aftermath of the cold war. Huntington's thesis is based on the assumption that the refusal of many non-Western capitalist countries to accept Western liberal ideas is due to the profound differences between the culture and civilisation of the West, on the one hand, and the cultures and civilisations of the rest of the world, on the other hand. The overall thesis of this allegedly inevitable clash is based on a number of assumptions: religion is argued to have constituted the core of civilisation; civilisations

themselves are assumed to have become the defining elements of the collective identity of people; it has also been argued that state actions will be motivated by civilisational factors; the different beliefs and value systems of Islam and Confucianism are at odds with Western civilisation and its liberal social and political ethos.

I would like to argue here that neo-Orientalism looks at Islam and Islamic fundamentalism from the perspective of the Orientalist tradition, which views Islam on the basis of its alleged contrast with and difference from the West. Moreover, the emphasis upon the clash of civilisations reinforces the inclination to ignore the politico-religious and socio-economic causes of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and emphasises instead the age-old rivalry between the West and Islam, and the latter's perceived antagonism towards the Judeo-Christian and secular West (Esposito, 1995: p. 206).

2.1.1 The assumption of difference

The accounts of Islam provided by Orientalism are all based on what are presumed to be deep differences between Islam and the West (Sayyid, 1997: p. 32). As in the Orientalist tradition, neo-Orientalists believe in the difference in culture and civilisation between the West, on the one hand, and the rest of the world, including Islam, on the other hand. Huntington highlights these differences in the following way:

> Islam and China embody great cultural traditions very different from and in their eyes infinitely superior to that of the West. The power and assertiveness of both in relation to the West are increasing, and conflicts between their values and interests and those of the West are multiplying and becoming more intense. Because Islam lacks a core state, its relations with the West vary greatly from country to country. (Huntington, 1997: p. 185)

Because of its different belief and value systems, Islam is perceived by Huntington (1997) to be at odds with Western culture and civilisation. He also argues that such differences created the increasing conflict and tension between the two sides. In his view, Islam not only differs from the West in terms of culture and civilisation, but also in lacking a core state and, consequently, a cohesive attitude to unify its relation

with the West. He highlights two groups with distinct attitudes to the Western paradigm: one is a group of modernising secularists, who hailed the role of Western science and rationalism in eliminating the superstitions and irrationality that formed the core of existing religions, including Islam. On the other hand, Huntington sees sceptical conservatives as worried about the disastrous consequences of the disappearance of religion, and its role as a moral guide on the individual and societal levels.

These worries, of course, developed as a result of a series of developments in the relations between the West and the rest of the world. But the relationship between the West and the world of Islam has gone through a unique set of developments and transformations that have left their impact on the existing relationship, hence the uniqueness of the West's relation to Islam, its distinct *Other*.

One of the consequences of the Islamic world approaching a non-Western paradigm—a suggestion that underlies the assumed contrast between the two—is the emergence of a movement of religious revival. Unlike the West, where science, rationalism and pragmatism eliminated superstitions and irrationalities, as integral aspects of religion, some Muslim societies are believed to have undertaken a course of reshaping personal, social and public behaviour, thus reinforcing their culture and identity on the basis of the fundamental tenets of Islam (Fukuyama, 1992: p. 236).

2.1.2 Islam's alleged inability to change

The return to these fundamental tenets, and the rejection of the Western paradigm, argues Huntington (1997), imply Islam's inability to change and its incompatibility with the modernist project. The major assumptions of the neo-Orientalists about the emergence of Islamic resurgence rest mainly on the assumed ontological difference between Islam and the West (Sayyid, 1997: p. 32). The neo-Orientalists' assumption of the inability of Islam to change is nothing new, for it represents one of the main themes that constitute the accounts of Muslim societies as provided by Orientalism. These societies have been approached with a focus on their history, values and

peculiarities, on the basis of a presumed particularism and uniqueness derived from Islam as a religion. The supposed unchanging nature and uniformity of these societies, as represented by Orientalists and neo-Orientalists, are not based on factual realities proven on the basis of universal criteria (Halliday, 1996: p. 196), but on their assumed structural and absolute differences from the West. Indeed there was some comparative analysis of Islam and Islamic societies, but they were studied and represented in contrast to Christendom, the West and modernity (Sayyid, 1997: p. 33).

Within this context, Huntington reaffirms the presence of an alleged systemic and absolute difference between the West and the Muslim world. In his view, the rejection of the Western paradigm and the return to the fundamental tenets of religion underscore and reassert the alleged absolute differences and the civilisation-based contrariety between the West and the world of Islam. Central to this argument is the assumption that the civilisation of the West is based on certain pillars and a set of values that are derived from sources contrary and antithetical to those from which the civilisations and cultures of the others emerged.

The inability to change, based on the clash-of-civilisation thesis, was first introduced by analysis of then existent or potential Islamic activism. No justification, apart from alleged absolute and systemic differences, had then been assigned to the Muslims' criticism and rejection of the overall Western enterprise, whether represented by modernity, imperialism, America's tilt toward Israel or the West's support for oppressive regimes in the Muslim world. Emphasis upon the clash-of-civilisation thesis, and on Islam's alleged inability to change, reinforces the inclination to overlook the politico-cultural and socio-economic causes of the Muslim rejection of Western paradigm. It also reinforces the age-old Orientalist tendency to establish the identity of the West by means of reinforcing the difference of the *Other*, in this case the Orient.

This presumed inability to change resembles arguments about the dynamic system

of the West versus the stationary system of the Orient, which allegedly lacks a contemporary modern state with modern institutions, including a sensible legal system: i.e., the ingredients of Western civilisation, all of which are hypothetically believed to be necessary prerequisites for the establishment of any civilised and enlightened society.

In Fukuyama's (1992) view, religion in itself did not create free societies. Christianity, he argues, had to secularise its goals before Protestantism could play the key role in abolishing clergymanship, and religious intervention in politics. He also quoted Buddhism, Shinto, Hinduism and Confucianism as religions that lent themselves either to a process of secularisation, or to family-centred private worship. However, fundamentalist Islam in his view is totalistic, seeking to regulate every aspect of human life, both public and private, including politics. The resulting situation impedes any positive change.

The presumed inability to change is evident in Fukuyama's argument. Had the process of secularisation and the elimination of clergymanship and religious intervention in politics occurred in the West, liberal free societies would not have emerged there. The creation of any liberal free society in the Muslim world should, he implies, be modelled on the Western experience of secularisation. To support his argument, Fukuyama quoted the example of Turkey as the only liberal democracy in the Muslim world, as a result of being "the only country to have stuck with an explicit rejection of its Islamic heritage in favour of a secular society early in the twentieth century" (Fukuyama, 1992: p. 217).

2.1.3 Islam's perceived incompatibility with modernism

Based on his assumption that religion *per se* does not establish free societies, Fukuyama argues that Christianity and Buddhism had to go through a process of secularisation so as to adapt themselves to Western liberalism. However Islam, in his view, is difficult to reconcile with liberalism and the set of universal rights, especially the freedom of conscience and religion. The difficulty in reconciling

Islam with liberalism and the concept of universal rights, Fukuyama (1992) argues, is due to its totalism, which seeks to regulate every aspect of human life, both private and public, including the field of politics. His thesis implies that Islam is anti-modern, and that in a modern context it is always fundamentalist: i.e., Islam and modern society always correlate negatively. His argument about its irreconcilability with liberalism and the set of universal rights, and its anti-modernist and fundamentalist characteristics, implies that Islam is consequently always antidemocratic.

The assumed anti-modernist characteristic of Islam, and its alleged irreconcilability with liberalism, seems to have been drawn out from the general argument of the presumably inherent anti-modernism of religion. The influential nineteenth century work of the German sociologist Max Weber, on the effects of Protestantism on the rise of capitalism, suggested that religion could, under certain circumstances, work to impede the rise of modern society; but under other circumstances, Weber argued, religion could, equally, work to stimulate modernisation. Weber supported his argument by focusing on the key role that Protestantism played in the advancement of capitalism as a mode of economic organisation in which the expansion of wealth was a key component, despite the Bible's dismissal of the love of money as "the root of all evils". Alongside the encouragement and development of modern capitalism, the assistance of some English and American puritans played a key role in the promotion of modern democratic society, a fact that refutes the assumed anti-modernism of religion (Sisk, 1992: p. 20). The influence of American Puritanism also played a positive role in the American antislavery movement, and in the civil rights movement during the 1960s.

The fusion of religion and politics in the Middle East during the last two decades was no new phenomenon peculiar to Islam, but an experience practised earlier by the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King in the USA in the 1960s, by Liberation Theology in Latin America in the last few decades, and most recently by the US Republican Party's Christian Coalition.

The secularisation thesis, as a key aspect of modernity, implies that the influence of religion diminishes in industrial and industrialising societies as a direct result of the rational and experimental basis of new technology and the driving force behind it: scientific and non-metaphysical thinking. The arrival of modernity resulted in a polarisation that created the fundamentalism-liberalism dichotomy: some in the Muslim world met the challenge of modernity by seeking to accommodate their religion to the consequent changes, while others opted to cling to the traditional and fundamental, in the face of what they considered the chaotic maelstrom of modernity (Momen, 1999: p. 381). The discourses that maintain the incompatibility of Islam with modernity, as manifested in secularism, pluralism and tolerance, establish their arguments using the historical development of post-Christian Europe as the sole criterion and terms of reference for understanding the history of Islam and Muslim societies. Apart from the tendency to apply the Western paradigm, with all its aspects, in a non-Western setting, there is an obvious contradiction represented by these discourses' disregard of the element of diversity, which is considered an integral component of liberalism, itself a product of modernity.

2.1.4 Islam's perceived looming threat and destabilising power

Huntington believes that the current fundamentalist phenomenon across religions, Islam of course is included, is the tip of the iceberg. The religious resurgence, he argues, transcends the current activism of fundamentalist extremists and extends to restructuring the whole society in accordance with religious fundamentals. Huntington argues that:

> The fundamentalist movements are dramatic and can have significant political impact. They are, however, only the surface waves of much broader and more fundamental religious tide that is giving a different cast to human life at the end of the twentieth century.... Simultaneously with the revival of Orthodoxy in the Slavic republics, an Islamic revival swept through Central Asia. In 1989, 160 functioning mosques and one medressah (Islamic seminary) existed in Central Asia; by early 1993 there were about 10,000 mosques and ten medressahs. While this revival involved some fundamentalist political movements and was encouraged from the outside by Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan, it was basically an extremely broad-based mainstream, cultural movement. (Huntington, 1997: pp. 96-97)

The concept of the perceived looming threat, implicit in Huntington's account, and the "dramatic and ... significant political impact" of the fundamentalist religious movements, conforms to the notion of Islamic fundamentalism as a disrupting obstacle in the face of the modernistic new world order. The Islamic fundamentalist phenomenon is stereotypically viewed as a united worldwide fundamentalist movement that threatens the security of the Arab Islamic world, and the stability of the world at large. When the Arab Islamic world has been destabilised, it is argued, the presumed expansion of the Islamic fundamentalist phenomenon will threaten even the industrial nations (Esposito, 1995: p. 218).

It is also presented as a reaction to the superiority of the West in the modern world, which is believed to have created a widespread mood of resentment and hostility among Muslims, as a result of their feelings of impotence and feebleness *vis-à-vis* the economically and militarily superior West. The overall approach is clearly based on Islam presumably having certain peculiarities, which render it unable to realise the successes achieved by the West.

The concept of Islam's so-called looming threat is often presented as part of the alleged confrontational and belligerent nature of Islam, and its hostility to the West. The assumed "Islamic threat" has in recent years occupied a significant place in contemporary discourses dealing with the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. The tone of these discourses is often alarmist about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East and North Africa, especially given the electoral strength of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the early nineties, and the bloody attacks on tourists and government targets in Egypt by the Egyptian Islamic radical groups. The list of Islamic threats extends to include the birth of a number of independent Muslim republics in Central Asia, whose political orientation is unclear, as well as the presumed ties and networks developed by Islamic fundamentalist groups both regionally and internationally. However, the Middle East is the area most feared, being represented as a place from which Islamic fundamentalism emerged, and where political violence and interstate conflicts are

commonplace (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 61).

It has often been alleged that the West faces a threat from the outside driven by Islam's rage, resentment, inferiority to the Western world and hatred of all Western political thought. However, the Islamic threat allegations ignore the fact that Islamic countries today are poverty-stricken, autarchic, and unable either militarily and scientifically to pose any threat except to opponents of the ruling regimes in these countries (Said, 1995: p. xxxiv). Even the combined strength of these countries, assuming the unlikely possibility of them forming an alliance to act together, is far less than that of the West. Moreover, these countries follow different sets of policies, based on individual and nation-state interests, and are often in conflict with each other. Possession of weapons of mass destruction by some Muslim countries, such as Iraq and Pakistan, could of course create a state of tension and destabilisation, but in comparison with the nuclear arsenal of the West these weapons are too small to pose a threat to the West.

The perceived Islamic threat is not only viewed as a political one, characterised by the state of violence and instability caused by the activities of the Islamic fundamentalist movements, and the age-old rivalry between Islam and the West, but also as a presumably demographic threat manifested in what some Western scholars view as "massive numbers of Muslims turning towards Islam as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power and hope" (Huntington, 1997: p. 109). Moreover, the presence of allegedly massive Muslim communities in a number of Western countries, such as Britain, France, Germany and the USA, is also viewed as a potential threat to the stability and national security of these countries.

Common in contemporary discourses about Islamic fundamentalism is Islam's so-called political threat, and the identification of Islam with the violent terrorist acts carried out by Islamic militant groups. Terrorist incidents, such as the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington, car bombs, the annihilation of villagers

in Algeria by the Armed Islamic Group militias, the massacres of foreign tourists in Egypt, the Paris Metro explosions and the practices of the former *Taliban* militias in Afghanistan, have all come to symbolise so-called "Islamic terror" and the destabilisation it causes to global and regional security. These incidents, together with Iran's previous claims of exporting its revolution and Khomeini's death sentence *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, were used to depict the Muslim world in the West as a source of militancy and extremism that wished to destabilise countries' order and topple governments to impose their version of Islamic state. Moreover, against the backdrop of prophecies of a worldwide Islamic *intifada* and an inevitable clash of civilisations, in which Islam might presumably rout the West, the assumed menace stimulated warnings from Western government leaders and opinion makers about the virulent political and security danger posed by what is perceived as Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism.

The perceived linkage of Islam with violent political change and war has been reinforced by such events as the Iranian revolution, the war between Iraq and Iran, the civil war in Lebanon, violence involving the Kurdish populations of Iraq, Iran and Turkey, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 193).

The lack of democratic tradition and the absence of democracies in the Muslim world, which came as a result of both European colonial rule and post-independence regimes' lack of concern about political participation and the building of strong democratic institutions, have encouraged the assumed generalisation that Arab culture and Islam are antidemocratic. This generalisation is evident in contemporary debates about Islam and democracy, in which the connection between the two is subject to the Western paradigm of modernism, i.e., secularism, pluralism and tolerance. Some contemporary discourses about the rise of political Islam and the dealings of Islam with the West have argued that Islam can often be understood as an equivalent to nationalism:

> In its dealings with the West, Islam in political terms can often be understood as the functional equivalent of nationalism, not necessarily a negative force in

> itself but potentially subject to the same kinds of extremism and prickly sensitivity to external pressures and slights. (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 165)

In most discourses dealing with political Islam, the relationship between Islam and the West is central to the debate. In political terms, Islam is classified as a super-state variant of nationalism, which seeks to unify Muslims on the basis of ethno-cultural similarities. Such a classification implies the concept of fusing religion and politics in Islam, and the integrity of the Islamic *Umma* (nation) as a trans-ethnic and trans-national entity. This so-called religio-ethnic trans-national entity is believed to have a distinctive response to external pressures. In other words, the response of this entity to foreign pressures and threats is influenced by a set of factors and motivations different from and even contrary to the tenets of Western modernity, i.e., tolerance, pluralism and secularism. This situation is believed to have created a state of sensitivity, which influences this entity's reaction to external pressures, whether fictitious or real. This so-called sensitivity to external pressures is believed to have produced a presumed extremism, a term often used in connection with the movements and groups of political Islam. The same argument continues that:

> Like nationalism, political Islam generally lacks any inherent, specific, concrete political agenda that offers concrete solutions to concrete problems. (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 165)

The hypothesis of the lack of an inherent political agenda also implies the argument of Islam's peculiarities, i.e., Islam is said to be imbued with inherent peculiarities that make it antidemocratic and, in turn, anti-modernist. The danger and political threat of political Islam is, thus, believed to stem from its presumed inherent lack of a specific political agenda that provide concrete solutions to concrete problems, a situation that allegedly leaves the door open for radical activists advocating violence, and for reactionaries who lack a coherent vision of the future (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 166).

It has thus been argued that, due to the inability, if not the impossibility, of making Islamic law compatible with global legal norms, human rights and the corpus of secular law in various societies, Islamic-inspired regimes and movements will not be able to successfully function in the modern world within the present so-called international order. Accordingly, it is presumed that these regimes and movements will be at odds with the present global system, a situation that will eventually cause tension and possible conflict between the two contestants, who will deal with it in accordance with two contrary frames of reference.

2.1.5 Islam's demographic and socio-cultural threat

Huntington focuses largely on Islam's demographic threat. He believes that important political consequences could emerge when the comparatively higher rate of population growth in the Muslim countries is associated with the question of social mobilisation. He argues further that demographic growth represents a central factor in the wave of Islamic fundamentalism in countries like Iran, Algeria and Egypt. He also contests that young people provide the recruits for Islamist organisations and political movements, and that Muslim youths, who form the majority of the massive bulk of unemployed, downtrodden and dispossessed among the urban migrant population in countries like Egypt, Algeria and Turkey, represent the militant cadres of the Islamist movements, and are the beneficiaries of their social services. Frustrated and disappointed with the impotence of their governments, increasing numbers of unemployed youth in the Muslim countries with high rates of population growth have found, it is argued, a dignified identity in Islam and the Islamic fundamentalist movements. Their resentment is viewed as being fuelled further by the prevalent state of stagnation and decadence in their own countries, along with the relation of dominance and subordination with the West (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 193).

Huntington views Islamic population growth as a major contributing factor to the conflicts along the borders of the Islamic world between Muslims and other peoples. Similar population growth in other non-Muslim societies has not been viewed as a

potential danger, but the possible threat of this Islamic demographic growth, as Huntington implies it, stems from the combination of radicalism and rapidly increasing population growth.

As Europe and the USA experience successive waves of immigration, Muslims already settled there, and their assimilation and presence within these Western societies, have become an issue for political agitation. The growth of Muslim populations in Europe and the United States has made Islam the second largest religion in Germany and France, and the third largest in Britain and America. The question facing the Muslim communities in the West is whether they will accept secularism, pluralism and tolerance as the basic tenets of Western modernism. The members of these communities must either be fully integrated into European society, or must seek to create an Islamic society within the host society, on the basis of separatism (Fuller & Lesser, 1995: p. 90).

Consequently, the argument about the so-called Islamic demographic threat transcends the borders of the Muslim countries to include even Western countries. The steady increase in the numbers of Muslim communities in countries like France leads to calls demanding the expulsion of foreign workers, most of whom are Muslim emigrants from north Africa, and preventing Muslim girls from wearing Muslim head scarves in state schools. Anti-Arab/Muslim sentiments in Western Europe are often related to a growing xenophobia that is induced by the presence of significant Muslim minority populations (Esposito, 1995: pp. 209-210).

Incidents such as the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington, the Madrid bomb attacks on the 11th of March 2004, the burning of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 and the Paris Metro explosions in 1995 led to harsh xenophobic sentiments against Arab and Muslim immigrants. In France, right-wing calls for the deportation of Arab/Muslim immigrants became commonplace; in the USA, questions were raised as to why Arab/Muslim immigrants have come to a country with which they cannot be identified and whose values they cannot share; in

Britain, during the demonstrations and clashes following the Rushdie affair, an editorial in the *Sunday Times* urged Whitehall to stiffen laws against Muslim protesters, and recommended that any Muslim troublemaker with no full British citizenship should be expelled from the country. Negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims were promoted, and Arabs and Muslims were commonly portrayed as threatening, undesirable and a demographic threat.

The Muslim presence in the West, i.e., Europe and North America, is increasingly becoming an issue in a broad debate. The nature of the perceived Islamic threat goes beyond the demographic to the socio-religious: arguably, Muslims are not only populating Western countries and presumably proliferating and prospering in Europe and America, but they also pose a challenge in these places. Members of the Muslim communities in the West must either be fully integrated in European society (Euro-Islam), to the extent socially permitted, with Islam preserved as a personal faith and a cultural preference; or they must create an Islamic society within European society, on the basis of separatism (ghetto-Islam) (Esposito, 1995: p. 210).

The debate about the presence of the Muslim communities in the countries of Europe and North America includes the question of the adaptability of these communities to Western liberalism as a whole package. This particular question emerged against the stereotypical background of Islam's inability to change, together with its perceived incompatibility with modernism, which produced liberalism. The prevailing Western attitude towards this issue takes into account neither the reality that many people consider religious faith a primary identity, nor the fact that liberalism appreciates in principle the existence of race and ethnicity as part of the human condition, and rejects discrimination along these lines.

2.1.6 Islam's monolithism

The tendency to represent Islam as a monolithic bloc is endemic in the contemporary discourses dealing with the phenomenon of Islamic militancy. The acts of violence committed by these movements are often represented as being

characteristic of Islamic movements, regardless of their manifold natures and varying objectives.

Once again, the diverse denominations of Islam and the various categories of Islamic movements are ignored. Contemporary discourses dealing with Islamic fundamentalism often disregard the fact that the educated Islamic elite and the Islamic fundamentalist movements are not homogeneous. There exist Muslim intellectuals in Arab/Islamic countries who do not oppose the application of the *sharia* laws, but do disagree with the Islamic fundamentalist movements on most of their cultural and political practices, and even with some of their basic arguments. Likewise, they disagree with Western perceptions of Islam, on the grounds that the West does not differentiate between the threat posed by a certain school of thought or a religion, and the danger brought by the followers of that particular doctrine. What could be argued here is that Islam is not necessarily a unified monolithic doctrine; consequently, all Muslims do not represent a single Islam. By the same token, Islamic religious figures and leaders of Islamic fundamentalist organisations, such as the late Ayatollah Khomeini, Omer Abdul Rahman and Usama Bin Ladin, do not represent Muslims in the four corners of the globe, nor do they represent the non-existent unified and monolithic Islam.

The monolithic approach ignores the fact that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is a phenomenon that incorporates extremists and moderates alike, as well as demagogues and representatives of populist movements. There is no denying that Islamic fundamentalism is a broad-based movement, but it is also a diverse religious movement that has swept across Muslim countries from North Africa to South East Asia in the last two decades. However, contemporary discourses dealing with the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism disregard the fact that it is a movement that manifests itself in individual and political life, from the emphasis on religious practices such as prayer, fasting, Islamic dress and family values, to the reassertion of Islam in politics and political life in general.

The images of the Iran-backed and other extremist Islamic organisations that used violence, hostage takings and terrorism dominated the years from the late 1970's onwards. By the late 1980's and early 1990's, Islamic fundamentalist movements had become diverse rather than monolithic. Organisations like the Egyptian *Al-Jamaa Al-Islamia* and the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were involved in violent and terrorist acts against the authorities, civilians and foreign tourists. Their goal was to establish what is often vaguely referred to as an Islamic state, via militant activities. Other Islamic groups, such as the Jordanian Muslim Brothers, the Yemeni *Al-Islah* Party and the Turkish *Rifah* Party, advocate the establishment of their version of an Islamic state via the democratic process. Other Islamic organisations focus on running schools, hospitals and clinics, and on providing a wide range of other social services. Another category, such as the various *sunni* groups preaching the customary practice of the Prophet Mohammed in many Muslim countries, espouse the propagation of the teachings through missionary activities, in order to found their own version of an Islamic state through the establishment of an Islamic society by personal and social transformation from below.

It is obvious that these different types of Islamic movements represent distinctive categories within the Islamic fundamentalist movement, though their common ultimate objective is to establish their proposed Islamic state; but this distinction is often ignored when contemporary discourses deal with the overall phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. Contrary to the assumptions of these contemporary discourses, there are numerous Islamic movements, different in goals, size and methods, and diverse rather than monolithic; but all are lumped together, labelled "fundamentalist" or "extremist", and perceived as a monolithic threat.

The Muslim world itself is often represented as monolithic, and without differences or divisions. When the late Ayatollah Khomeini issued his famous death sentence *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie over the *Satanic Verses*, he was perceived to have revealed what was described as Muslims' fanaticism, and the inclination they

harboured for hatred and rage. What was reinforced was the intolerant and aggressive attitude of *Islam*, not Iran or the Iranian regime. Ayatollah Khomeini could be considered a spiritual and religious leader of the *Shiite* Muslims, who have various differences and disagreements on a variety of important religious matters with *Sunni* Muslims, who form the mainstream or majority sect of Islam. Khomeini did not represent the Muslims of the world, and had never been their spokesman, as was claimed by the critics of his *fatwa* against Rushdie. Muslims' response towards Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* varied: the Organisation of the Islamic Conference urged its member states to ban the book and boycott the publishers, but the focus was on Khomeini's death sentence *fatwa*.

The tendency to view Islam and Muslims across the world through the lens of the religious edicts (*fatwas*) issued by Khomeini, and the politico-religious stances of a single country, like Iran, emphasises the tendency to create an imagined monolithic Islam, which, in turn, reduces the diversity of the Muslim world to a one and only one monolithic Islam. However, the politics of the Middle East and North Africa disprove the theory of Islam's monolithic threat, given the conflicting national interests and priorities of the countries in the region.

3. Fundamentalism as a product of modernity

The contrast between fundamentalism and modernity has been debated widely in modern times. In most of the world, the religious and secular worlds were not sharply defined and distinctly separated until the twentieth century. However, in the West this definition and separation started to take place during the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment. Prior to this development, religious assumptions prevailed in almost all aspects of society. Today's mass of problems, together with the complexities of modern life, which override every aspect of contemporary society, have created uncertainty and a state of anxiety, which drives a considerable number of people to retreat to religion, as a certainty and sanctuary from the perceived confusion of modernity. Religious fundamentalism became a historical movement and a psychological mindset for those who opted to protect themselves

against the new onslaught of the modern world and its symptoms. In this case, the retreat to religion as the point of reference is both a product of modernism, and the antithesis to it (Voll, 1994: p. 381).

In the case of Islam, the development of religious fundamentalism, as a retreat to religion in the face of the rise and dominance of post-Christian European values, is both a reaction to and a product of modernity. The project of modernity is fundamentally based on secularism, pluralism and tolerance as basic components, but the Islamic paradigm, to quote Mowlana's expression, is founded on a religious-based socio-economic, religio-political and cultural system. However, discourses within the Islamic resurgence argue that there is fundamentally no separation between religion and politics in Islam, nor is there a division of the world into sacred and profane, religious and secular, or priesthood and laity (Mowlana, 1996: p. 141).

Religion in Islam is not a private affair, nor is it a personal choice. These discourses argue that, unlike Islam, where the core of the state is based on the *umma* (community), the concept of the state within the context of modernity is based on the Western paradigm's notion of the nation-state, which is directly related to the internal evolution of Western Europe during the last three centuries. However, the evolution of the Islamic world produced a different version of the state's governing institutions *vis-à-vis* society. Thus, secularism, pluralism and tolerance, as fundamental tenets of modernity, produced values and principles that some Islamic discourses conceive as contrary to both the principles and values of Islam, and to the overall evolution of Islamic societies.

These discourses view even the attempts to modernise the Islamic world on the basis of the Western paradigm as either incomplete or failed, because of the perceived inability of this paradigm's secular character to provide coherent values, and to fulfil the needs of Islamic societies, which are contrary to, or at least radically different from, the needs of Western societies.

4. Fundamentalism as political and religio-cultural phenomena

This approach to interpreting Islamic fundamentalism explains the phenomena by reference to a set of social, economic, political and religious factors. The discourses representing this approach recognise the existence of certain peculiarities in Islam, but they never argue that the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism is mainly a result of these peculiarities.

According to these discourses, the causes of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism are many and vary from one country to another, though there are common concerns and factors. Politically, the failures of post-independence secular governments, most of which were non-elected and unable to establish their legitimacy, are believed to have produced a rampant sense of resentment, given the absence of politically credible systems able to realise popular aspirations and confront external challenges. The failure of the ruling elites of the Islamic countries to challenge the dominant political and economic paradigms of the West, which laid the foundation of the existing world order, has led many in the Muslim world countries to rally under the banner of Islam. The Islamic *umma*, in the sense that Islam presumably does not differentiate between individuals and members of its community, is now confronted with a new order, based on modern information and communication technologies, that some Islamists believe would atomise communities further, rather than bringing them closer (Mowlana, 1996: p. 143).

Some Islamic counter-discourses argue that the Western divorce between religious and cultural life, after the European Enlightenment, is a Western-related paradigm, which culturally and socially contradicts what is known as the Islamic community paradigm. The ethical conduct of everyday life was, therefore, left to the individual conscience. In Islam, this divorce between the religious and secular spheres does not exist, and even the endeavours to achieve it by modernisers did not succeed. Moreover, the religious law shapes the conduct of Muslim individuals, as Mowlana (1996) argues, not vice versa.

Mowlana (1996) argues that both the politics of modern ideology and the politics of material interests were counter-productive in Islamic societies, because they are inconsistent with the principles of the politics of *umma*. Mowlana based this argument on the assumption that this *umma* is perceived as a core of Islamic identity, and as the doctrine of both spiritual and temporal powers and authorities. It is obvious that Mowlana is talking about a concept that does not fit into today's world. This argument is based on a Quranic textual concept that might have been viable and applicable fourteen centuries ago, but definitely not nowadays. His overall approach is based on a particular mindset that believes in organising the whole life of the Islamic community on the basis of a set of fourteen-centuries-old religious texts. He also rejects the notion of 'nation-state' on the grounds that it is alien to a fundamental principle of Islam, i.e., contrary to the notion of the *umma*, which, according to the same set of religious texts, is supposed to inhabit a single extended Islamic state.

Thus, the emphasis on the clash of civilisations, the Muslims' presumed irrational clinging to faith and the alleged threat to the Judeo-Christian heritage posed by Islamic fanaticism, have all eclipsed the specific political, social and cultural causes behind the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The selective presentation of most analyses of Islamic fundamentalism disregards these causes. The result is an unanalytical, political, value-loaded and propagandist (Mowlana, 1996: p. 142) use of the term *Islamic fundamentalism* by the Western media, to represent a phenomenon that is far from homogeneous and a world which has not been, and never will be, monolithic. Contrary to what is widely believed in the West and is implicitly circulated by its media, neither Islam nor the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism is a new pattern of world politics dominated by the so-called clash of civilisations, nor do they pose a new threat equal to communism (Ahmed & Donnan, 1994: p. 91). Neither the Islamic fundamentalist movements nor the Muslim countries—almost all ruled by oppressive pro-Western regimes—are economically, culturally or militarily able to pose any kind of threat to the Western world.

However, it is often argued that the Western media equate mainstream Islam and Muslims with religious fanaticism, and reduce the widely diverse concerns, attitudes and orientations of Islamic groups to terrorism and religious violence, which is often represented as a threat to global order, security and stability. This overall negative image of Islam, it is argued, is a direct result of the media persistently presenting a distorted image of Islam.

5. Representation of Islam in the Western media and British press

The age-old conflict between Islam and the Christian West, it is argued, is still present in the West's collective memory. It has also been claimed that the shift in the global power balance after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union led to anxieties, and to attempts by the West to maintain its hegemony. Consequently, Islam as a religion has allegedly come to be perceived by the West as a global force posing an ideological and significant threat, based on the background of a historically polarised relationship between the two parties. Accordingly, the Western media is accused of constructing a particular image of Islam, portraying it as a threat to the West, and to the global liberal values and tenets of the modern world. However, the portrayal of this negative image of Islam in the Western media, it is argued, takes place by conflating mainstream Islam with Islamic militancy, in relation to acts of violence committed by Islamic militant groups. Conflation is also used in order to construct a particular image of Islam, and to associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism, violence, extremism and antipathy towards the West.

The Western media is one of the institutions that produces and reproduces knowledge of Islam through discourse. Representing Islam in this way reflects how knowledge is set to work through discursive practices, in order to portray a particular image of Islam, by drawing on the pre-existing corpus of knowledge that was constructed and produced by Orientalist discourses.

This attitude, which Roberson (1998) describes as a conscious exercise in image creation for tactical political purposes", produced what the Runnymede Trust report published in 1997 described as *Islamophobia*, which has arguably been viewed as a prevalent problem in contemporary western societies. In this report, the Runnymede Trust defined the phenomenon of Islamophobia as "unfounded hostility" towards Islam and the "practical consequences" of such hostility, such as unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals. The report classified some views towards Islam as "closed", and states that:

> Closed views see total difference between Islam on the one hand and the non-Muslim world, particularly the so-called West, on the other. Islam is 'other', with few or no similarities between itself and other civilisations and cultures ... Claims that Islam is totally different and "Other" often involve stereotypes and claims about "Us" (non-Muslims) as well as about "Them" (Muslims), and the notion that "We" are superior.... "We" are civilised, reasonable, generous, efficient, sophisticated, enlightened, non-sexist.... "They" are primitive, violent, irrational, scheming, disorganised, oppressive ... Closed views see Islam as violent and aggressive, firmly committed to barbaric terrorism, and implacably hostile to the non-Muslim world. (The Runnymede Trust, 1997: p. 3)

The "closed" views look at Islam as a monolithic entity, and lump Muslims and Islam(s) together as one colossal unified bloc. As Esposito (1995) writes,

> Monolithic Islam has been a recurrent Western myth which has never been borne out by the reality of Muslim history. Indeed, when convenient, Western commentators waste little time in emphasising the division and fratricidal relations of the Arab and Muslim world its intractable instability ... yet when equally convenient, Islam, the Arabs, and the Muslim world are represented as a monolithic bloc poised against the West. (Esposito, 1995: p. 201)

In the British press, I would argue, Islam is represented within a framework of the negative stereotypical images pointed out in chapter 2 (Islam and Islamic fundamentalism in Western discourses). These images are usually portrayed in connection with events related to controversial Muslim figures and clerics, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Osama bin Ladin, Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi, Abu Hamza Al-Masri and Omer Bakri; or Islamic militant groups with unfavourable reputations,

such as Al-Qaida, Taliban, Hamas, the Egyptian Islamic Group and the Algerian Islamic Armed Group (IAG).

In last two decades or so, the British press has focused on the rise of the increasing tide of militant piety that swept considerable parts of the Middle East. *Islamic Fundamentalism*, *Islamic terror* and *Islamic extremism* are among several labels used to refer to these phenomena. Those who are involved in the acts of violence carried out by the different Islamic militant groups are referred to as *Islamic terrorists*, *Islamic fanatics*, *Islamic extremists*...etc.

The rise of *Islamic militancy* in the last three decades has been the primary component in the construction and portrayal of the image of Islam in the British press. The events that have always been focused upon as major components, in the construction and subsequent portrayal of the image of Islam in the British press, can be divided into three major categories. First, the Iranian Revolution, and the alleged involvement of Iran in supporting terrorism, have often been used since 1979 as major themes around which to construct the image of Islam in the British press (Abdel-Latif, 1999: p. 7), although the beginnings of the wave of militant piety in the region could arguably be traced to the late 1960's, as a reaction against secular modernity, following the perceived failure of secular enterprises such as socialism and Pan-Arabism. The second category includes the violent acts and excessive practices of Islamic militant groups in some Muslim countries (in which Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority of the population), especially in the last two decades. This category of events includes violent acts and excessive practices, especially during the 1980's and 1990's, by movements such as *Al-Qaida*, the Algerian "Islamic Armed Group" (IAG), the Egyptian "Islamic Group" and the Jihad Organisation, the Palestinian Hamas and Jihad movements, and the Taliban former ruling regime in Afghanistan. The third category of events used as a theme around which to construct the image of Islam in the British press includes violent acts and threats transcending the boundaries of the Muslim world, by Islamic militant groups and figures. Examples of such events include the death threat issued

by Ayatollah Khomeini against the novelist Salman Rushdie in 1989, the Paris Metro bombings in 1995, the repeated threats of Osama Bin Ladin against Western and American interests around the world, which culminated in the simultaneous bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the attack on the US destroyer "USS Cole" in Eden seaport in October 2000 and the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11th 2001.

The UK media were partially blamed for portraying a negative image of Islam and Muslims by introducing radical voices, who represent a very tiny minority, at the expense of moderate voices, who represent the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Britain. As Elizabeth Poole wrote,

> In the search for a good story, journalists have tended to overlook Muslims with more moderate opinions in favour of radicals who give sensational sound bites, Muslim leaders say.... The representation of Islam in the press coverage of some British newspapers is viewed as reductive and reflecting a generally negative image of the religion and the societies associated with it. (Poole, Arab Media, May 2001)

Using van Dijk's concept of 'production and reception processes', we can understand the media contribution, in significantly circulating this unfavourable image of Islam and Muslims to the public mind, within the framework of the relationship between the three levels of news text production, i.e., structure, production and comprehension processes, in connection with the wider social context within which they are integrated (van Dijk, 1988: p. 2).

PART 2

CHAPTER 3

Analysing discourse: Theoretical and methodological issues

1. Language, discourse and representation

Language is central to the construction of meaning: it is the medium in which and through which meaning is produced and exchanged. It is also the medium that enables us, as dialogue participants, to build up shared understandings and interpret the world: it is used to represent thoughts, ideas and feelings. Language is able to do this because it functions as a representational system (Hall, 1997: p. 1). Language operates as a medium through which knowledge is produced. On the other hand, discourse was originally concerned with language in use, i.e. text and talk, and confined primarily to the rules governing connected sets of sentences in speech or writing. The concept of discourse was later extended to a wider range of social practices in the aftermath of the growing centrality of structuralism, post-structuralism, hermeneutic and Marxism in the social sciences during the 1960's and 1970's. As a group of statements that provide a language for talking about (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p.291), discourse is a way of representing things. Thus, both language and discourse are systems of representation.

Discourse, language and representation are intertwined and inextricably related to each other. Discourse and discourse analysis, which are central to this research, involve a wide area of language study and a variety of approaches with different origins related to the presuppositions, foundations, validity and extent of knowledge and meanings, and to their production through language and discourse. In this chapter, I will therefore examine the theories and concepts involving discourse, language and representation. I will also examine the research methodology of analysing media discourse in order to highlight the ways in which Islam and Muslims are represented in the British press. The part about research methodology

highlights the data to be analysed as well as the criteria behind the selection of newspapers.

1.1 Language and communication as a social practice

Communication as a social practice involves language users at large in both text and talk, not only as speakers, listeners or readers, but also as members of various social categories. Language users may be female or male, old or young, friend or foe, official or layman. They can also be categorised according to their association with a particular political group, profession, nationality, religion, gender, culture or ethnic group. That is to say, in various situations and communication settings, language users represent various roles and different identities (van Dijk, 1998: p. 3). On the basis of these different categorisations, people use language to express themselves and to convey different types of messages that reflect the ways in which they conceptualise and interpret the world. The diversity in conceptualising and interpreting the world, as represented in conceptualising and expressing different worldviews, highlights the diversity of language users' categories, roles and identities.

When language is used as a means of communication, users share the general codes and rules of the linguistic system that they learn when they acquire a language. Such codes and rules enable individuals to use language to express themselves, and to say whatever they want when they communicate or exchange ideas. It is through sharing these rules and codes that language users are able to meaningfully communicate with each other, by producing statements based on a particular system of forms. This rule-governed structure of language represents what the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure called *langue*. According to Saussure, the source of the rules of the language system (langue) lies in the societies' and in the language users' shared cultural codes. In this sense, language is therefore a social phenomenon, not an individual matter, because language users cannot make up the rules of language for themselves, if they want to be understood by other language users (Hall, 1997: p. 34).

In everyday conversations, people participate in different forms of personal interactions that involve different types and categories of language users. To perform this everyday interaction, language users use actual speech acts or utterances, or what Saussure termed *Parole*. In Saussure's tradition, *Parole* represents the second aspect of language, which he described as the actual speech acts or utterances language users make possible by using language (Hall, 1997: p. 34). By using such speech acts or utterances in accordance with the language system (*langue*), language users accomplish social acts and participate in social interactions, as is the case in conversations and various forms of dialogue in different communication settings. When language users produce such utterances, whether in speech, writing or other forms of representation, they are in fact taking part in speech acts to accomplish social acts and participate in social interactions in conversations and other forms of dialogue. Such interactions are grounded in many social and cultural contexts, whether in the form of formal institutional and professional encounters or informal assemblies of friends. The actions of language users, when they produce speech acts or utterances, are often accomplished in different communication settings, and with various forms of social and cultural knowledge and belief, with the intention of realising particular aims, purposes and results (van Dijk, 1998: p. 3).

The use of language in this particular sense is so far based on language users participating in a communicative and an interpretative process involving speech and writing, or spoken sounds and written words, to establish, maintain and structure social relations, i.e., to produce meaning. Meaning is constantly produced and exchanged in all personal and social interactions in which language users participate. However, it is not only speech and writing that are exchanged between language users when they produce and communicate meaning. Spoken words and speech sounds constitute only part of several means of producing, communicating and exchanging meaning between language users. The process of producing, communicating and exchanging meaning requires that language users, who belong to the same culture, share sets of concepts, images and ideas that enable them to

feel, think and then interpret the world in more or less similar ways (Hall, 1997: p. 2).

Hall (1997) argues that the definition of culture, in this particular sense, is based on the argument that emphasises its primary concern with the production and exchange of meaning between members of a group or society who, by virtue of belonging to the same culture, share a similar worldview and have common ways of understanding each other when they express themselves, their thoughts and their ideas about the world.

Sharing sets of concepts, images and ideas that enable members of the same culture to think and interpret the world in roughly similar ways and, in general, to produce and communicate and exchange meaning, requires, on the one hand, the presence of shared similar cultural codes. On the other hand, in order for members of the same culture to interpret or to make sense of what is being communicated or exchanged, they must also be able to use shared linguistic codes to facilitate the process of understanding and interpreting. However, sharing linguistic codes does not necessarily mean knowledge of a language in the literal sense, i.e., the ability to speak a particular language: rather, it implies sharing the elements that represent the concepts, ideas and thoughts which participants, whether at the transmitting or the receiving end, want to exchange. This interaction between participants involves a process of representation through language. Language in this sense is a system of representation using signs, i.e. ideas, concepts, thoughts and images, to communicate meaning-representation.

1.2 Meaning, language and representation

The concept of representation, according to Hall (1997), is generally referred to as the use of language to say something meaningful about the world, or to represent the world meaningfully to others. Language could be used to reflect an already existing meaning; it could also be used to express language users' personally intended meaning. Meaning may further be constructed in and through language. The later

constructionist approach to meaning and representation involves two distinct versions: the production of meaning through language, which is termed the semiotic approach, and the production of meaning and knowledge through discourse, which is known as the discursive approach.

Foucault (1991) argues that we can only have knowledge of things if they have a meaning: therefore it is discourse, not the things in themselves, that produces knowledge. Accordingly, subjects like 'madness', 'punishment' and 'sexuality' only exist meaningfully *within* the discourses about them. Therefore, the study of the discourses of 'madness', 'punishment' or 'sexuality' would have to include elements such as statements giving us certain kind of knowledge about subjects, or rules prescribing some particular ways and excluding others when talking about something, e.g., what is sayable or thinkable about X or Z at a particular historical moment. Other key elements in this context include subjects who personify the discourse, such as the 'madman', the 'hysterical woman', the 'criminal', the 'deviant', the 'sexually perverse person', and so on. Another important aspect to be considered is how this knowledge acquires authority, and comes to constitute what is deemed to be the truth of a matter at a historical moment, as well as the practices within institutions for dealing with cases (Foucault, 1991: pp. 200-202).

1.3 The semiotic approach

The semiotic approach is a version of constructionism concerned with how language and the use of signs in language –signification- work to produce meaning. It focuses on the importance of the signified/signifier and language/parole, and on how the marking of difference and binary opposition is essential for meaning. This approach to language and meaning is mainly concerned with the role of signs as carriers of meaning, and the details of how language works in this sense. This approach to language and representation came to be known as the semiotic approach.

The semiotic approach is mainly concerned with how signs function, and their general role as carriers of meaning, and with the production of knowledge and

meaning through language as a system of representation. One of the main contributions to the semiological theories of language was by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued that signs represent ideas that precede any actual utterance, and are in themselves timeless and context-free (Hall et al., 1990: pp. 196-197). According to Saussure, meanings are fixed within the language system itself, through the arbitrary linking of signifiers and signifieds, or images and concepts. His concept of the arbitrary nature of the sign has two main aspects. First, the identity of the sign is dependent on its material conditions: the sign does not constitute a purely material entity, but is based on certain conditions that are different from the materials that fit the conditions. The well-known example he used to support this argument is the "Geneva to Paris express", which he argued does not refer to a particular train, but to any train defined by certain conditions that make it the "Geneva to Paris express" (Saussure, 1966: p. 198). The second aspect of the principle of arbitrariness involves the internal structure of the sign itself. Saussure (1996) argues that there is no natural connection between the concept and the sound image associated with it, i.e., the sound image does not reflect or refract reality, but formulates the concept.

However, Saussure himself recognised the theoretical difficulties implicit in making the principle of the arbitrariness of the sign a point of departure for a general theory of language (Hall et al., 1990: pp.196-197). He defined this problem as "the limiting of arbitrariness":

> The whole system of language is based on the irrational principle of the arbitrariness of the sign, which would lead to the worst sort of complication if applied without restriction. (Saussure, 1966: p. 133)

Saussure's problematic of the sign is highlighted in a critique developed by the French philosopher Jacque Derrida, who argued that Saussure is self-contradictory because he remained attached to the notion of the presupposition of the *a priori* fixed meaning, despite his concept of the arbitrariness of the sign. The notion of the *a priori* fixed meaning implies the intrinsic relation of language to the self-consciousness of rationality, which, argues Derrida, is based on language as speech

coming from conscious and rational minds, whereas Saussure's approach is founded on a reformulation of the object of linguistics (Hall et al., 1990: p. 198).

Another limitation of Saussure's approach is the exclusive focus on the formal aspect of language, or how language works. His attention to the formal aspects of language diverts attention away from its interactive and dialogic characteristics that indicate how it is actually used, and the ways in which it functions in actual situations. Saussure's emphasis is on the formal aspects of language, and it fails to consider such issues as power between speakers who belong to different statuses and positions (Hall, 1997: p. 35). Moreover, the semiological approach in general provides a general theoretical framework that, according to Hall (1997), lacks historical specificity and, because it is a formalist system, renders language as an autonomous structure with its own laws of construction and application, a tendency which runs contrary to the discursive approach (Hall et al, 1990: p. 199).

1.4 The discursive approach and the production of knowledge through discourse

The discursive approach focuses on the production of knowledge through discourse, on how discourse produces and defines objects of knowledge, and how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others without language being conceived of as an autonomous structure. The system of language within the framework of the discursive approach can be understood in terms of more specific concepts that outline the ways in which knowledge is produced through discourse, and how discourse is enmeshed with power.

The primary concern of this research lies in the issue of representation, in the light of the production of knowledge through discourse as a systematic way of meaning-making. The concept of representation I am concerned with involves how discourse constructs the topic, defines and produces the objects of knowledge, and influences the way ideas are put into practice and used to regulate and shape the conduct and perceptions of others. Such a discursive-related concept of representation involves a linkage between discourse, power and knowledge.

The linkage between discourse, knowledge and power is dealt with in the theory of discourse developed by the French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault, who argues that

> Discourse is a systematic way of representing a topic in a specific way at a particular point in history limiting other ways in which it can be representing and consequently shaping perceptions and social practice... . We should admit that power produces knowledge ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute power relations. (Hall & Gieben., 1992: p. 291; Foucault, 1980, p. 27)

Foucault's primary concern is with discourse as a system of representation, rather than with language *per se*. According to Foucault, discourse constructs the topic and defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. Discourse also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others. Thus, the meaning is constructed primarily through discourse and nothing has any meaning outside of discourse (Hall, 1997: p. 44).

In the discursive approach introduced by Foucault, discourse, representation, knowledge and 'truth' are *historicised*: that is, in his view, things mean something and are 'true' only within a specific historical context, and knowledge about various topics, practices and subjects is historically and culturally specific. He thought that, in each period, discourse produces forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge that differ from those of other periods, with no necessary continuity between them (Foucault, 1979: pp. 47-48).

It was Foucault's contention that power-knowledge relations should be analysed on the basis of 'the subject who knows', 'the object to be known' and 'the consequences of the implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations'. However, power-knowledge and the processes that traverse and constitute it determine the forms and possible domains of knowledge. Therefore, the corpus of knowledge is not produced by the activity of the subject of knowledge.

According to Foucault's theory, discourse constructs topics in a specific way, by creating what he termed the *surfaces* of their *emergence*. These surfaces, he argues, are created by the relevant social institutions, such as the family, the social group, the work situation and the religious group. He argues further that the surfaces of emergence vary from one specific historical period to another, and they define and limit the domains of what they talk about, and to what they give the status of an object (Foucault, 1979: p. 41). The act of delimiting, designating, naming and establishing objects, Foucault argues, is assumed by certain authorities in society that are recognised by such institutions as public opinion, government and the law. There are also specifying systems that divide, sort and classify objects of discourse. The formation of objects of discourse, according to Foucault, is the product of the relationships between the authorities that assume control of the processes of emergence, delimitation and specification.

Objects of discourse do not appear abruptly, but as a result of the extra-object conditions of a complex group of relations that are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, types of classification and modes of characterisation. These conditions do not define the internal constitution of the object, but they underline what capacitates its appearance, juxtaposition and resemblance to other objects, in order to highlight its difference and distinctiveness (Foucault, 1979: p. 44).

In his theory of discourse, Foucault uses the concept of archaeology as a system of doing historical analysis on systems of thought or discourse (Smart, 1985: p. 48). Archaeology describes the archive that relates to the existence of the general system of the formation and transformation of statements within a particular society. The archaeological analysis describes the archive, i.e., what is permitted to be spoken about, and the survival, disappearance, repression and disapproval of statements. The archaeological analysis, as Smart argues, also involves the existing relation between the system of present and past statements, and who has access to particular

kinds of discourse. The aim of Foucault's analysis of discourse is to document its conditions of existence and the field in which it is deployed.

At the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation is the argument that it is only within discourse that things take on meaning and become objects of knowledge. Foucault argues, further, that since we can only have knowledge of things if they have meaning, it is discourse, rather than things in themselves, which produces knowledge. So, subjects exist meaningfully within discourse through statements that provide us with knowledge about them, rules which define certain ways of talking about these topics, subjects who embody the discourse, taking into account the characteristics given to the subjects, depending on the construction of knowledge about the topic, and the way this knowledge acquires authority. Other aspects to be considered in the production of knowledge through discourse are the practices of the institutions dealing with the subjects of discourse: the emergence, at later historical moments, of different discourses that replace the earlier ones and open up new discursive formations and create new conceptions of the earlier subjects and, consequently, bring about new discourses to regulate social practices in new ways (Hall, 1997: p. 46).

2. Theories of discourse

In a general theoretical sense, discourse is widely used in numerous disciplines, but two main meanings are attached to it. The first meaning is predominantly used in language studies. In this sense, discourse is used in connection with social actions and interactions when people are interacting together in real social situations. The second meaning of discourse is predominantly used in connection with post-structuralist social theory. In this sense, discourse is viewed as a social construction of reality, or a form of knowledge (van Dijk, 1998: p. 18). Discourse is also viewed as a complex concept that challenges simple definitions. For instance, a discourse community is formed when utterances or texts dominate a similar or common context and are eventually assembled together. There can be, for instance, a liberal discourse, a conservative discourse, a fundamentalist discourse, a religious

discourse, and so on. However, discourses are not simple utterances that reflect or describe our experiences: certain discourses have a forceful influence on society by virtue of having the means to structure both our sense of reality and our notion of our own identity (Mills, 1997: p. 15).

In common sense language, discourse is a rational body of speech or writing. It means a specific way of representation by means of a group of statements that facilitate a language for talking about a specific kind of knowledge about a topic. In this sense, discourse makes it possible to construct a topic in a particular way when statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse. These statements fit together because any one of them is implicitly related to the others. Consequently, a discourse does not involve one statement, but rather many statements working together to constitute what Foucault calls 'discursive formation' (Hall & Gieben, 1992: p. 291).

'Discursive formations' are among the principal concepts that Foucault used to analyse knowledge. Discourse in the Foucauldian tradition is defined as

> ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. (Weedon, 1987: p. 108)

However, before going into the details of the Foucauldian tradition of discourse, it is necessary to demarcate the boundaries of Foucault's view of discourse *vis-à-vis* the concept of discourse related to language studies. The term 'discourse' is becoming increasingly loaded and confusing as the scope of its usages has widened and they have been applied in multifaceted ways to the human sciences. First, the term 'discourse' may be employed with reference to the analysis of speech and conversation, in order to highlight the characteristics, dynamics and rules governing particular social situations in which speech and conversations are used, such as official meetings, informal chats, courtrooms and classrooms. The use of the term 'discourse' in this particular sense constitutes part of the field of sociolinguistics, or the study of language in relation to its social context (Howarth, 2000: p. 1).

Second, the term 'discourse' may be used in relation to the linguistics of subjectivity, or the linguistic, semiological and psychoanalytic traditions that all rely on a general theory of the subject in relation to language, which forms the basis for the analysis of individual speech acts. All these theoretical traditions attempt to construct general principles of subjectivity and language, which are supposed to remain constant over time and across cultures (Hall et al., 1990: p. 210). It is important to note here that discourse in this particular usage involves neither the historical specificity of the positions occupied by subjects within certain discursive practices, nor the historical conditions of their appearance, or their relation to the body of linguistic statements that constitute a discourse.

Third, the term discourse may also be used in a way that is related to the previous concept, but is mainly connected with Marxist theories of the social totality. According to this tradition, the term discourse has been employed to extend the theory of ideology, in the sense of ideology being viewed as an instance in which subjects represent the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence in speech or writing. The relation of discourse to ideology within this tradition is based on Louis Althusser's argument that what everyone knows through habit and usage is accomplished through ideology, which determines what is as well as what ought to be (Pecheux, 1982: p. 110). The investigation of this usage of discourse is evident in such work as that of Althusser and Pecheux, which combine language, semantics and ideology. In such works, the distinction drawn between the different types of social practices is in effect a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive.

According to this tradition, a discursive formation is a set of regulative principles that underlie actual discourses but remain separate from them. This formulation proposes that words, expressions and propositions change their meaning as they slide from one determinate discursive formation to another: they do not have permanently-attached meanings of their own, but derive their meaning from the determinate discursive formation in which they are produced. Moreover, individuals are considered as subjects of their discourse by the discursive formations that

represent in language the ideological formations that correspond to them (Pecheux, 1982: pp. 111-112). Discourse within this concept is articulated with ideology, and the discursive formations, argues Pecheux, are identified with dominance and ideological formations.

Fourth, a quite different major use of the term is more philosophical: it argues against the possibility of theoretical reasoning being decisively resolved by the use of epistemological categories. This line of usage draws a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive, as a theoretical distinction between knowledge and reality, i.e., between objects of knowledge and their presumed status of reference.

Not only have these uses of discourse been different from each other, but they are also quite different from the concept of 'discursive formation' developed by Foucault, whose concern, according to Smart (1985), is not to develop a general theory of discourse, but to avoid treating knowledge in terms of ideas. The reason for this, he argues, is that the term 'ideas' brings in its train a series of presuppositions that he wants to abandon. The first presupposition underlies the common concept of 'idea' in relation to knowledge. An idea is commonly perceived as knowledge by virtue of being a proposition, which is generally viewed as being the logical form of an idea. Knowledge viewed in this logical sense may be thought of as a tissue of ideas presenting themselves for validation, a trend that Foucault fundamentally opposes. The second presupposition that Foucault wanted to abandon involves perception of the idea as a mental representation, which is thus tied to the apparatus of the production of thought by a human subject. These two presuppositions do not necessarily go together, although they often do in historical investigations, especially when ideas are perceived as propositions and, at the same time, as having an author. Third, Foucault wanted to abandon another presupposition, argues Smart (1985): the notion that ideas are expressed and have their existence in language. The identity of the idea in such a case is its meaning and sentences are its basic unit. In his analysis of knowledge, Foucault always tried to

turn away from the way proposition, subject and meaning are tied to 'idea' in this fashion.

According to Smart (1985), Foucault's use of the term 'discursive' should be understood within the context of his attempts to avoid dealing with knowledge in terms of ideas. In his attempt to by-pass the category of 'ideas' in his analysis of knowledge, Foucault questioned a whole set of other terms commonly used within the history of ideas. He questioned the conventional categories, such as tradition, arguing that through their elementary synthesis they avoid the specification of differences. Foucault argued, for instance, that the category of tradition was involved in simplifying the problem of successive phenomena in the history of ideas. Within the frame of life summarised as 'tradition', he argued, ideas are given a life span by persisting and being continuously accepted. The reason for Foucault's proposed suspension of the category of tradition, in the analysis of knowledge, follows from his argument that the problems of the transmission and communication of knowledge are too important to be reduced to the undifferentiated category of tradition. The conditions of appearance and reappearance of forms of knowledge must be identified by reference to specific means. Similarly, any reference to a 'Zeitgeist', he argued, must be avoided because such references establish links between phenomena through the dogmatic conception that whatever is contemporaneous is necessarily pertinent. Foucault insistently rejects this perception on the grounds that links should never be established on a deductive basis (Foucault, 1979: p. 57).

2.1 Discourse, power and knowledge

Foucault's theory of discourse plays a key role within the concept of his analytical framework. Discourses within this framework are not only about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when and with what authority. Discourses personify meanings and social relationships and constitute both subjectivity and power relations. They are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak: in other words, they constitute objects rather than

identify them. Thus, the possibilities for meaning and for definition are pre-empted through the social and institutional positions held by those who use them. Meanings, according to this notion, do not arise from language but from institutional practices and from power relations.

Foucault's overall reflection on the subject of discourse highlights his more general concern with the emergence and development of the human sciences. His study of this field revealed that these sciences are essentially particular forms of knowledge that emerged at a specific historical moment with a common tendency to regulate human subjects on the basis of relationships of power that sought to impose discipline in institutional settings. He looked at these human sciences as seeking to codify and regulate particular sections of society such as the madman, the criminal, the hysterical woman and the sexual pervert, and to discursively constitute them as real subjects of knowledge. Foucault (1979) argued that these sciences were allied to techniques of regulations such as the asylum, the hospital and the prison.

Foucault (1991) argued that the social sciences emerged as part of a set of controlling devices that gave birth to disciplinary society. He viewed psychology, sociology, psychiatry and criminology, for instance, as disciplines that develop the technologies and procedures of making society fully exposed and visible to the state authorities. His idea is that societies live in a world in which they are persistently being watched, evaluated and judged, and are eventually disciplined and controlled by the state authorities and institutions. This, in turn, creates power and knowledge that Foucault suggests can be used for social control.

As has been pointed out, knowledge was set to work within discursive practices in particular institutional settings to regulate the conduct of others, and within what Foucault (1979) termed the institutional apparatus and its techniques. From his reflections on the relationship between power and knowledge, he came to the conclusion that those who have power, whether social, economic, intellectual or political, will always decide what is believed to be 'knowledge' and what is not. Knowledge, in turn, defines certain ways of talking about a topic, and an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write or construct oneself. On the other hand,

knowledge restrains limits and bounds "other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it" (Hall, 1997: p. 49).

This approach views knowledge as always related to relations of power because of its continued application to the regulation of conduct in practice. Knowledge and power always imply each other and, accordingly, knowledge cannot develop outside the junctions, demands and interests of power:

> We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presupposes and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1991: p. 27)

Contrary to what is generally believed, Foucault argues, power circulates and functions in a form of a chain: it does not function in a single direction from, for instance, top to bottom, nor does it originate from the domination of an individual, a group or a class over others. It is also never monopolised by one centre, but deployed and exercised through a net-like organisation. Power is not centred in a particular quarter, but operates at several sites of social life, from the private domain of the family and sexuality to the public spheres of politics, economics and the law. Individuals both exercise and undergo this power and are its vehicle, but not its targets of application:

> Power is not to be taken as a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group of class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands.... Power is exercised through a net-like organisation.... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Gordon, 1980: p. 98)

Foucault's approach to power does not deny the positions of dominance of the law, the sovereign or the dominant class, but rather directs attention to localised circuits,

tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates. The circulation of power from top to bottom, for instance, requires the existence of channels, or what Foucault calls capillaries, to facilitate the process of circulation. Power is not a mere top-to-bottom relation of obligation as conventionally perceived: it also exists in an ascending fashion. He directs attention away from the macro-institutional level, such as the power of the state, to the micro-level, so as to reveal the particular histories, techniques and tactics of power. Shifting the attention to the analysis of power at its micro-level, Foucault (Gordon, 1980) argues, reveals also the way in which mechanisms of power have been allocated, transformed, monopolised and stretched out by more general or global forms of domination. More important in Foucault's model of the relationship between power and knowledge is that mechanisms of power have been accompanied by "the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge" (Gordon, 1980: p. 102). In other words, the exercise of power creates sites in which knowledge is produced.

Discourses about certain topics give us a particular knowledge about them. They also provide the rules that define particular ways of talking about them, and about the subjects who embody the discourse, together with the attributes attached to them, on the basis of how knowledge about the topic was constructed at a particular historical period. Moreover, the discourses about certain topics include the ways in which knowledge about them acquires authority, i.e., the embodiment of truth about them. These discourses also include the practices within the institutions assigned the task of dealing with the subjects. This set of arguments explains how knowledge is set to work through discursive practices.

Like power, knowledge is always put to work according to particular techniques and strategies of application, within particular situations, historical contexts and institutional regimes. Knowledge and power work together to produce certain conceptions of a wide variety of objects. When knowledge is linked to power in this way, it claims the authority of "the truth" (Hall, 1997: p. 49). Foucault developed his concept of the 'regime of truth' in connection with a discursive formation with

reference to the human and social sciences. He argued that "truth is not outside power":

> Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Gordon, 1980: p. 131)

Thus, truth is connected in a circular fashion with the system of power that upholds it, and it is linked to the effects of power that it influences. It is this correlative interaction that Foucault calls the 'regime of truth'. Knowledge is constituted by power, either through exclusion or by inclusion (Gordon, 1980: p. 131). Foucault views truth as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation and distribution of discourses. It is characterised by five significant features:

> In societies like ours, the 'political economy' of truth is characterised by five important traits. 'Truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it; it is subject to constant economic and political incitement (the demand for truth, as much for economic production as for political power): it is the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption (circulating through apparatuses of education and information whose extent is relatively broad in the social body, not withstanding certain strict limitations); it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media): lastly, it is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation ('ideological' struggle). (Rainbow, 1985: p. 73)

2.3 Discourse and hegemony

The concept of 'hegemony' was developed by Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s, and was later taken up by cultural studies, to refer mainly to the exercise of social and cultural leadership in particular historical periods by dominant classes, in order to maintain their economic, political and cultural orientation of people. The significant aspect of the notion of hegemony lies in situations in which the consent of the people is incessantly sought for those ways of making sense of the world that happen to comply with the interests of the hegemonic alliances of classes. Hegemony is associated with the disciplines concerned with how meanings, representations and practices are made sense of in ways that seek to naturalise,

eternalise and render inevitable the interests of the dominant class. Also associated with the concept of 'hegemony' is a number of institutions usually perceived as being impartial and representative of people from all walks of life, with no particular reference to class, gender or race: for example, the state, the family, the law and the media. By virtue of their stated roles, these institutions are producers of knowledge, sense, meaning and, consequently, individual and social consciousness. They can also be controlled by a hierarchically based power bloc, constituted by people with various experiences and different levels of affiliations to it, who believe that their interests are similar to those of the dominant group. The parameter of the success of hegemony lies in the situation in which the totality of social, cultural and individual experience is understood in accordance with what has been defined, established and circulated by the power bloc. Hegemony is the naturalisation of ideology into a form of common sense, by the strategies of exercising power as authority and de-politicising the cultural aspects of life. However, hegemony can never be total: a struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic orders is evident in the on-going conflict of interests between classes (O'Sullivan, 1994: p. 133).

The basic Marxist division of society into base and superstructure was taken a step further by Gramsci, who introduced the division of superstructure into coercive state institutions and non-coercive voluntary associations. The coercive institutions, which Gramsci referred to as 'political society', were basically public institutions such as the government, the legal system, the police and armed forces. The non-coercive institutions, which Gramsci referred to as 'civil society', include the churches, the family, the schools, trade unions, political parties, clubs and associations, and so on.

An example of what Gramsci means by 'hegemony' is provided by Edward Said's study of Orientalism. Drawing on Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony', and on the argument that in any non-totalitarian society particular cultural forms predominate over others, Said contends that it is through cultural hegemony that Orientalism as a

discursive formation acquired its durability and strength *vis-à-vis* the entity called the Orient—itself a construct produced by the Orientalist discourses. Said refers in his argument to the operation of 'culture' within what Gramsci identified as 'civil' society, where the influence of ideas, institutions and individuals works through 'consent' rather than direct domination. This form of cultural leadership, Said argues, is essential in any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West:

> Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. (Said, 1995: p. 7)

Not only the idea of the superiority of European identity is involved in this form of cultural hegemony; there is also what Said identified as "European ideas about the Orient", which are in essence a reiteration of the presumed European superiority over what the West perceives as Oriental backwardness:

> In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand... . The imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, preparations, investments, and projections. (Said, 1995: pp. 7-8)

Hegemonic practice takes the form of discursive practice, because the concept of hegemony involves the development of practices that naturalise particular relations and ideologies in several domains of civil society. Such particular relations and ideologies have, to a large extent, a discursive nature.

3. Theories of discourse analysis

According to Stubbs, discourse analysis can be defined with reference to its concern with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence or utterance. It can also be defined in terms of its concern with the interrelationships between language and

society. Moreover, it could be defined in terms of its concern with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication:

> The term discourse analysis is very ambiguous... . Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers. (Stubbs, 1983: p. 1)

In *Language, Power and Ideology*, Ruth Wodak defines what she termed 'critical linguistics' as

> an interdisciplinary approach to language study with a critical point of view for the purpose of studying language behaviour in natural speech situations of social relevance. (Wodak, 1989: p. xv)

Wodak argues that language manifests social processes and interaction. Looking at language in this way involves three aspects. First, discourse involves power and ideologies, in the sense that interaction exists when power prevails. Wodak's argument in this context conforms to van Dijk's notion that ideologies are typically expressed, produced and reproduced in discourse and communication. Second, Wodak also argues that text consumers may have different interpretations, depending on their background knowledge, perceptions and positions. Therefore she highlights the need for a hermeneutic approach, because no such a thing as a right interpretation exists. Third, Wodak's argument entails that such an approach is always historical, in the sense that it is linked diachronically and synchronically to other communicative events which either have taken place previously or are taking place at the same time (Wodak, 1989: pp. 12-13).

Emphasising the importance of historical and social aspects, and the use of multiple methods in language research, Wodak argues that diverse theoretical and methodological concepts could also be used to analyse issues of social relevance, in order to expose inequality and injustice. When combined with recent approaches to discourse analysis, such an emphasis on the structure of media texts and their social

context can facilitate denaturalising and exposing the taken-for-grantedness of the ideological messages involved in the text (Fairclough, 1995: p. 27).

3.1 Critical discourse analysis

According to van Dijk (1998), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a discipline concerned with studying and analysing written and spoken texts, to expose the discursive sources of dominance, power, bias and inequality. CDA investigates how the discursive sources in question are preserved and reproduced within specific political, social and historical contexts. In a similar vein, Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as discourse analysis that is conducted to systematically explore obscure relationships of determination and causality between, first, discursive practices, texts and events; and, second, wider cultural and social structures, relations and processes, in order to investigate how such events, practices and texts emerge and are ideologically formulated by relations of power and conflict over it. It is also used to examine how the obscurity of these relationships between discourse and society plays a role in assuring power and hegemony (Fairclough, 1995: p. 135). In other words, CDA seeks to clarify the links and connections between discourse practices, social practices and social structures.

The critical use of discourse analysis in applied linguistics has led to a different approach to understanding media messages. Some of these new concepts have been identified as multi-layered and multi-dimensional:

> The text, whether written or oral, is a multidimensional structure.... Any text is layered, like a sheet of thick plywood consisting of many thin sheets lying at different angles to each other.... The understanding of grammar and lexicon does not constitute the understanding of text.... Rhetoric, intent, coherence and the world-view that author and receptor bring to the text are essential. (Kaplan, 1990: p. 84)

Kaplan (1990) further suggests that the basics of any text consist of syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics. However, the comprehension of meaning, he argues, does not lie in the text itself, but rather in the complex interaction between the producer's intent and her/his performative ability to encode that intent,

and the receiver's intent and her/his performative ability not only to decode the producer's intent, but also to enact his/her own intent with that of the producer.

The critical analysis of discourse emerged as an interdisciplinary tool in analytical researches, including media criticism, in order to question the basic assumptions of the ways, which involved abuse of social power and dominance, that text and talk employed in relation to politico-social contexts, in order to uncover dominance and social disparity. As Kress pointed out (Kress, 1990: pp. 3-9), CDA has a straightforward political agenda, which serves to distinguish it from other forms of discourse analysis and text linguistics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Most forms of discourse analysis, Kress argues, aim to provide a better understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of texts, but CDA aims to provide accounts of the production, the internal structure and the overall organisation of texts. A crucial difference between CDA and other forms of the analysis of discourse is that the aim of the CDA is to provide a critical dimension through its theoretical and descriptive accounts of texts. According to Kress's definition (1990), CDA deals with language as one type of social practice among many practices that are used for representation and signification: for example, music, visual images and gestures. In Kress's view of CDA, texts are produced by 'socially situated' speakers and writers, and the relations of participants in producing texts are not always equal. There will be, for instance, a range from complete solidarity to complete inequality: meanings are produced through interaction between producers and receivers; linguistic features come about as a consequence of social processes, which can never be considered arbitrary. Within the process of interactions, users of language bring with them different dispositions toward language, which are related to social positionings. CDA takes historical accounts as ideologically and politically 'inflected time' (Kaplan, 1990: pp. 84-85).

As well as language structure, ideology also has its own role to play in CDA. According to Kress, no determinate meaning can be attributed to any linguistic form

considered in isolation, nor can such a linguistic form have any ideological significance or function:

> Any linguistic form considered in isolation has no specifically determinate meaning as such, nor does it possess any ideological significance or function.... The defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of and organised by a specific ideology.... Language can never appear by itself—it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves realise discursive and ideological systems. (Kaplan, 1990: pp. 84-85)

Text producers express ideological content in texts, as do the linguistic forms of the text and the choice of lexical items. In media discourse in general and press discourse in particular, the actual decision on the part of the reporter or editor to employ a particular linguistic form, Kaplan (1990) argues, is a matter of choice and not chance. It follows that the adoption of a particular ideological-discursive structure on the part of the reporter or editor involves the values of an ideological system and a specific discourse authority that involve underlying mechanisms. Wodak's Discourse Sociolinguistics, which is one of the directions of CDA, argued that such underlying mechanisms

> contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context, whether they are in the structure and function of the media, or in institutions such as a hospital or a school, and inevitably affect communication. (Wodak, 1996: p. 3)

The key principles of CDA, as outlined by Fairclough (1995a), van Dijk (1998), Wodak (1996), Kress and Hodge (1993) and Kress (1991), can be summarised in the following seven points:

- CDA is not only about both interpreting and explaining texts.
- Texts gain their meanings by means of the dialectical relationship between text producers and receivers, who interact with various degrees of choice and access to those texts and ways of interpretations.
- Texts acquire their meaning by being situated in particular cultural, social and ideological contexts.

- Producers of texts operate within particular discursive practices that originally emanate from specific aims and interests that could involve exclusions and inclusions, depending on the intended objectives.
- Discourse and language as a social practice represent, signify and constitute other social practices such as domination, prejudice, the exercise of power and subsequent resistance.
- Power and domination relations are always produced, reproduced and exercised by means of discourse.
- No arbitrariness is involved in linguistic features and structures: they are intended, regardless of the consciousness or unconsciousness of the choices involved.

3.2 Ideology, society, cognition and discourse analysis

Ideology plays a key role in van Dijk's analytical method. Van Dijk views ideologies as interpretation frameworks that organise sets of attitudes about other elements of modern society: consequently, they provide the cognitive foundation for the attitudes of various groups in societies, as well as the promotion of their interests and goals (van Dijk, 1991: p. 45).

Despite its focus on ethnic affairs, van Dijk's study of racism and the press provides a detailed approach to a discourse analysis of media studies. According to van Dijk, when discourse analysis is used together with a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language, it provides the critic with a tool to study communication within socio-cultural contexts. In particular, he states that the focus on textual or conversational structures derives its framework from "cognitive, social, historical, cultural or political contexts" (van Dijk, 1991: p. 41).

Van Dijk's approach to discourse analysis belongs in the category of Critical Discourse Analysis focusing on how societal structures are related to discourse structures. Discourse structures, according to Van Dijk, range from

microstructures—lexical items and grammatical structures—to macrostructures—topics or themes indirectly expressed in larger stretches of text or whole discourses.

Van Dijk argues that societal structures and discourse structures cannot be linked in a direct way, because there would then be neither a place for ideology nor a total agreement between all social actors. He suggests that societal structures can only be related to discourses through social actors and their mental models, which mediate between ideology and discourse (van Dijk, 1991: pp. 45-46). This leads to van Dijk's notion of socio-cognition.

Van Dijk proposes a schema of relations between society, cognition, discourse and ideology that is based on an interaction that takes place within social structures. This social interaction is presented in the form of text/discourse, which is then cognised in accordance with a cognitive system/memory. This 'system/memory' consists of short-term memory, in which decoding and interpretation takes place, and long-term memory, which works as a holder of socio-cultural knowledge. Socio-cultural knowledge consists of knowledge of language, discourse, communication, persons, groups and events, all existing in the form of scripts. The long-term memory also includes social or group attitudes, which provide further decoding guides. Each of the group attitudes in question, according to Bell (1998), represents a set of ideologies that together create one's own personal ideology, which corresponds to her/his identity, social position, goals, resources and values.

'Analysis of implicitness' is another significant component of van Dijk's (1991) method of analysis. He argues that journalists as well as media users are in possession of what he calls 'mental models about the world'. According to this argument, the text is 'a tip of the iceberg' of information. The rest of the information is to be supplied by the knowledge scripts and the mental models of the media text users: the rest, therefore, is usually left unsaid. Thus, 'analysis of the implicit' is always very useful in the study of the hidden messages in the underlying ideologies. For example, a title such as *Islam's gangster tactics* (The Rushdie affair,

The Independent, 16 Feb. 1989), presupposes the existence of gangster tactics in the subject it refers to (the Islamic faith). The study of presuppositions therefore often concentrates on meaning dimensions that are either 'taken for granted' or 'naturalised' in texts.

The notions of 'naturalisation' and 'taken-for-grantedness' bring into focus Fairclough's view of the concept of discourse analysis. Social institutions, in Fairclough's view, contain diverse 'ideological-discursive formations': there is usually one dominant ideological discursive formation, characterised by its capacity to 'naturalise' ideologies, i.e., win acceptance for them as non-ideological "common sense". The orderliness of interactions, according to Fairclough, partially depends upon such naturalised ideologies; and the 'denaturalisation' of them, he argues, "is the objective of discourse analysis which adopts 'critical goals'" (Fairclough, 1995: p. 27).

Besides ideology or ideological discursive formations, other discursive characteristics must be taken into account in the critical analysis of discourse:

a. Discourse is a social practice in the sense that language users, as was pointed out earlier, engage in text and talk as members of social categories on the basis of gender, age, job, profession, ethnic background, et cetera. All these various social roles and identities are arguably constructed and maintained.

b. It follows that it is through discourse that texts, such as news reports or editorials, for instance, need to be analysed in connection with social, political and cultural conditions and consequences, in order to point out power relations between the media and politics in the light of the argument that news reports in particular constitute part of the discursive practice of the media.

c. Power relations are discursive in the sense that different discourses reproduce power relations through their connections to institutions. Power relations are, in fact, exercised and negotiated within discourse. Discourse constitutes society and culture and is constituted by them, in the sense that every instance of language contributes to the process of reproducing or challenging society and culture. Representations of the world, social relations between people and social and personal identities are three aspects that, according to Fairclough (1989), are constituted in discourse.

d. Discourse, Fairclough (1989) argues, is ideologically motivated in the sense that ideologies, as systems of thought, motivate discourses. By examining discourse, we seek the work of ideologies in them. Ideologies can be related to named systems of social order, such as Islamism, Capitalism and Marxism, or structures built around concepts like Militarism, or structures of feeling such as Islamophobia. When we do discourse analysis, we first look for the discourses and then for the ideologies that uphold them. Ideology can represent both specific representations of reality, and particular constructions of identity so as to legitimise particular views of the world and to endorse types of domination.

e. Discourse is historical in the sense that discourses are located in both time and space: what is significant in discourse analysis is to trace the 'where' and 'how' behind the emergence of discourses (Fairclough, 1989).

f. The connection between text and society is mediated, in the sense that connections between texts and society have the characteristic of being intricate and oblique. This mediation between discourse and society is carried out by discourse practices through which texts are produced and received (Bell, 1998: pp. 144-145). Alternatively, these connections are crossbred and wrapped in discourse. Therefore, the analysis of discourse at

> the level of society, culture and history is as important as the analysis of discourse at the level of structure (Fairclough, 1989).

Through his concern with language, discourse and power in society, Fairclough developed an approach to media discourse that draws on the functional framework of discourse analysis developed by M. A. K. Haliday, and on the discourse theory developed by Foucault. Fairclough's (1989) overall framework of analysis is based on three major components: text, discourse practice and analysis of social practice. Text in Fairclough's framework includes micro levels, such as vocabulary and syntax, and macro levels of text structure, as well as interpersonal aspects in a text. Discourse practice is concerned with how a text is constructed, interpreted and distributed. Analysis of social practices concentrates particularly on the relation of discourse to ideology and power (Bell, 1998: pp. 142-162).

While van Dijk, Fairclough and others who adopt the CDA approach look at discourse as both a rhetorical and textual device, their discourse analysis tradition focuses more on defined materials —written and spoken texts— based on empiricism and observation, rather than on abstract theorisation, in order to highlight how texts can have specific meanings in particular social, political and historical conditions.

Foucault, for his part, does not focus on the analysis of spoken and written language texts: rather, he deals with the conditions and possibilities of discourse, highlighting its potential internal contradictions, and thinking in terms of social institutions, such as the media, and their framing power.

Yet it could be argued that the two approaches in question are compatible as far as the purpose of this research is concerned, for two specific reasons. First, since discourse consists of both meanings and practices, it is necessary to use the Foucauldian approach to reveal the deep underlying structure, or the overall effect, of the selected news reports, so as to highlight the internal contradictions and

thinking involved. Second, to conduct actual discourse analysis, it is necessary to move from abstract notions to analysis of actual texts, to determine the relationship between the actual texts —news reports— the discursive practices —the processes involved in writing these reports or formulating them in a specific way— and the wider political and social contexts related to these reports and the discursive practices involved. I will confine my analysis to the post-structuralist school of thought, because it offers theoretical insights that are hardly present in such other approaches as semiotics. Foucault, for instance, focused on historicality and exclusion, whereas semiotics lacks the tools to explain the changes and variations in history, in the discourse producer(s)' intention or in subject interpretation. Moreover, semiotics does not involve institutional frameworks, social contexts, referent practices or tools that locate situations in particular social and historical circumstances.

4. Methodology

In this part I consider and discuss how to investigate the ways in which media discourses in Britain represent Islam. Because the image of mainstream Islam in the media is hypothetically constructed, represented, crossbred and wrapped in discourse(s), and conflated with the militant version of Islam, it is necessary to look at the discourse genre that deals with coverage of events involving Islamic militant groups. Therefore, deconstructing these texts through discursive means should presumably reveal what is actually covered in newspapers in relation to these events, how stories are framed and how knowledge of Islam is generally produced through discourse(s). Consequently, the focus of the research lies in deconstructing through discursive means how discourse techniques and mechanisms are used in news reports to construct a particular image of Islam.

The primary research objective is to be achieved by investigating *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent* coverage of the death sentence religious edict (fatwa) issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989 against the Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie —commonly known as the "Rushdie Affair"—, the

emergence of and seizure of power by the *Taliban* movement in Afghanistan in 1996 and the acts committed by its militias in order to establish its theocratic rule in the country, the Luxor killing of 59 foreign tourists by the *Jamaat Islamia* (the Islamic Group) in Egypt in November 1997, and the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington in September 2001, or what came to be known as September 11th.

I have chosen events related to Muslim nations and societies in the Middle East rather than, for instance, the Balkan, Central Asia or Chechnya, because the Middle Eastern model fits into Said's theoretical approach based on his argued ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident. Muslims nations and societies of Central Asia, the Balkans and Chechnya have gone through historical developments different from those with which Said's Orientalism is concerned. The political development of those nations and societies had been formulated by factors not similar to those concerning Said's Orientalism. For instance, colonialism as well as academic power and the tradition of West European academic literary production about the Orient constitute a significant part of Said's Orientalism. He argues that Orientalism is an influential academic tradition and an area of concern for writers, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators (Said, 1997: p2). There is no history or tradition of Western European academic interest in the Balkans, Central Asia and Chechnya similar to that in the Muslim Middle East. Moreover, there was no European colonial presence in these regions compared to that in the Islamic Orient; unlike its relationship with the Muslims societies and nations in the Middle East, the relationship between Western Europe, from one hand, and the Muslims-dominated regions in the Balkans, Central Asia and Chechnya, from the other hand, was not colonialism.

I will therefore use the most appropriate approach(s) to show how Islam is represented by *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* through the coverage of these events and how this representation is related to the historically conditioned

contemporary Orientalist discourses that seek to construct and maintain hegemonic perceptions of Islam.

Discourse analysis of selected news reports will be conducted, drawing on the works of van Dijk, Foucault, Fairclough, Kress, Hodge and Fowler, whose analytical frameworks and approaches to discourse in general, and media discourses in particular, illustrate in depth the different applications, features and characteristics of discourse.

5. Selection of broadsheets and coverage time frame

The selection of the three broadsheets is based on the political standpoint of each. Political or ideological labels attached to newspapers may vary considerably, and what some readers or journalists consider a "conservative" newspaper may seem "liberal" to others, and vice versa. However, newspapers can be categorised on the basis of whether their views are left, centre, right or neutral. The classification of the three selected newspapers is based on the political labels attached to them, i.e., selection is based mainly on the political standpoint of each newspaper: *The Guardian* can be evaluated as representing left of centre; *The Independent* is a supposedly non-aligned newspaper, whereas *The Times* can be evaluated as representing right of centre. In terms of political standpoints, the three newspapers cover a large part of the spectrum of public opinion.

Investigation of the selected news reports will include coverage of each event for the first six weeks, starting from the day the event occurred. For instance, investigating coverage of the Rushdie affair will start from 15 February 1989 (Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwa against Mr. Rushdie on the 14th of February) and continue to the end of March 1989. A period of six weeks coverage should be sufficient to investigate all the tones of coverage, from the climax of the first days of the event through to the stage at which the event starts to fade out.

Selection of the news reports to be analysed in each case study is based on the key themes identified as central to the framing of Islam in the news. Some of these themes are interrelated and might seem overlapping, e.g., association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism and association of Islam and Muslims with extremism, but there is a key difference between the two concepts. While terrorism entails involvement in violence, extremism could indicate harbouring radical ideas and views without necessarily being involved in terrorism. Selection of news to be analysed is based on five key themes: representing Islam as a singly monolithic entity, association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism and violence, association of Islam and Muslims with extremism, representing Islam and Muslims as anti-Western and representing Islam and Muslims as irrational. News reports selected for analysis will be those that are dominated by one or more of these themes.

The reason for selecting broadsheets rather than tabloids is that broadsheets devote more space to politics and foreign news than tabloids. Tabloids do, of course, cover political events, but serious political coverage is not their major concern. Tabloids offer news for readers who are less interested in daily detailed news reports, and more concerned about the personal aspects of news, especially the sensational parts. Broadsheets and tabloids report different stories because each type has its own distinctive readers. Tabloid readers, for instance, are in general not interested in detailed stories treating different aspects of politics, while broadsheet readers are not interested in gossip stories about celebrities. Therefore, the degree of attention and the amount of space given to serious political coverage is significantly greater in broadsheets than in tabloids. The style of language used by broadsheets is different from that used by tabloids. In broadsheets, sentences are generally long, detailed and informative, with little or no use of intensely emotive and sensational language. The informative objective of broadsheets is to let their readers draw their own conclusions.

The differences between broadsheets and tabloids, whether in language, layout, audience or article bias, are due to their different objectives and types of readership.

I would argue that, in comparison to tabloids, broadsheets set out to inform their readers, who are interested in international affairs and other serious events.

In comparison to tabloids, broadsheets, which are also known as the "quality press", are more informing and more formal in their way of conveying news stories and information to readers. Broadsheets in general aim to be more factual and objective in their coverage: they pay considerable attention to government, politics and international affairs. Tabloids, on the other hand, focus more on personal stories, showbiz news and scandals. For tabloids, newsworthiness is the most decisive factor. Accordingly, what is considered, for instance, as front page news for a tabloid, such as a celebrity divorce or a scandal, may not necessarily be newsworthy for a broadsheet. Likewise, what is viewed as front page news by a broadsheet, such as a serious political development in the Middle East, may not feature as front page news in a tabloid. Even when tabloids have reports related to politics, government and international affairs, they are often short and much less detailed than those in broadsheets. Therefore the choice of broadsheets rather than tabloids was made because the broadsheets' main concern is with news reports that deal with politics and political affairs, both domestic and international.

Informativeness is one of the reasons why I decided to choose newspapers rather than another mass medium. According the National Readership Survey, 36 million people read a national newspaper every week, and 85% of UK adults read national newspaper on a monthly basis. In the age of rolling 24-hour news coverage, national newspapers are read by 8 out of 10 adults in a week. This amounts to 24 million readers on weekdays and 30 million in weekends. Another study indicated that because national newspapers are portable they are also 'integrated' into the daily lives of their readers and the most informative of all media, achieving a higher rating than all other media. A recent study by the global communications planning and implementation agency Mediaedge:cia has shown that national newspapers can reach the key target audience of men, women, young adults, up-market adults and business people more const-effectively than TV.

6. Discourse analysis

I will investigate the coverage of the selected events by conducting discourse analysis, using a combination of methods in order to highlight the different aspects of the schematic form and the thematic content of the news texts. I intend to conduct this particular type of analysis in order to highlight any possible involvement of questions of power and ideology in the process of representation, in the light of the characteristics of Orientalist discourses.

By 'discourse' I mean the systematic practice of meaning-making, which is used in representing a particular topic. This concept of representation involves how discourse constructs topics, defines and produces the objects of knowledge, and influences the way ideas are put into practice and used to regulate and shape the conduct and perceptions of others.

Studying the press plays a key role in investigating how Islam is constructed and represented to the general public, in the light of how media discourse is arguably capable of assembling conceivable messages from incongruent signs, by using narrative forms that fit with the audience's prospects and expectations. The representation of Islam in the British press, which constitutes part of the Western media, is arguably carried out through an ideologically motivated discourse. According to Fairclough (1995), social institutions, including the media, contain diverse 'ideological-discursive formations', with usually one dominant ideological discursive formation characterised by its capacity to 'naturalise' ideologies, i.e., to win acceptance for them as non-ideological 'common sense'. Ideology can also represent both specific representations of reality and particular constructions of identity, in order to legitimise particular views of the world, and to endorse types of domination. The orderliness of interactions partially depends, according to Fairclough (1995), upon such naturalised ideologies. Therefore, denaturalising them is "the objective of discourse analysis which adopts 'critical goals'" (Fairclough, 1995: p. 27). Therefore conducting discourse analysis on the selected news reports will deconstruct them and reveal the work of ideologies, and the hidden messages in

the underlying ideologies, by, first, looking for discourses, and then for the ideologies that uphold them.

The most relevant method of discourse analysis in this respect is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), because it aims to provide accounts of the production, internal structure and overall organisation of texts through its theoretical and descriptive accounts of these texts. According to Kress:

> The defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of and organised by a specific ideology... . Language can never appear by itself—it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves realise discursive and ideological systems. (Kaplan, 1990: pp. 84-85)

CDA, argues Kress, deals with language as one type of social practice among many other practices used for representation and signification. To point out such a conflation between mainstream Islam and *Militant Islam*, and the alleged deliberate association of Islam with terrorism, extremism and violence, for instance, CDA will be conducted on news reports to point out both the strategies in use and the ideologies that uphold the system(s) of representation involved.

Since the relationship between Islam and the West has long been one of power and dominance, it can best be understood within a context of power and knowledge. Foucault (1979) argues that those who have power, whether social, economic, intellectual or political, will always decide what is believed to be 'knowledge'. Moreover, he argues, power is inextricably linked with the production of specific knowledge. Knowledge, in turn, defines certain ways of talking about a topic, and an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write or construct oneself (Foucault, 1979: p. 27).

Syntactic forms, however, signal not simply the prior presence of a specific ideological selection, but also express the meaning or content of that ideological choice. This point can be illustrated by a news report about the Rushdie affair, produced by three reporters and published in *The Independent* newspaper (16

February 1989, p.3). The report starts thus: *experts on Islam and terrorism stated that Rushdie may need protection for the rest of his life*. It goes on to quote sources commenting about *full-time armed protection by Special Branch officers* as well as statements about the surveillance of known *Islamic extremists* and a *pro-Islam terrorist group*. (The Italics and underlining are mine.)

Discourse works effectively by appealing to common sense, and making gross stereotypes appear as natural. Ferguson (1998) proposes that stereotypes do not exist in a vacuum: rather, they are produced and invoked in specific social, economic and political contexts. On the naturalisation of stereotypes Ferguson argues that

> Naturalisation is the process whereby specific social relationships, often of power and subordination, are constructed and presented as natural rather than being a result of complex historical interactions between individuals, ethnic or other groups, genders, classes and power blocs. (Ferguson, 1998: p. 156)

He also notes that the ideological import of specific messages in newspapers is likely to be embedded as much in implicit as in explicit discourses:

> This is never more the case than when the media are dealing with what is considered to be normal, common sense, the 'way things are'. The invocation of normality and the establishment of culturally and politically acceptable behavioural patterns often form the keystone for ideological arguments made at the expense of individuals, groups or nations deemed to be 'other'. (Ferguson, 1998: p. 154)

In the same context, Ferguson argues that the media use representations of normality in order to provide views and representations that are in fact extremely questionable. Such representations, he suggests, can serve to assert ideological positions, mainly by appealing to common sense and a notion of normality. The power of dominant stereotypes lies in the fact that they originate from a consensus, in the sense that they fit with the dominant ideology and with society's power relations. Consequently, we may not notice negative stereotypes, nor may we be aware of them as stereotypes, because they are often naturalised and formulated in a way that makes them appear commonsensical. Therefore, to deconstruct media

texts, it is important to conduct discourse analysis, in order to denaturalise and expose the 'taken-for-grantedness' (Fairclough, 1995) of the ideological messages involved in the selected news reports and opinion articles.

7. Methods and techniques of analysis

Consequently, discourse analysis will be conducted on the selected news texts, to point out how knowledge about Islam is constructed through press coverage, and how this produced knowledge is intended to be naturalised and taken for granted. The media use representations of normality and, to borrow Fairclough's term, taken-for-grantedness, in order to provide views and representations that are in essence highly disputable, such as Islam's anti-Western attitude, its incompatibility with the values and ideas of the modern world, its "lack of the Christian concept of forgiveness" and "the lack of the concepts of debate and individual freedom in the Muslim culture"; and the view that "Islam is a religion that sanctions violence and suicide as a path to Paradise".

Both the surface and deep structure of news reports will be analysed, drawing on van Dijk's approach to discourse analysis that looks at structural analysis as a prerequisite to establishing relationships with the context. The selected news reports will be investigated to highlight how the constructed knowledge of Islam is encapsulated in clichés, labels and stereotypes that are represented as natural and inherent, rather than an outcome of a complex historical interaction between Islam and the West. One of the main sources drawn upon in this investigation is van Dijk's study of "Racism and the Press". Despite this study's focus on ethnic affairs, it also provides a detailed approach for discourse analysis to media texts in general, especially with regard to the newsworthiness of certain topics (Why are violent events and bloody attacks committed by radical Islamic groups considered as having special newsworthiness?), and the special attention given to certain topics (Why are the bloody acts of violence related to Islamic radical groups treated with especial attention?). I will also draw on other aspects of van Dijk's study of racism in the press, such as the perspective from which news reports are written, to point out the

standpoint(s) from which reports dealing with events, acts of violence and excessive practices by Islamic militant groups are written. The same approach will be used to reflect and highlight which sources were quoted in reporting the events and which were not, so as to find out whose interests are defended, and which aspects of the events are meant to be particularly highlighted and why.

One of the techniques to be applied, in order to decode the constructed image of Islam, is to highlight the metaphorical applications of discourse in the selected news texts, and the role of configurations of discourses in the process of construction and framing this image. This type of investigation will reveal whether discourse is used to signify the sorts of experience it usually signifies (congruent application), or whether it is extended to signify a sort of experience other than that which it habitually signifies. This investigation is intended to reveal whether the metaphorical applications of discourses are socially motivated, corresponding to different perspectives or having different ideological loadings (Fairclough, 1995b: p. 14).

I will look into the rhetoric used in the news reports, especially the use of negative metaphors to represent Islam/Muslims, by associating them with properties such as terrorism, violence, extremism and anti-Westernism.

In addition to the overall meaning of news reports, I will also investigate the meanings of words and sentences. Some newspapers may try to avoid explicitly using derogatory words against Islam or/and Muslims. Special code-words or expressions, such as Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim fundamentalists, may be used and the readers, in turn, will interpret these words or expressions with reference to their prior mental models supplied by pre-existing images and attitudes towards Islam/Muslims. These code words and expressions will be decoded to point out the underlying attitudes and stereotypes, and the influence behind the lexical choice of the specific words and expressions used.

Analysis of the selected news reports will extend beyond investigation of the local meanings of words and expressions: it will examine the meanings of sentences and sequences of sentences, and the role they play in the formulation of the meaning of the overall news reports. Sentences may intentionally be formed in the passive voice to emphasise or de-emphasise meanings, by either foregrounding or backgrounding agents or participants for specific reasons. The preliminary overview of the selected news reports showed that some of them topicalised violence when Muslims were involved in protests, such as those organised against Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, and syntactically this was marked by passive sentences.

Since a significant part of the information in discourse is implicit and supplied by receivers of the encoded message, several meanings in news reports, as a discourse genre, are implied, presupposed and conveyed between the lines. Therefore, analysis of these reports will also decode what is encoded, presupposed and implicitly stated (van Dijk, 1998: p. 5).

Drawing on the aspects of discourse pointed out earlier, and based on the proposed methods and techniques of discourse analysis, I will also examine whether the coverage of the four selected events in the three broadsheets involved bias against Islam and framing of Islam, and whether certain ideological considerations were involved. The analysis is intended to show the extent to which mainstream Islam has been conflated with militant Islam, and how a particular image has subsequently been constructed within an alleged framework of terrorism, violence, extremism and anti-Western sentiments, which objectify fear and create a sense of constant threat. The way(s) in which each event is addressed will be investigated from the point of view of the British right-of-centre (*The Times*), left-of-centre (*The Guardian*) and from a presumably independent stance (*The Independent*).

The four selected events span a period of 13 years, from the Rushdie Affair in 1989 to the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. This enables me to conduct comparative historical analysis whenever possible. I will initiate the

investigation of each news text by looking first at its headline and lead, and then proceed to the rest of the text, in order to establish the links between the headline, lead and body of the text, so as to define the different themes and patterns involved. I will then proceed to form a set of conclusions to explain the themes and relationships identifying texts. The following step will focus on examining these conclusions and combine them with any possible evidence of contradictions between the three newspapers, unfounded claims, bias, stereotypes, inferences and implications. The investigation will focus on five main themes: Islam as a single monolithic entity, the association of Islam/Muslims with extremism and violence, the association of Islam/Muslims with terrorism, Islam/Muslims' alleged anti-Western attitudes and the association of Islam/Muslims with irrationality.

CHAPTER 4

The Rushdie Affair

1. Background

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Iran has often been a major theme around which the image of Islam has been constructed in the British press. The most notable event in this respect was the so-called Rushdie Affair in 1989, which led to severing the diplomatic relations between Iran and Britain. Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of Iran, issued a controversial death sentence *fatwa* (religious edit) against the Indian-born British novelist Salman Rushdie, over allegations of blasphemy and insults to the Prophet Mohammed in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. He further declared that the killing of Mr. Rushdie was the responsibility of all Muslims all over the world. Muslims took to the streets in many countries, including Britain, in protest against Rushdie's book. Many countries banned the book, and Muslims in Britain demanded a ban and an official condemnation of *The Satanic Verses*. A diplomatic crisis ensued and diplomatic relations between London and Tehran were severed.

Anglo-Iranian relations reached breaking point as a result of the Rushdie affair. Rushdie himself went into hiding after Khomeini issued his death sentence *fatwa* against him. Tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions followed the Rushdie controversy, and diplomatic relations were suspended for nearly 18 months.

The issue and its subsequent events were widely covered by the British press, but different newspapers focused on different aspects of the issue, using different tones and different volumes of coverage. Press coverage of the event continued for nearly two months, although its volume varied in the three papers.

In the immediate aftermath of the Khomeini religious edict on February 14th 1989, the volume of coverage of the Rushdie affair was very high in all three selected newspapers. There was an average of seven news reports in each newspaper, in

addition to opinion articles and comments on several related issues, ranging from the reactions to the Khomeini religious edict to the protests in many different countries.

Newspapers	Period of coverage	Articles found	Articles analysed
The Guardian	15 Feb.-30 Mar.1989	61	15
The Times	15 Feb.-30 Mar. 1989	128	15
The Independent	15 Feb.-30 Mar.1989	79	15

I have selected 15 news reports to be analysed from each newspaper from among tens of reports published in the first six weeks after the declaration of the Khomeini death sentence religious edict against Mr. Rushdie. From the general overview, and reading between the lines, I established that these news reports are dominated by five main themes:

- There is a tendency to depict Islam as a single entity.
- Islam and Muslims are often associated with extremism.
- Islam and Muslims are associated with terrorism and violence.
- Islam and Muslims are depicted as anti-Western.
- Islam and Muslims are associated with irrationality.

Consequently, the selection criteria are based on these five themes, i.e., the news reports selected for analysis are those that are dominated by one or more of these themes.

2. Islam as a single monolithic entity

In a news report published by *The Times* (18/02/1989), the Iranian President Ali Khamenei was quoted as saying that "of course he (Rushdie) may repent and say that 'I made a blunder' and apologise to Muslims and the Imam (Ayatollah Khomeini)". Another report, published two days later, quoted Ayatollah Khomeini as saying that "the author of the Satanic Verses, Salman Rushdie, could not be forgiven, adding that it was the duty of every Muslim to ensure that he was sent to

hell". The "apology to Muslims and the Imam", and reporting Khomeini as saying that it is "the duty of every Muslim" to ensure sending Mr. Rushdie to hell, are both used to underlie a monolithic Islam with a sole spiritual leader and spokesman who can issue orders to kill and send somebody to hell, and to whom apologies should be directed.

Ayatollah Khomeini was represented not only as the representative of all Muslims, and the sole spokesman of Islam, but also as a divine delegate who issues decrees on behalf of God: he was quoted in *The Guardian* (23/02/1989) as saying:

> Economic and other sanctions will not stop the implementation of God's decree about the blasphemous British author Salman Rushdie for slandering Islamic sanctities.... God had willed the publishing of a blasphemous book so that the world of conceit, arrogance and barbarism should reveal the true face of its long-held hatred of Islam.... God wanted it this way so that we should no longer think in simplistic terms.

Implicitly, whatever action Iran took and whatever statement the Iranian leadership issued would, supposedly, be representative of the totality of Islam.

Such a representation portrays Khomeini as a representative of the totality of Islam, as though there were one uniform and cohesive Islam. However, the overwhelming majority of *Sunni* Muslims differ from *Shiite* Muslims, most of whom are followers of Khomeini, on a variety of matters, including questions of succession, law and authority, interpretation of the *Quran*, marriage, inheritance and jurisprudence in general.

In another news report, *The Times* (22/02/1989) lumped together Iran and Islam, by suggesting that Iran spoke for the whole Muslim world: "Iranian hardliners and moderates made equally fierce verbal attacks yesterday, accusing Europe of a conspiracy against Islam". This approach was often used in *The Times'* news reports about the *Satanic Verses* controversy, to suggest the existence of a monolithic Muslim faith.

This example illustrates a common tendency in the press coverage of the Rushdie affair, and the events related to the wave of violence carried out by Islamic militant groups in the last two decades. Islam in this respect is portrayed as an undifferentiated and monolithic entity, despite the differences and variations within the world of Islam.

Analysis of implicit and encoded messages indicates that the report attempts to show that the crisis involves Iran, whose spiritual leader (Khomeini) is portrayed as representing all Muslims in the world, against the West. Such a trend is a typical way of reasserting the perceived dichotomy between the Occident and the Orient, and of reinforcing the differences between the West and the world of Islam.

A clear indication of the theme of the perceived antagonism and confrontation with the West is evident in *The Guardian*'s (22/02/1989) front page report, with the following headline and lead:

West closes ranks against Ayatollah

> President George Bush weighed in last night in support of Britain and its EEC allies, as the Salman Rushdie affair crystallised into a broad confrontation between a fundamentalist Iran and the Western world.

As it is difficult to perceive how a single country —Iran— could "confront" the entire Western world, there must supposedly be a power behind Iran. Since much of the information in discourse is implicit, and since meanings in such cases are presupposed and conveyed between the lines, recipients would supply the rest of the information. With Islam being linked to Iran, the Iranian leadership and the overall *Satanic Verses* controversy throughout the Rushdie affair, *The Guardian* left it to recipients to figure out who was behind Iran in its perceived confrontation with the Western world.

As was pointed out earlier, Islam was portrayed as a monolithic entity, and Iran/Khomeini as representative of the totality of Islam, as though there were one uniform and cohesive Islam. Coverage of different events and developments related to The *Satanic Verses* controversy involved examples supporting this argument,

especially headlines such as: ***Dhaka police fire on Muslims... Hurd warning to Muslims, British Muslims plan new campaign against book... Muslims in New York chant threats to Rushdie... Death threats to Rushdie... Death squads on way to Britain... Outraged British Muslims condemn 'The Satanic Verses' unseen... Holy warriors volunteer to kill... Muslim leaders not to be charged...*** on the basis of on van Dijk's argument that

> Much of the information in discourse, and hence also in news reports, is implicit, and supplied by the recipients on the basis of their knowledge of the context and of the world. (van Dijk, 1998: p. 5)

The Sunni/Shiite Muslim division was generally ignored in coverage: Khomeini was portrayed as the sole spokesman of Islam, calling upon "all Muslims" to carry out his orders to kill Mr. Rushdie. Iran was accordingly represented as, and consequently considered as, an archetype of Islamic polity. Subsequent representations of Iran's attitudes in the diplomatic arena, for instance, during the *Satanic Verses* controversy were implicitly meant to epitomise the governments of the Muslim world, especially since none of these governments even hinted at condemning Khomeini's death sentence order against Mr. Rushdie. On the other hand, it is common-sensically presumed that an Islamic polity is based on the tenets and principles of Islam, and that its attitudes towards different issues are inspired by these tenets and principles. In this sense, the attitudes of the Iranian government were interpreted as emanating from the principles and tenets of Islam, when, for example, it was reported that

> It is the British government's view that it would not be possible to establish a normal relationship with Iran while the Iranian government failed to respect fully international standards of behaviour.... Iran's action, he (Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign secretary) said, is incompatible with the United Nations charter, constitutes interference in our internal affairs and is therefore contrary to the agreement and joint statements made last November when Britain and Iran agreed to undertake the full normalisation of relations.... Such threats are completely irresponsible and are incompatible with basic standards of international conduct. (*The Guardian* 17/02/1989)

3. Association of Islam/Muslims with extremism

Studies and researches on the representation of Islam in the Western media suggest that the Western collective memory holds an image of Islam as inherently violent,

aggressive and hostile towards the West. This image, it has been argued, found its way into the Western collective memory by means of the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the mass media, including the press, through the conflation of mainstream Islam with militant and radical Islam. In the following analysis, I will try to highlight examples of associating Islam and Muslims with extremism and violence in the three selected newspapers.

Even before Ayatollah Khomeini issued his death sentence fatwa against Salman Rushdie, *The Independent* (13/02/1989) had already portrayed a violent picture of the Pakistani protests about Mr. Rushdie's controversial novel *The Satanic Verses,* with the following headline and lead:

Five killed in Pakistan anti-Rushdie protest rally

> At least five people were killed and dozens injured yesterday when police opened fire on Muslims fundamentalists protesting against Salman Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses, who tried to storm the US Information Centre in the centre of the Pakistani capital.

The event portrayed in the above report resembles a battle rather than a mass protest by Pakistani Muslims who wanted to express their protest against the novel. The report is dominated by scenes of bloody violence, killing, burning flags, setting buildings on fire, firing live ammunition, police being attacked, smashing windows, fighting pitched battles.

The protesters, who were Muslims, were portrayed as though they were taking part in a bloody battle, not a protest that became violent as a result of police over-reaction and mishandling, as was reported by eyewitnesses. The lead of the report is in the passive voice, a strategy that is often used to put the agent(s) in a less focal position (Fowler et al., 1979: pp. 98-99). By using the passive voice, the agent of the killing (Pakistani police) is set in the background, and the victims of the police shooting (demonstrators) are foregrounded. There is thus no direct reference as to who carried out the action; the report focuses rather on the victims of the shooting. It was also reported that "Muslim fundamentalists tried to storm the US Information Centre" and "threw stones and bricks and drove away scores of police trying to

guard the building". This founds a framework to explain the occurrence of the types of events that legitimise police intervention.

Muslim protesters were portrayed within a framework of violence, and were reported as rioting rather than protesting. They were reported to have been "screaming" slogans such as "American dogs" and "God is great", "throwing stones and bricks", "driving away scores of police", "beating policemen", "yelling" demanding to "hang Salman Rushdie", "breaking into the US Information Centre", "smashing windows", "starting a number of small fires", "pulling down the American flag and burning it along with effigies of Salman Rushdie", "setting a police tent and sentry box ablaze" and "driving away scores of police".

The Guardian (18/02/1989) also used the words "riot" and "rioting", rather than "protest" and "protesting", to negatively describe Muslims' anti-Rushdie demonstrations, and to portray Muslim protesters as causing mass violence and disorder:

> Signs of a possible damage limitation exercise by Tehran in the Satanic Verses affair emerged yesterday as riots over the book in India caused further injuries ... and 75 people were injured in riots in Srinagar.

To highlight the involvement of an 'Islamic fundamentalist' dimension to what was reported as a military battle, rather than a peaceful protest that turned violent because of police over-reaction and mishandling, the report stated that "a number of Muslim theology students were among the injured". The reference to "Muslim theology students" seems to suggest that those students were driven and motivated by what they learnt from the study of religious beliefs—in this case Islamic religious beliefs—to aggressively take part in the bloody events. The idea is implicitly suggested here that Islamic teachings and beliefs are all about attack, bloody violence, belligerence and extremism.

Part of *The Times*' focus on *The Satanic Verses* controversy dealt with the anti-Rushdie protests abroad, mainly in Iran, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, as will be

shown throughout the analysis. The following two bulleted sub-headlines were published as part of a news report in *The Times* (16/02/1989) under the headline ***Iranian's £1m murder money on Rushdie,*** following Khomeini's religious edict against Mr. Rushdie.

- ***Iranian demonstrators stoned the British embassy in Tehran in protest at Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses***
- ***The British Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran called for the protection of Iranian police, and this was given***

The headline was formulated in a way that seems intended to make it emotive and sensational, by using a particular lexicalisation—"murder", "murder money". This lexicalisation is commonly used in crime reporting, and as a result the agent(s) involved—Iran and the Iranian ruling establishment—are thus associated with breaking the law, and hence with involvement in crime and criminal activities.

Iranian demonstrators were reported, in one of the bulleted secondary headlines, to have "stoned" the British embassy in protest against *The Satanic Verses*: "Iranian demonstrators stoned the British Embassy in Tehran in protest to Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses". The word "stoned", which is topicalised by being mentioned in a secondary headline and written in bold, is value-loaded: stoning, putting someone to death by pelting with stones, is the Islamic punishment for committing adultery in countries, such as Iran, that apply the Islamic *Sharia* laws. The highly value-loaded word "stoned" is metaphorically used to describe this action, although in the body of the report the word "throw" is used to describe the same action: "debris thrown by the crowd yesterday smashed windows in the embassy".

The Independent coverage, which likened Islam to violence in its coverage of anti-Rushdie demonstrations in the Islamic world, was followed by coverage of Muslims' "outrage" at home. In its issue of 18 February 1989, *The Independent* featured the following report in the home news section:

Outraged British Muslims condemn 'The Satanic Verses' unseen

> Hardly any of the dozens of Muslims interviewed by *The Independent* this week on the streets of Southall, Spitalfields, Moseley, and Bradford had read Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. Yet, almost all are convinced that it is blasphemous and should be pulped.

The suggestion that the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the Muslims-dominated areas of London and Bradford were convinced of the blasphemousness of Rushdie's controversial book, even though "hardly any of them had reportedly read the controversial novel", implies that most Muslims can easily be moved and mobilised, to the extent of deciding to blaspheme an individual, and to support his execution, without even knowing why he should be blasphemed and executed.

Not only grassroots Muslims, but also their leaders, were associated with intransigent and extremist attitudes. *The Independent* (16/02/1989) reported that

> Mr. Quddus, the joint secretary of the influential Bradford Council of Mosques, who took part in the public burning of the book, said he was sticking to his earlier comments that Mr. Rushdie 'deserves hanging'.

The attachment of the adjective "influential" to the "The Bradford Council of Mosques" is meant to suggest that the council had a widespread power, and could be supposed to advise and guide many British Muslims on religious-related matters, thus making possible a more extreme reaction by Muslims who were influenced by it. It was also suggested that all Muslims followed Khomeini.

It could be argued that the reference to "book burning" was symbolically and metaphorically used to personify Muslims' extremism, irrationality and disrespect for freedom of expression, as shown by those who were involved, whether from the Muslim grassroots or leaders of the British Muslim community, such as Mr Quddus.

Representation of the overall attitude of British Muslims towards Rushdie's book suggested that their stances over religious-related issues, such as the Rushdie affair, were dictated by Muslims outside Britain, since blaspheming Mr. Rushdie, and the call to kill him, came originally from a foreign Muslim spiritual leader—Khomeini. Such an image sustains and maintains ideas about extremist and fanatical Muslims

in the public mind, and marginalises the moderate stance of the majority of British Muslims.

In the same report, *The Independent*'s coverage shifted to the British cabinet's possible action over Khomeini's religious edict against Mr. Rushdie, and the prospects for diplomatic relations between London and Tehran. However, perceived threats "on British soil or against British citizens" were once again highlighted:

> After cabinet meeting, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, said the British recognised that Muslims and others might have strong views about Mr Rushdie's book, The Satanic Verses: But nobody has the right to incite people to violence on British soil or against British citizens.... Ayatollah Khomeini's statement is totally unacceptable.

The Guardian (14/02/1989) also dealt with the reactions of the British Muslim leaders to *The Satanic Verses* controversy. Three leaders of the British Muslim community were quoted in the report: two were reported to have strongly supported Khomeini's religious edict against Salman Rushdie. Their comments are basically quoted to portray an extremist hard-line image of British Muslim leaders: Mr. Iqbal Sacranie, of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, was reported to have said that

> Death, perhaps, is a bit too easy for him.... His mind must be tormented for the rest of his life unless he asks for forgiveness to Almighty Allah.

Another leader of the British Muslim community, Mr. Sayed Abdul Quddus, of the Council of Mosques in Bradford, was quoted as saying that

> I totally agree with what Ayatollah Khomeini has said in public.... If any Muslim gets a chance he won't avoid it and he should not.... In every sentence the whole content of the book is blasphemous and is full of shit.

However, although the report mentioned a more moderate response by another Muslim leader, it did not state his comments, as it did those of the two others. It said only that he "disagrees with the Khomeini orders".

The report did not explicitly refer to Mr. Sacranie and Quddus as "extremists", but did so implicitly, by describing the view of the Muslim leader who reportedly

disagreed with Khomeini's religious edict against Salman Rushdie as a "more moderate response".

To further emphasise the extremist image of British Muslims and their leaders, *The Guardian* (15/02/1989) published a report under the headline ***Death threat wins support***. The headline clearly suggested that British Muslims supported Khomeini's death sentence orders against Mr. Rushdie, and it continued to highlight their leaders' views, which, as *The Guardian* (14/02/1989) reported, had been described by several conservative MPs as "amount[ing] to incitement to murder". Mr. Quddus is once again focused on as a British Muslim leader who harbours extremist ideas. The definition of Mr. Quddus in the report lead intertwines his chairmanship of the Bradford's Council of Mosques with his involvement in burning *The Satanic Verses*. A link was implicitly made between the act of book burning, which is generally viewed as a symbol of intransigence and a disregard for freedom of expression, and Mr. Quddus' leading position at Bradford's Council of Mosques:

> Mr. Sayed Abdul Quddus, secretary of Bradford's Council of Mosques, who burned Salman Rushdie's book in a demonstration in the city....

Since Mr. Quddus was represented as a leading British Muslim figure, readers would take his statements and comments to represent the British Muslim community, and probably Muslims at large, especially since similar anti-Rushdie comments and protests had already been reported from other Muslim countries.

Mr. Sahib Mustaquim Bleher was defined in the report as a leading Muslim figure, and an official of a British Muslim institution—chancellor of Muslim education services—and was quoted in that capacity. Accordingly, his statements and comments would be viewed seriously and taken to emanate from an authoritative figure. Hence, his statement that

> It is true that within the Islamic legal system the offence that Mr. Rushdie has committed would carry the death penalty.... There is no doubt about it, it is pretty well known, and in that sense this is to be endorsed.

These statements portray an extremist image of the British Muslim community leaders and to reinforce the perceived monolithic attitude of Muslims in the Rushdie controversy.

The report implies a threat when it defines Mr. Bleher as "chancellor of education services" and "promoter of Muslim schools in Britain". This perceived threat represented by the Muslim schools in Britain is reinforced by reporting that the Islamic Missionary College in Bradford strongly criticised Mr. Rushdie, and by confirming that

> All the 500 pupils who attended and prayed at the college criticised Mr. Rushdie, and all the Muslims were very angry with him.

The Guardian's (16/02/1989) coverage of the Muslims' response to *The Satanic Verses* controversy in Bradford and Birmingham—two cities with a sizeable Muslim community—implicitly suggested the existence of a serious threat, posed by the hard-line stance of the Muslims' community leaders. Its report, under the headline ***The Satanic Verses stirs up the Muslims with a show of faith, hope and threat***, states that

> In Birmingham, leaders of the city's 120,000 Muslims were in no mood for appeasement.

To reinforce this suggestion, the report quoted Muslims whose jobs are mosque-related as embracing hard-line views:

> Mr. Akbar Khan, who supervises the mosque's day centre, favoured execution.... Mr. Mohammed Ismail Janjua, the president of the Dudley mosque, added 'I hope he will be killed'.

However, the report referred to only one Muslim as disagreeing with Khomeini's death threat, and described the case as a "solitary exception".

The Independent (18/02/1989) paid a visit to Bradford, which was probably considered fertile ground for the "incitement of violence on British soil" referred to by Sir Geoffrey Howe after the cabinet meeting the previous day. The headline(s) and lead clearly portrayed a picture of extremism and violence: ***Majority of voices raised in favour of Rushdie execution, 'I think he will be killed ... it could be by Iranians, Yardies or Bradford Pakistanis'.***

> The vivacious 15-year-old Muslim behind the counter of her fathers' sweet shop in Spencer Road, Bradford, was unambiguous. "I'd pop a party if I heard Salman Rushdie was dead," Balkish Pandor said.

The report seems to suggest that the perceived extreme stance of the "influential" Bradford's Council of Mosques has already had an impact on people there, especially young people. *The Independent* reporter interviewed children as young as 9 and 11 about what they thought should be the fate of Mr. Rushdie. The girl referred to in the lead of the report is identified as "the daughter of Abdul Haque Pandor, a member of Bradford's Council of Mosques".

Interviewing children as young as 9 and 11 belonging to a particular minority, in a dispute involving issues such as blasphemy, freedom of expression and human rights, could hardly be intended to reflect serious views. It could be argued here that *The Independent* intended to focus upon not those children's views, but rather on the extent to which they had been influenced by their parents, who are themselves represented as having been influenced. If we take this in conjunction with the reports that none has actually read the book, it could also be argued that it was intended to suggest that there was no rational reaction, but rather widespread mass hysteria among Muslims about the Rushdie book.

A report by *The Guardian* (16/02/1989) suggests almost the same: "Even teenagers such as 16-year-old Mahmud Zairat or 15-year-old Javed Hani (one of the few who have actually read the book) are as fierce in their attacks as their elders."

Muslims' response to *The Satanic Verses* controversy was represented as though it was inherent extremism, rather than a response based on knowledge: hence the headline ***Outraged British Muslims condemn 'The Satanic Verses' unseen*** (*The Independent*, 18/02/1989). The report stated that

> These are not isolated examples of youthful extremism. Most of the 30-plus Asians interviewed at random on the streets of this East Yorkshire mill town think Rushdie must die. While none have actually read the book, most have read extracts in posters and leaflets published by the local Council of Mosques.

The Independent's report seems to convey four key suggestions, all of which involve a perceived internal present and future threat posed by British Muslims, who are predominantly Asian immigrants. First, it is suggested that there is a

perceived threat posed by future generations of British Muslims, exemplified by children as young as 9 and 11 who reportedly have been "unambiguous" in their views, saying that they want Mr. Rushdie executed. Second, a further internal threat is implicitly indicated by the suggestion that those children are nurtured in families where parents are themselves influenced by and involved in extremism and intolerant ideas; hence the indication of Mr. Pandor's membership in Bradford's Council of Mosques and his involvement in the public book burning of *The Satanic Verses*. Third, it is implied that British Muslims' extremism and intolerance know no age. Although the reporter interviewed Muslims from different age groups in the Bradford Muslim community, the report uses the shock tactic strategy in the lead, and the first two paragraphs of the report, to have a greater impact on the readers, by noting the Muslim children and teenagers who wanted to see Mr. Rushdie executed. The lead focuses on a Muslim teenage girl; the second paragraph focuses on a 9-year-old Muslim and the third paragraph on an 11-year-old Muslim. Fourth, the statement "while none have actually read the book, most have read extracts in posters and leaflets published by the local Council of Mosques" clearly suggests that there is a threat posed by Muslim institutions, such as Bradford's Council of Mosques, which is portrayed as fomenting extremism and intolerance and stirring up religious sentiments. In another report, *The Independent* (18/02/1989) reported that

> A message scrawled across the notice board inside the Moseley Mosque in Birmingham says: "Muslims declare holy war on the book and are ready to kill".

The British Muslim institution most focused on by *The Independent*, as a source of threats and extremist attitudes, was "Bradford's Council of Mosques" and its leaders. In its report under the headline ***Rushdie will not be forgiven***, it was suggested that the threat to Mr. Rushdie's life was first implied by the secretary of Bradford's Council of Mosques, Mr. Liaqat Hussain, who was reported to have "warned that Mr. Rushdie's continued refusal to withdraw the novel from sale had actually increased the threat to his life". Once again, Bradford's Council of Mosques is represented as a source of the perceived internal threat and danger posed by British Muslims, especially in Bradford where a ***Majority of voices raised in favour***

of Rushdie execution (report headline, *The Independent* 18/02/1989). It is generally suggested that there existed a link between the activities of Bradford's Council of Mosques and the attitudes Muslims there had towards the Rushdie affair.

The Independent continued to focus on linking the British Muslim leaders in Bradford with incitement to murder, and with reiterating and backing Khomeini's calls for the execution of Mr. Rushdie. Its report on 22 February 1989, under the headline ***Rushdie execution calls…. Muslims leaders not to be charged,*** stated that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had decided that no charges would be brought against the Bradford Muslim leaders, because of "insufficient direct evidence to bring charges at this time", which probably implies that there might be sufficient evidence of other incidents at another time: "The CPS had concluded that there was insufficient direct evidence to bring charges at this time."

However, the report deploys several suggestions, hints and implications in order to incriminate Bradford's Muslim leaders. First, it suggests that "any individual could still bring a private prosecution". Moreover, the CPS's official legal decision not to bring charges against Bradford's Muslims leaders is represented in the report as though it had been taken to avoid causing any possible unrest by Muslims in Britain, rather than on legal grounds:

> The CPS would not comment on the West Yorkshire case yesterday, but emphasised that one of the factors it took into account in reaching a decision was whether their prosecution would be in the public interest.

Second, the headline is worded in a way that implicitly means: "despite their Rushdie execution call, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has decided that Muslim leaders are not to be charged". The encoded message is that "charges should have been brought against them because of their Rushdie execution call". The headline is thus worded in a way that suggests unexpectedness, and thus proposed that the opposite had been expected, i.e., that Muslims leaders should have been prosecuted because of incitement.

The headline wording expressing unexpectedness involved breaking the traditional telegraphic style of newspaper headlines: instead of using "cleared" or "discharged", the comparatively lengthy phrase "not to be charged" is used—four words rather than one—but it is obvious that it strongly suggests the opposite, i.e., "to be charged"', and to make clear the unexpectedness a clear negation, "not", had to be used.

The report cites a lengthy explanation of a robbery-related case (5 paragraphs in an 11-paragraph report) as a legal precedent for incitement, under the British legal system, in the case of the British Muslim leaders who were reported to have called for the execution of Mr. Rushdie:

> The last major court ruling on the law of incitement was in the 1983 case of Fitzmaurice. Fitzmaurice was asked by his father to find someone to rob a woman of a payroll on the way back from a bank.

The report implicitly suggests that the British Muslim leaders, who were already associated with breaking the law, should face the fate of Fitzmaurice case conspirators:

> Fitzmaurice was convicted of inciting the third man to commit the robbery.... The court ruled that the necessary element of persuasion was satisfied by a 'suggestion, proposal or request accompanied by an implied promise of reward'.

The lexicalisation used in this context portrays those Muslims as criminals rather than as leaders of a religious community:

> If the crime is carried out, the inciter will be an accessory to the offence and as such will be as liable as the principal offender.... Any Muslim leaders in Britain who encouraged other Muslims to follow Ayatollah Khomeini's request to kill him would almost certainly face charges of accessory to murder punishable by life imprisonment.

Words relating to the domain of crime and criminal activities, such as "crime", "inciter", "kill", "murder", "punishable" and "life imprisonment" were used to negatively portray British Muslim leaders, as involved in breaking the law.

Besides mentioning the Mosley mosque in Birmingham and Bradford's Council of Mosques, another news report in the same issue of *The Independent* implicitly made reference to a Yorkshire Islamic boarding school as another source of Muslim extremists. A graduate of this school was reported to have expressed a sincere wish to kill Mr. Rushdie and to have participated in anti-Rushdie protests in London, Walsall and Birmingham. He is reported in a way that suggests that his Quranic knowledge is behind his overall attitude to *The Satanic Verses* controversy:

> He (the Yorkshire Islamic school graduate) spent two and half years learning the Koran by heart at an Islamic boarding school in Yorkshire, and has been on protest marches against the book in London, Walsall and Birmingham.... 'I would kill Rushdie if I saw him because he said things that are extremely false about our prophet'.

Once again, *The Independent* (18/02/1989) suggests that Muslims' perceived extreme fanatical attitudes, euphemistically dubbed 'outrage', know no limits: the source of these attitudes, as formulated in the report, could include a recent emigrant from Pakistan, a graduate of a Yorkshire Islamic school and even a trainee chemistry lecturer at a British higher education institution:

> Dr. Mahmoud Jabar, 38, an Iraqi-born Muslim, is a trainee chemistry lecturer at the Mathew Boulton Technical College in Balsall Heath and shares the feeling of outrage.... I (Jabar) was shocked but not surprised about the book because in this country anything can happen ... There are no morals in this country ... and women can go out almost naked wearing just a bikini. I would expect the worst in this country.

The Independent's initial coverage linking Islam/Muslims with terrorism and violence seems to have focused on the perceived internal threat, using eye-catching, value-loaded and shocking headlines such as ***Holy warriors volunteer to kill*** (*The Independent, 18*/02/1989).

The military metaphor used in this headline is obviously meant to highlight the existence of a threat, both to the life of Mr. Rushdie and to the security of Britain. Moreover, the term "holy warriors" is a phrase related to discourse about the Crusades, which took place in medieval times between Christian Europe and the Muslim East. Such terms and expressions could arguably reawaken the sentiments created by the age-old conflict between Islam and the Christian West. Graphic

emphasis is used in this report to topicalise the existence of the threat of Muslims' intolerance, violence and extremism, all of which are condensed in the secondary headline: ***If I see him I shall kill him. There's no need to discuss it with him, just kill him***. All those who were interviewed by the reporter are clearly shown either to have expressed their readiness to kill Mr. Rushdie, or to approve of Khomeini's death sentence against him.

An earlier news report (17/02/1989) in *The Guardian* presented a more negative image of Muslims' perceived extremism: not only grassroots British Muslims, but also an Iranian diplomat, were reported to have shown their readiness to kill Mr. Rushdie:

> Meanwhile, Iran's ambassador to the Vatican said he would be willing to carry out the order to kill Mr. Rushdie. 'I am a Muslim. And as such every Muslim is called on to carry out the sentence', the ambassador, Mr. Salman Ghaffari, told a reporter.

Although the report headline highlights the looming break in the Anglo-Iranian relations—***UK near to breaking with Iran***—an introductory headline uses a phrase from the domain of crime and gangster feuds: ***Price on Salman Rushdie's head raised to £5 million.***

It could be argued that the Satanic Verses controversy provoked a confrontation of Christian and Islamic civilisations at a level not seen for centuries. Confronted by mass protests resenting the West in some Muslim countries, Western leaders stood together in their disapproval of Khomeini's act and the overall Iranian attitude.

Bush rallies to support of UK and Europe on Rushdie threat

> In a massive show of unity, the United States and other nations yesterday rallied to the support of Britain and its European partners in their stand against Ayatollah Khomeini's death threat against Mr. Salman Rushdie.

The following report, published by *The Times* (22/02/1989), supports the argument that the construction of Islam in the British press was dealt with within a framework of crisis-staging against the backdrop of a perceived Islamic threat. The report represents Iran—and implicitly Islam—as a radical *Other*, whose threatening

behaviour requires possible "economic sanctions", solidarity and a "massive show of unity" by the United States and other nations, in support of Britain and its European partners in the Rushdie controversy:

> President Bush is expected to discuss possible economic sanctions against Iran when he sees European leaders.

This crisis-staging framework in turn produced the "crisis frame" often recalled and used whenever the need arises to represent a particular view of Islam when events take place in the Muslim world (Abdel-Latif, 1999: p. 5). The Satanic Verses controversy was used as a significant event to make the "crisis" visible to the wider public. The different aspects of the event were narrated according to simple and culturally available patterns, in which the role of Iran, whose leader was reported in earlier news reports to have "called upon every Muslim" to assassinate Rushdie, was condemned by the European Community and beyond:

> After the tough diplomatic action taken by the European Community on Monday, further support came yesterday from Australia, Sweden, Norway, and Brazil, while the Secretary General of the United Nations, Senor Javier Perez de Cuellar, appealed for the death threat to be lifted.

The Times apparently intended to show the widest possible consensus in condemning Iran by going across the Atlantic:

> Canada said it is recalling its Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Scott Mullin, for 'consultations'. In Washington, President Bush strongly endorsed the action taken by the European community.... He said the US would hold the Iranian Government accountable if action was taken against American interests, although Tehran voiced no threats against American interests.

The news report uses metaphorical language, and involves an exaggeration and over-reporting of the diplomatic developments following the Khomeini religious edict against Mr Rushdie. The withdrawals of Western diplomats from Tehran are portrayed as an "exodus":

> The exodus from Tehran was led yesterday by the Danish Ambassador, Mr. Hans Grunnel, and Britain's envoys were preparing to leave.

The report obviously attempts to suggest the existence of a diplomatic isolation of Iran, whose attitude, according to the report, is described by President Bush as "deeply offensive to the norms of civilised behaviour".

The occasional reference to civility, in connection with Muslims' reactions to the *Satanic Verses* controversy, represents it as a value that Muslims in general lack. *The Independent* report (25/02/1989) quotes the British Home Secretary, who was addressing British Muslims at Birmingham Central Mosque, as saying that threats of death, and talk of arrows being directed at the heart "are vicious and repugnant to any civilised man or woman". As the Home Secretary was referring to Muslims' reactions, their behaviour is implicitly branded as "uncivilised".

Since the source of this perceived incivility is the British Muslims community, which is part of British society, which is widely considered to be civilised and law-abiding, the community of British Muslims is implicitly regarded as an "Other"; hence *The Independent*'s (24/02/1989) front page report headlined ***Hurd will urge Muslims to accept more integration***.

Lexically, the use of the word "urge" suggests the existence of an urgent and earnest need on the side of the British Muslims community to advance and accelerate social integration into British society. This particular case reflects what van Dijk calls "self positive presentation"—British society—and "other negative presentation"—British Muslims. Implicit in the reference to the Home Secretary's appeal to British Muslims is their lack of will to integrate, their incomplete integration and their Otherness.

The following day, *The Independent* reported that British Muslims had been warned against breaking the law: ***Hurd tells Muslims not to break law over Rushdie book***. The warning in itself reflects a negative image of British Muslims, and represents them as posing a threat, and as being intolerant and uncivilised in a civilised world:

> But to turn such protests into violence or the threat of violence is wholly unacceptable. Threats of death, talk of arrows being directed at heart (Hurd refers here to the Iranian presidential aide's speech in the Yugoslav republic, *The Independent*, 23/02/1989) are vicious and repugnant to any civilised man or woman.

British Muslims were represented not only as a threat to law and order, but also as a threat to racial harmony itself in Britain: "Nothing would do more damage to racial

harmony than the idea that British Muslims were indifferent to the rule of law in this country." Moreover, the lengthy explanation by the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, of the importance of obeying the law implies that Muslims are not considered fully law-abiding citizens:

> None of us can choose to obey some laws and ignore others.... Respect for the rule of law is a fundamental principle for which Britain stood.

It is not only the rule of law that British Muslims are represented as ignoring. The Home Secretary extends the list of values that British Muslims are perceived to ignore to areas that Muslims at large are alleged to disregard:

> Respect for the rule of law is a fundamental principle for which Britain stood.... So too were freedom of speech and expression, and the toleration of different opinions.... But we are entitled to expect everybody in this country to accept these ideals, and all leaders of communities here to give them their full-hearted support.

Once again, a headline in a report by *The Independent* uses metaphor—***American writers denounce terrorism against an idea*** (23/02/1989)—to reinforce the association of Iran, and by extension of Islam, with disrespect for freedom of expression and the entitlement of individuals to this right. Islam is never mentioned in any part of the report, but readers have already been explicitly and implicitly told about the "Islamic" government of Iran, "Muslim fundamentalists' anti-Rushdie demonstrations", "Muslims' rage", "Holy warriors volunteer to kill (Rushdie)" and so on. Readers would not have any difficulty in understanding the perceived "Islam connection" behind what *The Independent*'s headline describes as "terrorism against the idea".

The demonisation of Ayatollah Khomeini, and implicitly of Islam, is evident in the report:

> Article 19 Organisation demanded the repudiation of Ayatollah Khomeini as an outlaw and an enemy of all humankind.... This is a new form of terrorism.... This is terrorism against an idea and intolerance in the modern civilised world.

The issue of violence seemed to be the top priority in the coverage of events related to *The Satanic Verses* controversy, by both *The Independent* and *The Times*. The line of associating Islam with violence through coverage of Muslims' protests

around the world, especially in Iran and the Indian sub-continent, continued. *The Times* (19/02/1989) published a report under the following headline and lead:

75 injured in riots over novel

> At least 75 people were reported injured in India yesterday after rioting over Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. There were other non-violent protests in several Muslim countries.

The main events mentioned by *The Times* in this news report are as follows:

- In Jammu and Kashmir, which borders on Pakistan and is largely Muslim, police opened fire and fought pitched battles with mobs. Twenty-five policemen were injured and 30 demonstrators were arrested. Two children were injured in Jammu and Kashmir when a bomb exploded in the capital Srinagar.
- Right-wing Muslims in Pakistan demanded the extradition of Rushdie for execution. In Karachi and eight other Pakistani cities Mr. Rushdie's effigy and American flags were burned.
- A Pakistani opposition member offered an additional reward for whoever would kill Rushdie.
- Riot police were out in Islamabad to prevent a repeat of previous violent protests in which six people were killed over the *Satanic Verses*.
- In Bangladesh, Muslim fundamentalists marched through the capital shouting "Hang Satan Rushdie" and "Punish all enemies of Islam".

This news report is dominated by the acts of violence reportedly committed by Muslims in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The overall reporting line seems to fit into the overall trend of reporting violence and riots by Muslims in several countries in response to Rushdie's book.

In reporting the events in India, *The Times* used the passive form: no direct reference was made to who injured the 75 demonstrators. The circumstances in which the events took place were described as "rioting over Salman Rushdie's *The*

Satanic Verses", implicitly to legitimise police intervention, although no indication is given as to who injured the demonstrators.

In the case of the events in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the police were portrayed as being on the defensive, and "fighting pitched battles" against "the mobs": twenty-five policemen were injured and 30 demonstrators were arrested. The overall picture, which is dominated by military metaphors, is presented in a way that provides good reasons for, or opens the way to justifying, "opening fire". A more negative and brutal image was highlighted in the report of a bomb explosion, which injured "two boys" in the Kashmiri capital.

The use of military metaphor in reports—"fight", "rioting", "pitched battles", "open fire" and "mob", "a mob of Muslim demonstrators" (*The Times* 25/02/1989)—implies that Muslim demonstrators are violent, threatening, irrational and difficult to control.

Pakistan is no better than the state of Jammu and Kashmir. "Right-wing Muslims" were reported to have made demands to extradite Rushdie for execution: "In Pakistan, right-wing Muslims demanded Mr. Rushdie's extradition for execution"; demonstrators, who were reported to have burnt a Rushdie effigy and American flags, are depicted as violent, fanatical, aggressive and supportive of terror; and an opposition figure is reported to have added more money to the reward for killing Mr. Rushdie:

> Sheikh Rashid, a National Assembly opposition member said in a speech at Rawalpindi that he would raise an additional 100.000 rupees (£2,800) as a reward for anyone who killed Mr. Rushdie.

There is also a reminder that earlier acts of violence over Rushdie's novel killed six people. A more aggressive picture is given in the paragraph that refers to "Muslims fundamentalists" demanding "hanging Rushdie" and "punishing all enemies of Islam".

This report, and the coverage in general, imply the existence of a "Muslim fundamentalists' mindset", consisting of intolerance, totalitarianism and irrationality, with no regard for freedom, human life or respect for human rights: "Police fired on a mob of Muslim demonstrators calling for Britain to ban the publication of Salman Rushdie's book, The Satanic Verses, and to stop protecting the author" (*The Times*, 25/02/1989). This suggestion implies, in turn, the existence of a wide gap between Muslim fundamentalists and Muslims in general, on the one hand, and Western values on the other hand.

The Times (22/02/1989) published another news report that linked Islam with violence through coverage of protests against Rushdie's book abroad, under the following headline and lead:

Dhaka police fire on Muslims

> More than 100 people were injured as about 10000 fundamentalist Muslims calling for the execution of the author Salman Rushdie clashed with police in central Dhaka yesterday, witnesses and hospital doctors said.

Once again, *The Times* uses the passive form to foreground "fundamentalist Muslims" "calling for the execution of the author Salman Rushdie", with less focus on the other agent (police). Throughout the report, the instigators of violence are categorised as "fundamentalist Muslims", "angry protesters" and "Muslims". "Clashing with the police", "marching on the British Council building" and "stoning the police station" were used as the explanatory context, which is intended to illustrate the reasons for the police intervention and the casualties among "angry protesting Muslim fundamentalists":

> When the mob fought back, setting ablaze several shops and vehicles, the police opened fire, 35 people were injured. (*The Times*, 25/02/1989)

Although it was widely known that it was Muslims, rather than Christians or Jews, who led and took part in all the demonstrations against the Rushdie book, the headline of the news report emphasises that it was 'Muslims", rather than protesters, who instigated violence and were subsequently and justifiably, it is implied, shot at.

The most noticeable property of this report is its use of military metaphor to emphasise the violent nature of the threat posed by the protestors. Words and phrases such as "injured", "execution", "fired shots", "tear-gas shells", "angry protesters", "killed", "open fire" are used throughout the report to describe the actions of the protestors. The report also focuses on the insistence of those it categorises as "fundamentalist Muslims" on killing Rushdie, and quotes the leader of the Bangladeshi Islamic Constitution Movement as saying: "today we hang Rushdie's effigy but Muslims will seek out the devil one day and kill him". The reported insistence on killing Mr. Rushdie is further highlighted by the alleged call by *Jamaat-e-Islami* for "volunteers to carry out the death threat against Mr. Rushdie".

Although the strike is widely recognised as a legal form of protest, and organising strikes is, in consequence, a legal activity, the report represents the organisation of a strike by a Muslim, obviously over Rushdie's book, as trouble-provoking: "and stopped a Muslim strike organiser travelling to Delhi, where it was feared he could provoke trouble". The attachment of the word "Muslim" to "strike organiser" seems to justify the suggested trouble-provoking. Once again, the news report reminds readers that even widely known peaceful forms of protest, such as strikes, can become violent, disorderly and uncontrollable when Muslims are involved.

On 25 February 1989, *The Times* portrayed an almost similar image under the following headline and lead, as it continued its coverage that linked Islam to violence, by reporting anti-Rushdie demonstrations around the world:

10 die in Rushdie riot

> Ten people died in Bombay yesterday as police fired on a mob of Muslim demonstrators calling for Britain to ban the publication of Salman Rushdie's book, The Satanic Verses, and to stop protecting the author.

The Guardian (24/02/1989) reported a death threat against Sir Geoffrey Howe as he was visiting Japan. However, because the death threat did not seem to be serious, the report abruptly changes the event setting, and moves thousands of miles from Japan to Lebanon, to highlight another threat: an organisation called "The Islamic

Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine" had threatened to take vengeance against the defenders of Mr. Rushdie.

> Meanwhile, in Lebanon a group holding three American hostages, 'The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine', warned yesterday that it would take vengeance against defenders of Mr. Rushdie.

Despite the use of the word "meanwhile" to indicate the change of scene of the events, ***Death threats to Howe in Tokyo*** seems incoherent, given the abrupt change of setting and events that occurs before shifting once again to the Howe death threats. There is not even any common ground between the two stories: the main story involves death threats against a British politician, while the other story involves threats of "vengeance" against the "defenders of Mr. Rushdie" with no reference to Britain, as stated by the report.

Since *The Guardian* news report lacks coherence, it could be argued that its main aim is to show the threats to the lives of British politicians posed by Muslims individuals, as in the case of Howe, and the threat posed by Muslim groups using words such as "Jihad" and "Islamic", which are commonly used to associate Islam with terrorism and violence.

The Times continued its coverage of Muslims' protests against Rushdie's novel abroad, focusing mainly on Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. A report under the following headline and lead was published by *The Times* (28/02/1989):

Bomb blast as Howe flies into protests

> A bomb exploded near a British cultural centre here early today hours after Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, arrived for a visit.

The headline is emotive and sensational, and obviously uses shock tactics to create a large impact: the site of the bomb blast is reported to have been near the British Council Library: "Police said no one was injured in the blast which was at a building under construction about 10 yards from the British Council Library", only "hours after Sir Geoffrey Howe arrived for a visit". The setting was an atmosphere allegedly hostile to Britain, with a planned and unwelcoming protesting reception

for Sir Geoffrey Howe, organised by an Islamic organisation (Organisation for the Protection of the Name of the Holy Prophet).

The report attempts to convey the message, that is, that there is an antagonistic Muslim attitude in Pakistan towards Britain, as manifested in the unwelcoming reception for Sir Geoffrey Howe and the bomb blast near the British Council Library in Islamabad. The report suggests the existence of a terrorist threat, and a threat to the lives of British citizens.

In this report, Muslims are portrayed within a negative framework of perpetrating violence and harbouring anti-Western sentiments.

In another report, dated 16/02/1989, under the headline ***Death squads on way to Britain, rebel leader says***, *The Independent* quoted a Pakistani politician and former cabinet member as saying that "the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran had expressed the sentiments of all Muslims". Western readers, unaware of the *Shiite-Sunni* schism within Islam, may have believed that Khomeini's religious edict genuinely "expressed the sentiments of all Muslims". By quoting this particular source, *The Independent* report seems to follow other media coverage, in representing Islam as monolithic and ignoring the widespread diversity between and within Muslim societies.

A similar report to that on the front page was published on page 9 of *The Times* (03/03/1989), under the following headline and lead:

Iranian extremist cell in UK could number under 12

> The Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, who have issued death threats against government ministers, have shown themselves capable of carrying out assassinations in Britain and escaping arrest.

This news report is typical of the construction of Islam in the British press: it occurs within a perceptual framework of bloody violence and extremism, in order to objectify fear and maintain a feeling of a constant threat. The fear and threats in this case are intended to be felt by the British public, whose ministers are reported to

have faced death threats from Iranian Muslims, who "have shown themselves capable of carrying out assassinations in Britain and escaping arrest". The mention of death squads implies the possible involvement of clandestine terrorist organisations, whereas the mention of "cells"' suggests the possibility of Mafia-type assassinations, and the mention of victims of "Iranian terror" in London, with no mention of the assassins being apprehended, were cited in the report to reinforce these allegations. To increase stress and to maintain the sense of fear and threat, the report asserts the importance of increased alertness concerning the safety of British ministers and other figures related to the *Satanic Verses* controversy, given potential assassins who are reported to act on the directives of "*Ayatollah Khomeini's periodic hard-line speeches*".

The report provides an example of the connection between Islam, violence, belligerence and revolutionary politics, by citing the presence of "a number" of revolutionary organisations in Iran, one of which is reported as belonging to the Iranian Foreign Ministry—"The Department for Islamic Liberation Movements". Another is The Revolutionary Guard Corps, which was reported by *The Independent* (16/02/1989) to have "announced its readiness to carry out Khomeini's order".

Van Dijk's (1998) notion of the 'analysis of implicitness' makes clear that what is said in this report is only part of the information about the event, and is represented according to the reporter(s)'s mental models of the topic. The rest of the information is to be supplied by the readers' knowledge scripts and mental models. Accordingly, what is left unsaid will be supplied by the readers' mental models, i.e., the readers will put flesh on the bones. Consequently, the phrase "revolutionary organisations" implies a connection between Islam and extremism. Reporting the "Department of Islamic Liberation Movements" as belonging to the Iranian Foreign Ministry implies that extremism is financed by the Iranian state apparatus and is thus a state practice.

Continuing its focus on the alleged internal threat emanating from the *Satanic Verses* controversy, *The Times* (09/03/1989) published a report under the following headline:

Britain will expel Iran's 'danger men'

Other headlines in the same report:

- ***Violence feared in wake of threats to Rushdie.***
- ***The Home Office plans to expel about 20 Iranians on security grounds after further threats on the controversial author, Mr. Salman Rushdie.***
- ***Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, told the House of Commons the activities of Iranians remaining in Britain would be closely watched.***
- ***Fearing retaliation by Middle East terrorists, the British mission in Beirut is warning expatriates to leave Lebanon and other nationals not to go there.***
- ***Within hours of the warning a feared kidnap group renewed threats against Mr. Rushdie and said they would attack police stations shielding him.***

Lead:

> Britain announced yesterday it will expel a number of Iranians on security grounds after further threat against Mr. Rushdie, author of The Satanic Verses.

Headlines and lead are used to emphasise the existence of an alleged foreign threat posed by Iranians—Muslims—living in the UK, the fear of whom is explicitly spelled out in the main headline, *Iran's danger men*, and graphically emphasised by the employment of four bulleted secondary headlines. The report is intended to maintain in recipients' minds the alleged threat posed by particular foreign nationals, who are Muslims living amongst the British. This alleged scare is obviously intended to maintain a sense of threat, by stating that the perceived danger has not been completely eliminated, since it has been reported that 25,000 Iranians are still living in Britain:

> An informed Iranian source said last night that the removal of such men 'who hold the purse strings' would reduce the danger posed by Iranian-sponsored terrorism in Britain, but might not diminish it significantly.

To make the story more credible, the source quoted is described as both "informed" and Iranian, i.e., an insider.

A link has directly and explicitly been made between Islam and bloody violence, by associating the Iranians to be deported with what is categorised as "revolutionary Muslim organisations", one of which is reported to have voiced its intention to kill Mr. Rushdie:

> They (the Iranians to be deported) direct the activities of Shiia and revolutionary Muslim organisations, such as the Islamic Students Society, which has formally declared that it will try to carry out the Ayatollah Khomeini's death threat on Mr. Rushdie.

The report provides a further negative image of the Iranian ruling establishment, with the British Foreign Secretary blaming the rupture of diplomatic relations on Tehran, and also accusing it of abusing human rights:

> The Foreign Secretary underlined the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Tehran regime by also condemning in robust style human rights abuses in Iran.

The report supports the image of Iran as an alleged backer of cross-border terrorism and hostage-taking, by raising the alarm against the "response of terrorists against British targets". It also mentions another scare, a possible Iranian cross-border terrorist act in Lebanon, implicitly against British citizens. This is obviously to emphasise the commonly held image of Iran as supporter of cross-border terrorism:

> Fearing a response by terrorists in Lebanon against British targets, the embassy in Beirut issued 'urgent' advice to the estimated 100 British expatriates, who are not permanently settled in the country, to leave and warning potential visitors not to go. A reference is also made to what has been described in the report as "one of the most feared kidnap groups in Lebanon".

The same report mentions another internal security scare, by identifying a "pro-Iranian" group that is threatening to attack British police stations that are in charge of protecting Mr. Rushdie. The report is obviously loaded with fears of a terrorist threat, not only by the remaining Iranians living in Britain, who will be closely watched, but also by other Muslim pro-Iranian groups that, it is feared, may strike on British soil, in order to carry out the death threat against Mr. Rushdie.

Figures are normally used in news reports to provide precision, objectivity and, hence, credibility, but in the following paragraph the figures are used mainly to imply the size of the threat and of the security scare: "There are about 25,000 Iranian nationals in Britain, including students. The government will not hesitate to remove anyone behaving likely to seek to kill Mr. Rushdie" and "issued 'urgent' advice to the estimated 100 British expatriates".

As coverage shifted towards the Muslims threat to the UK, *The Times* (18/02/1989) published a news report under the following headline(s) and lead:

Muslims plan new campaign against book

Riyadh declaration fails to calm Rushdie storm

> Leaders of Britain's 1.5 million Muslims announced here yesterday that they would be using the scathing condemnation of Salman Rushdie by the Islamic Conference Organisations to step up their campaign against The Satanic Verses inside Britain.

The basic idea behind the headlines and lead is to suggest that the agenda of British Muslims, most of whom are Asians, is dictated by Muslims and Islamic organisations outside the British Isles. It is clearly and straightforwardly stated in the report that leaders of the British 1.5 million Muslims would use the Riyadh meeting condemnation of Mr. Rushdie "to step up their campaign against *The Satanic Verses* inside Britain".

Reporting that "a special meeting of 100 national ledgers of British Muslims had been called in Bradford next Saturday to review the conference declaration and draw up strategy" involves another explicit suggestion that the British Muslim agenda is dictated from abroad, rather than being subject to what the British system of law and order requires. This suggestion consequently implies, and eventually suggests to the public mind, that British Muslims pose a threat to British mainstream values. It thus provokes fears about integration, especially since the British Muslims' delegation is described by the report as "the largest from a non-Muslim country".

To highlight the suggestion that foreign values are being imposed on British society, the report quoted what it describes as "senior Western experts" as saying that "one interpretation was that Britain's Muslim community would itself now have the right to judge whether Mr. Rushdie had repented sufficiently to escape sentence of death which normally follows an accusation of apostasy". Such an image seems to have been intended to emphasise alleged Muslim extremism, fanaticism and violence, and to maintain them in the British public mind by using particular lexical items and phrases presumably related to extremism, fanaticism and violence, such as "apostate", "death sentence", "sufficient repentance", "accusation of apostasy" and "hard-liners".

4. Association of Islam/Muslims with terrorism and violence

Another important set of discourses that appeared in the British broadsheets associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism.

In its 16 February 1989 issue, *The Times* featured a news report under the headline ***Iranian's £1m murder money on Rushdie***, with the following main lead:

> Britain will today press the Iranian Government to explain Ayatollah Khomeini's order that Salman Rushdie, author of The Satanic Verses, should be killed.

Anther bulleted headline reads: ***Concern increased after more than £1 million was offered by an Iranian cleric for the assassination of the novelist***.

The coverage of events in Iran in this issue of *The Times* includes over-reporting and distortion, by representing the orders of Khomeini as if they were binding on all Muslims, be they *Shiite* or *Sunni* Muslims. For instance, it was reported that Rushdie had to cancel a tour of the USA because of concerns for his safety, a statement that implies that Muslims in the USA are committed to carrying out Khomeini's ruling against Mr. Rushdie, and hold views identical to his against the author.

Howe attacks Tehran threats

> Britain yesterday shelved plans to establish normal relations with Iran and made a strong protest against Ayatollah Khomeini's order that Salman Rushdie, the novelist, should be killed.

Under the above headline and lead, *The Independent* (15/02/1989) first looks at the looming diplomatic crisis between Iran and Britain, but then highlights what it portrays as "the anger aroused in the Muslim world by Mr. Rushdie's book". Following the portrayal of the Muslim world as in a state of anger, the report focuses on two alleged threats that are implicitly stated as a response to the alleged anger. The first is obviously a terrorist threat: "security was stepped up at airports in India and at Heathrow after a threat to bomb British Airways flights." To portray the threat as credible and serious, it is reported to have been declared in Rushdie's hometown, Bombay: "the threat was telephoned to an Indian news agency in Bombay, where Mr. Rushdie lived as a child." The threat is reported to have been so serious that the Transport Secretary stated that "we are taking it extremely seriously".

The report then turns directly to Khomeini's threat against Rushdie, which was also reported as so serious that the Conservative and Labour parties were united in condemning it.

The news report suggests that the threats in question emanate from, and are motivated by, anger against Mr. Rushdie's book in "the whole" Muslim world: "the anger aroused in the Islamic world by Mr. Rushdie's book". This suggestion implies that the whole Islamic world is against the book and, accordingly, supports Khomeini's ruling and is thus a source of threat.

The phrase "the anger aroused in the Islamic world by Mr. Rushdie's book continued to spread" is formulated and stated as a fact, but is loaded with implicit meaning to be supplied by recipients, according to their knowledge of the context and of the world of Islam. The recipients, in turn, will deal with this encoded message on the basis of a possibly pre-existing interpretive framework that associates Islam with intolerance, extremism and terrorism. The word "anger", rather than "protests", is used to describe the reaction of Muslims, and implies a potential state of vehemence and rage on their side that is waiting to be ignited.

The Times news report (15/02/1989) headlined ***Khomeini orders Rushdie's murder*** is remarkable for making reference to the opposition by some Muslims to the Khomeini death sentence against Salman Rushdie. However, the report's headline is emotive, and does not accurately reflect the focus of the text: it is typical of the repetitive, sensationalising and standardising headlines that newspapers use in certain cases as a shock tactic. The same applies to its lead:

> Scotland Yard may be asked to provide armed protection for Salman Rushdie after Ayatollah Khomeini yesterday issued an order for the execution of the author of The Satanic Verses on the grounds of blasphemy against Islam.

Since Ayatollah Khomeini has been represented in several news reports as the supreme Muslim spiritual leader, who can call upon 'all' Muslims to kill Mr. Rushdie, the headline could be viewed as offering a further negative image of Islam, as a faith whose spiritual leader can issue instructions to kill. What is important in the headline is its use of lexicalisation: the word "murder", rather than "killing", is used as a code word to add a further criminal dimension and thus associate Khomeini, and consequently Islam, with violence, aggression and criminal practices.

The Times reports no opposition to the Iranian stance by any Muslim individuals or groups, either inside Iran or elsewhere, as if "all Iranians" and "all Muslims" in the world approved of the decision to kill Mr. Rushdie. The report also attempts to show all Muslims as supporters of Khomeini who are ready to carry out his ruling, by killing Mr. Rushdie, in order to create in the public mind a negative image of Islam associated with extremism, irrationality and violence.

A similar image occurs in a report in *The Independent* (16/02/1989) under the following headline(s) and lead:

Rushdie under threat 'for rest of his life'

Publisher plans paperback of 'The Satanic Verses' as police step up surveillance on Islamic extremists

> Experts on Islam and terrorism said last night that Salman Rushdie may need protection for the rest of his life.

The association of Islam with terrorism, extremism and violence is explicitly and straightforwardly expressed in the main headline, lead and body of this report published by *The Independent* on 16 February 1989. Sensationalisation and standardisation were used in the headline as a strategy to highlight what is intended to be widely understood and maintained by readers as the ordeal of an individual facing the threat of assassination for the rest of his life. Upon reading the headline, readers who are following the developments of the Rushdie affair through the British press, and the media coverage in general, will directly come to the conclusion that the source of this ordeal is "Islamic extremism". The emphasis on the death threat facing Mr. Rushdie entails Muslims' disregard for freedom, human rights and life, an implication that suggests the existence of an unabridged fault line between the two civilisations, Islam and the West.

The association of Islam with terrorism is explicit, and it is reported as common sense information in both the lead and body of the report: "Experts on Islam and terrorism", "organised pro-Islam terrorist groups". Stating code words and expressions as common sense information entails meaning dimensions that are intended to be naturalised and taken for granted. Naturalising the association of the faith of Islam with terrorism, by formulating a phrase in a way suggesting that the issue has become a field of expertise in which individuals can specialise, is intended to make recipients take it as common sense.

To maintain a sense of fear and constant terrorist threat by "Muslims", the report states that the authorities have "stepped up surveillance" of those who are described in the report as "known Islamic extremists". Moreover, the level of protection given to Mr. Rushdie is reported to be constantly under review by top police officials. To emphasise the sense of fear and constant threat, the report states that

> Ayatollah Khomeini's execution order would remain in force until it was carried out, there will always be those wishing to carry out his (Khomeini) orders.

A reminder to maintain the threat in the public mind is given by referring to "Iranian hit squads" alleged to have been involved in assassination attempts in London since the early nineteen eighties.

To emphasise this sense of fear, the report uses particular words and phrases: "terrorism", "protection", "execution order", "surveillance", "level of protection", "assessment of the risk", "greater risk", "exceptional threat", "full-time protection", "hit squads".

To reinforce a similar image, *The Times* (16/02/1989) featured the headline ***Iranian £1m murder money on Rushdie*** as well as five bulleted sub-headlines, two of which read:

- ***Concern increased after more than £1millon was offered by an Iranian cleric for the assassination of the novelist***
- ***Britain will press Tehran for an explanation of Ayatollah Khomeini's order that Salman Rushdie be killed***

The news report states that

> The government's 'grave concern' over the Ayatollah's remarks increased yesterday when Hojatoleslam Hasan Sanai, an Iranian cleric, offered a reward of $2.6 million to an Iranian and $1 million to a foreigner for the assassination of Mr. Rushdie.... The Iranian television quoted Mr. Sanai as saying that his charity, the June Fifth Foundation, would pay the reward to 'anyone who would punish'.

The reference to Mr. Sanai as an Iranian "cleric" is probably meant to indicate that "Muslim" members of the Iranian ruling establishment may be involved in offering assassination money and bounties. "Iranian" is often used interchangeably with "Muslim". Moreover, the reference to "charity" (an institution or organisation set up to provide help, money, et cetera, to those in need) seems to be used, in this assassination-related context, to indicate that Muslim "clerical" charities may also be used, contrary to the benevolent nature of charities, to finance criminal activities such as assassinations.

The Independent (16/02/1989) echoes the issue of the perceived terrorist threat posed by Iran in a news report dealing with the same event. However, its headline(s) are sensationalising, emotional, code-worded and value-loaded: ***Protesters damage UK embassy as charity offers $1m reward for murder, Iranian cleric puts price on Rushdie's head.***

The "damage" to the UK embassy in Tehran, highlighted by being graphically emphasised in the first headline, is intended to have an emotional impact on the readers, by drawing their attention to the threat posed to the British diplomatic mission and staff in the Iranian capital. The atmosphere there is reported to have been hostile to Britain, with demonstrators' "shouting 'death to England'". *The Independent* report focuses on associating the Iranian charity, "The Fifth of Khordad Foundation", and the Iranian cleric Hasan Sanei—both topicalised by means of graphic emphasis—with practices contrary to the humanitarian role of charities and the righteousness of clergymanship. Associating a clergyman with "putting a price on someone's head" is intended to show how criminal an Iranian (Muslim) clergyman can be. The report that the Iranian charity foundation "runs supermarkets and other businesses in Iran" is clearly intended to show its profit-making nature, which is contrary to the benevolent character of charity organisations:

> [The] Fifth of Khordad Foundation ... was set up to care for the relatives of demonstrators killed in an anti-American protest in 1963 and now runs supermarkets and other businesses in Iran.

The intention is therefore to emphasise the extremism and intolerance exemplified by Khomeini "dashing the cautious hopes", and "the British Government's intention to push for strong condemnation of the ayatollah's death threat".

Although the attack on the British embassy in Tehran was topicalised by graphic emphasis, the report states that "the demonstration at the embassy was relatively peaceful". This reveals an obvious contradiction, and an exaggeration in reporting. This indicates that discourse is never perfect and linear, but sometimes involves ruptures and contradictions that in turn affect coherence and the functional relations between the meanings. The graphic emphasis topicalised ***Protesters damage UK***

embassy, but the report states that "the demonstration at the embassy was relatively peaceful".

In a report with a sensationalising headline and lead, *The Independent* (16/02/1989) warns against a Muslim terrorist threat on its way to Britain:

Death squads on way to Britain, rebel leader says

> Several "death squads" from Pakistan and other Muslim countries are on their way to England to assassinate Salman Rushdie, the British author of The Satanic Verses, and the book publishers, according to a former Pakistani minister of information and religious affairs.

The lead of the report is highly value-loaded with "death squads", which were mentioned in earlier news reports, being mentioned again. The person who is directly quoted in the lead is a former cabinet member in a government of a country that has long been related to religious and Muslim sectarian violence. While he is quoted to have approved the Khomeini death sentence *fatwa* against Rushdie and the publishers, no other source condemning it is quoted in the report. Quoting this particular source does not seem to have been coincidental: the report seems to suggest that the Pakistani source, a party leader whose previous cabinet post involved supervising publishing, among other tasks, approved Khomeini's decision, which was widely considered an outrageous violation of freedom of speech and publication.

Although the word 'terrorism' does not explicitly appear in the report, it is encoded in both headline and lead. On the basis of their knowledge of the context, the recipients will then decode the message and supply the rest of the implied information, i.e., that "Pakistan and other Muslim countries are supportive of terrorism and assassination". By directly quoting a Pakistani politician, *The Independent* attempts to give credibility to its news story, so that the threat will be taken seriously by the recipients.

The headline and lead do not seem to offer a valid representation of the story. What was actually intended to be emphasised in both headline and lead—a perceived threat of terrorism—is not detailed further: instead, the rest of the report elaborates on the political career of the quoted source, particularly his attempts to destabilise Miss Bhutto's government.

During the Satanic Verses controversy, *The Guardian*, however, focused more on the diplomatic crisis between Tehran and London, but it too was involved in the negative portrayal of Iran, Islam and Muslims.

Relation with Iran in the balance

> Britain's relations with Iran were hanging in the balance last night, with crowds again chanting "Death to Britain" outside the recently reopened British embassy in Tehran.

This report, published by *The Guardian* (16/02/1989), does not focus primarily on Khomeini's religious edict against Salman Rushdie. Rather it mentions three events, two of which underlie Tehran's alleged involvement in terrorism: the Lockerbie crash and the reward offered to kill Salman Rushdie.

The Guardian's headline does not focus on the fatwa *per se*, but deals instead with three allegedly incriminating events in which Iran was involved: the bombing of the Pan American passenger airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, the attacks on the British Embassy in Tehran and the size of Rushdie's bounty. Its lead outlines the demonstrations outside the British Embassy, and highlights the deteriorating Anglo-Iranian relations and the emotive chanting of "Death to Britain".

The report implies a connection with terrorism when it notes that the Israeli Foreign Minister and his British counterpart "discussed their implacable determination to resist terrorism". Given the setting in which the meeting was held, this statement clearly suggests that Tehran is implicated in terrorism.

The Guardian (17/02/1989) suggests the involvement of Iran in two terrorist acts. In the main news report, under the headline ***UK near breaking with Iran***, the

Lockerbie bombing is once again mentioned, with a suggestion that Iran may have been involved in it:

> There were also hints yesterday that Britain was close to concluding that Iran had commissioned the bombers behind December's Lockerbie disaster.... It was being suggested yesterday that published speculation about Iranian involvement 'is not likely to be far off the mark'.

The report does not discuss a threat of outside agitators, though it does take the opportunity to vilify Iran. The report states that "there is only a fine line between terrorist acts and the menace in Tehran's threats against Mr Rushdie".

Another report on the same page, under the headline ***British Airways threatened***, associates Iran with a threat to hijack a British Airways airliner, and links the threat to the money offered to kill Salman Rushdie:

> A threat to blow up British Airways planes flying into India was made in Bombay yesterday only hours after the Iranian bounty on the author Mr. Salman Rushdie was raised to £3 million.

A further image of extremism, intolerance and intransigence is featured on *The Independent*'s (20/02/1989) front page under the headline(s) and lead: ***Rushdie 'will not be forgiven'***

Khomeini confirms death sentence against novelist

> Ayatollah Khomeini last night dashed the cautious hopes that his sentence of death on Salman Rushdie might be lifted by declaring that the author would not be forgiven even if he repented.

Unlike the reporting of demonstrations involving police and Muslim protesters, which often use the passive form to background one of the agents (police), especially when demonstrators are killed, the lead of this report uses the active form to emphasise the responsible agent (Khomeini) and his action (confirming death sentence against Rushdie). In fact, the report, which consists of 11 paragraphs including the lead, is almost devoid of passive sentences, because all the meanings need to be emphasised as they involve actions and reactions: Khomeini's insistence on Mr. Rushdie's death, and the British government's response.

> Ayatollah Khomeini last night dashed the cautious hopes.... Ayatollah Khomeini said in a statement.... His second intervention in the Rushdie affair

> amounted to a reaffirmation.... Deputy foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Larijani, told the British Chargé d'Affaires.... The government decided that.... Ayatollah Khomeini's statement said .... The conservative Resalat added that.... Liaqat Husssain said that.... The warning came... et cetera. (*The Independent*, 20/02/1989)

In comparison, *The Guardian* (18/02/1989) relegated the "death squads" allegations to a secondary event, and described them as "claims" by Tehran radio. *The Guardian* did not use it as a sensationalising headline, as did *The Independent*, and it even underestimated the threat, by quoting some British Muslims "with experience of Shiite militancy", as described in the report, as saying: "It is sheer froth with no practicality", and "we expect a lot of hot air from some Pakistani Muslims, but no more than that". It is clear that *The Guardian*'s approach in this particular news report differs from that of *The Independent.*

The Times (19/02/1989) continued to maintain the atmosphere of threats:

Britain seeking EEC response to Tehran threats

> As the controversy over The Satanic Verses spread to the United States and began to embroil the Britain's European partners in diplomatic arguments with Iran, Britain decided to seek a common EEC response to Iran's death threats against the author, Mr. Rushdie.

Throughout the news report there is a clear indication of an existing threat, to the extent that "British officials would probably seek a joint position at a meeting of foreign ministers on Monday". Two US booksellers are reported to have withdrawn the controversial book "to protect employees from possible terrorist actions". Another UK bookseller reportedly decided to withdraw the book because "the safety of its staff and customers had to come first". The book's US publisher, Viking, "has received at least nine bomb threats" and the firm is reported to have "installed a new security system in its New York headquarters". The Dutch foreign minister is reported to have described Khomeini's edict as a "call for international terrorism". It is also reported that the Iranian ambassador to the Vatican "called for the killing of directors of an Italian publishing house" because of their decision to publish the book. The Italian foreign ministry is reported to be "worried by the threats against the author and any threats translated into criminal acts". The news report also states that "there is a strong public reaction against the threats": prominent public figures

in France, the report says, denounced what has been called "terrorism in defence of God's honour", a comment that suggests the existence of an international threat posed by Islam.

A link has clearly been constructed between Iran, which has been a central theme around which the image of Islam has been constructed in the British press, and extremism, terrorism and violence, in order to influence public opinion. *The Times* clearly depicts Islam as a political ideology used for military and political objectives, in its report of the denunciation by public figures in France of "terrorism in defence of God's honour", a phrase that associates Islam with a variety of different acts of extremism.

Although *The Guardian* coverage of the Rushdie affair generally focused on the looming diplomatic crisis in Anglo-Iranian relations, it occasionally highlighted threats by the Iranian side, especially to the lives of British hostages, Mr. Roger Cooper and British diplomats:

> Sir Geoffrey said yesterday: 'I have concluded that it is no longer sensible to maintain a diplomatic presence in Iran in present circumstances.... The Foreign Office was cautious about a break in diplomatic relations, which might endanger Mr. Roger Cooper, the British businessman who was found guilty of spying by Iran, and the British hostages in Lebanon.... Britain hopes that its diplomats in Tehran will be able to leave within 48 hours and has urged Tehran to maintain police protection for their safety until then. (*The Guardian*, 21/02/1989)

However, the report gives no indication of how the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Britain and Iran would pose a threat to the lives of British hostages in another Middle Eastern Muslim country, Lebanon. While *The Times* and *The Independent* clearly stated that the danger to the lives of the British hostages in Lebanon lay in the fact that their captors were pro-Iranian groups, *The Guardian* seems to have left readers to work out what it leaves unsaid: the involvement of Iran in trans-border terrorist acts such as hostage-taking.

There is a further reminder of the association of Islam with terrorism and violence at the end of a news report in *The Times* (22/02/198), which is followed by bulleted brief national news items, one of which quotes a person identified as an "expert on Islamic affairs" as saying:

> Mr. Rushdie is a dead man.... There is no place safe for him in the world ... the sentence passed by Ayatollah Khomeini was final and irrevocable.

A similar reminder in *The Guardian* (22/02/1989) reports President George Bush as warning Tehran: "Mr. Bush warned that the United States would hold Tehran accountable for any terrorist action against US interests."

On the other hand, *The Times*' focus seems to have shifted, from the Iranian leadership attitudes and Muslims' anti-Rushdie protests abroad to the perceived threat inside Britain, as in the report published on 03/03/1989 under the following headline and lead:

Terrorists add Hurd, Howe to book death list

> Two cabinet ministers and a television newsreader have been added to the death list of a pro-Iranian terrorist group ready to carry out Ayatollah Khomeini's instructions over the Salman Rushdie book The Satanic Verses.

The report is typical in portraying Islam within a framework of violence and terrorism, by attaching the adjective "Islamic" to an Iranian radical organisation reported to have previously carried out "terrorist attacks" and "assassination operations":

> Security was tightened last night for Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr. Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, and other senior ministers after a telephone threat by the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution.

The alleged security threat was reported to have been so serious that security was "tightened" for top British cabinet members. It is obvious that the report seeks to warn the public mind against the foreign terrorist danger that threatens the security of Britain, and the life of some of its top political figures, by making the perceived threat of this "Islamic" organisation sound more serious and alarming, by referring to its "involvement in a string of terrorist attacks" and "other three London assassination operations".

The report also intends to convey the image that this Muslim intolerance and intransigence occurs despite the tolerant British attitude illustrated by Sir Geoffrey Howe's remarks on the "huge distance between ourselves and the book". The Leader of the House of Commons, Mr. John Wakeham, is reported to have told MPs that "Britain fully understood the deep offence that the book (*The Satanic Verses*) has given to Muslims".

The report seems to highlight the difference between what it attempts to portray as a persistently intransigent Muslim stance, and a tolerant attitude by the British government.

In line with the shift of focus towards the alleged internal threats to Britain because of the Satanic Verses controversy, *The Times* (08/03/1989) published a news report under the following headline and lead:

Government tells security risk Iranian to leave

> In view of the threat from Iran against Mr. Salman Rushdie over The Satanic Verses, some Iranians living in Britain were being asked to leave on security grounds, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Secretary, said in a Commons statement. The Home Secretary would issue the necessary notices soon. (*The Times* 08/03/1989)

Both headline and lead emphasise the fear of a possible threat from Iranian individuals living in the UK. Such an attitude is typical in evoking for readers the security threat posed by "a number" of Iranians—Muslims—who were to be deported from British soil because of this threat. The readers are reminded that the threat is not all over: other Iranians are still in the UK, but they are reported to be under "close review".

Fifteen of the 21 paragraphs in the report focus on the ensuing diplomatic row between Britain and Iran. Since the report was written almost four weeks after the beginning of the Rushdie controversy, the tone of coverage is calmer, in terms of the patterns and frequency of constructing a negative image of Islam, by drawing on the crisis caused by Mr. Rushdie's novel. Protests against *The Satanic Verses* in Britain

and abroad had subsided: however, the headlines continue to sensationalise and standardise, reinforcing Muslim-related violence and aggression by "security risk Iranians". The headline of the report is not a valid representation of the whole story. The first six paragraphs of the report are drawn from the headline and lead, but the remaining fifteen paragraphs derive neither from the headline nor from the lead: they deal with issues such as the fate of a British prisoner in Iran (Roger Cooper) and the British hostages, the fitness of Iran for diplomatic relations, the Foreign Secretary's recognition of the insult that *The Satanic Verses* caused to the Muslim world, and the diplomatic support of European Community members. They also note that upholding the freedom to write and publish does not imply approval of the *Satanic Verses*, the importance of "civilised" relations between Iran and Britain, and the role Britain played to end a conflict in which Iran and the Iranian people had been engaged.

Similarly, *The Guardian* (09/03/1989) published a report focusing on the Rushdie-related threats at home and abroad, thereby feeding and maintaining the already existing sense of fear and threat allegedly posed by Muslim elements. Abroad, all Britons were ordered to leave Lebanon:

> The British embassy yesterday issued an urgent warning to all Britons to leave Lebanon as soon as possible and not to remain under any circumstances in West Beirut or the Beqa'a Valley.... There is an increased threat to British citizens in Lebanon, where three Britons are already held hostage and where a fourth was shot dead in December.

At home, *The Guardian* reported that the Home Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, told the House of Commons that "an unspecified number of Iranians, including individuals who might have been called upon to carry out the death threat against Mr. Rushdie, had been ordered to leave Britain".

The lead of the report indicates a high-level alarm against the perceived threats abroad from Muslim individuals and organisations alike. It uses the phrase "random new attacks", which suggests that these alleged attacks could take place at any time against any British target:

> Fearing random new attacks as a result of the Rushdie affair, the British embassy yesterday issued an urgent warning to all Britons to leave Lebanon as soon as possible. (*The Guardian*, 09/03/1989)

The report employs lexicalisation—the use of the words "fearing", "random", "new attacks"—and non-specification—"random attacks"—to make the perceived threat more serious.

5. Islam/Muslims' alleged anti-Western sentiments

News reports dealing with events related to violence committed by Islamic militant groups involve a view of Islam that is arguably based on perceptual framework of anti-Westernism. This framework reinforces Islam's perceived disagreement with Western values and aspirations, along the lines established by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. As noted in the introductory chapter on the historical relationship between Islam and the Christian West, the legacy of historical conflict between the two parties is important in the collective memory of the West. This memory, it can be argued, still views Islam as monolithic and, consequently, conflates mainstream Islam with militant Islam, arguing that its overall rhetoric and attitudes reflects anti-Westernism. This argument entails Islam's perceived animosity to major Western values such as democracy, individualism and freedom, especially freedom of speech. The perceived anti-Western sentiments of Islam/Muslims represent one of the issues that form the main themes involved in news reports of the Rushdie affair.

News reports suggest that Prime Minister Mir Hossein Musawi "is seen as the most anti-British of senior Iranian ministers", and also that two other cabinet members have been "against conciliatory moves by a moderate faction led by the Iranian Parliament speaker" (*The Times,* 21/02/1989). This implies that almost all senior Iranian ministers are anti-British, a suggestion that asserts the existence of anti-British sentiments at the top of the Iranian ruling establishment.

In the same context, the report indicates that the hard-line faction within the Iranian ruling establishment dominates the whole situation. The dominance of the Iranian hard-line faction's support for the Khomeini death sentence *fatwa* against Rushdie

and against "rapprochement with Britain" suggests, according to the news report, the presence of anti-Western sentiments within the Iranian ruling establishment; and, implicitly, an antipathy towards Western rationalism, tolerance and liberal values.

The reinforcement of the difference between "us", Europe, and "them", embodied by Iran, is implied in the news report's suggestion that

> One option open to Sir Geoffrey (Foreign Secretary) is to ask Britain's 11 partners to show disapproval by recalling their ambassadors in Iran "for consultations".

The report attempts to maintain a state of fear and threat, by citing the "cautious" response of the Foreign Secretary, who, according to the report "did not envisage the withdrawal of the staff already there (at the British embassy)".

The Independent (16/02/1989) published a report packed with encoded messages representing Pakistani Muslim protestors as showing anti-Western sentiments. It focused on the leading role of a top Pakistani politician in an anti-Rushdie demonstration in front of the American Information Centre in Karachi, despite the fact that the USA was not associated with the *Satanic Verses*' row:

> He (the Pakistani politician) led the demonstration in front of the American Information Centre in Islamabad on Sunday during which six people were killed.

The theme of Muslim/Iranian anti-Westernism continued with the focus on the case of Roger Cooper, the British prisoner in Tehran, and the British hostages in Lebanon, in a report under the headline ***Rushdie row halted secret moves to free Cooper*** and the lead:

> Lambeth Palace may have been on the verge of a breakthrough in negotiations with Iranian moderates for the release of a British prisoner in Tehran and British hostages in Lebanon when Ayatollah Khomeini issued his death threat against Salman Rushdie, author of The Satanic Verses.

The Times (05/03/1989) published a relevant news report, with an image, typically prevalent in the British press, linking Iran to supporting terrorism, violence, extremism and hostage-taking. In particular, Iran's alleged involvement in

supporting terrorism is one of the major themes around which the image of Islam has been constructed. However, Muslims' alleged anti-Western sentiments and animosity towards the West are wrapped into two paragraphs in the report:

> Attempts at improving ties with Britain were sabotaged by hardliners in the regime opposed to warmer relations with the West... . Hojatoleslam Rafasanjani and his supporters now seem temporarily to have abandoned trying to re-establish normal links with the West.

The diplomatic crisis was between only two countries—Iran and Britain—but the report categorises some Iranian officials, who were critical of the position of the British government on Rushdie's book, as "opposed to warmer relations with the West".

The most explicitly sensationalising headline to emphasise a Muslim government's anti-Western attitudes was in *The Independent* (23/02/1989): ***Iran leaders unite to attack West***. In order to reflect a generally negative image of the Iranian leadership and Tehran's perceived anti-Western attitude, and to have a greater impact on readers, the report uses sensationalising headlines, value-loaded words and a particular lexicalisation. The report is placed at the top of the front page and is preceded by a highly sensationalising and graphically emphasised secondary headline: ***The arrow is flying towards the heart of this blasphemous bastard, Rushdie***. This is obviously intended to sum up two statements by President Khamenei and Ayatollah Khomeini, neither of which involves any attack against the West. Khomeini is reported to have said: "We must wake up to the West's plots", and President Khamenei is reported to have said: "The Western analysis of this matter is funny and mistaken". The headline is not a valid representation of the lead or the body of the report. It seems to have been based on *The Independent*'s own interpretation of a statement by Ayatollah Khomeini:

> Ayatollah Khomeini's latest statement, extracts of which were broadcast for more than half an hour, confirmed the extent of the sudden switch in the past 10 days away from the steadily improving relations between Tehran and Western Europe.

The report goes on to report on Khomeini's statement:

> Ayatollah Khomeini's statement yesterday marked a return to the most intransigent rhetoric of the revolution. He said the Rushdie affair has been a gift which has helped Iran to avoid a 'naïve foreign policy'.

Thus, the report headline is intended to have a great impact on the readers, by reasserting one of the main themes around which Islam is being constructed in the British press, Islam/Muslims' anti-Western sentiments.

6. Association of Islam/Muslims with irrationality

Negative representation of Islam in the press, it is argued, involves perpetuating the stereotype of alleged Islam/Muslim irrationality, and producing knowledge about both based on this stereotype. Millions of Muslims took to the streets in many Muslim countries to protest against the *Satanic Verses*. These marches were meant to be peaceful protests, but in some cases violence erupted between police and protesters, as in Britain, India and Pakistan. Newspapers chose to give the overall event a negative image, with coverage dominated by reports of violence, clashes between protesters and police, and book burning. There was also a focus on Khomeini's *fatwa* against Rushdie, but it was not mentioned that his *fatwa* applied only to followers of the minority Shiite Muslims. The idea of Islam/Muslims' extreme thoughts and beliefs, and their irrational violence, were dominant in coverage, as the following analysis will show.

Iran suggests an apology could save life of Rushdie

> Thousands of Iranians packed the streets of Tehran to mark "a day of anger". President Ali Khamenei yesterday offered Britain an olive branch by suggesting that the death sentence against Mr. Salman Rushdie could be lifted if he apologised. (*The Times*, 16/02/1989)

Such words and expressions as "thousands of Iranians packed the streets" and "day of anger" are used metaphorically in the lead, to portray an image of fury and vengeance and to indicate that Muslims, who are often cited interchangeably with Iranians, are in a state of rage over the Rushdie controversy. The sentence that includes the Iranian president's offer to lift the death sentence against Mr. Rushdie is syntactically formulated to imply blackmail, hence the president's offer is basically conditional: The offer to lift the death sentence against Mr. Rushdie is

intentionally formulated in a way that depicts the Iranian president as a blackmailer, against European calls to renounce violence and respect freedom of expression. Moreover, the expression "olive branch" is used sarcastically, especially since figures of the Iranian ruling establishment have continuously been portrayed in almost all news reports, including this one, as intransigent and radical. It is noteworthy that what the Iranian president is quoted as saying later in this report is meant to portray him as insisting on Mr. Rushdie's killing.

The news report highlights anti-British sentiments by those whom the news report describes as "worshippers chanting 'Death to Britain', at Friday prayers", which were addressed by the Iranian president Ali Khamenei. It also highlights what is meant to be represented as further intransigence by the Iranian president, who is reported to have said that

> This wretched man has no choice but to die because he has confronted a billion Muslims.

A report in *The Times* (20/02/1989) uses three different strategies to emphasise Khomeini's intransigence, the Iranian establishment's alleged contradiction and uncertainty and the deteriorating diplomatic relations with Tehran. The report has the following headline and lead:

Send Rushdie to hell, says the Ayatollah

> Even if Salman Rushdie repents and becomes the most pious man of all time, it is incumbent on every Muslim to employ everything he's got, his life and wealth, to send him to hell.

Khomeini's perceived intransigence is topicalised by graphic emphasis—a bold secondary headline—although the news report headline features the same message. Metaphorical language—"plunged deeper into crisis"—is also used, obviously to create more impact and sensation and to highlight the deteriorating diplomatic relations between London and Tehran, which is blamed for instigating the *Satanic Verses* controversy by declaring death threats against Mr. Rushdie and causing the ensuing diplomatic crisis:

> The Ayatollah's statement, published by Iran's official news agency, contradicted a speech by President Khamenei last week in which he suggested

> that, if Mr. Rushdie apologised, he might be forgiven. Ayatollah Khomeini treated this suggestion as if it had come from the British media rather than the Iranian President.... 'The imperialist mass media were falsely alleging that if the author repented, his execution order would be lifted. This is denied, 100 percent', his statement said.

The report goes on to point out conflicting statements and contradictions by top figures in the Iranian ruling establishment, a matter which, according to the report, "highlighted a dilemma of dealing with a regime which spoke with conflicting voices". The news report seeks to suggest that the Iranian ruling establishment is dealing with the Rushdie issue in the presence of a state of chaos and uncertainty. It also suggests the Khomeini's decisions and orders regarding the Rushdie controversy are the result of his mood-swings rather than rational thought:

> They have won the support of Ayatollah Khomeini's son Ahmed, who runs his father's office and has an important influence on his mood.

A report in *The Independent* (20/02/1989) also highlights a state of uncertainty and contradiction, obviously to suggest the existence of chaos and confusion within the Iranian ruling establishment. The Iranian Deputy Foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Larijani, is reported to have told the British Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, Nicholas Browne, that the Rushdie statement regarding the proposed pardon is positive. However, it was then reported that two hours later Khomeini reaffirmed the death sentence against Rushdie. This implies that decision-making lies in the hand of one individual—Khomeini—no matter what the head of state says:

> The Iranian President, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, declared yesterday that the death sentence passed on Salman Rushdie would certainly be carried out, but that the author of The Satanic Verses ... might yet be spared if he asked for pardon from the Muslim people.

"Silenced", a metaphor from the domain of oppression and despotism, is negatively used to describe Khomeini's attitude. even towards the conservative media:

> The conservative Resalat (Iranian newspaper) added that the way is still open for real repentance and to reform the signs of this crime.... Such a viewpoint is silenced by Ayatollah Khomeini's latest edict. (*The Independent*, 20/02/1989)

In an earlier news report by *The Independent* (18/02/1989), on the views of Southall Muslims, who are predominantly Asian immigrants, on *The Satanic Verses*

Controversy, the interviewees seemed to be divided into three binary oppositions: Muslims who have read *The Satanic Verses*, at least partially, and those who haven't; practicing Muslims and non-practicing ones; recent Muslim immigrants and long-time immigrants. The recent immigrants, practicing Muslims and those who did not read *The Satanic Verses* are lumped together as advocates of the execution of Rushdie. The suggested common factor between these three groups is irrationality and extreme attitudes:

> They (London Bangladeshi Muslims) do not need to have read the book and know the context of the offending passages to know it breaks Islamic law.... Farah Deeba, 24, who came to Britain from Pakistan six years ago, said: 'He should be killed. I would kill him if he came in front of me'.... Mia Chand, also 52, had heard about the contents of the book through their local mosque.... Mr. Chand said Mr. Rushdie should be killed.

On the other hand, it is also implied that Muslims who immigrated to Britain several years ago, and are non-practicing Muslims, no longer hold what are often perceived as extreme and irrational Muslim views. It is suggested that this is because they have spent many years in rational and tolerant British society:

> Mohammed Dabbeegh, 28, a greengrocer in Southall who came from Iran 13 years ago and describes himself as 'not a good Muslim', thinks Ayatollah Khomeini was wrong to sentence the author to death.... Shashom Sul Hassan, 54, who left Bangladesh for England 32 years ago, said: 'He (Rushdie) has caused a lot of hurt and pain.... He did wrong and he should be punished. But not killed, no.'

The implicit and explicit suggestions of irrationality in news reports were not confined to alleged Islam/Muslims violence and extreme views. They were also extended to the politics of diplomatic relations.

Tehran breaks with UK over Rushdie controversy

> Iran formally broke diplomatic relations with Britain yesterday, so shattering any chance of a compromise over Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, The Satanic Verses, and setting back hopes of progress for Britons held in Iran and Lebanon.

The Times report (08/03/1989), published under the above headline and lead, focuses on the diplomatic break between Britain and Iran, and blames the rupture on Tehran: "The Foreign Office reacted by blaming the Iranians for causing the rupture." Although the severing of diplomatic relations between countries entails a

negative impact on several mutual interests, the report concentrates only on the fate of the British prisoner in Iran, Roger Cooper, whose story was focused upon in a previous report by *The Times*, on 5 March; and the two British hostages, Terry Waite and John McCarthy, although both were held in a different country, Lebanon. The report seems to emphasise a prevalent image of Iran in the Western media that associates Tehran with hostage-taking, planes hijackings, engagement in a holy war against Western values of tolerance and freedom of expression, and involvement in international terrorism: hence the reference to the kidnappers of Waite and McCarthy in Lebanon as "pro-Iranians".

> Relatives and friends of the British hostages held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian kidnappers responded with similar pessimism.

The report attempts to intensify concerns over the fate of Mr. Cooper and the two British hostages, by quoting an announcement, reported to have been issued by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which accuses Britain of having led "plots against Islam and Muslims" for the last two centuries.

The report also portrays Iran as lacking the necessary understanding of the ways in which countries deal with each other in diplomatic relations. A spokesman for the British Foreign Office is quoted as saying:

> The rupture was entirely of Iran's making because Tehran's behaviour make normal relations impossible.... Incitement to murder is a violation of the most elementary principles and obligations that govern relations between sovereign states.

The report clearly portrays a negative image of Iran, by representing it as a Muslim state whose leadership incites murder and infringes the norms regulating relations between sovereign states. The word "behaviour"—now usually used of animal or people as objects of study (Oxford English Dictionary, 1993: p. 207)—is reportedly used by the spokesman of the British Foreign Office to refer metaphorically and negatively to Tehran's official posture in the diplomatic row with Britain. Another metaphor, possibly from the domain of psychology and behavioural sciences, is used in a similar way in a report by *The Independent* (16/02/1989). It is obviously meant to suggest Iran's irrationality in the diplomatic arena:

> They (conservative MPs) are confident that Foreign Office diplomats are making all possible efforts to bring the Iranians to their senses.

Bringing the Iranians "to their senses" implies that they are fanatical, extreme or wild.

The metaphorical use of the word "behaviour", rather than "attitude" or "stance", occurs again in *The Independent* report of 22/02/1989, ***Commons unites behind Howe in Rushdie affair***, obviously to portray Iran negatively in connection with the diplomatic row with Britain. An explicit contrast between "us" and "them" is used within a context that portrays negatively Iran's perceived disregard for "sovereignty" and the "democratic way of life". Sir Geoffrey Howe, a former British Foreign Secretary, is reported to have told the Commons that

> Britain is able to do business with many counties who do not share <u>our</u> ideals or democratic way of life. <u>We</u> were ready to do business with Iran.... But <u>we</u> can only do so if Iran respects accepted standards of international behaviour, in particular respect for the sovereignty and law of other states as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

The possessive and subjective pronouns "our" and "we" are used as in-group designators (van Dijk, 1998: p8), obviously to establish a contrast between "us", Britain, and "them": Iran and "many countries who do not share our ideals or democratic way of life". This clear us-versus-them distinction is implicitly made on the basis of a presumed fundamental fault line between Britain and Iran, as indicated in the report, and by extension between Britain and Muslim countries at large: "many countries who do not share our ideals or democratic way of life". A further emphasis on this fault line between Iran, and implicitly Muslims, and Western values is indicated in the report, by quoting an MP as saying that "the freedom to write and to speak peacefully is fundamental in Britain".

To reassert Iran's irrationality, the report further quotes the Labour Party spokesman as saying:

> We must make clear that Iran's violation of the fabric of world order is utterly unacceptable. She will have to earn the right to be accepted back into the community of civilised nations.

The Guardian (22/02/1989) gave similar indications, by reporting that four German parliamentary parties had signed a declaration describing the death threat against Mr. Rushdie as "a declaration of war against our legal system and our values". It also reported Sir Geoffrey Howe as saying to the Commons that

> Iran has attacked the fundamental freedoms for which our society stands in the most flagrant and menacing way.... Until Iran decided to return to civilised society, it would be impossible to conduct normal business with Tehran.

An example of self-positive presentation versus other-negative presentation reinforcing the existence of the values fault line is evident in Mrs. Thatcher's comment in the report: "Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental part of a free society and should not be interfered with from the outside."

The theme of irrationality is also highlighted by *The Independent* (23/02/1989), which reports an Iranian presidential aide as using the insulting word "bastard" to describe Mr. Rushdie. Reporting an Iranian official's comments, in which he was alleged to have used this word, was obviously intended to portray the Iranian leadership at large negatively: the person reported to have made these comments was speaking at a press conference, in his capacity as a presidential aide, and speaking on behalf of the Iranian government. The report is generally meant to show that Iranian officials do not observe the normal rules and principles of decency and diplomacy, which are normally followed by state officials when speaking in official settings such as press conferences:

> A presidential aide, asked at a press conference in the Yugoslav capital to clarify the significance of President Khamenei's remarks, said: The arrow is indeed flying towards the heart of this blasphemous bustard, Salman Rushdie, he must be killed.

Muslim clash looms as Iran presses on with Rushdie issue

> Iran was set on a collision course with the Muslim world yesterday as its delegation returned here from Tehran with orders to push ahead with its demand for the killing of Salman Rushdie despite opposition from all but a handful of the 46 members of the Islamic Conference Organisation.

Discourse is never consistent and perfect, but involves contradictions. In a report with the above headline and lead, *The Times* published a report (14/03/1989)

suggesting an imminent "Muslim clash" over the Khomeini religious edict to kill Mr. Rushdie, despite the tendency to represent Islam as a homogeneous entity. The rest of the news report clearly indicates that Iran was trying to press ahead with its demands to kill Mr. Rushdie, but faced reluctance by other ICO member states.

The contradiction between the headline, lead and body of the report on the one hand, and the perception of Islam as a homogeneous entity on the other hand, is indicative of a tendency to use repetitive, sensationalising and standardising headlines as a shock tactic. Such shocking and eye-catching headlines illustrate the use of imaging and framing rather than coverage. Accordingly, the headline is worded and meant to say it all, and to reflect a negative image of Islam in an impressionistic and misinforming way.

Apostasy ruling in Riyadh puts Rushdie under greater threat

> The threat to the life of British author, Salman Rushdie, intensified last night when foreign ministers representing 46 Islamic nations issued a hard-line declaration denouncing him as an 'apostate'. They also called for a worldwide ban on the sale and distribution of The Satanic Verses.

The report published by *The Times* on 17 March 1989 can be divided into two parts: the first part deals with the outcome of an annual meeting held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, by the foreign ministers of the Islamic Conference Organisation member states. The second part addresses what the report described as the "Anti-British Crusade" over the Rushdie affair.

In the first part, the report highlights the threat to Mr. Rushdie's life, as a result of what is described as a "hard-line declaration" charging him as an apostate. The report also quotes many unnamed delegates as saying that the denouncement of Mr. Rushdie as an apostate would be interpreted by "Muslims extremists throughout the world as further justification for seeking to kill the author". The report goes on to state that what it referred to as "the Islamic sentence" for the charge of apostasy is death. It also indicates wide disagreements about the form of the trial, and a penitence procedure prior to carrying the sentence. It sums up the outcome of the

Riyadh conference, quoting an unnamed North African delegate, as "very good for Iran".

In terms of negatively representing Islam, the report does not differ from the previous ones. The declaration issued by foreign ministers representing 46 Islamic nations is branded "hard-line". The focus on apostasy and mention of the "penalty" and "sentence" implies that concepts and practices such as apostasy and repentance, which were prevalent in pre-Enlightenment Europe centuries ago, still prevail in the present-day Islamic world. The image that is intended to be maintained here is implied in the suggestion that the world of Islam is still immersed in ignorance, clericalism, intransigence and extremism. The overall intended image is backed up by terms and phrases such as "hard-line", "apostate", "Muslim extremists", "Islamic penalty", "death" and "Islamic sentence".

Although the report implies that Mr. Rushdie may be executed because he was denounced by the Riyadh meeting as an "apostate"—implicitly according to the so-called Islamic penalty—none of the 46 ICO member states, apart from Saudi Arabia and Iran, was applying the notorious Islamic *Sharia* laws at the time of the report, nor had any individual in the recent history of any of these countries been charged with apostasy and executed for it.

The second part of the report deals with the Tehran attack on the royal visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Iran is portrayed as speaking on behalf of all Muslims:

> When the British Government has applied all its resources for inflicting a blow upon Islam and insulting our noble Prophet.... The royal tour contains some symbolic measure in that it openly expresses hostility towards the Muslims' demands.... The British Government is trying to exploit such symbolic measures to give a cold shoulder to the worlds' Muslims. But it cannot avoid facing their wrath.

The report continues to highlight and maintain an image of Iran as hostile to Britain. Tehran is alleged to have been involved in what the report describes as an "anti-British crusade". To emphasise this aspect, the report uses a value-loaded lexical

item—crusade—seemingly to bring into readers' minds the historical conflict between Islam and Europe. In historical contexts, the word "Crusade" (starting in upper case) refers to the Christian military expeditions in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims. However, "crusade" (lower case) in the news text is ostensibly used to mean "campaign"; however what could have been understood by readers here is the word's connection with the historically conflictual relationship between Islam and Europe.

In concluding this chapter, we must note that the three newspapers did not follow a similar line in their coverage. All of them devoted considerable space to the events of violence and protests related to the Satanic Verses and the Khomeini *fatwa* inside Britain and abroad. However, *The Guardian*'s focus was different from that of *The Times* and *The Independent*. For instance, it looked at the Anglo-Iranian relations in the light of other events, such as the suspected Iranian involvement in the Lockerbie bombing, the sentencing of the British businessman Roger Cooper on espionage charges, and the impact of the Rushdie affair on the relations between Tehran and London. *The Guardian*'s language of coverage was, to some extent, neutral, and so was *The Independent*'s, albeit to a lesser extent. However, *The Times* used non-neutral language and value-loaded terms, e.g., 'mob' and 'rioter', instead of 'crowd' and 'protester'. That indicates the sensationalised nature of its news reports. *The Times* and *The Independent* devoted more space than *The Guardian* to coverage of protests that turned into violent confrontations between protesters and police. Such events were used, in various ways, to reinforce the association of Islam/Muslims with extremism, terrorism, irrationality and anti-Western sentiments.

CHAPTER 5

The rise of the Taliban movement to power

1. Background

The Taliban movement was founded in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, by graduates of the Pakistani Islamic seminaries, and it overran the Afghan capital Kabul on September 27th 1996. Their aim, as they claimed then, was to restore order and security, and to put an end to the chaos caused by the government of the Mujahideen, which fought the Soviets from 1979 to 1989. The students from the Pakistani seminaries, who come to be known as the "Taliban", were against what they believed to be the Mujahideen's state of confusion and lack of motivation. The Taliban believed that the government of the former Mujahideen was not a pure Islamic state, and so they declared their mission: to seize power in Afghanistan and proclaim an Islamic state

Having gained control of Kabul, the Taliban hanged the former Afghan president Najibullah, and imposed a strict version of Islam that banned girls' education and women working. Women were forced to wear the veil and to cover themselves in *burqa*. The Taliban banned music and dancing, closed down cinemas and the television station, and burned video and audiocassettes as well as public works of art. They also banned the consumption of alcoholic drinks. Men were ordered to grow full beards and were often forced to pray in the mosques. The Taliban treatment of the Afghan people, especially girls and women, led to wide concern, and to condemnations by many human rights groups. Only Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Pakistan recognised the Taliban regime in 1997, but Saudi Arabia and the UAE withdrew their recognition on the eve of the war that toppled the Taliban regime in October 2001, following the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington.

The Western media coverage of the dramatic rise of the Taliban began in the early stages of its emergence in the Afghan cities of Heart and Kandahar, but increased

after the Taliban movement consolidated its power grip and started to impose a strict conservative brand of Islam, following the fall of Kabul. News reports covered the harsh Taliban punishment of those who dared to show defiance, the battles that ensued on the military front, between the fighters of the new regime and its opponents, the imposition of a strict dress code on women, the ban on girls' education and women's employment, as well as the closure of Kabul University and the suspension of the High Court.

However, it has been argued that the Western media coverage of the reign of the Taliban is a case in point of conflating and identifying mainstream Islam with its most radical fringes, by drawing on the extreme and violent acts committed by the Taliban, on the basis of their perception and interpretation of Islam.

It could also be argued that the overall coverage during the six weeks after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan focused on the harsh treatment of the people of Kabul, especially women, and linked these measures to violence and extremism by the new authority, which was attempting to consolidate its power on the capital, as a key step towards controlling the whole country. The military situation on the different Afghani fronts was also covered, but not with the intensity of the coverage of other events in Kabul and the other Afghan cities. The focal point of coverage in the three newspapers was the Taliban authority's harsh measures against individuals in the capital Kabul, with a particular concentration on the violations committed against women rights, although these constituted only part of the overall infringements of human rights in the country.

The measures imposed by the Taliban authorities, especially on women, were obvious violations of the basic human rights. The issue of the rights and status of women in Islam has for several decades, if not centuries, attracted increasing attention and controversy, especially with regard to gender and equality, the legal and other rights of women in Islam and the Islamic perspective on the veil (*Hijab*). Consequently, negative stereotypes of Muslim women in some Western media

branded Islam as a backward and "fundamentalist" religion in its treatment of women.

The following analysis will examine what was really covered by *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*; and how news stories were framed to reinforce this image of women, and the association of Islam with violence and extremism after the Taliban takeover of power.

The analysis will include the news reports published by the three newspapers in the immediate aftermath of the Taliban taking control of Kabul on the 27th of September 1996. It will examine the coverage of the first six weeks after the capture of Kabul from the Northern Alliance. There were some 135news reports about Afghanistan under the new regime of Taliban during this period. However, I have selected 15 news reports, as in the other case studies. The selection criteria are based on the topics treated by these reports, i.e., the news stories that were framed to reinforce negative stereotypes of Muslim women, drawing mainly on the experience of women under the Taliban regime; and also news stories that associate Islam with violence and extremism, drawing on the practices of Taliban.

Newspapers	Period of coverage	Articles found	Articles analysed
The Guardian	28 Sep.-08 Nov.1996	29	15
The Times	28 Sep.-08 Nov.1996	68	15
The Independent	28 Sep.-08 Nov.1996	38	15

2. Analysis

The coverage of both *The Independent* and *The Guardian* (28/09/1996), after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban militias the previous day, included a background to the Afghan conflict, whereas *The Times'* (28/09/1996) coverage was confined to a three-paragraph report that focused mainly on the execution by Taliban militiamen

of the former Afghan president Mohammed Najibullah, who had taken refuge in the UN compound in Kabul in 1992.

Explicit identification of Islam with the Taliban militias, and implicit association of Islam with violence and extremism in the subsequent events, is common to all three newspapers:

> The hard-line Taleban Islamic militias took control of Kabul, the Afghan capital, yesterday and immediately killed former president Muhammad Najibullah. He was shot and his battered body was left hanging from a concreted traffic gantry. (*The Times*, 28/09/1996)

> Fighters of the Islamic militia known as Taliban burst into the compound where Najibullah lived as a virtual prisoner for the past four-and-half years.... Najibullah, 49, was dragged out, beaten, shot dead, and hung from a traffic kiosk near the palace. (*The Independent*, 28/09/1996)

> The bodies of a previous Afghan president, Mohammed Najibullah, and his brother, Shahpur Amdedzai, a former security chief, hung from a lamppost.... Residents waited to see whether the victorious hard-line Islamic force would end four years of factional fighting. (*The Guardian*, 28/09/1996)

Both *The Times* and *The Independent* first explicitly identified Islam with Taliban, then implicitly associated Islam with violence, but *The Guardian* report reversed the order. In its report of the horrible scene of the killing of Najibullah and his brother, *The Guardian* first reported that "they had been mutilated", and the identification of Islam with Taliban was made in the following paragraph, which starts with the phrase "the victorious hard-line Islamic force". In comparison, *The Times* and *The Independent* provided more details on how Najibullah and his brother were executed. The coverage of this particular incident did not differ from the coverage of the other events and acts committed by the Taliban militiamen, in terms of framing news stories to depict a negative image of Islam by means of different strategies, one of which is to consistently attach the adjective "Islamic" to the movement of Taliban and its militias. The execution of Najubullah and his brother is used not only to imply an association of Islam with barbarity, but also to suggest its incivility and its lack of respect for human life, and disregard of it.

Whenever an event is reported to have been committed by the Taliban militiamen, a more negative portrayal is reported and there is an implicit association with Islam. Association with Islam is often indicated by identifying Taliban with Islam, by using the modifier 'Islamic'. To strengthen this image in readers' minds, they are told that the state that Taliban intended to establish is described as "the world's purest Islamic state":

> In their attempt to create the world's purest Islamic state in Afghanistan, the victorious Taliban militia will waste little time before subjecting the population to justice by amputation and coercing women in purdah. (*The Times,* 28/09/1996)

Another report by *The Guardian* (28/09/1996) supposedly shows a more negative image, by explicitly identifying Taliban with Islam:

> Who are they: Fundamentalist Islamic militia with membership of about 10,000 men and boys. Their aim: Officially, to run the world's most hard-line Islamic state. Unofficially, to rule using Islam as ideological justification, and to control a slice of the £50 million heroin crop. Line on women: No schools for girls over 10. The Taliban have closed all women's universities in areas they run. Women pressed not to work, and not to leave homes unless accompanied by a male.

The Guardian report portrays an image that involves violations of the rights provided for in international charters—women's access to education and right to work, involvement in cross-border criminal activities—involvement in world drug trafficking, and the recruitment of underage soldiers. This overall negative image is mentioned in connection with a movement that is consistently identified with Islam, by means of attaching the identifier 'Islamic' to it, with no mention of the fact that the Taliban model in its entirety is based on its own interpretation of Islam.

The report's reference to "using Islam as ideological justification" reinforces the argument that the media's audience receives a generally obscured and perceived view of the reality of Islam, based on preconceived perceptions that look at Islam as a political ideology that can be manipulated for military and political objectives. In this report, these preconceived perceptions of Islam were further fed by the earlier identification of Islam with a radical movement such as Taliban.

A closer look at the surface structure of another report, in *The Times* (28/09/1996), shows that no place of reporting is cited, nor is there any reference to the source of its information. The use of the future tense indicates certainty about what will happen, rather than reporting what is actually happening on the ground at the moment of reporting:

> Music, dancing, picnics, and even kite-flying will be banned as un-Islamic.... The few television sets and stereo systems left in the capital will be ritually smashed up in public squares.... Women and girls will be forced to conform to strict Islamic codes of dress.... Women and girls will be prohibited from going to work or school.

Lexically, *The Times*' headline, lead and the body of the report are tightly knitted and semantically linked, in order to reflect a grim picture of bloody violence, brutality and ruthlessness. The words "brutal", "brutality", "ruthless", "amputation", "coercing", "enforcer", "meat cleavers", "chop off" and "beaten" are all used to reinforce this brutal image:

> An era of brutality is about to fall on the hapless inhabitants of Kabul.... The Taliban militia is a ruthless enforcer of Sharia (Islamic law). The Islamic fighters, with their flowing beards and cloth caps, dish out Koranic justice. Meat cleavers are used to chop off the hands and feet of thieves, and women who fail to conform to dress codes are beaten with rifle butts. (*The Times*, 28/09/1996)

The fighting that preceded and immediately followed the Taliban taking control of the Afghan capital Kabul caused a humanitarian disaster, because of the deteriorating living situation, and tens of thousands of refugees had to leave their homes. However, the headlines in *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* featured two issues related to perceived Islamic fundamentalist icons: veiled Muslim women and bearded Muslim men. Metaphor is used as a linguistic game to make headlines sound more sensational: ***Militants bring a veil down on battered Kabul*** (*The Times*, 30/09/1996), ***Women of Kabul hide behind veil of fear as Taliban banish them from the streets*** (*The Independent*, 30/09/1996), ***Beard-growing rule imposed*** (*The Guardian*, 30/09/1996). It could be argued that the press scramble to associate Islam with violence and extremism was a key factor behind the interest in covering the events that followed the rise of Taliban to power in Afghanistan,

although the Afghan conflict hardly fits into general news values. For instance, if we take meaningfulness as a news value, Islamic, third-world and Oriental events do not seem as self-evidently meaningful to Western reporters as European and American events. In terms of relevance, however, events in far-off cultures may nevertheless become newsworthy when they are viewed by news-gatherers as impinging on their home culture (Hartley, 1995: p. 77). In this case, the veil is portrayed in accordance with the popular perception that considers it one of the hallmarks of the subordination of women in Islam.

A report in *The Times* (30/09/1996) employs metaphors reminiscent of the centuries-old Muslim conquests during the conflict between Islam and Europe, apparently to reawaken in the public mind images of the Muslim armies involved in those conquests. *The Times*' point of focus continues to concentrate on reflecting a brutal image of the developments in Afghanistan after the rise of Taliban to power, and reinforces this image by using particular lexical items, such as "enforced" and "the strictest".

> The veil is descending once more in Kabul ... where Taleban invaders have imposed the strictest interpretation of *Sharia* (Islamic Law), under which thieves will have a hand amputated and adulterers be stoned or lashed to death.

The Independent report, however, does not directly refer to the Islamic law, but symbolically reports that the new Taliban rules were declared from inside Kabul mosques: the actions of the Taliban are directly linked to Islam by means of reference to "Islamic clerics":

> At dawn on Saturday, Islamic clerics broadcast a new code of behaviour from the loudspeakers of mosques. Women should stay at home, the edict said. If they ventured out, they should be covered from head to toe. And they should not work.

Both *The Times* and *The Guardian* report the beard-growing rule imposed by the Taliban authority in a way that suggests the existence of a penalty in Islamic law for men who do not grow their beards, as well as the imposition of the loss of freedoms and liberty:

> Afghanistan's new ruling Taliban Islamic militia yesterday ordered government employees to grow beards within one-and-half months or face Islamic

> punishment.... Anyone flouting it would face action under Islamic *sharia* law. (*The Guardian* 30/09/1996)
> Yesterday, it (Taliban) even ordered government employees to grow beards within six weeks or face Islamic punishment. (*The Times* 30/09/1996)

Using the loaded term "Jihad", *The Times* report concludes with an alleged fear of "Islamic fundamentalism" moving northwards. After portraying a grim picture dominated by harsh rules, oppression, the absence of basic rights and the denial of freedoms, *The Times* report attempts to expand Taliban's rise to power into a regional threat:

> There is an instinctive fear of Islamic fundamentalism in Russia. Pavel Felgenhauer, the military journalist, wrote that 'Tajikistan cannot be held' if a jihad is launched from across the border.

The Times frequently uses phrases to describe the Taliban militias that, in essence, associate Islam with militarism, invasion, extremism and fanaticism: "Taliban Islamic militias", "the Taliban fundamentalist militia", "Islamic fighters", "the Taliban invaders", "a holy army", "Afghanistan's holy army", "Islamic conquerors", "invincible Taliban army" (28 and 30 September, and 1 and 2 October, 1996). *The Independent* and *The Guardian* also use a similarly militaristic tone of coverage, implicitly associating Islam with militarism. Both newspapers use similar terms to describe Taliban: "fighters of the Islamic militia", "the fundamentalist militia", "Islamist victors", "new Islamic rulers" (28 and 30 September, and 6 and 9 October, 1996); "fundamentalist Islamic militia", "Islamist Taliban militia", "ruling Taliban Islamist militia" (28 and 30 September, 1996).

The Times (02/10/1996) report involves coded messages, metaphor and value-loaded terms and phrases that could arguably be considered reminders of the commonly held perception, in the Western collective mind, that Islam is a faith of conquests and invasions; and that it is inherently violent, intolerant and spread by force, in contrast to Christianity, which is arguably spread by peace, persuasion and reason. The following phrases were used to support this perception: "to spread the word of Allah", referring to the Taliban militias, and "Islamic crusader", referring to the Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omer, whose name was associated with

Usama Bin Ladin, following the US war on terrorism. In a report published three days earlier (30/09/1996), *The Times* refers to the centuries-old Muslim conquests during the historical conflict between Islam and Christian Europe. It then repeats the same theme, seemingly to reawaken in the public mind images of the Muslim armies involved in those conquests. Both phrases—"to spread the word of Allah" and "Islamic crusader"—are used to reinforce this perception, and could serve to rekindle Western sentiments that have been transmitted through the generations since the Crusades. There is an implicit sense of historicism in *The Times* report, an indication that the overall spirit of the report focuses on reawakening historically-based negative perceptions of Islam, especially those related to conquests, invasions and the Crusades.

Reporting the involvement of Taliban in the growing and trafficking of drugs, and simultaneously and explicitly identifying it with Islam—e.g., "Islamic militia", "Islamic army", "Islamic fundamentalist militia", "Islamic invaders"—suggests that in Islam growing the poppy crop and trafficking heroin are not illegal, but rather necessary to finance its "holy" war. Such a suggestion implies an association between the "holy war"—a value-loaded phrase often used in connection with Islam—and the illegal international trade linked with narcoterrorism, and with terrorist and violent activities carried out to stop intrusion in drugs trafficking:

> But holy wars are expensive, and it was not long before Taliban had given the annual poppy crop its blessing— they levy a 10 percent tax on the crop.

Coverage of the developments in Afghanistan during the second week after the Taliban rise to power consisted mainly of news reports about the ensuing military battles, and features that concentrated mainly on the worsening situation of women there, as a result of the violations committed by the Taliban regime in this respect.

However, the worsening situation of women's rights continued to be the point of focus in the three newspapers' coverage of the events in Afghanistan, although each deployed a different approach. *The Times* makes no reference to the fact that the inhumane treatment of the Afghan women under the Taliban authorities is not

representative of mainstream Islam. On the contrary, *The Times* report (04/10/1996) suggests that the Taliban attitudes towards women were based on Quranic knowledge and interpretation, and lacked liberal humanistic education, which is viewed as the benchmark of western societies and civilisation:

> A television crew filming an unmasked Western female journalist in Kabul fled from an armed Mullah who exploded in rage. The mullahs are well educated about the Koran, but few are educated in anything else.

The Independent, however, adopted an approach that involved reporting mixed messages about the rules forced by the Taliban authorities on women in Afghanistan. Some reports quote women, in a few instances, as saying that the harsh rules imposed on them were not derived from Islam, and that the Taliban authorities manipulated Islam to oppress them:

> All the women expressed anger that the Taliban are using Islam to deny them human rights.... The Koran, she said, allows women to work, learn and participate fully in society. (*The Independent*, 30/09/1996)

In other instances, it is implicitly indicated that these rules are part and parcel of the faith, which gives the rules added religious legitimacy by labelling them "edicts", and reporting that they have been declared by "Islamic clerics":

> At dawn on Saturday, Islamic clerics broadcast a new code of behaviour from the loudspeakers of mosques. Women should stay at home, the edict said. If they venture out, they should be covered from dead to toe. And they should not work.

The Guardian, however, interviewed protesting women, who resented the severe new rules imposed on them. Two of the women reported to have talked to *The Guardian* (28/09/1996) correspondent each showed their resentment by concluding with an ostensibly protesting question:

> Which holy book is it that prescribes this? Is this sharia [Islamic law]?

The report is formulated in a way that discredits the way in which the Taliban imposed these rules, but the text also implies that the prescriptions of "the holy book" and the "*sharia*" (Islamic law) are essentially flawed in their understanding of the status of women in society. Meanwhile, the report makes no attempt to blame the deterioration in the situation of women directly on the arbitrariness of the

Taliban rules, nor is there any indication that these rules are essentially Taliban-made. The above report links Islam directly with the Taliban, as is evident from its citing "Islamic clerics" as issuing a new code of behaviour that forces women to stay at home, and to cover from head to toe if they venture out. The report is framed in a way that suggests that those clerics did indeed pronounce the teachings of Islam with regard to women. However, the instructions declared by the Taliban concerning women were essentially Taliban-made and based on their own version of Islam. For instance, the voters in Bangladesh, a country with over 141 million people where Islam is the official religion of the state, elected two women prime ministers—Khalda Zia (1991-1996) and Hasina Wajid (1996-2001)—in two consecutive general elections. Voters in Turkey, another country with an overwhelmingly Muslim majority, elected Mrs. Tansu Ciller prime minister. In 2001, voters in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world (240 million people), elected Megawati Sukarnoputri as state president. However, women in some countries with a majority Muslim population do not have the right to vote—for example, in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait—whereas in other countries with a Muslim majority, such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, women occupy cabinet posts. The situation of women in Afghanistan under the former Taliban regime was essentially related to the version of Islam followed by the Taliban regime.

The Independent and *The Guardian* reduced the volume of their coverage as from the third week following the Taliban seizure of power, but *The Times* continued to report almost daily, concentrating on the issues of violence, extremism and violations against women.

The Times (08/10/1996) carried reports of events linking Islam with extremism, cruelty and violations against women in Afghanistan. Remarkably, however, the report uses explicit irony, obviously to make fun of a situation that involved a humanitarian disaster, as a result of hundreds of thousand of civilians fleeing their

homes, wide-scale violations and denials of basic human rights, and the enforcement of harsh rules based on the Taliban's own version of Islam:

> Canaries are banned because they sing.... Taliban is crazy-rule. It uses Kabul radio or soldiers on the street to convey instructions governing everything from the length of a man's shirtsleeve to the day he will next be allowed to trim his beard.

As in previous reports, associating Taliban with Islam comes first, often in connection with a negative image, which is then followed with further negative images, so that readers look at these images in relation to the previously stated association with Islam:

> There are 33 days to go before men will be allowed to trim their beards under a 45-day rule introduced when the Taleban Islamic militia took over. (*The Times*, 08/10/1996)

The following report by *The Times* presents a long list of additional negative images:

> The rules say people will be stoned to death for drinking alcohol or using drugs, for having an affair or for committing murder. A hand will be amputated for stealing. Men are not supposed to wear Western-style clothes. Shirts and trousers, which used to be popular, have all but disappeared. Men are covering their arms down to the wrist under the strict Taleban sartorial code.... Men have been told to attend mosques five times a day and their names are taken by the mosques shura (Council) to ensure compliance.... Families have been told to order women to pray five times a day, although females are banned from mosques. Card games and chess are against the rules because they are said to encourage gambling, which is outlawed.... Women have been beaten on the street for simply being there, regardless of whether they are veiled, because of a rule confining them to the house except when shopping. A married couple riding on the same bicycle on the way to the market were beaten for being physically too close in public.

The list extended to the end of the report, which concluded with an implication that reinforces the view that these rules and decrees are based on religion:

> Television sets were smashed— something that has not happened yet in Kabul. The invaders banned football, the most popular sport locally, because it was 'un-Islamic'.

The true intentions of world powers, as *The Independent* reported, were not motivated by the humanitarian disaster and the wide-scale violations of individual rights. International concern was motivated by two factors, one of which—

violence—has long been identified with Islam: "International concern about Afghanistan is now motivated by what the country produces: drugs and violence." (*The Independent*, 25/10/1996)

The thematic line about the ill treatment of women in Islam continued in *The Guardian*'s reporting of events in Afghanistan. It implicitly suggested that Muslim countries in general impose tough restrictions on women:

> They (Taliban) have imposed tougher restrictions on women than any other Islamic country. (*The Guardian*, 24/10/1996)

Presupposition is used to suggest that restrictions on women are the norm in Muslim countries, but also that the Taliban's restrictions are tougher than those in other countries. The phrase "Islamic country" is, however, vague and misleading, and it is not clear whether it is used in this report to refer to "countries with a majority of Muslim population" or "countries that impose the Islamic *Sharia* laws". However, readers will interpret what is conveyed on the basis of their knowledge of the context: in the case of this report, they will opt for what is implied or presupposed, i.e., that imposing tough restrictions is the norm in Muslim countries.

An example of *The Times*' line of reporting, which portrays the Taliban's ban on women's work and its closing down girls' school as Islamic-based, is evident in its report (09/10/1996) under the headline ***Aid agencies push mullahs to relax policy on women***. The report begins by reinforcing the identity of Taliban as Islamic: "International aid agencies in Afghanistan warned the Taleban Islamic regime yesterday to relax its severe restrictions on women", and reported the Taliban acting Foreign Minister as saying that women working is contrary to Afghanistan traditions:

> Aid agencies yesterday met Mullah Muhammad Ghous, Taleban's acting Foreign Minister, to submit a joint request for women to be allowed to work. He appealed to them not to force Afghanistan to adopt ways of life that were 'contrary to our national traditions'.

This example involves the implication that there does exist a fundamental fault line between Muslim traditions and Western values, as the phrase "ways of life that were

contrary to our national traditions" indicates. To reinforce this point, the report selects one particular part of a 90-minute meeting between representatives of the aid agencies in Afghanistan and the Taliban acting Foreign Minister, about a request for Afghani women to be allowed to work. The report says:

> During the private, 90-minute meeting he declared that on his visits to the West he had been saddened by the sight of women who worked in hotels. They had seemed tired. At home, he went on, men looked after their women properly. He found it astonishing that the West could accuse Afghanistan of discriminating against them.

The report has not of course covered all that the Taliban official said during the meeting, but only a specific statement by the official, selected to highlight how "Muslim" men look at women: i.e., they should not look after others, especially in hotels. The report also reinforces that how Afghan men, who are Muslims, view the situation of women in Afghanistan is normal and does not involve discrimination. It could be argued here that readers would not bother to distinguish between Afghan women and other non-Afghan Muslim women, because of the frequent conflation of the Taliban acts against women with the situation of women in other Muslim societies—Indonesia, Bangladesh, Turkey—where women occupy high-ranking posts in the state, including the premiership.

Derisive reporting, obviously intended to make fun of such an alarming situation, could also be spotted in *The Independent*:

> The morning editorial meeting at Radio Kabul is a sombre affair. Bearded Taliban soldiers sit around a dusty desk deep in concentration.... They are meeting to decide how to fill the day's airtime. It does not take long. Music, singing and other forms of entertainment are banned in Kabul so they do not have to worry about quiz shows or the top 40, and after 10 minutes the soldiers have worked out the programme. First, the seven o'clock news. By common consent it will be similar to the previous day's news and the day before that. (*The Independent*, 26/10/1996)

The reporter does not seem to have listened to the news, but, nevertheless, made a prediction: the prediction conformed to the general line of reporting violence and extreme religious edicts as "Islamic", by using implicitness and presupposition:

> Listeners will be told how the Taliban Islamic fundamentalist army killed hundreds of troops from the opposition former government forces, led by

> Ahmed Shah Massoud, overnight.... After the news the announcer will issue the latest government edict.

The Guardian (28/10/1996) reported an example of how extreme the Taliban commanders were. A wounded Taliban military commander in hospital was interviewed by *The Guardian* as saying that he was determined to spread the *sharia* Islamic law in Afghanistan and beyond. This case conforms to the line of reporting that focused on the concept of conquest and invasion associated with Muslims. The Taliban militia commander is quoted as saying:

> Until the end of my life I will continue supporting the Taliban movement. We want to spread shariah [Islamic] law throughout Afghanistan, and if possible all over the world.

The idea of spreading Islamic law all over the world is obviously far-fetched, but the militia commander statement is reported as highlighting the warlike and belligerent nature of the Taliban, which has already been identified with Islam. Its fighters are frequently referred to as "Islamic warriors", "holy army" and "Taliban invaders".

The Independent attempted to reinforce the same issue of invasion, belligerence and warlike nature, ostensibly of Taliban. However, Islam is implicitly meant, hence the use of code words often mentioned in connection with Islam and Islamic fundamentalism: Taliban fighters advance and pay for martyrdom: ***Afghanistan's Islamic warriors face two formidable enemies in the Panjshir valley.***

Stereotypical images and fundamentalist icons, frequently used in the media in connection with Muslim clergymen, are used to refer to a Taliban leader:

> Led by a bearded, pot-bellied clergyman, the Taliban went back to their work, clearing away huge boulders dynamited onto the road by Commander Massoud. (*The Independent*, 09/10/1996)

The arrival of the Taliban militiamen in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif is depicted as an invasion by a foreign army. The frequent use of the words "invasion" and "invaders" in *The Times*' reports, to refer to the Taliban militias, reflects the extent to which its discourse is related to the historically-based

Orientalist discourses that portray Islam as a religion of invasions and conquests. Metaphor and lexicalisation, e.g., the words "pour", "invade", "invaders" and "language barrier", are used to indicate a massive and organised "conquest", although the Afghan conflict was entirely a civil war, with no involvement by any foreign army:

> Taliban troops poured into the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday, flushing out the last pockets of resistance and imposing restrictions on women. (*The Times*, 22/10/1996)

Despite the wide-scale chaos that the Taliban militias caused in different aspects of the Afghan peoples' lives, press coverage continued to focus on the treatment of women: ***Pariah widows bear brunt of city's despair*** (*The Times*, 15/10/1996), ***Lone women runs risk of militia's vengeance to care for 800 orphans*** (*The Times*, 17/10/1996), ***Taliban imposes work ban on north's women*** (*The Times*, 22/10/1996) ***Women use make-up in fight against Taleban code*** (*The Times*, 24/10/1996).

Two particular themes dominate coverage of the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan in September 1996: the persecution of women, and the prevalence of violence and harsh measures as the Taliban authorities attempted to tighten their grip on power. Both themes conform with a tendency in some Western media to associate Islam with violence, belligerence and backwardness, and to portray it as unjust, and oppressive to women. These two issues were used to reinforce the negative image of Islam by contrasting the West and Western values of tolerance and civility with Islam's alleged extremism, barbarity and suppression of women. It is emphasised that violence is the means often used to enact rules.

The Guardian's and *The Independent's* coverage of the Taliban movement's rise to power can be divided into two distinct stages. The first stage, which can be termed 'ground work coverage', is characterised by a line of reporting that is based on covering events, but also focuses on identifying Islam with Taliban. The second stage focuses mainly on reporting developments and events focusing on the violence and harsh measures of the Taliban authorities and their treatment of women, in the

obvious expectation that readers would make sense of what is reported on the basis of knowledge already supplied by the ground work coverage.

All three newspapers began their coverage of the events following the fall of Kabul, and later the rest of Afghanistan, by persistently attempting to establish the Islamic identity of the Taliban: "Taliban Islamic militias", "Taliban Islamic fundamentalist militias", "Islamist Taliban militias", "Holy army", "Divine rulers", "Islamic warriors", and so on. However, the pattern of identifying the Taliban movement and its militiamen with Islam is more frequent and consistent in *The Times* than in the two other newspapers. This particular line of reporting in *The Times* seemed to be a continuing process: even after the relative decrease in the volume of coverage of the events in Afghanistan following the Taliban seizure of power, *The Times* continued to use phrases such as "Taliban Islamic militias", "Taliban Islamic fundamentalist militias", "Islamist Taliban militias", "Holy army", "Divine rulers", "Islamic warriors", and so on.

While *The Times* line of reporting consistently represented the Taliban authorities' treatment of women as though it was prescribed by Islam, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* followed a line of reporting that attributed the Taliban's attitudes to Islam in some instances, but in other instances ascribed them to the Taliban's own interpretation of Islam.

Two themes dominated the three newspapers' reporting: the persecution of the Afghan women under the Taliban, and the prevalence of violence and harsh measures by the Taliban militiamen. All three newspapers portrayed both themes in a way that implied the existence of a fundamental faultline between Muslims' values and Western values. The situation of women under the Taliban, and bloody violence, killing, executions and punishments, were often represented in a way that suggests that Muslims are backward and barbaric. This representation reinforces, in turn, the view that Islam cannot be thought of as rational, democratic and modern.

Consequently, the followers of Islam are conceived of within an us-versus-them framework, and are viewed as incompatible with 'us'.

CHAPTER 6

The Luxor killing of foreign tourists

1. Background

On November 17 1997, more than 60 people were shot dead by armed members of the Egyptian Islamic militant group *Ajjama'a Al-Islamia* (Islam Group) at Luxor, one of Egypt's most popular tourist attractions. Apart from four Egyptian policemen, all the victims were foreign tourists, from Switzerland, Japan, Germany, Britain and France. They were fired upon as they were visiting the temple of Queen Hatshepsut in the town of Luxor. The killing captured the world's attention because of the number of victims and the horrific accounts of the survivors. Most of the victims, according to eyewitnesses, were trapped on the raised terrace of the temple middle courtyard before being shot dead by the attackers.

The Luxor attack took place at a time of relative calm in the militant activities of Islamic groups. The only scene of such activities at the time was Algeria, where the militant campaign of the Islamic Armed Group (IAG), against the Algerian army, police and suspected anti-fundamentalist civilians, was sporadic. The situation in Afghanistan had settled down after the Taliban militias succeeded in controlling most of the country: coverage of events there was not as consistent as it had been earlier, when the Taliban forces overrun Kabul in September 1996.

The involvement of an Islamic militant group must have added a special news value to an act of bloody violence such as the Luxor killings of foreign tourists: it can be argued that such events provide the press with dramas that reinforce the allegedly extreme face of Islam, and its association with violence and terror.

The following analysis examines whether the coverage of the Luxor attack on foreign tourists was used by *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* to reinforce a negative image of Islam, and to associate the faith with violence and terror drawing, as usual, on the acts and aberrations of a minority of radical

adherents and ignoring the vast majority. The analysis also examines whether the Luxor attack on tourists was manipulated to increase the alert of perceived threat from within to UK national security, on the grounds of the alleged involvement of UK-based Muslims' organisations in plotting terrorist attacks abroad.

The overall articles published by the three newspapers are shown below:

Newspaper	Period of coverage	Articles found	Articles analysed
The Guardian	18 Nov.-22 Dec. 1997	31	15
The Times	18 Nov.-23 Dec. 1997	21	15
The Independent	18 Nov.-24 Dec. 1997	21	15

The analysis covers a time span of six weeks—the first six weeks following the event, 18 November to 3 January, 1998—but the bulk of the coverage occurred during the first week, and by the beginning of the second week it had started to decrease gradually. The overall coverage of the Luxor attack lasted for less time than that in the other three case studies. The main focus of coverage revolved around the association of Islam with violence and terror, citing the acts of a radial group, *al-Gamaa al-Islamia*, and ignoring the vast majority of Muslims. Therefore, associating Islam with violence and terror, by drawing on the violent acts of a radical minority of adherents, will be the major theme focused on in the following analysis.

2. Analysis

The association of Islam with extremism and violence was a common theme in the selected newspapers' coverage in the two previous case studies. The Luxor attack on foreign tourists, in which more than sixty people were killed, was no exception. Such an association is evident in *The Times'* early reports of the Luxor attacks on foreign tourists:

> Even before the full horror of the latest attack became apparent, more than doubling the number of foreigners killed since the main Islamic terror organisation, al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, launched its struggle to topple the regime in

> 1992 ... the Islamic extremists opposed to the secular Government of President Mubarak. (*The Times*, 18/11/1997)

After describing the violent acts of the Egyptian militant group against the state, the report quoted part of a statement about its ultimate goal, issued earlier by the same group. The reported statement declared that the group "would continue its struggle until an Islamic state is established in Egypt and the criminal Mubarak is killed in just retaliation". The encoded message in the reported statement is that violence, killing and retaliation are key prerequisites of establishing "an Islamic state". No indication is given in the report to suggest otherwise. No Egyptian Muslim figures or leaders of institutions—such as Al-Azhar—other than the state authorities, were interviewed to comment about the act of killing innocent foreign tourists.

The report portrayed the group behind the Luxor attack as though it was the only opposition to the Egyptian government, despite legal secular opposition parties were represented in the Egyptian parliament. The statement quoted in the previous paragraph suggests that there are no legitimate parliamentary opposition parties. Such a suggestion might make readers conclude that the only opposition to the Egyptian government is the radical al-Gamaa al-Islamia. In other words, by ignoring Egyptian opposition political parties, the report implies that the only alternative to the Egyptian government is al-Gamaa al-Islamia, which carried out the Luxor attack.

As in the coverage of the events that followed the Taliban rise to power in Afghanistan, *The Times* carried out "ground work coverage" in its early reports about the attack, in order to found the identification of the responsible group with Islam, before moving on to deploy phrases and clichés frequently used to implicitly and explicitly reinforce the association of Islam with violence and extremism:

> They (witnesses) told how Islamic militant terrorists fired on foreign tourists with machine-guns and then stabbed their victims to make sure that they were dead.... The others were killed by members of the Islamic group al-Gamaa al-Islamiya which launched the attack in an attempt to force the release of its spiritual leader Sheikh Omer Abdel-Rahman. (*The Times*, 19/11/1997)

Once again, *The Times*' line of reporting focuses on reinforcing the 'Islamic' identity of perpetrators of the Luxor mass killing: "members of the Islamic group al-Gamaa al-Islamiya" and "Islamic militant terrorists". Three interrelated issues should be noted here. First, the 'Islamic' identity of the perpetrators is reinforced at the beginning of the paragraph; second, this is followed by a description of acts of irrationality, barbarism and extremism; third, an 'Islamic' identity is attached to the group with which the perpetrators were affiliated. The order of the paragraph is formulated in a way that re-emphasises that what happened was an act of terrorism and barbarism: "Islamic militant terrorists fired on tourists with machine-guns and then stabbed their victims to make sure that they were dead". It also reasserts that those who carried out the atrocity were Muslims: "Islamic militant terrorists". It is evident that the report intends to reinforce the association of extremism, terrorism and barbarism with Islam.

The Guardian (18/11/1997) reported condemnations by presidents and heads of states in its report under the headline ***Massacre at Luxor: World voices outrage:*** American, British, French, German, Swiss and Russian presidents and officials were reported to have voiced their condemnations, however leaders and figures of Muslim moderate organisations and groups were neither quoted, nor apparently approached for comments. The absence of such comments may have been taken by readers as an indication of approval by those figures. It could be argued that ignoring the condemnations by the Palestinian Hamas leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen, the Iranian government and the Lebanese Hizbullah, would only reinforce public perceptions of Islam's alleged monolithism and uniformity in approving and condoning violence.

The Guardian (19/11/1997), like the two other newspapers, ignored condemnations from Muslim figures and mentioned instead Sheikh Omer Abdul Rahman, who was convicted by an American court and sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993:

> The gunmen at Luxor were trying to take hostages with the aim of winning the release of a sheikh convicted of conspiracy in connection with the bombing of

> the World Trade Centre and other New York landmarks, according to the Egyptian Islamist group that claimed responsibility for the attack.

The coverage of the Luxor attacks brought into focus the issue of the involvement of asylum seekers in the UK in raising funds to finance activities of foreign organisations suspected of involvement in terrorism. The inclusion of this issue came as a result of the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak accusing Britain of sheltering terrorists: however, it was used to suggest that Muslims' organisations in the UK were a source of a terrorist threat, implying that this threat was taken seriously, because it had been addressed by the Home Secretary:

> Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has pledged to make it more difficult for extremist groups to raise funds in the UK. He said this week: 'we already have tough anti-terrorism laws and we intend to strengthen these further'.

The Home Secretary's comments were reported in connection with an Egyptian asylum seeker who was reportedly convicted of involvement in an assassination attempt on the Egyptian Prime Minister in 1993.

Many foreign nationals residing in the UK were suspected of having links with foreign groups accused of plotting acts of violence abroad. However, given the context of the reported events, it is Muslims, rather than other foreigners, who were obviously the intended target of the new anti-terrorism legislation:

> Foreigners living in Britain who plot terrorist acts abroad will face prosecution and long jail terms under revised anti-terrorist laws planned by the government.... The legislation will end Britain's reputation as a haven for Middle Eastern and other international terrorists, the Home Secretary said. It will become an offence to conspire in this country to commit violent outrages abroad. (*The Times*, 20/11/1997)

In the context of this event, the only country to accuse Britain of harbouring terrorists at that time was the Egyptian government, following the Luxor attack on foreign tourists. The Middle East is foregrounded in the following sentence: "The legislation will end Britain's reputation as a heaven for Middle Eastern and other international terrorists". Prior to that event, only Egypt had accused Britain of being a haven for terrorists involved in plotting the Luxor attack, referring to an Egyptian

asylum seeker who headed a London-based organisation, and was convicted on terrorist related charges by an Egyptian court and sentenced to death *in absentia*.

In the same report, under the headline ***Anti-terror bill sparks fears of witch-hunt***, there is an example of the blanket association of Islamic organisations and groups, most of which are charity groups, with terrorism:

> After the massacre at Luxor, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, yesterday reiterated his intention to table an anti-terrorism bill which could make it a criminal offence to conspire to commit terrorist acts abroad and to raise money for political movements which use violence.

Once again, the press raised the 'threat from within' in connection with these attacks. In the Rushdie affair, this issue was understandably raised, given that the major events related to that incident took place in Britain, but the Luxor killing of foreign tourists took place in Egypt. Whereas the alleged 'threat from within' in the Rushdie affair was associated with the British Muslim community at large, the 'Islamic fundamentalist threat' raised in the aftermath of the Luxor killing of foreign tourists was connected to UK-based Islamic charities. This perceived threat was depicted in some news reports as infiltrating Britain and, consequently, being a potential danger:

> Groups such as the Tamil Tigers, Kurdish guerrilla groups, Kashmiri and Sikh separatists, and a whole range of Islamic organisations have bases in London. (*The Guardian*, 20/11/1997)

The Independent, however, combines the alleged 'threat from within' with the issue of immigration, which often features in the right-of-the-centre newspapers. In a report under the headline ***Egypt anger over UK asylum***, The Independent reported:

> An Egyptian Islamist, accused by Egypt of attempted assassination, claimed yesterday that Britain is ready to offer him political asylum, just days after the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, accused Britain of allowing terrorists to flourish. (*The Independent*, 26/11/1997)

The above report highlights the perceived threat from within against the background of the issue of immigration. Explicit and implicit suggestions were used to raise the 'threat from within' alarm. Two main points were explicitly made in the report: there is an Egyptian Islamist suspect who has a legal immigration status as an

asylum seeker, and he stated that the British authorities were ready to offer him political asylum. The core of the perceived 'threat from within' issue is left to readers to interpret from what has been reported. The most obvious interpretation is that the current UK immigration laws allow foreigners to apply for political asylum, including fugitives suspected of involvement in assassination plots, such as the Egyptian asylum seeker in question. The scare is further intensified, by quoting him as saying that the British authorities are ready to offer him political asylum. An average reader would conclude that Britain had become a refuge for suspected assassins, who would use the country as a base to launch terrorist attacks against targets abroad. Framing events in this way reinforces the sense of an Islamist threat living 'amongst us'.

Like *The Independent*, *The Times*' treatment of the perceived threat-from-within involves the issue of immigration, as well as the suggestion that Britain has become a haven for Muslim terrorists. Like *The Independent*'s report, *The Times* report also suggests that the UK's immigration system and laws are so soft that suspected terrorists are allowed into the country, and provided with immigration status. However, *The Times* report goes further, and indicates that both the immigration and social security systems are abused by suspected Muslim terrorists. The issue of the dependence of asylum seekers and refugees on the British benefits system is not unfamiliar in the right and right-of-the-centre press:

> Three men sentenced to death for terrorist offences in Egypt have been allowed to live in Britain, where at least one of them has claimed thousands of pounds in social security benefits. (*The Times*, 23/11/1997)

However, *The Independent* reference to the suspected terrorists "living on benefits in Britain" occurs only in the headline and lead, with no further details in the body of report. The obvious hyperbole of the report headline— ***Convicted Egyptian 'terrorists' living on benefits in Britain***—suggests that Muslim extremists abuse the British benefit system to finance their terrorist activities.

The Guardian reported that other non-Muslim organisations and groups had bases in the UK, but clearly indicated that Islamic organisations and groups were bigger in size than the other, non-Muslim, groups, a suggestion that implied that these Islamic organisations posed a bigger threat than the others:

> Groups such as the Tamil Tigers, Kurdish guerrilla groups, Kashmiri and Sikh separatists, and a whole range of Islamic organisations have bawds in London. (*The Guardian*, 20/11/1997)

However, the report reiterated that "Muslim charities and groups in particular" were suspected of funding "Islamic militant groups" in the Middle East, a region which had already become associated, in the Western collective mind, with conflicts, violence and turmoil:

> Muslim charities and groups, in particular, have been accused of funding militant Islamic groups in the Middle East and fear the government's proposal could lead to a witch-hunt.

Metaphor and symbolism are used twice in this paragraph of the report. First, the phrase "Islamic militant groups", which is often mentioned in connection with violence, is metaphorically used to signal terrorism; the term "Middle East", in turn, is used to signal turmoil, conflicts and bloody violence. Consequently, these Islamic groups and organisations are implicitly accused of financing terrorism.

As in the coverage of the Rushdie affair, and specifically the case of the Iranian charity that offered a reward for the killing of Mr. Rushdie, it is again suggested, in a blanket generalisation, that Muslim charities tend to become involved in activities contrary to the principle of benevolence that motivates charitable work:

> Muslim charities and groups, in particular, have been accused of funding militant Islamic groups in the Middle East. (*The Guardian*, 20/11/1997)

Hyperbolic headlines were used to reinforce this perceived internal terrorist threat: ***New law to combat foreign terrorists in Britain***, ***Convicted Egyptian 'terrorists' living on benefit in Britain*** (*The Times*), ***Egypt's anger over UK 'asylum'*** (*The Independent*), ***Anti-terror bill sparks fears of witch-hunt***, ***Britain accused of harbouring terrorists***, ***'Islamic terrorists' in London on Egypt's most wanted list*** (*The Guardian*).

The deployment of police reinforcements following the attack was described using a metaphor of military register, to reassert that Egypt was no longer safe for tourists. However, *The Times'* portrayal of this perceived instability and turmoil was formulated in a way that made it sound more serious, by suggesting that at stake was not only the tourists' safety, but also the Egyptian economy, and even the presidency of Hosni Mubarak. Under the headline ***Massacre bullets ricochet into Egyptian economy***, it was reported that

> the damage that Monday's slaughter of 58 tourists will inflict on Egypt was signalled yesterday when Japan's top travel agency said it was cancelling trips to the country until at least the New Year.... Similar reactions are expected elsewhere, posing the most serious threat to President Mubarak since he came to power, also as a result of Islamic violence, when President Sadat was murdered, on October 14, 1981. (*The Times*, 20/11/1997)

The theme of instability and turmoil was echoed by *The Independent,* in a report under the headline ***Egypt beefs up security.*** The leading sentence portrayed Luxor and other sites as war zones rather than tourist sites:

> Egypt deployed more forces at tourist sites yesterday in the wake of the massacre of 58 tourists at Luxor. (*The Independent*, 20/11/1997)

This perception was reiterated by *The Times* three days after the attack:

> Johannes Zureiden, director of the Phoenix travel agency in Bonn, said: 'People want to go on holiday and not into a war zone.' (*The Times*, 20/11/1997)

Hyperbolic headlines were used to reinforce the same image: ***Bloodbath undermines Mubarak campaign, Extremist group splits make security task more difficult*** (*The Times*), ***Egypt Killings: Major travel firms cancel holiday flights, Egypt Killings: Firms cancel Holidays*** (*The Independent*), ***Massacre at Luxor: Tour firms offer chance to fly home, Luxor deserted in the wake of killings*** (*The Guardian*).

Three major themes can be identified as points of focus in *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* coverage of the Luxor attacks. First, the three newspapers sought to reinforce their linking of Islam with violence and terrorism by emphasising the Islamic identity of the group that committed the Luxor attacks.

Second, the event was used to raise a perceived internal threat, by claiming that UK-based Muslim charities and groups were involved in funding violent and terrorist acts abroad. The significant encoded message in this perceived threat is the presupposition that the presence and activities of these Muslim groups endanger British national security, to the extent that the Home Secretary was considering new anti-terrorist legislation, implicitly anti-terrorist legislation to curb the Muslim threat.

Third, the 'Middle East', itself a Eurocentric term that came to be associated in the Western collective mind with conflict and turmoil, is generally portrayed as an area of instability, by being linked directly with the activities of the UK-based Muslim charities and groups, although the Luxor attack took place in one country, Egypt, not in the entire region.

It has been argued that British press coverage often identifies Islam with its most extreme and radical fringes, and unfairly associates Islam with violence. The Runnymede Trust report (1997) referred to one example of the role of the British media in reinforcing Islamophobia: when a Muslim militant group carries out an act of violence, the British media never interview a Muslim leader who denounces such an act, and even when Muslim leaders and figures do condemn such acts of violence, the report argued, their condemnations are usually ignored. It has also been contended that if Islam had not been identified with its most radical and extreme groups, and if the condemnations by other Muslim organisations involved in other attacks in other contexts, such as Hamas and Hizbullah, had not been ignored, readers would have had a less monolithic image of Islamic militancy:

> There can be little doubt that had these condemnations from other organisations involved in attacks on civilians in other contexts been included in the coverage, readers and viewers would have received a much less 'monolithic' impression of Islamic militancy. (Donnan, 2002: p. 55)

The three themes pointed out above were common in the three newspapers' coverage. However, each paper wrapped the themes in different ways. Unlike *The*

Times and *the Independent*, *The Guardian* generally used a more neutral tone of coverage, especially on the issue of immigration. Moreover, *The Times* and *The Independent* focused more on the issue of immigration, and a perceived threat-from-within, than *The Guardian*. Reinforcing the Islamic identity of the group that committed the Luxor killing of foreign tourists is more evident in *The Times* and *The Independent*: both repeatedly used clichés such as "Islamic terror", "Islamic terrorism", "Islamic extremism", "Islamic violence", "Islamic extremists", "Islamic militant terrorists", "Islamic gunmen" and "Islamic fundamentalist gunmen". In contrast, the identification of this group with Islam in *The Guardian* was often encoded in the general context without the direct use of such clichés.

CHAPTER 7

The September 11th attacks

1. Background

Since the September 11th 2001 attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, Islam as a global religio-political movement as well as a community of faith and cultures, has become a subject of renewed interest, and of much controversy. The attacks seem to have reinforced the widely held presumption that Islam is inherently anti-Western and violent, and more likely to offer a justification of violence, unlike other world religions.

Many British national newspapers used their leader (editorial) column to defend Islam and British Muslims following the September 11th attacks (Anti-Islamic reactions in the EU, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, p. 27). However, Muslims blame the British press coverage for using blanket generalisations, and tarring all Muslims, Islamic-oriented movements and Islam in its entirety with the brush of violence and anti-Westernism, in a monolithic fashion that ignores any internal differentiation of opinion and overlooks the diversity in the Muslim faith and Islamic-oriented movements. They argue that this negative image of their faith in the press is reinforced by using phrases such as 'Islamic terrorism', 'Islamic fanaticism', 'Islamic extremism', thereby associating Islam, rather than Al-Qaida, with terrorism, fanaticism and extremism. Consequently, an entire spectrum of negative characteristics has been indiscriminately attributed to Islam and Muslims.

In the following analysis, I examine the press coverage of the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington by *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, and how it deployed the themes of perceived Islamic violence, monolithism and British Muslims' foreignness to construct particular images of Islam.

As the table below shows, during this period the three newspapers published a total of 1173 reports dealing with Islam and Muslims. However, due to the specific size

devoted to analysis of the September 11th attacks coverage in the research, I will select 15 news reports from each newspaper.

Newspapers	Period of coverage	Articles found	Articles analysed
The Guardian	12 Sep.-24 Oct.2001	389	15
The Times	12 Sep.-24 Oct.2001	438	15
The Independent	12 Sep.-24 Oct.2001	337	15

The reports to be analysed were selected from the three newspapers' coverage of September 11th attacks and the subsequent events in the six weeks following the attacks (12 September to 24 October, 2001). The selection criteria are based on the news reports' relevance to four key themes that dominated the coverage, as well as references to "Islam" and "Muslims" in the news reports. First, Islam was treated as monolithic bloc with its diversity reduced to a single undifferentiated global force; second, Islam was viewed as a violent religion harbouring hatred of the West, and espousing and justifying the use of violence; third, British Muslims were considered as foreign and as alienated from British society; fourth, the representation of Islam in this coverage suggests the presence of a faultline between the Muslim world and the Western world.

2. Islam as a monolithic faith

The representation of Islam as a monolithic entity, and its perceived incompatibility with modernism, have been common themes in the press coverage of events related to Islamic militant movements, or to acts of violence committed by them.

Two days after the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington, *The Independent* (13/09/2001) published a report under the headline ***Blair to demand action against fundamentalists***:

> This was not an attack on America alone. This was an attack on the free and democratic world everywhere and this is the responsibility that the free and democratic world have got to shoulder together with America. (*The Independent* 13/09/2001)

Two intertwined suggestions are encoded in the headline and the paragraph above. First, although no Muslim group claimed responsibility for the attacks until then, the value-loaded term 'fundamentalists', featured in the headline, encodes suspicion of Muslims involvement. Second, another encoded message, related to the first, is the implicit suggestion of a fault line between those behind the attack—a reference had already been made to "fundamentalists", a term often used by the news media in connection with Muslim groups—and the "free and democratic world":

> Although British intelligence experts suspect the involvement of Islamic terrorists, Mr. Blair tried to damp down tensions. (*The Independent* 13/09/2001)

To reinforce the two encoded messages, the report employs a cliché commonly used to portray Islam/Muslims negatively—Islamic terrorists. Although no other similar clichés were explicitly used to associate Islam with terrorism and violence, such other techniques as implicitness, propositions and code words were deployed, in that early stage of the events, to reinforce suspicion.

Media consumers' images of Islam and Muslims largely derive from reports that mainly cover political and violent events in the Muslim world and beyond. Since these media, including the press, which often associates Islam with violence, terrorism and extremism, readers develop negative images about Islam and Muslims. Newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Independent*, reported sensationalising comments and statements by London-based Muslim radical clerics, such as Abu Hamza Al-Masri and Omer Bakri Mohamed, following the September 11th attacks. The comments and statements of such radical voices were highlighted, while moderate voices were either marginalised and relegated, or ignored altogether. Overall, the image portrayed was based mainly on the sense of intolerance and extremism expressed by voices such as Abu Hamza Al-Masri and Omer Bakri Mohamed:

> Al-Muhajiroun's leader, Sheikh Omer Bakri Mohammed, has praised the terrorist attacks against the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Other leading figure have claimed that around 1800 British Muslims take part in 'military service' each year, recruited

> at mosques and university campuses across the country. (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001)

In a report under the title ***British Muslims divided by attack*** (*The Times*, 08/10/2001), a spokesman for Al-Muhajiroun, a radical Muslim group known for its anti-Western views, and the outspoken cleric Abu Hamza Al-Masri, former Imam of Finsbury Park Mosque in North London, and the director of the Manchester-based Council for Community Relations, were all quoted; but more emphasis was placed on the Al-Muhajiroun spokesman and the former Imam of Finsbury Park Mosque. The Al-Muhajiroun spokesman was reported to have threatened against retaliation in "every way", whereas Al-Masri was reported to have claimed that Muslims all over the world would become supporters of Usama Bin Ladin. Although British Muslims include people from different strata in society, with several levels of devoutness to Islam, they were all lumped together and represented as a single entity. Moreover, both men were represented as though they spoke on behalf of all Muslims:

> People who are not in groups will become sympathisers and support Bin Ladin.... We will retaliate in every way, whether it will be verbally, physically or financially. We pray to God that anyone targeting innocent Muslims will come back in body bags. (*The Times*, 08/10/2001)

The director of the Manchester-based community relations' council was reported to have supported the military action against Afghanistan. However, *The Times* attempted to suggest that the military action against Afghanistan had become the "sole" dividing line among British Muslims, thereby suggesting that had there been no war on Afghanistan, British Muslims would have suffered no division or split. This line of reporting ignores the fact that Muslims have varying types of relationship to religion, and only a minority of them have politico-religious affiliations. Like members of the other Muslim communities in Europe, British Muslims have their own divisions, which are in essence a reflection of Islam's internal divisions. They are divided not only over the US-led military campaign against Afghanistan in October 2001: they are divided by their different languages, various cultures, diverse ethnic origins, and by sectarian variations, such as Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Contrary to the above news report, British Muslims must have

had more than two views towards the US-led war against Afghanistan. Members of the Shiite Muslim community in Britain, for instance, are not pro-US, nor are they supporters of the Taliban regime or Al-Qaida, both of which are affiliated to Sunni Islam. In this case, the Shiite Muslims' common antagonism towards the US, and their theological rivalry with Sunni Islam, most likely mean that they would not be part of the British Muslims' divisions, as reported by *The Times*.

Lumping Muslims together is evident in other news reports throughout *The Times*' coverage of the September 11th attacks:

> The Home Secretary risked the wrath of Muslim groups by saying that he shared the outrage felt by those who did not want asylum granted to anyone who spoke out in favour of the September 11 terrorist attacks. (*The Times*, 24/10/2001)

Metaphor is used here to describe negatively how extreme British Muslims' possible reaction would be. The word 'wrath', which is borrowed from the domain of divine retribution—religious discourse—is metaphorically used to depict Muslim groups' possible reaction to Mr. Blunkett's comments as a fit or manifestation of intense anger and indignation. The metaphor of divine retribution metaphor, or 'wrath', is mostly used nowadays in literary contexts. Its use in the news reports' language may arguably be deliberate, to negatively represent Muslims' possible reaction to Mr. Blunkett's comments as a threat to be feared, especially since violence and threat have often been used as properties of the meaning of news discourse on British Muslims.

The British press seems to have deliberately overlooked the diversity within British and global Islamic community, by treating Islam entirely as unidimensional and monolithic, and without internal differences; and by attributing several negative characteristics, such as violence, extremism and terrorism, to all Muslims indiscriminately. The interest in highlighting radical voices, such as Al-Muhajiroun leader, Omer Bakri Mohamed, and the London-based "Ansar Al-Sharia" group, Abu Hamza Al-Masri, while marginalising, and often ignoring, moderate voices, suggests that the newspapers seek out those whose statements, comments and

attitudes reinforce the media's own agenda, which is based on reflecting a monolithic picture of Islam, itself based on the perception that all Muslims have synonymous views.

3. Associating Islam with extremism, violence and anti-Westernism

It is obvious that the media began blaming the September 11th attacks on Islam and Muslims at a very early stage, and before any group had claimed responsibility for the attacks. Newspapers, TV reports and radio broadcasts began to focus on the possible involvement of Islam and Muslims, and featured the association of Islam with terrorism, as in *The Guardian* headline on 12/09/2001: ***Middle Eastern studies 'essential' for understanding terrorism***. Words such as 'terror' and 'fundamentalists' were used very early in connection with Islam, to indicate the possible involvement of Muslims: ***Attacks echo earlier failed 'day of terror' aimed at New York*** (*The Times*, 12/09/2001), a reference to the 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre by an Islamic militant group: ***Blair to demand action against fundamentalists***:

> Tony Blair said yesterday that he feared many Britons had been killed in the terrorist attacks in America as he called for a huge international effort to combat the 'new menace' threatening the world.... Although the Prime Minster declined to disclose the details, British officials said he was worried that fundamentalist groups were allowed to operate freely in some countries though they were outlawed in others. (*The Independent*, 13/09/2001)

The term 'fundamentalist', and indeed 'fundamentalism', seem to have become used exclusively to indicate Islam and Muslims, to the extent that its commonly used modifiers in media reports, i.e., Muslim(s) and Islam, seem no longer needed. The above extract from *The Times* mentions "fundamentalist groups", by which is obviously meant "Muslim fundamentalist groups". The terms 'fundamentalist(s)' and 'fundamentalism' are commonly used in media and news reports to construct a blanket portrayal of Islamic groups, be they revivalist or militant, as a menace that is associated with extremism, terrorism and violence. Morphologically, the use of the word 'fundamentalism' or 'fundamentalist' implies that this tendency to extremism,

violence and terrorism is religiously inspired, since the concept is based on adhering to the fundamental tenets of Islam.

The implicit and explicit blaming of the attacks on Muslims continued. *The Times* reported the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi: ***Berlusconi says West is superior to Islam*** (*The Times*, 27/09/2001). US President George Bush later used the value-loaded term 'crusade' to declare that the West was superior to Islam. *The Times* also reported former British PM Baroness Margaret Thatcher's attack on Muslim leaders for not condemning the September 11th attacks:

> The people who brought down these towers were Muslims and she has not heard enough condemnation from Muslim priests. (*The Times*, 04/09/2001)

The overall media coverage of the September 11th attacks contributed to anti-Muslim sentiments following these events. In several Western countries, many Muslim men, and even Arab and Asian-looking people, were attacked, harassed and detained: Muslim women and girls, who were spotted by their head scarves, were harassed and attacked in the streets. The negative images in the media, including the press, had obviously made their way deep into the psyche of the ill-informed public, creating a wave of anti-Muslim sentiments and stirring feelings of what the UK-based Runnymede Trust termed 'Islamophobia' (Anti-Islamic Reactions in the EU After the Acts of Terror against the USA, May 2002, pp. 3-4).

The technique of imbedding information in coded messages was used in an early report by *The Guardian* (12/09/2001) on the September 11th attacks. The threats of terrorist attacks are clearly attributed to "Arab" and "Middle Eastern" countries, as it has been unmistakably stated by *The Guardian* that ***Middle Eastern studies 'essential'*** (inverted commas were used in the original headline) ***for understanding terrorism***:

> A dearth of academic expertise in Middle Eastern and Arabic studies is hampering the effort of Western governments to understand and respond to the threat of terrorist attacks, leading academics have said. (*The Guardian*, 12/09/2001)

The implications here are left to be supplied by the recipients, i.e., more academic studies of the Middle Eastern countries—almost all are Muslim countries—would increase awareness about terrorism. In other words, to understand terrorism and respond to it, the West must understand this particular region. It is true that the Middle East is a volatile region, for various reasons. The situation and the problems there must be reported and discussed, but reducing the whole region merely to a source of terrorism reinforces the commonly held negative image of its countries and nations.

As with other violent incidents in which Islamic militant movements were suspected of involvement, *The Independent* report made a clear association between Muslims and terrorism, using the often-deployed phrase "Islamic terrorists":

> Although British intelligence experts suspect the involvement of Islamic terrorists, Mr. Blair tried to damp down tensions in Britain by insisting Muslims should not be associated with the attacks. (*The Independent* 13/09/2001)

As in several examples of press coverage of violent events involving Islamic militant groups, press reports imply a direct association of Islam with terrorism and violence. Phrases such as "Islamic terror", "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic terrorists" were used in news reports covering the September 11th attacks:

> Moscow has offered the US full intelligence cooperation over Islamic terrorists and the Taliban regime following Tuesday's attacks.... The Russians are alarmed at the spread of Islamic terror.... Moscow is also acutely sensitive to issues of Islamic extremism. (*The Guardian*, 13/09/2001)

The association of Islam, rather than a particular Islamic militant group, with terrorism, extremism and violence is a technique frequently used in news reports to build a particular negative image of Islam. However, since September 11th, numerous news reports in several newspapers have resumed using this image, representing Islam as an indiscriminately violent religion and equating it with violence.

One of the most striking features of how Islam was represented in the press following September 11th attacks is the frequent association of the word 'Islamic'

with negative evaluative terms, such as 'terrorism', 'militant', 'terrorist', 'extremism', 'extremist' and 'terror'. Headlines, leads and the bodies of news reports used such phrases as "Islamic terrorists", "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic terror" concurrently, obviously to reinforce negative stereotypes of Islam. When reports use such adjectival phrases and repeatedly connect Islam and terrorism, the terms become synonymous in the readers' mind, and skew the public perception of Muslims. For instance, the headline ***No refuge for Islamic terrorists*** (*The Times*, 26/09/2001) was used with reference to the speech by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in which he warned the Taliban regime of the consequences of its failure to hand over Usama Bin Ladin. Blair argued in this speech that those who committed the September 11th attacks should not be associated with Islam or Muslims, but should be considered only as terrorists.

Jihad, an expression often used as an equivalent to 'holy war', in order to imply an association between Islam and violence and militarism, was used in several reports about the September 11th attacks. A common view of Islam and its current political manifestation, as frequently depicted in the media, generally perceives Islamic politics as radical, bellicose, anti-secular and, consequently, anti-democratic and anti-Western. In this sense, Islam is frequently associated with, and depicted as, a threat to the international order in its contemporary perception: accordingly, Muslims are presented as engaged in a Jihad against the West (Donnan, 2002: p. 33). To reinforce this perception, both 'Jihad' and 'holy war' were used in several news reports throughout the coverage of the September 11th attacks, for instance: ***Young Muslims ready for 'holy war'*** (*The Times*, 29/09/2001); ***Dispute over the meaning of 'Jihad'*** (*The Times*, 12/10/2001); ***US attack would start a jihad, say mullahs*** (*The Times*, 21/09/2001); ***Taliban call for 'holy war'*** (*The Independent*, 18/09/2001); ***Clerics called to council of holy war*** (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001).

The calls by Islamic militant movements for their followers, and Muslims in general, to return to the so-called 'pure form of Islam', or the original and pure faith, was viewed as a real threat, especially since Islam is commonly perceived as radical

and militant. Accordingly, such calls were viewed as a declaration of war from Islam:

> The decision by Muslim clerics yesterday that Osama bin Ladin should leave Afghanistan of his own accord was accompanied by the threat of a holy war against the United States if it attacked the country.... If infidels attack the soil of a Muslim country, jihad (holy war) becomes an order for the Muslims of that county, the edict said.... If in the time of an American attack, any Muslims, be they Afghans or non-Afghans, co-operate with the infidels, accomplices or spies, that person also is punishable by death like the foreign invaders. (*The Times*, 21/09/2001)

The source of the so-called decision was identified as "Muslim clerics" rather that Afghan clerics. The threat of the so-called holy war was in fact made by a group of pro-Taliban Afghan tribal leaders: "the guidance of the *shura*, a handpicked pro-Taliban collection of 1000 village clerics and mullahs". However, the report identified them as "Muslim clerics" without specifying that they were Afghan rural and tribal leaders. The underlying suggestion is that when it comes to Jihad, any Muslim group, whether in Afghanistan or anywhere else, can speak on behalf of, and decide the fate of, other Muslims: "any Muslims, be they Afghans or non-Afghans, [that] cooperate with the infidels... that person is punishable by death like the foreign invaders". Once again, Islam and Muslims are represented as a monolithic bloc, despite the widespread diversity not only from one Muslim country to another, but within Afghan Muslims.

The concept of Jihad as a threat is associated with the perceived radical and violent nature of Islam. A number of writers who deal with the field of terrorism turned their focus to radical Islamist movements, and the thesis of 'holy terror'—Beverley Milton-Edwards' phrase—became accepted by the media, including the press. The discourse of 'holy terror', which has arguably influenced the current understanding of Islam in the West (Donnan, 2002: p. 41), is itself influenced by the Orientalist discourses, especially regarding the motif of Islam's radical and violent nature. This particular motif demonises and objectifies Islam as a monolith that is represented by radical Islam. Such a discourse represents radical Islam and the Muslim faith in merely fundamentalist terms and argues, on the basis of this standpoint, that

violence is a sacred obligation. The newspapers attempted to give this argument more emphasis and credibility, by representing the calls for Jihad as issued by individuals who are viewed as representing a religious authority—'mullah', 'sheikh', et cetera: ***US attack would start a jihad, say mullahs***.

> If infidels attack the soil of a Muslim country, jihad (holy war) becomes an order for the Muslims of that country, the edict said... . Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former Afghan Prime Minster and Mujahidin warlord who fled to Iran when the Taliban seized Kabul, said yesterday that he had already held talks with them. I have decided to leave for Afghanistan to join hands with the Taleban against the American aggression, he said. (*The Times*, 21/09/2001)
>
> Warning of a possible US invasion, Taliban leaders urged Afghans to prepare for a jihad, or holy war, against the United States.... Throughout Afghanistan on Monday, the Taliban leaders were sending a message to their people: 'Stay united and prepare for jihad against US invaders'. (*The Independent*, 18/09/2001)

The Independent also published an edited version of a statement made by Usama Bin Ladin urging Muslims to defend Islam, i.e., to participate in Jihad against the US. The edited statement, which was published in a news report format in the world news section, was formulated in a sensationalising headline: '***Every Muslim should rise up to defend his religion***' (inverted commas were used in the original headline, possibly because is it quoted from the reported statement). Bin Ladin was also quoted as a person who had the religious authority to call upon Muslims to defend the faith, and to address the US on behalf of all Muslims:

> Our Islamic nation has been testing the same for more than 80 years of humiliation and disgrace, its sons killed and their blood spilled, its sanctities desecrated.... Every Muslim must rise to defend this religion.... God is great and glory be to Islam. (*The Independent*, 08/10/2001)

In this case, Islam is conflated and identified with the ideas, interpretations and stances of the leader of a Muslim radical fringe, Al-Qaida. This is akin to representing the stances and attitudes of the leader of the Al-Muhajiroun organisation as though it was representative of all British Muslims. Direct speech is used as a linguistic technique to convey this message, and to emphasise the literal sense and reinforce the authenticity of what Usama Bin Ladin said.

Following early reports that speculated that the September 11th attacks were carried out by Muslims, British public figures, including Tony Blair, attempted to reassure members of the Muslim community in the UK, and to emphasise that the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the UK were against the attacks. However, the negative image, which associates Islam and Muslims with violence and terrorism, has more influence than the British government's reassurances to Muslims on an audience that generally believes that news is authoritative, authentic and immediate. Tens of assaults, including physical attacks, verbal abuse and attacks on properties and Muslims' institutions, such as mosques, were reported in the UK and elsewhere.

It may be asked why the statements by figures such as the British PM, Tony Blair, and the US president, George W. Bush, did not change the overall attitude of British and American public opinion towards Islam and Muslims following the September 11th attacks.

Both Bush and Blair clearly made a distinction between Islam and terrorism, and reasserted that the message of Islam is antithetical to violence and terrorism. However, the overall attitude of the British and American people to Islam and Muslims showed the existence of a wide gap between official discourse, represented by the comments of Bush and Blair, and British and American public opinion. Another wide gap was also obvious between the image of Islam, as reflected in the comments of top leaders of the American and British establishments, and the image of Islam in the press.

The British government's efforts in this respect proved ineffective, for two main reasons. First, newspapers devoted only very limited space to the statements by British politicians and officials who said that the September 11th attacks should not be blamed on all Muslims, and that Islam is a peaceful religion, in comparison to the space devoted to images and reports covering this exceptionally violent act of devastation, and the operations of the US and other law enforcement authorities in

tracking down the perpetrators, who were already suspected to be Muslim militants. Such an event would obviously be extremely newsworthy. Moreover, the headlines in early reports pointed accusing fingers at Islam and Muslims, and were formulated in a sensationalising way. Such headlines included, for instance, ***Muslim student group*** (the UK-based Al-Muhajiroun) ***linked to terrorist attacks*** (*The Guardian,* 18/09/2001); ***Suspect lived in Brixton before joining US flying school*** (*The Guardian*, 10/09/2001); ***Europe on terror alert*** (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001); ***Three more held in UK*** (*The Guardian,* 24/09/2001); ***Guard mounted on mosques*** (*The Times*, 13/09/2001); ***Police seek Bin Ladin's British links*** (*The Times*, 17/09/2001); ***'Death threat' sheikh is unrepentant*** (*The Times*, 20/09/2001); ***Eleven Hijackers had British connection*** (*The Times*, 26/09/2001); ***Young Muslims ready for 'holy war'*** (*The Times*, 29/09/2001); ***Scotland Yard investigates North London militant*** (*The Times*, 02/10/2001); ***Public schoolboy became bin Laden pupil*** (reference to Ahmed Omar Sheikh, who studied at Forest School in Snaresbrook, East London) (*The Times*, 04/09/2001); ***Londoner who left his family for the Taleban*** (*The Times*, 15/09/2001); ***London deploys 1000 more police as security is tightened at likely targets*** (*The Independent*, 13/09/2001); ***Police granted more time to question suspects*** (*The Independent*, 24/09/2001); ***Fundraising link leads to man's arrest in London*** (*The Independent, 02/10/2001*); ***Was this ordinary block of flats in South London home to an academy of terror***? (*The Independent*, 03/10/2001); ***Baroness Thatcher criticises British Muslim leaders*** (*The Independent*, 04/10/2001); ***Yard investigating 24 terror suspects for FBI*** (*The Independent*, 19/10/2001).

Second, the three newspapers devoted much coverage to such UK-based hard-line Islamic groups as Ansar Al-Sharia and Al-Muhajiroun. For example, both came to prominence in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, and their leaders were always presented as representatives of Muslims in the UK. The newspapers frequently interviewed the leaders of both groups, following the September 11th attacks, and this helped to reinforce this impression among British public opinion. The views about the September 11th attacks of other moderate individuals, organisations and groups representing mainstream Islam and the majority of

Muslims, such as The Muslim Council of Britain, were either marginalised or given little space. The emphasis was on the radical views of groups such as Al-Muhajiroun, one of whose spokesmen was reported to have claimed that Muslims' struggle in Britain would continue until they saw the flag of Islam flying over Downing Street. The group was also reported to have issued religious edicts calling for the assassination of British PM Tony Blair and President Musharraf of Pakistan, on the eve of the war against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan, in October 2001.

The perceived threat from the enemy within featured in reports by *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, in which radical clerics known for their anti-Western sentiments, such as Omer Bakri Mohamed and Abu Hamza Al-Masri, were often quoted and interviewed. News reports quoted and referred to the comments of both Omer Bakri Mohamed and Abu Hamza Al-Masri, because they invoked images that recalled anti-Islamic prejudice and negative archetypical stereotypes about Islam. Both were always identified as "Muslim clerics" or "Sheikhs"; both were often reported as expressing radical anti-Western attitudes; they were reported to have praised the September 11th attacks; they were also represented as proponents of violence who encouraged military training for British Muslim youths, and acknowledged that such training is required by Islam and provided for in the Quran. Therefore, both men personified the perceived image of violence and anti-Westernism associated with Islam in the media.

The interest in highlighting such radical voices and marginalising, and often ignoring, moderate voices, suggests that the media seeks out those whose statements, comments and attitudes reinforce the media's criteria of what constitutes a good news story. These criteria involve reflecting a monolithic picture of Islam that is based on the perception that all Muslims hold the same views.

For instance, Omer Bakri Mohammed, the leader of the Al-Muhajiroun Islamic group, was reported as speaking in support of British Muslims travelling abroad to take part in military actions alongside other Muslims:

> The British leader of al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Mohammed, has previously spoken in support of young British Muslims who travel abroad to join in military action on behalf of Islam causes. (*The Independent*, 23/10/2001)

Frequent reference to statements by radical Muslim clerics supports the argument that the British press often prefer to quote and refer to controversial statements by Islamic radical voices, whose views are believed by the majority of mainstream moderate Muslims to distort Islam, and to ignore the views of the moderate Muslim clerics and figures who represent the majority of British Muslims:

> Al-Muhajiroun's leader, Sheikh Omer Bakri Mohammed, has praised the terrorist attacks against the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New and the Pentagon in Washington. Other leading figures have claimed that around 1800 British Muslims take part in 'military service' each year recruited in mosques and university campuses across the country. (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001)

In this case, Islam is typified and identified with what can arguably be considered a radical fringe group, by means of drawing on its views and acts. The conflation of radical Islam with mainstream Islam, and consequently of the overwhelming majority of British Muslims, who follow a moderate and non-violent version of Islam, with the followers of Muslim radical fringe groups, contributes to formulating and reinforcing this negative image. It could be argued that propagation of such an image would significantly influence the views of those whose main source of information about Islam are the mass media.

Omer Bakri Mohamed was reported as calling for the issue of a religious edict—fatwa—against President Musharaf of Pakistan for taking part in the war against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida, led by Usama bin Ladin:

> He must be put on trial. The punishment if he does not repent is capital punishment. He will be killed if he does not repent. (*The Times*, 20/09/2001)

Despite the difference in setting and context, the reporting of Mr. Mohamed's call for a fatwa against the Pakistani leader was arguably used to remind readers of the Khomeini fatwa against Salman Rushdie in 1989. The important point, however, is that neither Khomeini nor Omer Bakri Mohamed represent the overwhelming majority of Muslims, but nevertheless Mr. Mohamed was represented as speaking on behalf of Islam and Muslims:

> America has been at war against Islam since the 1960s: Lebanon, the bombardment of Somalia, Iraq and Sudan. Muslims are always under attack, even before all the discrimination against Muslims that there is here in Britain. (*The Times*, 20/09/2001)

Radical comments and stances related to the September 11th attacks and the subsequent events were reported quoting individuals that the newspapers represented as Muslim clerics— sheikh, mullah—without the actual authority of those individuals being properly explained. To the readers of newspapers, whose knowledge of Islam might have largely been derived from the media, these statements and comments of those so-called 'clerics' might seem authentic, and representative of Islam and Muslims.

Representing Muslim clerics in this particular way might reinforce the perceived great contrast between Islam and Western culture, and the stronger societal role of religious authorities and leaders, especially the commonly assumed authoritative role of religious leaders in Muslims countries and communities. Those who were represented in news reports as religious leaders were consistently referred to as "Muslim clerics", and were portrayed as sources of authority, with the capacity to decide on three issues that in the contemporary West are widely considered medieval-like remnants. First, the so-called 'Muslim clerics' are represented in news reports as having the authority to issue calls for Jihad, which is often referred to as "holy war". Second, news reports suggest that the so-called 'Muslim clerics' have the capacity to issue religious edicts excommunicating others. Third, they are also portrayed as authoritative figures, able to issue death sentence *fatwa*s against those whom they consider apostates:

Sheikh Omar was unrepentant. He said that the Pakistani leader had, under Islamic law, become an apostate for siding with the West against Muslim forces. He must be put on trial. The punishment if he does not repent is capital punishment. He will be killed if does not repent. (*The Times*, 20/09/2001)

The decision by Muslim clerics yesterday that Osama bin Laden should leave Afghanistan of his own accord was accompanied by the threat of a holy war against the United States if it attacked the country. (*The Times*, 21/09/2001)

> Abdul Rehman Saleem, a spokesman for the fundamentalist group al-Muhajiroun, said that anyone Muslim, British or foreign, who 'wants to get rid of him' (British PM Tony Blair) would not be punished under Islamic law but praised. (*The Times*, 10/10/2001)
>
> Warning of a possible US invasion, Taliban leaders urged Afghans to prepare for a jihad, or holy war, against the United States. (*The Independent*, 18/09/2001)
>
> ***Clerics called to council of holy war*** (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001)

This constructed image of Islam might reiterate the theme in Orientalist discourses that associated Islam with violence and belligerence, and perceived war as inherent in Islam, inscribed in its teachings and a fact of its civilisation. The image also involves portraying Islam as still involved in practices that prevailed long ago in medieval Europe, such as excommunication and issuing religious edicts to execute heretics and apostates. In other words, representing Islam in this way suggests that it is still trapped in a historical stage that Europe overcame centuries ago.

4. Perceived threat to Britain

The identity of British Muslims, most of whom are of Asian origin, was subject to substantial questioning after a number of British Muslims joined the Taliban and Al-Qaida to fight against the Anglo-American forces in the war to overthrow the Taliban regime and uproot Al-Qaida, in October 2001. Nine British citizens, all of immigrant parentage, were detained in Guantanamo Bay after they were allegedly captured while fighting with the Taliban against British and American troops in Afghanistan. Another British citizen, Richard Reid, was convicted and jailed in the USA for attempting to bomb an American airliner on its way from France to the USA, in December 2001.

As in the *Satanic Verses* controversy, the issue of the British Muslims' identity surfaced once again: their agenda was considered as one imposed by a foreign centre of gravity.

The existence of a perceived faultline between the West and the Muslim world came to be widely believed following the September 11th attacks. In Britain, for instance, Prime Minister Tony Blair, a close ally of US president George W. Bush, described the September 11th events as "an attack on our civilisation, our democratic values and our way of life" (Quraishy, 2001: p. 2). The coverage of Tony Blair comments in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks involved an explicit use of the in-group designator 'our' to establish a clear contrast between 'us' and 'them': "our civilisation", "our democratic values", "our way of life"'. At stake, suggested the British Prime Minster, were Western civilisation, Western democratic values and the Western way of life. It can be argued that Tony Blair's comments following the September 11th attacks encapsulated a clear contrast between 'us' and 'them' and the perceived faultline between the Western world and the Islamic world. This attitude was explicitly and implicitly reiterated in the British press. *The Guardian* (19/09/2001) published a report under the headline ***Europe in terror alert,*** suggesting that European nations' national security was at stake as a result of the September 11th attacks, which by then were blamed entirely on Islamic militants. The report discussed some 'Western' countries, whose security was reportedly under threat as a result of the attacks:

> **Britain:** Within hours of the attacks, British ministers began considering measures to curtail civil liberties in the name of national security as Tony Blair ordered a full-scale review of anti-terrorism laws. **France:** in Paris, 1000 CRS riot police and 700 soldiers have been called in to reinforce the capital's 3400 regular police officers. Identity checks have been stepped up and litter bins and bottle banks sealed for fear of bombs. **Germany:** The government is looking into ways of stemming the flow of funds to extremists operating in the country following revelations that at least seven of the suspects in the US attacks studied in Germany, where they are thought to have taken advantage of generally liberal legislation. **Japan:** the ruling coalition is discussing a law that would curtail civil liberties and expand the powers of the military in the event of terrorist or conventional attack. **Belgium:** it has launched a sweeping crackdown on suspected Islamist fundamentalists and upgraded security measures at airports and key government buildings. **Spain:** National identity

> cards are compulsory and authorities have advised people to carry them at all times. (*The Guardian*, 19/09/2001)

The Guardian reports an unusual level of alert and security measures in both European countries and Japan. To portray the alleged terrorist threat, the text deploys a high-risk register to indicate an extraordinary state of security alert: "1000 CRS riot police and 700 soldiers have been called up", "litter bins and bottle banks sealed for fear of bombs", "upgraded security measures". Only *The Guardian* report on Belgium made direct reference to Islam or Muslims *per se*, but both implicit and explicit references to the reasons behind the security alert in the countries mentioned, together with the 'groundwork coverage', reinforced the 'Muslim connection'.

The tone of alarm and potential threat is greater in *The Times*' reporting, which used a special rhetoric to persuade readers to make sense of what it reported in a particular way. *The Times*' textual strategy is to induce readers to believe that Britain has become a base from which Bin Ladin's Al-Qaida has been using British soil as an operational base from which to coordinate and organise attacks: "British cities" are described in the report as "centres" for planning terrorist activities. Muslims are also negatively portrayed as abusing hospitality and liberal laws, by becoming involved in illegal and criminal activities such as terrorism, passport forgery and money laundering:

> British cities are believed to have become valuable centres over the past three years for organising his terrorist operation. From the unlikely setting of the terraced suburbs of North London, key figures in his organisation have provided vital communication and travel links for terrorist attacks.... Some have lived in Britain for years with their families, including bin Laden's most trusted aide, Khalid al-Fawwaz, who worked as a civil servant in Neasden. Al-Fawwaz, who is facing extradition to the United States, and several others are suspected of using high street banks, including a branch of Barclays at Notting Hill, to launder money, helping to secure false passports for recruits and finding printing firms to produce bin Laden's propaganda. (*The Times*, 17/09/2001)

The scare of an internal threat continued to be evoked, by suggesting that the UK had become a safe heaven for terrorists, and a base from which terrorists could launch their activities. Strong assertions were used in reports, obviously to give

them a measure of factuality, despite the fact that the British authorities were only investigating allegations:

Police seek bin Laden's British links

> Detectives are questioning four asylum-seekers who recently arrived at Heathrow airport, and are searching bank accounts and telephone records to uncover the identity of terrorists suspected of running Osama bin Laden's network in Britain. (*The Times*, 17/09/2001)

Three more held in UK

> The arrests in London and Birmingham, part of the largest security operation in the UK since the Gulf War in 1991, were made following information received from the FBI, which is leading a huge global investigation into the attacks. The suspects were being questioned about whether they had been directly involved in aiding and succouring those who had bombed the World Trade Dente, said the Home Secretary, David Blunkett. (*The Guardian*, 24/09/2001)

Yard investigating 24 terror suspects for FBI

> Up to 24 terror suspects are being investigated by Scotland Yard in connection with the 11 September attacks. Anti-terrorist officers are also following up more than 200 other lines of inquiry linked to the terror networks behind the American atrocities. Scotland Yard also disclosed yesterday that of the suspects already investigated, three people in Britain already had 'strong links' to the suicide hijacking and the support network of Osama bin Laden. (*The Independent*, 19/09/2001)

A specific rhetorical style was used to support the strong assertions quoting a senior cabinet minister, Mr. David Blunkett, and a globally known security institution, FBI. It also used a particular linguistic register, suggesting the threat of feature terrorist attacks on the UK: "British links", "terror suspects", "anti-terrorist officers", "terror networks", "strong links", et cetera.

In addition to reinforcing and maintaining the sense of possible threat, such reports might be viewed as intended to prepare public opinion to condone and accept any upcoming measures against domestic 'suspected terrorists', including the curtailment of civil liberties in the name of national security.

Another issue related to the perceived internal threat, or the threat-from-within: the involvement of young British Muslims in terrorist activities abroad. The first

indication of "Britons" being involved in a "Jihad" enterprise occurred shortly before the US-led war in Afghanistan against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime:

> The recruitment of young British Muslims in terror activities has become increasingly apparent and they have been linked to car bombings in Afghanistan and Kashmir and a terror a campaign in Yemen. (*The Independent*, 03/09/2001)

The Times reported a similar story:

> Al-Muhajiroun has been banned from university campuses across Britain because of fears that many young Muslims were being recruited for training camps abroad. (*The Times*, 20/09/2001)

When the identity of the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks was confirmed as 'Muslims', and as the wave of anti-Muslim feeling increased following the attacks, the British Home Secretary, David Blunkett, proposed a fresh package of anti-terrorist measures, one of which was compulsory ID cards. Obviously, those who were meant to be issued with the proposed ID cards were immigrants; and since the main suspects behind the September 11th attacks were Muslims, it would be concluded that 'Muslims', rather than any other religion or sect, had impelled the British authorities to propose once again, despite opposition from civil liberties groups, the issue of compulsory ID cards. In *The Independent*'s news report (24/09/2001) under the headline ***Blunkett giving 'high priority' to compulsory ID cards***, the words 'Islam', 'Muslims' or 'immigrants' were not explicitly used in any part of the report, but the overall context implicitly indicates that 'Muslims', the prime suspects, who made the British government consider this measure, which is reported to have gained wide support:

> Although a survey revealed overwhelming public support for identity cards, the plan will arouse fierce opposition from civil liberties groups. (*The Independent*, 24/09/2001)

British Muslims, most of whom are of Asian origin, were in the media spotlight even before the September 11th 2001 attacks on New York and Washington. In the same year, the finger of blame was pointed at Muslim youth in Bradford and Burnley, during race riots in which clashes with the police took place. Following the September 11th attacks, the British Muslim community in general came under media focus in a way unprecedented since *The Satanic Verses* controversy in 1989.

The focus was on the alleged 'growing number' of British Muslims willing to join the Taliban and Al-Qaida fighters in the US-led war against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida, in which British forces took part. The issue ignited a wide controversy among many, across the political spectrum in the UK, over whether those Muslims should be charged with treason on their return to the UK. However, their return was not only looked at in terms of whether they should be tried for treason: they were also looked at as a potential threat to the national security of the UK:

> They (FBI) already asked Scotland Yard to trace an estimated 500 Britons who the FBI suspects were trained in recent years at camps in Afghanistan linked to bin Ladin. The FBI's fear is that, armed with terrorists skills they acquired in these camps, many of these British recruits may have returned home where they remain as 'sleepers'. (*The Times*, 29/09/2001)

Here the passive form is used to topicalise the alleged threat of volunteer fighters, which is supported by a number that seems like a round figure. The figure in question might have been used to reassert subjectivity and, consequently, credibility. However, the number seemed to imply the size of the threat:

> They (British Muslims) are among 11,000 volunteers who the FBI suspects were recruited from Europe and American to join camps linked to the al-Qaeda network. Some of the British recruits are known to have been sent to fight in what are seen as holy wars in Chechnya, Kashmir, Afghanistan and the Balkans. (*The Times*, 29/09/2001)

The September 11th media coverage of the British Muslim community was generally sensationalist and negative. The main focus was on those Muslim youths travelling abroad to train for 'Jihad': some reports estimated that hundreds of Muslim youths were sent overseas to train and fight for 'Jihad'. However, only seven British Muslims were detained in Guantanamo Delta camp, in which Taliban and Al-Qaida fighters were detained:

> During that period, a network of Islamist organisations that allegedly includes Sakina and al-Muhajiroun—a radical Muslim organisation which has been banned from campuses by the National Unions of Students—has sent between 1000 and 2500 young Britons overseas to train and fight for the jihad. (*The Independent*, 03/10/2001)

Such reports seem to be based on casual observations, rather than actual news, or figures from reliable sources:

> The recruitment of young British Muslims in terror activities has become increasingly apparent and they have been linked to car bombings in Afghanistan and Kashmir and a terror campaigns in Yemen.... Last February, the Russian government claimed that students from British universities, including the London School of Economics, were being recruited by Islamic groups to fight in Chechnya. (*The Independent*, 03/10/2001)

In its 1997 report on Islamophobia, titled 'Islamophobia: A threat for us all', The Runnymede Trust stated that Islam was inherently seen as being the 'Other' to the West, a situation which reinforces the 'us' versus 'them' dualism, especially given a headline and lead such as: ***Young Muslims ready for 'holy war'***:

> Young British Muslims are arriving in increasing numbers at mosques and community centres, asking how they can fight in what they describe as an imminent holy war. (*The Times*, 29/09/2001)

In the context of the atmosphere following the September 11th attacks, and prevailing sentiments towards Muslims in general, British Muslims might have been looked at as traitors to Britain because they were going to fight British troops in the then imminent war in Afghanistan. The root of the perceived problem therefore now lies at the heart of the Islamic tradition, for the so-called youths were going to fight a 'holy war' in Afghanistan against troops of fellow citizens. It follows that, as long as Muslims were viewed as one monolithic single entity, then their perceived threat would be dealt with seriously. Such a perceived threat would not then be underestimated, whether from outside or within Britain.

British Muslims and other members of the Muslim community in the UK came under the media spotlight in the aftermath of September 11th. However, their overall image in the mass media was generally negative. In addition to being associated with violence and terrorism, British Muslims were also associated, in some reports, with lawlessness and involvement in criminal activities:

> In weeks to come, fresh operations are expected against suspected money-launderers, fake charities, front companies and extremists attempting to recruit new followers. (*The Independent*, 03/10/2001)

> Anti-terrorist branch detectives also arrested a suspected terrorist fundraiser at his London office and searched his home. The 43-year-old man was being questioned at Paddington Green police station in West London over allegations that he collected money for the Islamic Jihad group, which is one of the 21 organisations banned by the Government. (*The Times*, 02/09/2001)

This suggestion of Islam's so-called threat to the West had increased over the years.

It became even stronger in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, and the Second Gulf war in 1991. Today, the Western media portrays Islam as a terrorist threat to the West. Edward Said wrote:

> For the general public in America and Europe today, Islam is 'news' of a particularly unpleasant sort. The media, the government, the geopolitical strategists, and—although they are marginal to the culture at large—the academic experts on Islam are all in concert: Islam is a threat to Western civilisation.... What I am saying is that negative images of Islam are very much more prevalent than any others, and that such images correspond, not to what Islam 'is' but to what prominent sectors of a particular society take it to be. Those sectors have the power and the will to propagate that particular image of Islam, and this image therefore becomes more prevalent, more present, than all others. (Said, 1997: p. 144)

The Western attitude towards communism during the cold war era seemed to have been transferred to what the mainstream Western media generally dubbed "Islamic fundamentalism". Media reports about the alleged new 'Islamic fundamentalist' threat represent the themes related to this perceived threat selectively in a way that has contributed to, and still contributes to, the negative perception of Islam in Western society. 'Fundamentalism', 'extremism', 'fanaticism', and 'terrorism' have all been repeatedly used and associated with Islam.

This selective-based representation reflects a prejudiced one-sided picture that reinforces previously held negative images of Islam in the Western public mind. Such an on-going process of representing negative images of Islam, in media coverage of violent acts committed by Islamic militant groups, seems to basically be used to reinforce the preconceived negative images and stereotypes of Islam.

Public opinion, which has already been exposed to a monolithic and stereotypical images of Islam in the press, might not, for instance, question or object to the detention and interrogation of individuals merely because they were Muslim and Middle Eastern, such as the Algerian pilot Lotfi Raissi, who was detained in the UK for months and was about to be deported to the US, but was later freed due to lack of evidence supporting the charges against him, of training some of the September 11th hijackers. Anyone who read the following part of *The Guardian* news report about Raissi, in the prevailing atmosphere of negative anti-Muslim media coverage, would not doubt his involvement:

> Lotfi Raissi, 27, an Algerian pilot, and his wife Sonia, 25, were arrested at a flat in Colnbrook, Berkshire, near Heathrow airport, in the early hours of Saturday. Mr. Raissi's brother Mohammed was arrested in Hounslow, west London, but was released without charge on Saturday afternoon.... Mr. Raissi was on an FBI 'watch list' of 200 people sought in connection with the attacks on New York and Washington. (*The Guardian*, 24/09/2001)

In the light of the association in the public mind of Islam with violence and terrorism, pubic opinion probably considers such arrested suspects as criminals and terrorists, especially if they are said to be 'Arabs' or people of Arab or Muslim descent:

> British police were yesterday investigating the possibility that the al-Qaida terrorist network is active in the UK, as anti-terrorist branch officers continued to question three people of Arab extraction arrested at the weekend. (*The Guardian*, 24/09/2003)

Mr. Raissi, the Algerian pilot referred to in the news report above as one of three people 'of Arab extraction', was presented as part of an investigation into the 'possibility' that Bin Ladin's network was active in the UK. However, implicit terrorist involvement was indicated, first, by linking the three arrested suspects to 'Arab extraction' and, second, by confirming that Mr. Raissi was sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

> Mr Raissi was on the FBI 'watch list' of 200 people sought in connection with the attacks on New York and Washington. (*The Guardian*, 24/09/2001)

The news report about Mr. Raissi was formulated in a way that would leave readers with no doubt about his involvement in terrorism. Moreover, he was reported to have been on an FBI watch list, which explicitly means that the US authorities considered him to pose a threat to American national security. To dramatise the story further, and in order to raise suspicion about the possible involvement of his relatives in the hijacking-based attacks on New York and Washington, Raissi's close family members were reported to work in aviation:

> Sonia Raissi works for Air France on the customer service desk at Heathrow. Mohammed Raissi's wife works for Saudi Arabian Airlines. (*The Guardian*, 24/09/2001)

5. The perceived faultline between the West and the Muslim world

In trying to comprehend the root causes of the September 11th attacks, some news reports mentioned the perceived fault line between the West and the Islamic world, which is referred to in Samuel Huntington's thesis of the 'Clash of Civilisations'.

Implicit and explicit references to the thesis of the 'Clash of Civilisations' in news reports on the September 11th attacks implied Huntington's notion that democratic values were most deeply and widely entrenched in Western societies. Huntington predicted that the strongest cultural and civilisational clash in political values would be between the West and the Muslim world. I would like to refer here to comments by the British PM Tony Blair his Italian counterpart Silvio Berlusconi. Tony Blair said:

> This was not an attack on America alone. This was an attack on the free and democratic world everywhere and this is the responsibility that the free and democratic would have to shoulder together with America. (*The Independent* 13/09/2001)

The Times reported a similar story but in a different context. The Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, was reported to have reasserted the superiority of the West to Islam, under a headline clearly indicating his meaning: ***Berlusconi says West is superior to Islam***.

> Breaking ranks with allies reaching out to the Muslim world, Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian Prime Minster, said last night that Western civilisation is superior to

> Islam. He also said that he hopes the West will conquer Islam. (*The Times*, 27/09/2001)

The Independent report quoted the British PM in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks, before the identity of the perpetrators was known. However, *The Times* report was published two weeks later, in an atmosphere of anti-Muslims sentiments, and before the launch of the US-led 'war on terrorism' against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime:

> We must be aware of the superiority of our civilisation, a system that has guaranteed well-being, respect for human rights and—in contrast with Islamic countries—respect for religious and political rights. (*The Times*, 27/09/2001)

The Times report had obviously selected particular comments from Berlusconi's speech at a news conference with the German Chancellor and the Russian President in Berlin on September 26th. The comments chosen constitute the core of the alleged fault line between Islam and the Western world: "well-being, respect for human rights, religious and political rights".

The Times report featured lexical items and phrases, such as "conquer" and "confrontation with another civilisation", that fit into Huntington's thesis and the atmosphere of the looming US-led war on terrorism at the time—less than two weeks before the war against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime began:

> Berlusconi went on to say that he 'trusts the West will continue to conquer peoples like it conquered communism', even if it means a confrontation with 'another civilisation', the Islamic one, stuck where it was 1400 years ago. (*The Times*, 27/09/2001)

Berlusconi's comment was not an isolated instance, but part of explicit statements and implicit suggestions of the perceived confrontation between two monolithic worlds, the so-called 'civilised West' and the allegedly 'uncivilised Muslim world', which is often represented as hostile to Western civilisation and its values. After September 11th, the two worlds were represented as opposing monolithic entities. However, the war against Iraq in March 2003 proved that neither of these worlds is monolithic. Arab countries, for instance, were divided on this issue: some opposed the war, while others provided the US troops with bases, territories and airspace to

launch attacks against Iraq. The West, too, is deeply divided over the war, which was eventually launched outside so-called international legitimacy.

Berlusconi's comments obviously included terms of self-praise, and reasserted the superiority of Western civilisation and cultural values, in reaction to the September 11th attacks. They are an example of conflating mainstream Islam with militant Islam, and of associating Islam with extremism and violence, thus reasserting the existence of a faultline between the two based on commonly held binary oppositions, such as 'civilised versus uncivilised' and 'superior versus inferior', between Islam and the Western civilisation, and reinforcing a negative image of Islam. Berlusconi explicitly attributed 'superiority', 'supremacy' and 'civility' to the West over Islam.

This tendency to suggest the 'Otherness' of Islam in the press is largely rooted in how the West affirms its positive qualities and contrasts them with the perceived inferior qualities of the Muslim world. The representation of this image is often accompanied by implicit or explicit references to a sense of bounded identity, and the reassertion of in-group (the West) solidarity and the shared values of its members, *vis-à-vis* the out-group (the Muslim world). The 'us versus them' framework is itself is rooted in the continual historical antagonism between Islam and the Christian West, from the rise of Islam in the seventh century to the present day.

This framework projects a world of prolonged conflict between arguably incompatible civilisations—Islamic and Western—defined by religious allegiances, historical ties and cultural resemblance. The positive qualities of the Western civilisation are represented in contrast to those of the Islamic world.

Therefore, the focus on the Italian Prime Minister's comments on the superiority of Western civilisation *vis-à-vis* Islam could be viewed as intended to highlight a sense of bounded identity, and to unite the members of this group, who are implicitly understood to share common values. Berlusconi's comments, which were obviously

intended to reinforce the alleged Western superiority *vis-à-vis* Islam, and the perceived faultline and conflict between Islam and the Western world, are in essence a contemporary recurrence of the age-old notion of the Orient, against which Western Europe reinforces its distinctiveness. The notion of the 'Other' in this context is based on how the Western civilisation, as mentioned in Berlusconi's comments, is believed to understand itself in terms of images of the conflictual past between Islam and the Christian West.

Issues related to gender equality, such as polygamy in Islam, which is often cited as one of the most crucial faultlines between Islam and the Western world, were introduced into coverage of developments that followed the September 11th attacks. A profile of the family of Usama Bin Ladin was dominated by the polygamous history of the family:

> The incident brought shame on his family, where he is the 17th of 57 children by Mohammed bin Laden, an immigrant from Yemen who arrived in Saudi Arabia as a guest worker but succeeded in building up a multibillion-pound business empire thanks to his engineering skills and his close ties to the House of Saud, the country's ruling family.... Bin Laden, who is believed to have 56 half-sisters and half- brothers, was the only child of his father's tenth wife.... During the war he acquired a hatred of Western culture and in particular America. (*The Times*, 15/09/2001)

Another image implicitly conflating Islam's radicalism and polygamy was reported by *The Guardian*, citing Usama Bin Ladin. The report uses particular lexicalisation and phrases to reinforce this image: 'dissident', 'large family', 'Arab followers', 'four wives', 'his four wives and many children'. More interestingly, this image was reported as Bin Ladin became the most wanted terrorist in the world:

> The Saudi-born dissident's large family, together with his Arab followers, has also left the city, the sources added. His four wives and many children have taken refuge in the countryside, according to reports. (*The Guardian*, 17/09/2001)

Polygamy has long been one of the most controversial issues about Islam in the West. It is widely perceived as one of the central values and cultural divides that separate it from Islam. It has also been considered that Islam does not sanction equal rights for men and women. Another related point of conflict is the status of women

in Islam: many believe that women in Islam remain unliberated and perceived as a source of comfort for males.

A lack of coherence is evident in the above report: the top-down process of news was not followed. The headline reported Bin Ladin and his family fleeing to a mountainous area, and the lead confirmed Bin Ladin fleeing his main base near the city of Kandahar. His family, which was featured in the headline, was mentioned only twice in a single paragraph in the 16-paragraph report: "the Saudi-dissident's large family" and "his four wives and many children". Hence, if we take into account the levels of description and amount of detail on each level, it could be argued that Bin Ladin's family does not have a main contextual relevance. It could be argued further that featuring Bin Ladin's "family" in the headline was essentially meant to emphasise the issue of polygamy in Islam, as a negative value that has long been criticised and cited as in stark contradiction with Western values and culture. Code-phrases such as "his four wives", "his large family", and "his many children"—all in relation to Bin Ladin—were used to emphasise and reinforce a cultural fault line between Islam and Western society.

This image of Islam suggests, in turn, that the Muslim world is still a hostage of its historic past, and explains its failure to adopt the values of the democratic and modern Western world. It suggests the superiority of the West and Western values *vis-à-vis* the perceived inferiority of an anti-modern, medieval and primitive Muslim world.

However, there are similarities and differences in how the three newspapers represented Islam/Muslims in their coverage of the September 11th attacks. News reported in the three selected newspapers is very similar, but is represented and formulated differently. Three major interconnected themes were common in the coverage by the three newspapers: first, the alleged threat-from-within in the two weeks immediately following the September 11th attacks. The UK is generally constructed as a safe haven for terrorists, and as a base for funding and planning Al-

Qaida-related terrorist activities abroad. Second, the three newspapers focused on David Blunkett's proposed anti-terrorist laws to curb the perceived terrorist threat facing the UK: in this context, reference was often made to the perceived threat-from-within. Third, the three newspapers focused on the British Muslims who took up arms to fight for Taliban and Al-Qaida against the Anglo-American military campaign in Afghanistan, after the September 11th attacks.

The difference lies in how each newspaper treated these issues, and how the news texts were formulated to construct a particular image. Unlike *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, *The Times* gave more detailed accounts of the dramatic aspects of alarming events, such as the story of Moussaoui—dubbed the 20th hijacker—who lived in London before he left for the US to attend a flying school; and the Algerian pilot Lutfi Raissi, who was accused of training two of the 9/11 hijackers in the US, but was later released and the charges against him were dropped. *The Times* often reported events in a tone characterised by strong assertions, in order to reinforce the suspected terrorists' UK connection, and the involvement of British Muslims in jihad: ***Eleven hijackers had British connections*** (26/09/2001). "Young British Muslims are arriving in increasing numbers at mosques and community centres asking how they can fight in what they describe as an imminent holy war" (29/09/2001). *The Times*' tendency to give dramatic and sensationalised accounts of events, such as the arrest of Khalid Al-Fawwaz and Lutfi Raisi, as well as the Moussaoui story, did not constitute a dominant aspect of *The Guardian*'s and *The Independent*'s coverage of these stories.

However, the three newspapers' focus is almost similar, as regards reinforcing the notion of the threat-from-within. Each used lexical items related to the domain of law and order enforcement, violence and terrorism, to warn of the potential threat to the UK: "raid", "crackdown", "terror suspects", "terror cells", "terror network", and "terror alert", among others. *The Times*' formulation of news texts and use of linguistic register suggests the need for the authorities to take strict measures to pre-empt a presumably terrorist danger waiting to happen in the UK. The strong

assertions used in *The Times'* language of news converge implies suspects, although the allegations mentioned were under investigation and were not yet proved:

> Eleven of the hijackers who took part in the attacks in America stayed in Britain this year before going on their suicide mission. (26/09/2001)
>
> The terrorist attacks in American prove that al-Qaeda uses recruits who have spent years leading what appear to be respectable lives in Britain and America. (21/10/2001)
>
> Zacarias Moussaoui, a 33-year-old French-Moroccan, who is being questioned in New York, is believed to be the twentieth hijacker. (21/10/2001)

The Guardian and *The Independent,* however, did focus on the threat-from-within notion by reporting stories of UK-based suspects, but they always refer to them as "suspects" without using strong assertions, as in *The Times*. Nor did they relate them directly and explicitly with British Muslims, as *The Times* did.

Negative representation of Islam and Muslims can be detected in the three newspapers' coverage, but it is more evident in *The Times,* because of its explicit linguistic registers that conform to the proposed themes. However, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* often used implicitness and neutral language in their coverage and treatment of their themes.

ART 3

CHAPTER 8

Findings and conclusion

Events related to Islam and the Muslim world during the last two decades constituted a significant part of the developments that dominated the attention of the news media: the Ayatollah Khomeini's controversial religious edict (fatwa) against Salman Rushdie, the second Gulf war, the Balkan war, the first bombing of the World Trade Centre, the conflict in Algeria, *Hamas* suicide bombs in Israel, the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, the series of explosions in the Paris Metro network, the killing of foreign tourists in Luxor, the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the conflict in Kosovo, the September 11th attacks, post-war Iraq insurgency and the kidnapping and slaughter of hostages there. This list reinforces the widely held view that press coverage of Islam is concerned primarily with violence, terrorism, crises, and social and political unrest.

Since the end of the cold war and the consequent political, social and economic transformations, following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, Islam has become an increasingly prominent issue. The subsequent shift in the global power balance involved attempts by the West to sustain its hegemony and reassert its strategic and political power, especially in areas where it has vital interests. In the light of the above events, which were viewed as a threat to Western interests, and hence to the new world order after the end of the cold war, the media, as an instrument of public ideology, became a key focus of attention as they overtook other institutions in the cultural production of knowledge (Poole, 2002: p. 41).

News stories on militant Islam usually occur after an event of violence committed by an Islamic militant group triggers press assumptions about the presence of a similar threat in the UK. Apart from the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, the other research case studies link this perceived threat to British Muslims, and/or

controversial Muslim figures who live in the UK. The media in this respect continued to play a major role, as a discourse capable of constructing plausible images out of incongruent signs, by virtue of having the necessary tools to make crises, images and perceived threats concrete, by wrapping them in narrative forms designed to correspond to audience expectations.

The negative representation of Islam and Muslims in the press is arguably influenced by the age-old perception of both as an *Other*, a concept which has been dominant in Western civilisation and was resolutely established in the discourse of colonisation and invasion. This perceived image of Islam/Muslims first emerged during the early encounters between Islam and Christian Europe, in the eighth century, and continued over the centuries with varying degrees of intensity, until the epoch of the mass media.

The overall contemporary picture of Islam and Muslims depicted by the press reinforces the pre-existing negative image of both in the readers' collective memory. Central to this image is the view of Islam as a monolithic entity associated with violence, intolerance and hatred of everything Western: hence the blanket association of Muslim cultures with intolerance, anti-modernism, anti-pluralism, anti-liberalism, misogyny and patriarchalism.

It could be argued that the media focus lies basically on representing a single monolithic Islam, and ignores the demarcations between militant, moderate and liberal versions of Islam. There are Islamic militant movements that seek to implement a strict version of Islam, as it was interpreted and practiced in the early days of Islam by Prophet Mohamed and his followers. Examples of these movements include all the groups that follow the *Wahabi* version of Islam that prevails in Saudi Arabia. These movements seek to establish a strict version of Islam, and to expel a perceived Western cultural threat to Muslim identity. The role of these movements focuses on establishing Islamic rule, and on safeguarding the Muslim community and identity against such alleged threats. Other movements, such the Egyptian Jihad and the Algerian Islamic Armed Group, follow a

confrontational line against the ruling authorities in both Egypt and Algeria. They believe that it is their duty by virtue of Islam to topple what they describe as secular and infidel governments, in order to establish Islamic states. Besides its open confrontation with the US, Al-Qaida, however, has become a parent Islamic international movement that supports militant groups in order to destabilise security and target Western interests. An example of this is evident in the suicide attacks in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan between 2003 and the end of 2005, which were carried out by suicide bombers suspected of association with Al-Qaida. There are also revivalist movements that seek to renew the Muslim community from within, but do not blame all social ills on the West, nor on the perceived western ideological and moral threat: such movements include the Moroccan "Party of Justice and Development" and the Egyptian "Muslim Brothers". Despite this evident diversity in the types of Islamic movements, the image usually portrayed in the press implies a single monolithic Islamic militant movement.

Given that most of people's social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world derives from the dozens of news reports they read or see everyday, the negative representation of Islam/Muslims in the press might result in having negative perceptions, and misconceptions and probably fear of Islam, or what the Runnymede Trust report termed "Islamophobia". Examples of Islamophobia include viewing Islam as a single monolithic entity, static and unresponsive to new realities; viewing it as separate and an *Other* lacking common values and objectives with other cultures; viewing it as irrational, primitive, sexist and inferior to the West; and viewing it as aggressive, threatening and supportive of violence and terror.

Negative portrayals of Islam, derived from the series of events that followed the Khomeini religious edict against Salman Rushdie in 1989, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the second Gulf War in 1991, and continued throughout the 1990s until the September 11th attacks, reinforced the preconceived negative image of Islam/Muslims in the Western collective memory. These events were, of course, attributed to the Arab/Muslim world, a region already associated in media consumers' minds with terrorism, turmoil and instability.

Once again, Islam and Muslim were on the defensive. With the preconceived negative image of Islam/Muslims in mind, readers of the news consider "Islam" and "terrorism" as synonymous every time they come across phrases such as "Islamic terrorism" and "Muslim terrorists". Muslims are often lumped together indiscriminately, without distinguishing between mainstream Islam and radical Islamic movements and groups. The press also tends to report an incomplete fragment of a rather complex situation, and to represent the acts of these radical groups as an archetype of Islam, ignoring the wide diversity in the Muslim world and its complex social and political dynamics, in which the West itself played a role, involving colonisation, dependency and international discrimination.

It is evident from the discourse analysis conducted on the selected news reports that a perceptual framework of violence, extremism and anti-Westernism has been used to build a specific construct of Islam, apparently to evoke a sense of constant threat, although to varying extents in the three newspapers, and a continuous sense of fear. A link has often been made in an indiscriminate manner between Islam, terrorism, violence, extremism and fanaticism, by conflating mainstream Islam with militant Islam. The analysis also revealed that this conflation is the norm in portraying Islam and Muslims through negative stereotypes. The negative representation of Islam in the three newspapers was based on a perceptual framework of violence, extremism, terrorism, fanaticism and disregard for human life: the death threat against Salman Rushdie and the subsequent events; the rise of Taliban to power in Afghanistan; the Luxor killing of foreign tourists; and the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington. The perpetrators of violence in these events were all Muslims, and this reinforced the tendency to represent Islam in a negative way. Consequently, generalising judgments related to violence, extremism, fanaticism and anti-Western sentiments were explicitly and implicitly made about either the Muslim faith, societies predominated by Muslims and even about Muslim communities in Western countries: British Muslims' responses to the Rushdie affair and the September 11th attacks.

The overall picture drawn by the news reports portrays a negatively projected image of Islam. This picture mirrors a trend by the newspapers analysed to depict Muslims as perpetrators of violence, lacking in the common values of tolerance and freedom of thought and expression, and unable to accept ideas and opinions contrary to theirs.

It could be argued that there were historic, political and cultural factors behind the prejudice against Islam and Muslims, even before the Rushdie affair, the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan, the Luxor killing of foreign tourists and the September 11th attacks. Drawing on these factors, the three newspapers focused mainly, albeit to varying degrees, on the extreme practices and actions of a particular faction of followers of the Muslim faith, at the expense of the non-extremist Muslim majority, in order to create an image of Islam in which the worst practices of this particular segment loomed larger than the normal conduct of its vast majority. As was pointed out in the final case study, the three newspapers have an almost identical focus in terms of reinforcing the notion of the threat-from-within. Islam and Muslims have been represented within a perceptual framework of violence, extremism, terrorism and antagonism to western values. It could be argued that, in this respect, the three papers share a common discourse. However, each used techniques and strategies in conformity with its own line of reporting. For instance, the use of lexical items related to the domain of order and law enforcement, violence and terrorism, such as "raid", "crackdown", "terror suspects", "terror cells", "terror network", and "terror alert" among others, was common in all the three newspapers. These items were primarily used to warn of a potential threat to the UK, in the coverage of the Rushdie affair, the killing of foreign tourists at Luxor, Egypt, and in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. Such a warning was, in turn, often used to maintain a sense of fear, and to reinforce a suggested need for the authorities to take strict measures to pre-empt a presumably terrorist danger waiting to happen in the UK. *The Times* tended to use language dominated by strong assertions, and to focus on sensationalising aspects to suggest the incrimination of individuals suspected of involvement in terrorism, even though at

the time of coverage the allegations were still under investigation and had not yet been proved: e.g., "eleven of the hijackers who took part in the attacks in America stayed in Britain this year before going on their suicide mission" (26/09/2001); "the terrorist attacks in American prove that al-Qaida uses recruits who have spent years leading what appear to be respectable lives in Britain and America"; "Zacarias Moussaoui, a 33-year-old French-Moroccan, who is being questioned in New York, is believed to be the twentieth hijacker". (21/10/2001). As has been pointed out in the September 11th case study, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* however, did focus on the threat-from-within notion by reporting stories of UK-based suspects, but they often referred to them as "suspects", without making strong assertions in their coverage, unlike *The Times*. Nor did they relate British Muslims directly and explicitly with terrorism, as *The Times* did.

These findings support the argument that British press coverage in general tends to identify Islam with its most extreme and radical fringes, and to associate it with violence. One example, referred to in the Runnymede Trust report (1997) on the role of the British media in reinforcing Islamophobia, is that when a Muslim militant group carries out an act of violence, the British media never interview a Muslim leader who denounces such an act. Even when Muslim leaders and figures condemn such acts of violence, the report argued, their condemnations are usually ignored. Moreover, it has also been contended that had Islam not been identified with its most radical and extreme groups, and had there been reports of the condemnations of other Muslim organisations involved in other attacks in other contexts, such as Hamas and Hizbullah, readers would have had a less monolithic image of Islamic militancy:

> There can be little doubt that had these condemnations from other organisations involved in attacks on civilians in other contexts been included in the coverage, readers and viewers would have received a much less 'monolithic' impression of Islamic militancy. (Donnan, 2002: p. 55)

This tendency is common in the coverage of the three selected newspapers that we investigated. However, each paper wrapped the themes in different ways. Unlike *The Times* and *the Independent*, *The Guardian* generally used a more neutral tone of

coverage, especially on immigration. *The Times* and *The Independent* focused on immigration and the perceived threat-from-within, more so than *The Guardian*. In *The Times* and *The Independent*, the tendency to reinforce the Islamic identity of the group that committed the Luxor killing of foreign tourists was more evident: both repeatedly used clichés such as "Islamic terror", "Islamic extremism", "Islamic violence", "Islamic extremists", "Islamic militant terrorists", "Islamic gunmen" and "Islamic fundamentalist gunmen". Analysis also indicated that the construction of this particular image of Islam/Muslims, which has often been conflated with *Islamic militancy* and the bloody violent acts committed by Islamic militant groups, relied upon the intense use of category labels in the newspaper discourse. In this respect, links have often been constructed between Islam/Muslims and the notions of terror, extremism, fanaticism, belligerency, intolerance and violence, suggesting that Islam is inherently violent, and encourages extremism and the use of violence.

Phrases such as "Muslim terrorists", "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic terror" were frequently used, thus resulting in Islam being labelled a terrorist faith. However, it could be argued that this is a misnomer. For instance, members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who carried out bombing attacks in Britain were not labelled "Catholic terrorists", nor were loyalists who struck Catholic targets in Ireland called "Protestant terrorists". Moreover, Timothy McVeigh, who carried out the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 killing 168 people, and was convicted by a US court and sentenced to death in June 2001, was not labelled a "Christian terrorist".

This image contributes to the previously held distorted image of Islam that is prevalent in the West, especially when we take into account that the press is among the prime sources of information. Such coverage might drive newspaper readers to judge the Muslim faith by the actions of a minority of its followers. Therefore professional considerations need to be reviewed and balanced by social responsibility, and media coverage must take into account that the right of fair play has to be observed when dealing with Muslims. Terrorists do not of course make up the majority of Muslims, but even so blanket generalisations such as "Muslim

terrorists" and "Islamic terrorism" were used to describe all Muslims. There are, of course, different interpretations of Islam and different forms of adherence to Islam and several distinct Muslim attitudes: some of them are tolerant, and hostile to fanaticism and violence; others are even secular and, therefore, anti-fundamentalist. But such diversity has often been ignored, and it is rarely acknowledged by the press.

Conflation was a common practice by the three newspapers. They seem to have purposefully conflated mainstream Islam with the militant version of Islam. Violent acts and threats carried out by Islamic militant movements—the Rushdie affair, the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, the killing of foreign tourists in Luxor by the Egyptian Islamic group, the September 11th attacks—were not explicitly and unequivocally attributed to radical fringes unrepresentative of the Muslim faith: Al-Qaida, the Egyptian Islamic Group and Taliban. Rather, the overall coverage suggests the presence of a monolithic faith that is supportive of extremism and violence, thereby ignoring the distinctive diversity of Muslims in countries as diverse as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Analysis showed that linking Islam with violence and extremism in the tthree newspapers is used as a perceptual framework to construct a particular image of Islam. Objectivity is often related to conceptual systems and sets of culture-related values. Therefore, such objectivity was absent, in the light of the divergence of the conceptual systems and cultural values of the West *vis-à-vis* Islam and the Muslim world, which have consequently been portrayed within a perceptual framework of extremism, violence and animosity towards Western values.

Attributing extremism and violence to all Muslims, and associating every conflict related to Islam/Muslims to the notion of jihad, were used as discursive practices in news reports to demonise Islam and Muslims. For instance, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Times* generally portrayed anti-Rushdie demonstrations in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as acts of disorder, and protesters were dubbed

"rioters" who were "screaming" slogans such as "American dogs" and "throwing stones and bricks", and demanding "hang Salman Rushdie", and "breaking into the US Information Centre". Such unfavourable portrayals of Muslims contributed to this process of demonisation, and made news reports look dramatic and more plausible. "Muslim fundamentalists" is another unfavourable phrase that was used in several news reports to portray a negative image that often implied a threat. "Fundamentalism" has not been used to describe the larger political resurgence of Christian, Jewish or Hindu religious movements, but has been confined primarily to Islamic fundamentalism. Consequently, all Muslims' acts deemed extreme were constituted as "fundamentalism" and automatically linked to terrorism (Poole, 2002: p. 46).

The use of violence against non-combatant, defenceless and unarmed civilians is indeed an act of terrorism. It is also true that groups such as Al-Qaida and the Egyptian Islamic Armed Group did indeed commit acts of violence against non-combatant, defenceless and unarmed civilians. However, the contexts in which these phrases were used in news reports by the three selected newspapers often used phrases such as "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic terrorists" as blanket generalisations. Other phrases, such as "Muslim fundamentalists", "Muslim militants", "Islamic extremists" and "Islamic fundamentalists", were also used in several news reports with no indication of what was meant by "militancy", "fundamentalism" or "extremism". More often than not, these phrases were used without providing the readers with context or explanation. Consequently, these phrases, in which Islam is negatively portrayed, might foster fear and create a continuous sense of threat.

Almost all the events covered by the three newspapers as acts of violence, mostly protests against Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, were placed within a particular context and network of causes: the descriptions involve several concepts or systems of concepts—theories—intended to explain events in connection with other events, by placing them in a context of patterns, structure and causes. Protests, including those that became violent confrontations because of police mismanagement, such as the

Anti-Rushdie demonstrations in India and Pakistan, were depicted as acts of aggression by Muslim demonstrators against the authorities, the police.

Analysis showed that the overall picture drawn by most of the news reports portrayed a negatively projected image of Muslims. This picture mirrors a common trend in the newspapers analysed: depiction of Muslims as perpetrators of violence, lacking the common values of tolerance and freedom of thought and expression, and unable to accept ideas and opinions contrary to theirs.

Bloody violence, fundamentalism and urban carnage are among the themes that likely found their way into the public opinion largely by means of the media, including the press. Press coverage of the developments in the Rushdie affair, for instance, especially the protests organised by members of the Muslim community, and the focus on the Bradford book burning, suggested that agenda of the Muslim community was being dictated by other Muslims abroad. Such suggestions might have helped maintain negative images of British Muslims in the public mind and marginalised, if they did not totally exclude, the tolerant, moderate and pragmatic stances of the majority of the British Muslim community. Consequently, British Muslims could have been viewed as a threat to UK security and British mainstream values, as a result of the perceived inherent cultural differences between Muslims and the host community. Hence, *The Independent* took the following tone when covering Douglas Hurd's visit to a Bradford mosque and his speech there:
Hurd will urge Muslims to accept more integration ... ***Hurd tells Muslims not to break law over Rushdie book***: "to turn such protests into violence or the threat of violence is wholly unacceptable" (*The Independent*. 24/02/1989).

As the coverage of Islam was revolved around violence, terrorism, extremism, monolithism and anti-Westernism, it could therefore be argued that the image of Islam and Muslims, as it was reported in the selected news texts, was basically a negative one.

It could also be argued that the perceived violent, extremist and antagonist nature of Islam *vis-à-vis* the West in the Western media in general and the press coverage analyzed in particular, did not emerge suddenly when these newspapers began to cover the selected events. This negative image, it could be argued, has its origin in the representation of Islam as an *Other* in Orientalism, which Edward Said defined as

> A style of thought based upon the ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and, most of the time, the Occident in which Western culture and societies are essentially and inherently superior to Eastern ones ... as a corporate institution for dealing with the West. (Said, 1995: p. 2)

A common in the three newspapers is the focus on Islam as an *Other* using a representational framework drawing largely on the themes of Islam's perceived violence and extremism, monolithism and anti-Western sentiments. These themes underlie the categories pointed out in a framework developed by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (Runnymede Trust, 1997), as representing a discourse that suggests an undifferentiated image of Islam. Analysis of the selected news reports showed that Muslim cultures were viewed as static and monolithic. The *Otherness* of Islam is reinforced by representing Muslim culture as wholly different from other cultures, especially that of the West. Within the same context, Islam is represented in a way that could make one views it as inferior, violent, barbaric, destructive, primitive and irrational. All these negative values and characteristics culminate in representing Islam in indiscriminately as a threat and its adherents as using it for political advantage (Poole 2002: p. 45).

The perception of Islam as an *Other*, and of members of Muslim communities as a threat, is evident in the press coverage of the Rushdie affair and the September 11th attacks. The notion of threat-from-within was implicitly and explicitly often raised in both cases, and the loyalty of British Muslims and their commitment to law and order was significantly questioned, as shown by Douglas Hurd's speech during his visit to a Bradford mosque during the Satanic Verses controversy. Muslims continued to be linked with the issue of freedoms: in the Rushdie affair, for instance, Muslims were associated with the issue of freedom of speech. In this particular

context, the Rushdie affair was used to highlight a threat to British democracy and liberal values because some British Muslims supported the Khomeini religious edict (fatwa) against Salman Rushdie.

There were other examples in the coverage of both the Luxor killing of foreign tourists and the September 11th attacks. Coverage of the Luxor attacks brought into focus the involvement of UK-based asylum seekers in raising funds to finance the activities of foreign organisations suspected of involvement in terrorism. Following the September 11th attacks, the papers analysed reported that dozens of British Muslim youths were willing to join the Taliban and Al-Qaida fighters in the US-led war against the Taliban regime and Al-Qaida, in which British troops took part. The issue ignited a wide controversy among many across the political spectrum in the UK as to whether those Muslims should be charged with treason on their return to the UK.

Analysis of the overall coverage of the four selected events reveals the demonisation of Islam as common trend in the news reports. It would indeed be inaccurate to generalise or to categorise the entire Western media as uniformly or monolithically demonising Islam, but analysis of the three selected newspapers' coverage makes clear that there were several examples of demonising Islam. It has been represented as backward: "The victorious Taliban militia will waste little time before subjecting the population to justice by amputation and coercing women in purdah" (*The Times,* 28/09/1996); as barbaric: "Najibullah, 49, was dragged out, beaten, shot dead, and hung from a traffic kiosk near the palace" (*The Independent*, 28/09/1996); as fanatic: "Meanwhile, Iran's ambassador to the Vatican said he would be willing to carry out the order to kill Mr. Rushdie" (*The Guardian*, 17/02/1989); as antagonistic: "Attempts at improving ties with Britain were sabotaged by hardliners in the regime opposed to warmer relations with the West" (*The Times*, 05/03/1989); as oppressive and unjust towards women: "Women should stay at home, the edict said. If they venture out, they should be covered from dead to toe. And they should not work." (*The Independent*, 30/09/1996); "The veil is descending once more in

Kabul … where Taliban invaders have imposed the strictest interpretation of *sharia*, under which thieves will have a hand amputated and adulterers be stoned or lashed to death (*The Times*, 30/09/1996). As mentioned earlier, such a representation might help to emphasise the *Otherness* and, consequently, set up a barrier of misunderstanding between Islam and Muslims on the one hand and the West on the other.

The alleged stagnant nature of Muslim cultures was associated with absolutism and tyranny, as in the coverage of the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan. The use of the Taliban paradigm could be viewed as a means to reinforce the perceived anti-modernism and medieval nature of Muslim societies, by focusing on stories of Taliban's cruel and brutal punishments, and by representing those punishments as archetypes of a common penal system in the Muslim countries. Thus, a negative image characterised by barbarism, brutality and inhumanity was reinforced and presented to readers who might have been exposed to similar, if not identical, negative images about Islam and Muslims in the other mass media. The Taliban rulers' closure of Afghan girls' schools was used in the press coverage to reinforce the theme of Islam's alleged oppression of women. The tragic situation of Afghan women under Taliban rule was implicitly and explicitly portrayed as representative of how women are habitually treated in Islam, as though the Taliban movement were representative of mainstream Islam.

Metaphors such as *The Times*' "the veil is descending once more in Kabul", and the alleged common threat and security concerns in quite diverse Western countries, all constitute part of a process intended to juxtapose the enlightened West against a "veiled Orient", and a threatened West against a threatening Islam, by using language to systematically organise knowledge, concepts, images and experience in order to rule, and to learn then to compare the Orient with Occident (Said, 1995, p. 78). Such a discourse reiterates the argument that European culture gained its strength and constructed its identity by setting itself off against the Orient, in order to reinforce the distinctiveness between 'us' and 'them'- the Orient. The

construction of such an image of the Orient strengthened Western culture(s) *vis-à-vis* the culture(s) of the Orient. This Orient is depicted, in the Orientalist discourse, as an entity against which the West defines itself in several respects. For instance, the "veil", often reminiscent of the Oriental woman, is used to indicate the mysterious Orient and to restate the stereotypical depiction of women in Arab and Muslim societies: i.e., they are sub-subjects who have neither voice nor existence as acting individuals.

Analysis showed that volumes of coverage varied from one selected event to another. However, the coverage of the September 11th attacks and the Rushdie affair was far greater than that of the Luxor killing of foreign tourists in Egypt and the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan. For instance, a significant increase in the volume of coverage was evident in the three newspapers following the September 11th attacks: between the 12th of September and the 24th of October 2001, a daily average of eight news reports about Islam and Muslims was published by *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*. News reports in the three newspapers were more or less identical in three stages of coverage: the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the arrests of suspected members of Muslim militant groups and the US-led war against Al-Qaida and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The four selected events can be divided into two categories. The Luxor killing of foreign tourists and the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan constitute a category of events in which violence committed by Islamic militant movements took place overseas, whereas the Rushdie affair and the September 11th attacks, although they were carried out outside Britain, make up another category, in which coverage highlights an internal threat. Common to the three newspapers' coverage of the Rushdie affair and the September 11th attacks was the focus on the stance of British Muslims towards the two events, and the call to introduce the necessary anti-terrorist legislation against suspected Muslim terrorist groups and individuals in the UK. Meanwhile, the coverage of the Luxor killing of foreign tourists, and the rise of the Taliban movement to power in Afghanistan, focused on

violations, bloody violence, terrorism and Islam's alleged hostility to the West and Western values. However, common to the overall coverage of the four events is the reinforcement of themes not uncommon in the Western media: the portrayal of Islam as a monolithic bloc, and Muslim cultures as static, monolithic and entirely different from other cultures; the portrayal of Islam as inferior, irrational, sexist, primeval and a threat, and the depiction of Muslims communities in the West as potentially threatening; the representation of Muslims as using the faith as vehicle for a political agenda, the association of Islam with violence, extremism and terrorism and the representation of the Muslim world as hostile to Western values.

In news reports, Islam was implicitly and explicitly used to explain the violent acts of militant groups such as Al-Qaida, the Egyptian Islamic Group and Taliban, thus ignoring the wide diversity of Muslims in terms of sects, languages, regions, politics, education, gender and class. Analysis revealed that reporters relied on the diversity of British Muslims and their lack of a unified leadership, by interviewing radical individuals such as Abu Hamza Al-Masri, who was stripped of his British citizenship for seriously prejudicing Britain's interests, and the former leader of a group accused of sending Muslim youths to fight Jihad war abroad, Omer Bakri, who quit the UK for Lebanon in August 2005. Both men were known as leading voices of radical Islam in Britain. Quoting extreme UK Muslim voices was a pattern in *The Times* coverage: e.g., ***Muslim leader calls for Blair assassination***: "He (Al-Muhajiroun spokesman) also said that government buildings including Downing Street and British military installations were 'legitimate targets'" (*The Times*, 10/10/2001); "He (Omer Bakri Mohamed) said the Pakistani leader had, under Islamic law, become an apostate for siding with the West against Muslim forces.... He will be killed if he does not repent" (*The Times*, 20/09/2001). *The Guardian*, however, introduced counter voices and attempted to distinguish in its coverage between extreme and moderate voices among British Muslims. This clearly indicates that the image of Muslim extreme voices, and groups like Abu Hamza Al-Masri and his Ansar Al-Shariah, had been inflated by the media, and that these groups were not representative of the British Muslim majority: "Despite the high

media profile of its leader, Supporters of Shariah is thought to number 200 members at most.... Moderate Muslim leaders have warned that the coverage given to fringe groups has been out of all proportion to their size and influence" (*The Guardian*, 22/09/2001). In its attempts to differentiate between extreme and moderate Muslim voices, *The Guardian* reported statements by Muslim figures such as Manzoor Moghal, chairman of the Federation of Muslim Organisations: "These people are a massive problem for the rest of the Muslim community" (*The Guardian*, 22/09/2001). *The Independent*, however, ostensibly seemed to differentiate between radical and moderate voices within the British Muslim community by reporting the statements of moderate figures, but radical voices were, at the same time, treated seriously: "Angry Islamic leaders in London expressed deep scepticism that a significant number of young Britons would be prepared, or find it possible, to help in fighting in Afghanistan". The same report referred to Omer Bakri Mohamed as having "spoken in support of young British Muslims who travel abroad to join in military action on behalf of Islamic causes" (*The Independent*, 23/10/2001).

The discourse of the newspapers analysed used several strategies and techniques to construct and maintain such negative images and stereotypes of Islam and Muslims. Emotive language was frequently used in *The Times*' news reports, to make an event more sensationalising and dramatic. Analysis revealed that the use of emotive language combined with religious identifiers, e.g., "Islamic extremism", "Muslim fundamentalists", "Islamic terrorism", "Muslim fundamentalist", converge in the three newspapers, but it was more dominant in *The Times*' coverage. This pattern contributed to racial and religious tensions, especially by collapsing Arabs and Muslims into each other, although all Arabs are not Muslims, nor all Muslims are Arabs. The inaccuracy of portraying Muslims and Arabs as the same provided a racial basis for hatred and led to Muslims being identified by racial features.

Stereotypes, clichés and value judgments were used in coverage in order to distinguish between the 'out-group'—Islam/Muslims—and the 'in-group'—the West and Western societies. 'Islamic terrorism', 'Islamic extremism' and 'Islamic fundamentalism' were among several stereotypes and generalisations that lacked

well-founded evidence. The acts of violence carried out by some Islamic militant groups were reduced to simple explanations that portrayed Islam as a monolithic faith that encourages violence and fosters extremism, and assumed that every Muslim was the same, by placing them all in one category. The use of such stereotypes in coverage contributed to perpetuating and reinforcing several negative images of Islam and Muslims.

The use of stereotypes, which included value-loaded terms, lack of impartiality and context, and inaccuracy in reporting particular stories, might have contributed to prejudice, physical attacks, verbal abuse and discrimination against Muslims following the September 11th attacks. The systematic negative projection of Islam and Muslims in news reports contributed to viewing them within a derogatory framework that contributed, in turn, to Islamophobia - the unfounded fear of Islam and Muslims. Islam/Muslims were commonly viewed as one-dimensional, inherently violent and hostile to and separate from the West, and an enemy of its modernisation. As a result, the three selected newspapers' coverage of the four events fits into what the Runnymede Trust report about Islamophobia titled "closed views about Islam":

> Islam is seen as a single monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new ideas; Islam is seen as separate and 'Other', not having any aims or values in common with other cultures and not affected by them or influencing them; Islam is seen as inferior to the West, barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist; Islam is seen as violent, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a clash of civilisations; Islam is seen as a political ideology used for military or political advantage; hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society. (Runnymede Trust 1997: p. 3).

Since the media, including the press, play a significant role in shaping and formulating public opinion, and since the mainstream news media is one of the general public's main source of information about Islam and Muslims, negative projection of Islam and Muslims could lead to indiscriminate prejudice against all Muslims, regardless of cultural, social or ethnic orientation. Therefore, the mass impact of the mainstream news media, which represent Islamic politics as generally

radical, associated with terrorism and posing a threat to the international order, will probably continue to dominate, as Donnan (2002) argues, unless there is a genuine attempt to counter the dominant perspective of the conservative neo-Orientalists, who continue to view Islam through cynical eyes, and project it on the assumption that the West represents everything that is modern, progressive and good in the world, whereas Islam allegedly represents the opposites. I intend this research to contribute to the proposed quest, which is intended to approach Islam and Muslim society as a highly diverse reality that is not characterised only by extremism, confrontation, violence, terrorism and antagonism to everything Western. This proposed perspective, which is essentially meant to reinforce the highly diverse and disparate reality of the Muslim world/societies in several respects, is intended to challenge the monolithic approach that reinforces blanket generalisations, stereotypes and views of Islam/Muslims, based on the common perception of Islam as depicted in the West's self-definition as the negative *Other*.

As I pointed out in stating the research objectives, it was my intention to unmask the meanings that were crossbred and wrapped in the selected news reports, and to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance and the bias involved. It was therefore necessary to deconstruct these texts through discursive means, in order to reveal what was actually covered in the selected texts in connection to these events, and how stories were framed, and knowledge of Islam was generally produced, through discourse(s). In doing so, I looked at Islam as a diverse religion with numerous internal differences as a result of the disparate interpretations of the Islamic faith. There is no denying that proponents of some of these interpretations do embrace confrontation, bloody violence and antagonism towards the West. However, it is inaccurate to consider all the highly diverse Muslim societies as supporters of terrorism, anti-modern and anti-Western.

Having investigated the historically-conditioned ways in which media discourses in the West represent Islam, which constitutes a part of Europe's past and present, I suggest that this research is an addition to the works that examine how Islam and

Muslims societies are represented in the British press, and how the historically-conditioned contemporary Orientalist discourses influence this representation. The research provides illuminating insights into how *Islamic militancy* is a single aspect of a rather complex situation, and only one phenomenon in a highly diverse Islamic world. In essence, it enhances and adds to other academic researches on 'Islam and the media' and 'Islam in the media'—such as Elizabeth Poole's 'Reporting Islam'—by seeking to reveal how media images of Islam and Muslims are based on inaccuracy and prejudice. By examining discourse, its characteristics, mechanisms and strategies, as well as the social, political and historical conditions behind its emergence, production and consumption, this research provides a significant contribution to research and academic works in discourse-based media studies, Islamic studies and politics.

For a future research agenda, I recommend the examination of the largely unresearched area of how Islam, Arabs and Muslim societies were represented in the British press prior to the intense media focus on Islam and the Muslim world that began with the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Key events and significant developments, related to relations between Britain and the Middle East, occurred during the three decades prior to the Iranian Revolution: the Arab-Israeli 1948 war, the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, the Arab pro-independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s, the Six-Day war in June 1967 and the October 1973 war. British newspapers standpoints indeed changed in the course of this period. *The Guardian*, for instance, was a staunch supporter of the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of Israel, but decades later it was accused of being pro-Palestinian and anti-Semitic. Hence, research into the representation of Islam, Arabs and Muslims in the British newspapers throughout the years in which these events and developments took place will reveal how changes in newspapers' standpoints were reflected in how they systematically used language to organise and formulate knowledge, concepts and images about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs in connection to the Arab-Israeli wars.

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