

**CANADIAN MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS AND WESTERN MAINSTREAM
MEDIA**

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Dedication

To the five men and five women who honoured me by sharing their perspectives of the media, and in doing so gave me a privileged window into their lives.

The knowledge and time you shared was precious and appreciated. Your voices were heard.

Thank you!

Abstract

This study sought to discover how Canadian Muslim immigrants perceive Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how they felt it affected their social integration. Muslim immigrant adults, five males and five females who lived in Canada for at least two years, were interviewed. Participants commented on three Western mainstream news items they identified as representing Muslims positively, neutrally, and negatively, and they ranked their sense of belonging. Findings revealed that Western mainstream media influenced how immigrants felt, viewed themselves, and how they thought others perceived them, potentially impacting their emotions and mental health. Participants' responses differed, seemingly due to how much they engaged with media, their relationships with the media, and their social and personal vulnerability. The impact of Western media centred around themes of identity construction, accuracy in media reporting, social education, and the power of the media. Although the media exerts an influence on participants' sense of belonging in Canada, they attribute social interactions with others to even more significantly influence their belonging.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The media is a major social structure that shapes public dialogue (Bauder, 2008) and worldviews (Bandura, 2001). At the same time, one should note that media views are not neutral or uniform in their deconstructing and reconstructing of events in their stories, and in condemning or praising particular actions (Bauder, 2008). Moreover, the media may reflect the views of the politically dominant sectors within society at different points in time (Kazemipur, 2014).

The media's role in shaping public perceptions of society is thought to have the same impact as an educator (Bandura, 2001; Van Dijk, 1991). Media can mould the way people see themselves, including the way people see themselves as fitting into society, and form their social identities (Bandura, 2001). It can also influence people's understandings around social values and social issues (Bandura, 2001; Lull, 2006).

Through the media's presentation of events and their facilitation of public discussions on current topics (Crespi, 1997; Fairclough, 1996 Taylor, 2001; van Dijk, 1991), the media plays an important part in forming the social norms and values of society (Kazemipur, 2014). Hence, the media can exert power to affect people's integration into society, and influence social cohesion and acceptance (Bandura, 2001; Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000). Media can promote healthy societies through fostering a sense of belonging and well-being (Toye, 2007), creating environments of mutual respect, trust, and equality (Spicker, 2014).

The media's role in promoting healthy societies is critical, because, as Slater (2007) propounds, vulnerable populations such as immigrants (Edge & Newbold, 2013; Khenti, 2014; Oxman-Martinez, Abdool, & Loiselle-Leonard, 2000; Slater, 2007) are more susceptible to the influences of the media. This may be for a variety of reasons

such as a lack of connections with others-. In addition, they may react this way for no other reason other than the media not lining up with their norms and values, which may greatly distress them on an emotional level. Regardless, Slater (2007) provides a realistic account of how the media may affect people emotionally and/or influence their views. All and all, it may be especially important for the media to be a resource that encourages immigrants to make the connections they need to improve their lives to better integrate into their new society. That said, although one may recognize that media discourse is often one-directional, the current popularity of social media seems to provide access for a greater public response to social issues (Newman, 2011; Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008).

Given the differences in power and influence between the media and society's more vulnerable groups like immigrants, learning how Canadian Muslim immigrants appropriate the representations of Muslims constructed by Western mainstream media is important. It will give us insight into which media messages are construed by Muslims as positive, negative, or neutral in constructing Muslim immigrant identity and integration into Canadian society. Furthermore, understanding how Muslim immigrants feel about Western mainstream media's portrayals may allow the media to reflect on how they represent Muslim groups in the news. Hence, this qualitative descriptive study aims to discover how Muslim immigrant adults living in Canada feel about Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how they feel it affects their social integration.

Research Rationale

The Muslim population is rapidly increasing in Canada, and this is likely to continue with Canada's admission of Syrian civil war refugees (Statistics Canada, 2011; Survey Shows, 2013). Hence, with the Syrian Crisis, the Muslim population in Canada will likely make up an even greater percentage of the population and therefore have an even greater impact on society. Moreover, as the Western media's news coverage is currently intensely focusing on the behaviours of Muslims, it is timely for non-Muslims living in Canada to understand how immigrant Muslim adults are impacted by the visual and written portrayals of Muslims by Western mainstream media. Very little research reports on how Muslim immigrant adults living in Western countries feel about how Western media represents them (Brown, Brown, & Richards, 2015). Furthermore, with the media ever-focused on the behaviours of Muslims, there is an apparent lack of direct research in this field of study (Brown et al., 2015; Keshishian, 2000). Hence, it is apparent that this study is vital to delve further into how Canadian Muslims perceive Western mainstream media, and its implications. Moreover, there is a gap in the research in relation to knowing how Muslim immigrants living in Canada feel about Western media's representations of Muslims, and as to whether the media can affect people's health. Because they are a population that is not often heard by the Western mainstream media (Brown et al., 2015; Edge & Newbold, 2013; Khenti, 2014; Oxman-Martinez et al., 2000), this research will allow them a voice to present their views.

Definitions

The terms social identity, social integration, social cohesion and mental health will be used throughout this thesis. It is useful to provide a definition for these terms

here. Individual mental health is defined as a person having the ability to reflect their potential, so that he or she is a thriving contributing member of society, is mentally flexible and able to appropriately deal with obstacles and is able to have healthy and satisfying relationships (Grob & Goldman, 2006). Social identity is defined as the identity one forms through deciding which group types a person relates to and defines him or herself with reference to them (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Social integration is a dynamic process by which individuals in society are working at creating an environment that promotes acceptance and respect of each other (Building Peaceful). One feels socially integrated when one feels accepted by society as a whole. Social cohesion or social connectedness is the feeling experienced in settings of mutual and reciprocal respect, trust, and agreement, within a dynamic environment of equality (Spicker, 2014).

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 provides the definitions, introduction and overview to this study with a statement of its rationale, purpose, and research questions.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the key areas related to this topic including Western mainstream media's depictions of Muslims, and why bias may be present in the media. Additionally, it investigates the potency of media representations, its influence on social cohesion, identity, health, and integration. Next, the relationship between the media, the public, and Muslims' reflections of Western media representations of Muslims is considered. Finally, more recent research in the area and some of the questions this study wishes to address are reviewed.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology of this study, including definitions and personal motivation for this study. In addition, the theoretical framework, recruitment

and sampling, data collection, and analysis are communicated. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter 4 reports on the major findings of the study. In this section the researcher discusses which media pieces were evaluated by the participants, how they were categorized, and the participants' commentaries on these media pieces. This section will also report findings from the interview data outside of those generated from the participants' commentaries on the specific media pieces. Finally, this researcher will deliberate on the participants' reported influences of their belonging.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature, considers the strengths and limitations of this study and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on the power and influence of the media and the relationship we have with the media. The review also considers why Western mainstream media may be biased, and tools available to reporters to emphasize the messages they wish to convey. Portrayals of Muslims the media represents will be examined. The emotional, health, and social implications impact of these representations are considered. More current research on how Muslims perceive Western mainstream media is then discussed. Finally, I will consider how my research proposes to fill a gap in existing studies, based on the literature discussed.

Method of Literature Review

This literature review employed searches from scholarly databases JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, SocioIndex, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Global Health, and Health Source, using a combination of search terms: news, media, press, Muslims, Islam*, integrat*, social cohesion, educat*, and teach* between the years 2010-2018. Among them were essays and theoretical papers. Four research pieces analyzed coverage of specific events in regard to how Muslims were depicted. Five studies looked at various media coverage in their country over time in terms of how Muslims were shown. Finally, there were eleven empirical studies, which included one focus group research, five interview studies, and five surveys.

Power and Influence

The “relationship” between the media and people.

Abrajano and Singh (2009), conducted interview surveys of 1, 326 Latinos on their view of immigration. They found that the news sources people chose can impact their

views, and, overall, media can shape people's world perspectives. Hence it is important to find out more about how the press and the public interact with each other.

Slater's (2007) theory, called a "reinforcing spiral," comes from his literature looking at the media's impact as well as how people engage with the media. This theory suggests that we approach news items with our own biases, and if the press presents a topic that attracts our interest in an angle that agrees with how we feel, it cements our beliefs. At the same time, if the media shares news that contradicts our viewpoint on a matter, we often want to search for other environmental cues and evidence to ratify our views (Slater, 2007). It is important to recognize that when people are new to a country, or are vulnerable in other ways, such as in health or finances, they are particularly susceptible to the messages conveyed by the media (Slater, 2007). This greater susceptibility can be due to a variety of reasons. One explanation may be a lack of connections vulnerable people have with others as other sources of information. Another explanation might be because the few connections some of these vulnerable people have encourages them to hold on particular beliefs that oppose those presented by the media. If this is the case, the vulnerable person may be more emotionally impacted by the media, perhaps even to the point that a media's stance upset them, even when the message the media conveys happens to be more correct than their own. It might also happen that that vulnerable consumers of the media feel in opposition to the media because they believe that their perceptions do not line up with the norms and values presented, which may cause emotional distress. In this way, Slater (2007) provides an account of how the media can affect people emotionally and/or influence their views, especially those who are vulnerable such as new immigrants.

People who are not vulnerable do not necessarily passively accept the messages the media conveys and are strongly dissatisfied with the media's direction on particular topics or populations. They will intentionally position themselves in a way that empowers them. As Bullock and Jafri (2000) suggest, people who want to influence the media might choose to actively engage with the media by becoming active members in communities, joining social movements, writing letters, and becoming media literate so they can inform others, share their skill, and intelligently respond to erroneous perceptions. Karim (2008) supports the idea of writing letters to the media to share our thoughts and feelings on issues we feel strongly about, or when we have a fervent desire to be heard publicly. To help reduce our susceptibility to the media Keshishian (2000) and Slater (2007) suggest that we communicate with others who have different views than our own.

With regard to the relationships Muslims have with the media, Sharify-Funk (2009) cites Mohamed Elmasry, a past leader of the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), who inferred that while maintaining their religious and cultural practices, that Muslims should "become actively engaged in all aspects of civil life" (p. 78). Elmasry specifically suggests that Muslims should "study journalism, law, social work, and political science, while also participating directly in the political system" (Sharify-Funk, 2009, p. 78) if they want to change Western media. In other words, Muslims who wish to change Western mainstream media's narratives of Muslims should not only write letters, but also interact with the media and society at a variety of levels.

People actively being a part of the press, whether being employed by the media, or by writing letters with the press is vital. Balas (2009) who had in-depth interviews with editors, created and conducted seven focus groups with diverse groups within the general

population, and also conducted phone surveys. This study found that editors do not know their audience, what is important to them and how to connect with them.

Engaging with the press in order to have their voices heard – in this case the voices of Muslims – actively helps to maintain their rights as citizens (Keshishian, 2000). This is important as it widens the lens of “truth” and highlights some relevant solutions to many existing social problems. One could wonder if any other motivators exist in the media beyond reporting information on what is happening. If there are other stimuli, what are their driving factors, and, aside from inherent individual human bias, is there an occasion for the media to be biased?

Why bias may be present in Canadian mainstream media.

Bauder (2008) did a topoi analysis on 490 articles published in five prominent Canadian English-language daily newspapers that speak to aspects of immigration law. He found that one of the main ways that the Canadian mainstream press highlights discussions around immigrants is in terms of the economic benefits and costs they represent to Canada. Gale (2004), who did a literature review on the Australian mainstream media, suggests that these are the same types of “dialogue” echoed in Australian media. At the same time, Kazemipur (2014) has done extensive research into the major factors that influence Canadian Muslims integrating into Canada. He conducted interviews and collected data from surveys, which showed that Western mainstream media could sometimes be simply echoing the voices of the majority of politically dominant populations within society.

Jiwani (2009), who studied the Canadian media using a comparative approach that looked at the media’s representations of visible minorities, suggests that the politically dominant population oppresses those outside their population to stay in power. Jiwani

draws from her past research on domestic violence against women and the views that are associated with subtly supporting the oppression of women, found that the media discreetly perpetuates inferential racism. She suggests that this is done in order to perpetuate the old systemic hierarchy of genders and ethnicities that existed and to a significant extent continue to exist (Jiwani, 2009). Inferential racism is a new type of racism that is subtle and covert but is at least just as damaging as overt racism (Kowalczewski, 1982). It was, and still might be present in educational institutions and, though it is diminishing, is existent within the media (Downing, & Husband, 2005; Fleras, 2011). It is a powerful tool of oppression for those belonging to the politically dominant culture to maintain their socio-economic status. For the purpose of this research, this same logic is applied while referring to Islamophobia and the oppression of Muslims. Jiwani's conclusion has one wonder whether Canadian mainstream media sometimes purposefully put in place discriminatory portrayals of Muslims for their own political agendas, causing a myriad of consequences. Litchmore and Safdar (2015) present data from Statistics Canada (2001) that indicates that Muslims are the second highest educated population group in Canada and the least likely to be hired. These statistics may be showing the existence of and the outcomes of widespread Islamophobia, the systematic inequality and prejudice against Muslims, in Canadian society.

The tools of the media.

Downing and Husband (2005), whose book includes an extensive literature review on the tools of the media, suggest that North American mainstream media have particular tools that can enable them to emphasize their messages and promote their agendas. Sometimes these tools can spread bias, albeit unintentionally. According to Downing and Husband, the media uses images to create profiles and/or representations of

people or situations in order to create something tangible for their audience to hold onto in their mental construct and memory. The press also angles their stories within a “frame” by using particular text and discourse to give their news items context and meaning to emphasize their messages, purpose, and views.

Odartety-Wellington (2009) and Smolash (2009) echo this concept of profiles. Both discussed the Canadian press coverage of the arrest of 22 men in "Operation Thread," and how the press profiled these Muslims by using descriptions of some of their everyday behaviours, such as, “fires in the kitchens of the students [the 22 men], the fact that they lived in sparsely furnished apartments, and their affiliation to a school, the Ottawa Business College, that supplied visas to students but then shut down, leaving the students with visas but no school to attend” (Odartey-Wellington, 2009, p. 33). Both authors indicate that the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail* essentially convicted these men before they even went to court.

Downing and Husband (2005) also remind us that entertainment media perpetuates the stereotypes by showing visible minorities playing stereotypical roles. Downing and Husband (2005), citing Gray (1995) and Mean Coleman (1998), inform us that historically at one point in the United States African-Americans were often represented as “buffoons” on television shows. At the same time, and more recently, the entertainment media can choose to promote positive images of visible minorities such as Muslims, as in the case of the television show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (Eid & Khan, 2011).

The framing and the purposeful use of discourse by the media can result in generating false pictures of reality (Downing & Husband, 2005). One example of this is seen in Sharify-Funk’s (2009) article, a literature review, focused on the possible presence of Sharia mediation in Canada. “Focusing especially but not exclusively on the 2003-

2005 debate over Sharia-based alternative dispute resolution in Ontario” (p. 75), Sharify-Funk “analyzed a highly public conflict between two Muslim non-profit organizations, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) and the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC), as it played out on the pages of Canadian newspapers (in this case, the Globe and Mail & Toronto Star)” (p. 73), and on “the websites of the MCC and CIC” (Sharify-Funk, 2009, p. 75). Sharify-Funk highlights that this story was framed by Canadian mainstream press, unintentionally or intentionally, in a way that spreads bias through simplifying and polarizing stories. Although not strictly representing a false representation of reality, polarization can still result in the public missing valuable information, which results in not providing the public with a complete and accurate depiction of issues and can create an environment of conflict and distrust within communities.

Moreover, Downing and Husband (2005) remind us that power differentials between the media and the public do exist, so interacting with the media is a difficult task for many, especially for immigrants and refugees. In sum, Downing and Husband (2005) logically and systematically illustrate what tools the media have and how they can be applied. The illustrated examples attest to the fact that these tools exist, and that the press can choose to inform and empower, or mis-inform and disempower us. These studies infer that how the media “chooses” to present their material, whose “voices” they attend to, and how they choose to use symbols to express a concept, value, or feeling (Bandura, 2001) to impact our worldviews.

Fleras (2011), who wrote a book consisting of literature reviews regarding racism and the media, informs us that although the media no longer espouses blatant racism and/or religious bias, it is still sometimes prejudicial in its representations of people in the news. This bias is shown with immigrants and refugees being muzzled or nullified. For

example, Nairn et al. (2006), who conducted a large literature review examining how New Zealand's media have tended to represent the Maori, observe that the New Zealand media tended to represent them in a "distorted" way, and in a manner that somewhat silences the Maori. If they are given an opportunity to be heard they often have to "justify" their expressed perspectives instead of being able to state them. They tend to be seen through a Eurocentric lens, not accepted by society, and as the cause of many social problems, and are presented as such by the media.

To add to the complexity behind the idea of communication between communities through the press, other literature reminds us that despite the leaders of Muslim organizations sometimes having opportunities to have their voices heard, realistically they cannot reflect the views of a majority of Muslims. It is good to have the voices of these leaders heard; however, some people absorbing the opinions of the leaders might forget that these were only a handful of people trying to express themselves (Kazemipur, 2014).

Portrayals

Canadian mainstream media's depictions of Muslims.

Bullock and Jafri (2000) inform us that the Canadian mainstream media tends to portray Muslim women either as combative women, sexually mysterious, or as women who are suppressed by their religion and in need rescuing, again promoting this idea of us versus them. Their analysis is based upon information collected during a community project, "Muslim Women Speak Out: Towards a Fair and Accurate Portrayal of Muslim Women in Canadian Mainstream Media," sponsored by the Afghan Women's Organization in Toronto from 1997-1998 and funded by Status of Women Canada and the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage. The project included several phases that involved four separate focus group sessions where Muslim women

from a range of ages and backgrounds came together. The study discussed how the media represented Muslim women. It also had the specific intention to improve Muslim women's media literacy and advocacy skills. In this study they demonstrated that Muslim women are taking up strategies to empower themselves, including hard work and activism on the part of the community, and developing media literacy so that they are able to competently analyze, read, and respond to negative stereotypes.

Akter (2010), whose empirical narrative study included interviewing six Bangladeshi women in Newfoundland, Canada, found that the media had a mixed effect. These women felt badly about what had happened on 9/11, and how Western media portrayed Muslims. At the same time, these media representations motivated these women to talk to non-Muslims in their area and communicate with them what Islam is really about. Such conversations helped these Muslim women and the non-Muslims they talked to develop positive relationships to rectify a negative situation through dialogue. The negative representations of Muslims by the media that happened after the destruction of the Twin Towers had the consequences of spreading negative messages about Muslims, creating an obstacle for them integrating into their community in Newfoundland.

Participants from another study suggested that Canadian mainstream media mirrors this pattern initiated by the American media of sharing negative representations of Muslims: when reporting a person who committed a crime, the religion is named if it is a Muslim, but not when it is a non-Muslim (Leuprecht and Winnbon, 2001). Haroon Siddiqui (April 18, 2016), former Toronto Star columnist and editorial page emeritus, stated, "Canada's news media are contributing to mistrust of Muslims." Steinberg (2010), looking at some of her experiences, Western media representations of events, and

examining entertainment media, points out that Islamophobia is present in the media, including the entertainment, sharing stereotypes intimating that Muslims are often dark-skinned, hiding among us, so ‘othered’, evil, backward, violent, though there may be a few good ones.

Some literature suggests that Western mainstream media sometimes portrays Muslims as “either victims or villains” (Stonebanks, 2010). Stonebanks (2010) and Steinberg (2010) note that Islamophobia exists. Stonebanks, who conducted a literature review in the United States, outlined eight criteria to identify Islamophobia in the media.

First, the media inaccurately depict Islam as an unchanging religion, with no variation or sects. There are two main sects of Islam, Sunni and Shiite, and branches thereof (Ayubi, 1992), which change over time and geography (Park, 2004). In England, international Muslim students expressed their hurt and disapproval over the media’s portrayals of Islam as having no sects within its religion (Brown et al., 2015). These perceptions and sentiments felt by Muslims living in London, England, could also be held and felt by Muslims in other Western countries, too.

Second, the press defines Islam as the “other” religion, seen as having nothing in common with Judeo-Christianity. However, although all mainstream religions are theoretically oppressive to women, no major mainstream religion actually enacts or promotes these oppressive practices and the mentality associated with this thinking (Stopler, 2003). Moreover, all major religions feel that murder, stealing, and hurting another are wrong (Ali & Gibbs, 1998).

Third, the media show the West as seeing itself as superior to Islam, which was observed by Jiwani (2005), who noted that Muslim women tended to be depicted as needing to be rescued from their oppressive culture (Akter, 2010; Bullock & Jafri, 2000;

Jiwani, 2005; Kazemipur, 2014). The fourth criterion is when the Western press portray Islam as endorsing threatening and aggressive behaviour for their own global strategic benefit. Islam seen as a political ideology and as being used for political or military advantage is the fifth criterion.

Sixth, the media present the West as dismissing any of its own faults as observed by Islam. This sentiment was echoed by Jiwani (2005), who observed that Canadian mainstream media tend to omit any evidence of political error as it pertains to the global consequences of the actions taken by the Canadian government, intimating that any “faults” of the Western government would be ignored. This could result in a false, overly pure image of Canada in the global arena can create a strong foundation for subtly endorsing an “us-versus-them” mentality; if this was the case then, it likely still is today.

The seventh criterion is when mainstream media excuse treating Muslims unfairly through an “accepted” distrust and disdain of Muslims. The eighth and final Stonebanks (2010) criterion is when the press reflect Islamophobia as generally accepted within a Western mainstream society (Stonebanks, 2010, p. 37). The above criteria can lead one to question if Western mainstream media sometimes promote Islamophobia. Eid and Khan (2011) suggest that the Western mainstream media represented Muslims in a discriminatory fashion for a period after the 9/11 attack. The articles discussed above allude to the possibility of the press creating an environment of distrust, through its subtle endorsing of Islamophobia. As relationships are bi-directional this distrust could lead to Muslims in becoming increasingly hesitant to get any help they need (Keshishian, 2000). In Western societies, akin to other societies, people of different ethnicities coexist, so this act of “othering” people can happen (Said, 1978), for example with reference to gender or ability. Muslim women in Western societies, especially those who are more identifiable

as they cover their hair with a veil, such as a hijab, tend to be the most exposed to experiences of discrimination (Eid & Khan, 2011; Kazemipur, 2014; Todd, 1998). Overall, the literature suggests that stereotypes and bias are still present in the Western press. On the other hand, the television show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* represents an important step forward in the portrayal of Muslims in Western media. Eid and Khan (2011) conclude that television now sometimes represents Muslims more objectively (Eid & Khan, 2011; Kazemipur, 2014).

Stonebanks (2010) built the criteria for the presences of Islamophobia in the media. Overall, the author, Christopher Stonebanks, seems to argue that the mainstream media in North America has a large influence on what we “know”, and how we perceive what we “know”. This author also demonstrated that the mainstream media portrays the Islamic religion and Muslims in unduly negative ways. One way he did this was to illustrate a number of times Western mainstream media used prejudiced terminology in reference to Muslims compared to Caucasians.

The above studies, along with others such as Gardner, Karakasoglus, & Luchtenburg’s (2008) research helped to solidify the claim that Islamophobia exists in the press. Gardner, Karakasoglus, and Luchtenburg’s (2008) conducted a large analysis examining and comparing media sources from Australia to Germany. Their research discovered that Islamophobia is present in Western media. They suggest that education on Islamophobia could be an effective solution toward diminishing the presence Islamophobia.

A study done in Europe, Horvat (2010) examined local Slovene news media and their ideological interpretative framing of the October- November upheavals in France. Horvat did a thematic analysis and learned that Slovene news tended to subtly promote

Islamophobia in three ways. First, it promoted the idea of the “angry young man” (p. 761), the idea that young Muslim men were very susceptible to becoming radicalized, and that they could not be integrated, because they were frustrated with Western norms and values. Second, Western European journalists also were inclined to promote Islam as a religion that encouraged rigid ideals that viewed Islam as a superior religion and promoted violence. Finally, journalists shared the image of anti-Muslim protests that had signs associating Islam with terrorism and extremists’ views. This was all presented by reporters without proper explanations or contextualization.

Kabir and Bourk (2012) analysed the representation of Islam in the New Zealand (Western) mainstream press between 3 October 2005 and 30 September 2006. Kabir and Bourk (2012) conclude that many factors shape how the New Zealand mainstream press composes the defining elements of Islam and Muslims. It is swayed by international Western mainstream news, which spreads the message that Muslims are to be feared. At the same time, the editorials go into more depth about the issues and so at times challenge the typical “narrow” definitions of Islam and/or Muslims usually applied to by Western media. Finally, as Muslim population and its various cultures are “largely invisible” it may be difficult to get their voices heard, but they still have the opportunity to do it, and on their terms.

Rane and Ewart (2012) analyzed 32 news stories concerning the anniversary of 9/11 broadcast by Australia's five major television news stations on primetime evening news on 11 and 12 September 2011. What they concluded was that Western mainstream media, particularly in Australia, is slowly changing in the way it represents Muslims. The media is gradually shifting from blaming and “othering,” no longer implying that Islam promotes violence and no longer blaming or associating terrorism with Muslims and

Islam. This helps build bridges and lessens the means by which the press spreads Islamophobia.

Douai and Lauricella (2014), who analyse[d] ten years of news coverage of the Sunni–Shia relations in the Canadian *Globe and Mail* and the US-based *Washington Post*” (p. 7), argue that journalists should try to be as accurate and objective as possible. Douai and Lauricella (2014) feel that, in an attempt to be objective reporters should try to present the news and information about events, within its meaningful and appropriate context. These researchers also infer that they believe that Islamophobia is present in the media.

Impact

The potency of media representations.

Conducting a questionnaire study involving 253 people, 74 men and 165 women, asking them about their news habits and how they felt about how the news story made them feel, McNaughton-cassill (2001) found that the media influences emotional states in a complex way, and our reactions to it are often not entirely passive. Hence, it is clear that news stories can affect us emotionally, but its potential further impact needs to be better known.

In this direction, when considering the impact of media pieces, Bandura (2001) completed an in-depth literature review that looked at social cognitive theory and mass media. His research examined how people learn from and are impacted by the media. The research posits that a person’s social identity is developed through interacting with one’s environment within society, including with the media (Bandura, 2001; Slater, 2007). Bandura asserts that the media not only inform us, but also sometimes use the powerful tool of modeling by illustrating who they consider to be “model” citizens, and promoting

what they consider desirable characteristics, in praising some acts while condemning others. When the media express value judgments it could shape our identities and worldviews, affecting our very lives. If this is how the media works, then one can imagine the potential power the press has over its audience. Therefore, the media's coverage of events influences how people perceive them. Therefore, it is not surprising that the "media's unusually extensive coverage of issues related to Muslims has played a major role in shaping the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada" (Kazemipur, 2014, p. 88).

Macro structures' effects on identity, social integration, social cohesion, and health.

Relationships can cause anxiety and emotional distress or be a source that helps with "a multiplicity of health concerns, from coping with physical illness to chronic depression or lack of self-esteem" (Hendry and Reid, 2000). These researchers assume that the media have a relationship with their audience, which can be seen as positive, neutral, or negative. One example of the press having a positive relationship with immigrants is in regard to the presence of ethnic media, who can help some immigrants learn about their newly adopted country, and help them preserve their language and culture, potentially helping them feel acknowledged (Elias & Lemish, 2008). Ewart and Pearson (2018) believe that fair, ethical and accurate reporting on matters involving Islam and Muslim communities will help promote social cohesion and may assist in the reduction of community tensions.

Bandura (2001) suggests that the press can act as teacher and a coach at times, potentially shaping perceptions of reality (p. 283). This position that the media take sometimes reflect the relationship the media have with their public. We learn a society's

social norms and values from the media (Bandura, 2001). The media expresses what they consider to be desirable characteristics, or unwanted attributes, through representing their perspectives on events and issues. In doing so the press can, indirectly and potentially influence the views and behaviours of their audience (Liu, 2006). Hence, in the process, the media could even affect people's social identity. Social identity forms through defining oneself and deciding which group types and groups one relates to (Bandura, 2001; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

The above literature suggests that macro social structures in our society, such as the media, influences our self-identity, our social identity, and thereby our willingness and ability to integrate into society (Bandura, 2001; Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000, Table 7). Increased integration increases social cohesion and is tied to increased positive mental health (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2014; Berkman, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000; Bruhn, 2009). Individual mental health is manifested in the ability to live out one's potential and become a thriving, contributing member of society (Grob & Goldman, 2006). Healthy individuals are mentally flexible, able to appropriately deal with obstacles, and engage in satisfying relationships.

Specifically, social structures such as the press can positively or negatively affect our emotions and behaviours, and thereby our physical and mental health (Berkman et al., 2000). The press can influence a person's "cognitive and emotional states such as self-esteem, social competence, self-efficacy, depression, which affects their stress responses" (Berkman et al., 2000, p. 850). A person's self-esteem, social competence, and self-efficacy usually help one to cope with stressors. However, in extremely psychologically harmful environments these factors might no longer be as able to help a person deal with stress.

For example, if a Muslim often sees him or herself being negatively depicted by Western mainstream media, he or she might feel the desire to social isolate himself or herself, potentially causing feelings of loneliness. These feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and isolation can have a significant negative impact on health to the extent of decreasing a person's overall lifespan (Berkman et al., 2000). In sum, this proposes that the macro social structures of mainstream media can indirectly affect our identity, our desire to be a part of society, and our sense of cohesion, which could even indirectly influence our health. People feeling like they belong in society tend to live more harmoniously and cohesively than those that do not (Muiznieks, Rozenvalds, & Birka, 2013).

Internalized Islamophobia.

Karlsen and Nazroo (2002) explored associations between racism, social class, and health among ethnic minority people in England and Wales. They performed a series of regression analyses on cross-sectional data from the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities to explore the relation between different indicators of racism, health, and household occupational class. Their study revealed that discrimination has a negative effect on mental health affecting how ethnic minorities perceive themselves. The prejudice Muslims might experience due to their religious beliefs could have some Muslims develop a form of internalized Islamophobia, if they feel they are not understood or accepted by the society in which they live. Internalized Islamophobia led Muslims to feel ashamed of their religion: "when Muslims blame their own communities for exacerbating and inflaming Islamophobia (p. 410)" and when they devalue their self-worth because of their religious background (Abdel-Fatah, 2017). When internalized racism, or in this case, internalized Islamophobia, affects a person it evokes dysfunctional

patterns of thinking. Unika (2008) sees internalized Islamophobia reflected by an acceptance of oneself as inferior after accepting negative messages about their abilities and worth.

Speight (2007), who completed a broad literature review on racism, highlights that racism or prejudice, is “a process, a condition, a relationship that violates its victims physically, socially, spiritually, materially, and psychologically” (p. 126). The same applies to Islamophobia. Some of the many consequences of internalized racism include: a significantly increased risk of diabetes, tuberculosis, heart disease, hypertension, long-term disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, and death (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). Kirmayer et al. (2003) finds that internalized racism contributes to increased chances of poor physical and mental health, linking the history of colonialism and government interventions to the mental health of Canadian Aboriginal peoples.

Discrimination and its effects on identity, integration, and social cohesion.

Kazemipur (2014) remarks that social interactions are important in shaping integration. The media can play a key role in shaping people’s understanding of cultures, their acceptance of various cultures, and help facilitate acculturation into a newly adopted country (Kazemipur, 2014; Liu, 2006). If the press uses its ability to communicate with others to encourage acceptance, it could help to ease the tensions people might feel about interacting with others.

Litchmore and Safdar’s (2015) empirical study investigated perceptions of discrimination among Muslim-Canadians to determine whether these perceptions were related to levels of religiosity, ethnic identity, and gender. They suggest that biased representations within the media affect Muslims’ employment opportunities in Canada. They observed that Muslim females are more prone to prejudices than their male

counterparts, and that collective prejudice tends to be more easily recognizable than individual discrimination. They also found that prejudice, which can be represented by the media, could affect a person's mental health. For example, the Canadian media's coverage of the Gulf War caused a negative perception of Muslims for many Canadians, and had many Muslims feel that they were being negatively portrayed. As an example, the article reported that a Muslim Iraqi living in British Columbia displayed signs of depression as it had him feel alienated from the wider society. Hence, the presence of discrimination in the Canadian media can negatively affect the mental health of those being negatively represented. This article shows the presence of discrimination in Canada and the link between the experience of prejudice and the impact of discrimination on person's mental health.

Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, and Haslam (2008) completed a literature review on the relationship between social identity, health, and well-being, and how these issues are interwoven with power and politics. They suggest that if the media, even unintentionally, espouses a politically dominant group bias, it can lead a person in a subordinate group to negative psychological consequences. For example, they claim that an affected person can have a lower sense of self-worth and views one's own culture as being of lesser value than the politically dominant culture.

DeGarmo and Martinez (2006) conducted an analysis of the academic well-being of 278 Latino youth. The results of their study emphasized that discrimination negatively affects young people's performance and health, increasing cortisol levels as a result of increased distress (p. 286). Their study advances the idea that discrimination, regardless of origin, even if it comes from the media, decreases people's performance at work and schools.

Hyman (2009), carried out a literature review presenting evidence on how the major health access inequities for racialized people in Canada make racism a determinant of health. These studies support the idea that discrimination is detrimental to one's social and mental health. If the press express norms in a discriminatory manner, resulting in hurting a population's sense of identity or affecting their wanting to become a part of society, it could have a significant impact on racialized people's health.

Muslim's reactions to Western media representations of Muslims.

Brown et al. (2015) and Litchmore and Safdar (2015) propose that the Canadian mainstream media's negative representations of Muslims and of the Islamic religion can have a harmful effect on Muslim audiences, even if unintentionally. Brown et al. (2015) researched Muslims views on how they feel the mainstream media affected them. In this study one participant interviewed gave an example of this potential psychological harm. He said that he felt the guilt of a terrorist despite being completely innocent: "Sometimes you watch the news and think, 'I am a terrorist because I am a Muslim'" (p. 54).

Brown et al. (2015) found that some Muslims felt that the press in the U.K. sometimes, though perhaps unintentionally, encourages racism and Islamophobia, which has at times led to verbal and physical harassment of some Muslims living in the U.K. It appears that some Muslims are upset at the press's representations of Muslims, Islam, and their countries. They feel that the press tends to present Muslims as dangerous, and their religion as unchanging and socially conservative. This frustrates them, as it is the same as thinking that all Judeo-Christian sects are the same (Akter, 2010; Brown et al., 2015; Malik, 2006; Survey Shows, 2013). According to Brown et al. (2015), Muslims feel that the press also inaccurately mirrors their countries as backward and failing their people educationally.

These foregoing articles converge in the view that if the media propagates myths about peoples' religion, a group of people, or their countries of origin, it impacts people's lives negatively. These authors also point out that these myths can lead to a person feeling rejected from society (Litchmore & Safdar, 2015), with symptoms of depression and psychological distress (Brown et al., 2015; DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006) and increased anxiety reflected in elevated cortisol levels (Haslam et al., 2008). The media impact a person's cultural and social identity, their performance, and self-esteem (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006). All of these factors are associated with a person's feelings around connectedness and their mental health. However, other authors see that the press is changing, depicting increasingly more accurate, positive and more objective rendering of Muslims in general (Eid & Khan, 2011; Kazemipur, 2014). More currently, Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy (2017) obtained similar findings. Hopefully, this is an indication that the Western mainstream media will share more and more positive stories and portrayals of Islam and/or Muslims.

The literature also noted that the frequency of Muslim perspectives represented by the media and how they are represented by the media are noticed by Muslims and non-Muslims alike (Bloemraad, de Graauw, & Hamlin, 2015; Fleras, 2001; Odartey-Wellington, 2009; Sharify-Funk, 2009; Smolash, 2009). These press stories reflect how Muslims are being regarded by the politically dominant population within Western societies (Brown et al., 2015). Furthermore, these media representations at times show Muslims in a way that they are "othered," seen as different, and not part of the mainstream populations in Western countries (Saeed, 2007). The theme of being "othered" in the Western media is by virtue of how their religion (Brown et al., 2015) and clothing is represented by Western mainstream media, including the Canadian

mainstream media (Todd, 1998). However, the media is not the only powerful influence in people's lives; the views of people's close family members and friends also shape people's worldviews, including their perceptions of the media (Elias & Lemish, 2008).

During the phase this researcher was completing the literature, only one current study that directly asked Muslim participants to express their views on how they feel affected by the mainstream media was found by Brown et al. (2015) on "Media representations of Islam and international Muslim student well-being". The method was a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews and was exploratory in nature, involving 18 participants who were university students in the U.K. (Brown et al., 2015). The study highlights that Muslims did feel that the press directly and/or indirectly affected the mental health of Muslims by the press's negative depictions of them, their countries of origin, and their religion. The study performed semi-structured interviews and found their themes by utilizing all the information they gained from their participants, and putting it all together (Brown et al., 2015). Brown et al. (2015) also noted that the question of how Muslims view Western mainstream media has received "scant attention" (p. 51).

However, since that time there has been more research done on how Muslims viewed general Western mainstream media's depictions of Muslims. To begin, a study was performed in the U.K. (Sobolewska & Ali, 2015) analyzing all U.K. public opinion polls conducted in the 18 months following the 7 July attacks and newspaper coverage. It looked at eight broadsheets with respect to their ideological tendency as right-wing (The Times, The Daily Telegraph, Sunday times, and Sunday Telegraph) and left-wing (The Guardian, The Independent, The Observer, and the Independent on Sunday) newspapers.

They learned that regardless of whether the media were right-wing or left-wing, intends to negatively represent Muslims.

In contrast to many other researchers who suggested that Islamophobia was present in Western media, the researchers Bleich, Nisar, and Abdelhamid, R. (2016) noted that, for the past 29 years that, overall, New York Times, a Western media outlet, tended to neutrally represent Muslims. These authors found that terrorist attacks done by Muslims significantly negatively influenced how non-Muslims saw Muslims. However, they also observed that Western media, tended to try to also combat the impact of the negative event by positively representing Muslims outside of the terrorist event. That said, these researchers were only looking at one media source, in this case the New York Times.

Vucetic (2016), analysed 386 discrete newspaper articles published between January 1, 1999, and December 31, 2014, in The Buffalo News, Tampa Bay Times, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and USA Today. They saw Western, mainly American, mainstream media as portraying Muslims in neutral in indistinct ways, rather than either overly positive or negative. Yet, Vucetic (2016) importantly still observed that Muslims tended to be represented by Western media as “others” and Canadian Muslims as problematic. Both elements, in this researcher’s viewpoint are reflections of two of many possible elements that indicate the presence of Islamophobia.

Sealy (2017) analyzed 191 articles between 2008 and May 2015 from mainstream British newspapers identified as having the widest readership. What Sealy (2017) discovered was that for many Non-Muslims, the only knowledge they have about Muslims comes from what they learn from the media. British who have converted to

Islam are rarely given a voice, and when they are it is usually limited and controlled. The media is influential; thus, reporters hold positions of power. The press defines social norms and values. Moreover, it would place journalists in a difficult position if they were shown to be critiquing mainstream culture, which is attached to the country's political history. If he, or she, did criticize a past, or present value or norm reflecting a country's mainstream culture, it would appear he or she was not proud of his or her, country. Resultantly, many reporters tend to mirror values that, perhaps unintentionally, convey the message of Muslims being the "other", different from non-Muslims, and not part of mainstream society.

West and Lloyd (2017) conducted two experiments in Britain, having participants respond on Likert scales, to discover whether the same negative actions are more likely to be labeled "terrorism" when Muslims commit them versus than when they are committed by White non-Muslims. Their findings indicated that violent mass attacks committed by Muslims were perceived and labeled as a terrorist acts more than acts by any White non-Muslims. It was also found that the propensity of categorizing the act as violence increases when one is talking about a non-White Muslim. Their findings infer that journalists should be careful of the implications if they choose to categorize a person's actions as acts of terrorism. Some participants also questioned whether reporters should be using that label "terrorist" at all or attaching the label of terrorists to all people who commit acts of mass violence regardless of their religious or ethnic background.

Pertaining to a study done in the U.S., Samaie and Malmir (2017) built a corpus of U. S. news media stories on Islam and Muslims, based on news stories which were featured in the Cable News Network (CNN), Newsweek and The New York Times (NYT) between 2001 and 2015. Their findings indicated that, in general, Western

mainstream journalists attributed Islam and/or Muslims with radicalism, violence, and terrorism, spreading Islamophobia. To counter this influence, Samaie and Malmir (2017) advocate having the educational system that teaches students media literacy.

Silva (2017) looked at 607 New York Times articles from 1969 to 2014 and analyzed these news reports. They learned that radicalization has been a strategically and widely used term in Western media since the 1960s. However, it no longer connotes overtly political and economic differences, but religious ones. Islam has become firmly cemented in association of radicalization. Western press outlets have also spread the message that Muslims are “alien,” the “other,” and cannot integrate. These elements being highlighted and attributed to Muslims demonstrate the presence of Islamophobic elements in the media.

In the U.S., Tamborini, Hofer, Prabhu, Grall, Novotny, Hahn and Klebig (2017) did an experiment with 238 undergraduate students (p. 808) randomly assigned to watch news of the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks or a control news story. Afterward, they measured the salience of five moral intuitions (sensitivity to care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity) and prejudice of the participants (i.e., the lack of intentions to help outgroup members). What they found was that terrorist attacks, provoking outgroup distrust, tended to significantly increase people’s respect for the status quo traditions, authority, and what authority figures contribute to society. This respect for the status quo can lead to diminished prosocial behaviours directed toward outgroup members, outgroup organizations, or “others.” Overall, these authors found that seeing news reports of terrorist attacks committed by Muslims increased non-Muslims tendencies to discriminate against identifiable Muslim organizations and perhaps even increased non-Muslims propensities to behave in anti-social ways toward Muslims.

In Vienna, von Sikorski, Schmuck Matthes, and Binder (2017) conducted an experiment with 103 participants, who ranked their views on a 7-point Likert-type scale on whether news articles “clearly distinguish between Muslim terrorist and Muslims in general,” “The news articles stress that Islam and Islamism need to be distinguished,” and “The news articles emphasize that Muslims in general strongly oppose Islamist terrorism” (p. 835). Participants were randomly assigned to three conditions: three undifferentiated news articles about terrorism (n = 35), three otherwise identical differentiated news articles about terrorism (n = 34), and a control group that was exposed to three neutral news articles with no relation to the topic of terrorism (n = 34). They discovered that news distinguishing between Muslims and Muslim terrorists had no impact on people’s fear of terrorism, while news that did not discriminate between Muslims and Muslim terrorists did. This increased fear translated to negatively impacting non-Muslims behaviours toward Muslims. Furthermore, when reporting on a terrorist event committed by a self-identifying Muslim, they found news differentiating between Muslims and Muslim terrorists might go a long way to help to prevent the feelings of fear some people may have of Muslims, and to reduce levels of Islamophobia.

On the other side of the globe in Eastern India, Ahmed (2017) surveyed 598 non-Muslims students at a large private school in a metropolitan city to examine the relationship between Indian non-Muslim adolescents’ Western and Indian news media use, exposure to Hollywood and Bollywood movies, and their prejudice against Muslim minorities. In doing this research, Ahmed learned that Western media supported anti-Muslim prejudice. Ahmed also learned that having quality contact with Muslims reduced Non-Muslims’ propensities to discriminate against Muslims.

Itaoui and Dunn (2017), conducted 76 online surveys as well as 10 in Australia. They examined the impact media representations of the Cronulla riot had on the socio-spatial implications in terms of the way Muslims in Australia navigate public spaces. They were concerned that representation of places like Cronulla, and specifically the Islamophobia attached to those places, could narrow the opportunities Muslims had to experience everyday citizenship and belonging in urban spaces. Participants were selected because they held a range of demographic characteristics of interest to the study, including an equal diversity of gender, age, and residential locations across Sydney. What they found was that many researchers in this field have strongly pointed out the presence and problem of “othering” and Islamophobia by the Australian media. The study showed that the media demonstrates and spreads Islamophobia, leading to increased discrimination in the work force, and crime against identifiable Muslims (Klocker & Stanes, 2013; Poynting et al., 2004; Said, 1981; Runnymede Trust, 1997). They also found that the media by highlighting, sensationalizing, and focusing on events that negatively represent Muslims, it has the effect of spreading Islamophobia.

Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy (2017) explored the attitudes of Muslims to news media coverage of Islam and Muslims by drawing on data from 14 focus groups (N = 104 participants) conducted with Australian Muslims. They found that some Australian Muslims were worried about the media negatively representing Muslims could negatively influence how some non-Muslim Australians would react and respond to them. They found three subthemes. First, Western mainstream media is generally prejudiced, often associating terrorism to Islam and stereotyping Muslims. Second, Western mainstream media generally does not share in-depth knowledge about Islam and/or Muslims, as a group or in reference to an individual. Third, these respondents also observed the lack of

news crediting Muslims who have positively contributed to society. According to Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy (2017) in Australia, Muslims feel that the news coverage on Islam and Muslims has been improving. However, overall, their conclusion was that Western mainstream press represented views that reflected generalized and stereotyped images of Muslims, and associated Muslims and Islam with terrorism. It was also felt that Western mainstream news hardly, if ever, echoed the voices of Muslims. Overall, Ewart et al. (2017) propounded that Muslim scholars were needed to inform Western mainstream media, whether as journalists themselves, or as those educating reporters.

Ewart and Pearson (2018) conducted a literature review and interviews with Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia, in-person, by phone, or via Skype. They found, among other things that problematic representations of Muslims negatively affect social climate and contribute to marginalization, and that generalizations led to a “dehumanization of Muslims” (p. 149). They also learned that Muslims feel that Western mainstream media does not always accurately report on issues on Islam and/or Muslims. To help with this problem, the participants in the study suggested the idea of training manuals created by Muslims to teach educators and journalists about issues concerning Islam and Muslims is emphasized as a solution for reducing the presence of Islamophobia within the media and within the education system.

This followed similar sentiments found within research done in Germany. Everyone understands that “...established journalistic norms such as complete, accurate, and objective reporting demand the coverage of Islamist terrorist attacks” (p. 516). Neumann, Arendt, and Baugut (2018) conducted six qualitative interviews with prisoners who had joined the terrorist militia Islamist State in Syria and Iraq, and who had returned to Germany as dropouts from different Islamist groups. They were interviewed to find out

how they felt about Western media. Neumann et al. (2018) also conducted an empirical laboratory experiment with 194 Muslims participants exposing them to negative news content. Overall these participants propounded that, when journalists are reporting on Islamist terrorist attacks reporters should take care that they not do so in a sensationalized manner. They also believed that reporters should also do their best to present news that shows Muslims in a positive light. Specifically, they felt that Western media is inclined to negatively represent Islam and Muslims. This resulted in their hostile perception of the media. Though they did not think the media affects how they see themselves, they thought what the press shares shaped how others saw them, and this angered them. These respondents also felt that the government influences Western mainstream media, and therefore negated all the news content on Islam and Muslims, especially those they felt negatively represented Islam and/or Muslims.

In the Netherlands, Alencar (2018) completed a qualitative study with 18 Muslim refugees from Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan. Alencar asked the Muslim refugees on how they felt social media either impeded or helped their process of integration. The findings demonstrated that participants believed that social media does not reduce discrimination and racism and may even reinforce stereotypical images of refugees fleeing from war in Syria and other African countries, feeding into negative impressions of Islam.

Cannizzaro and Gholami (2018) employed a method that took sample coverage extracted from five national U. K. newspapers from 9 June (the date of release of the Ofsted Advice Note) to 26 June 2014. They conducted a content analysis of news articles to determine whether the British press emphasized ‘Islamist extremism’ over ‘poor school governance.’ What their research discovered was that the U.K. media placed more emphasis on differences between the West and the Middle East, and Islamist ideology

than it did on the faults of the U.K. government actions, and their impact on the Middle East. Furthermore, they concluded that by the media downplaying the responsibility of the past and perhaps current impact of the U.K.'s government actions, it is sharing biased messages. This reinforces negative Muslim stereotypes, and encourages distrust of Muslims, and is thereby spreading Islamophobia.

In sum, with the exception of Bleich, Nisar, and Abdelhamid's (2016) study, the above literature all point to the pattern of Western mainstream media presenting elements of Islamophobia, representing Muslims as the "other," and negatively depicting Islam and/or Muslims.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed has led this researcher to better understand how the media shape our perceptions of other groups (Bandura, 2001; Slater, 2007), a group's self-identity, and their connections with the world. Furthermore, the literature has helped to sensitize this researcher to what constitutes Islamophobia in the press, some of the views Muslims have about the press, and the strategies the media have used to persuade readers of their opinions, while still trying to appear objective. The effects of media portrayals of racialized groups are not inconsequential and have impact on physical and mental health as well as academic and work performance.

Of the interview studies, only one of them was conducted in Canada (Akter, 2010), who interviewed six Muslim women living in Newfoundland on their reactions to the representations of Muslims shortly after 9/11. No other studies were conducted in Canada, though some investigated the influence of Western mainstream media. One interview study was done by Brown (2015), who interviewed eighteen Muslim international students on Western mainstream media, including how they felt they were

treated by Western mainstream media in the U.K. There were three studies interviewing Muslims about their views on Western mainstream media and social media reported in 2018 (Ewart & Pearson, 2018; Neumann, Arendt & Baugut, 2018; Alencar, 2018). This indicates that more qualitative studies interviewing Muslims on their views of Western media are emerging. This thesis contributes to the emerging literature in eliciting Muslims' views of the media in a Western Canadian province and how the media impact their belonging and social integration.

Chapter 3. Methodology

It is important for researchers to be transparent about their biases and disclose them, so readers can properly evaluate the credibility and verifiability of the researcher's interpretations and findings (Bryman, Becker, & Sempik, 2008). To begin, I will describe my motivation for this study, followed by the theoretical assumptions, method, and procedures for data collection and analysis.

Personal Motivation for This Study

My interest in this topic was sparked by my father's story as a refugee who escaped the Nazis in World War II. He shared with me some of the stories of his struggles immigrating and adapting to Canada. I therefore empathize with people fleeing war and oppression, trying to survive, and attempting to make a better life for themselves in Canada. In addition, my father encouraged me to think critically about what I read and hear in the news, and to understand that the media may sometimes have their own agendas, suggesting that the media may not always provide an objective assessment of events.

Research Questions

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research aims to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do Muslim immigrant adults, who have lived in Canada for two years or more, interpret the Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims? And, (2) how do they perceive these representations as affecting their social integration?

Theoretical Frameworks

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a framework that subscribes to the idea that people learn through their interactions with other people, objects, language(s), and symbols, within their own personal lens, or perspective, formed by their own personality (Creswell, 2013). Hence, social constructivism recognizes the subjectivities that people bring in constructing their worlds. Further, social constructivism posits that people's reality and identity are constructed from language and symbols in a shared social context for interacting and communicating with each other. Overall, the idea behind social constructivism is that we develop and add on to our knowledge, increasing our intelligence, through our interactions with others, such as our parents, teachers, and peers (Amineh & Asl, 2015). These social interactions are not limited to conversations or interviews with people, but also include other forms of social narratives and rituals occurring in the public space, including the media (Bandura, 2001; Philo, 1990).

Recognizing that people gain knowledge through their interactions with each other, this researcher will try to understand people's subjective and unique perceptions of their selected media pieces as positive, negative, or neutral, from the participants' perspectives. The researcher employed a qualitative descriptive method using interviews and will interpret what participants state without extrapolating meaning beyond what they express or more than the fundamental idea that they try to convey and communicate (Sandelowski, 2000).

Cultivation Theory

In analyzing the potential effects of the media, this study also borrows its reasoning from “cultivation theory” (Brechman, 2010). According to Gerbner (1966), cultivation theory was founded on three guiding factors. The first factor is how external and internal pressures, including political pressures, financial pressures, and power dynamics (e.g., between reporters and bosses), affect the media's processes and the information they share with the public. The second factor is the observed patterns found among media messages communicated, and whether there are consistent patterns in large bodies of those messages (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). The third factor contemplated by cultivation theory is the potential impact these messages can have on the public (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). This researcher will not be considering the first of these factors but is curious about the second and third ones. This researcher will observe if participants mention any existing patterns that emerge in relation to the messages portrayed, such as particular phrases being repeated, and what they feel their impact is.

The central principle behind cultivation theory and the “drip drip drip effect” (Brechman, 2010; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; O’Neil, Simon, & Haydon, 2015) posits that over time, periodic to regular and frequent exposure to the media can have an “indirect, subtle, and cumulative” (Brechman, 2010, p. 13) influence on people’s worldviews. Beyond participants’ comments on their individual media pieces, this researcher included an interview question that asks Muslim participants whether they feel that observing on a regular and frequent basis media pieces similar to the ones they shared could affect how they saw themselves.

Recruitment

This study used the method of purposive sampling (Liamputtong, 2013) to recruit a specific population to interview who will answer the research questions. This is followed by snowball sampling (Liamputtong, 2013) where more participants are recruited through referrals and contacts by the participants already recruited. This researcher recruited participants from the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and the local community centres near the universities, as well as at conferences, mosques, Islamic centres, and immigration centres in Lethbridge and Calgary, Alberta. This researcher contacted the appropriate people at these locations for permission to put up posters throughout the universities and other sites and to create website ads to increase people's awareness of the study. This researcher also booked rooms at the libraries to conduct the interviews. It took approximately four months to recruit the ten participants.

Five female and five male Muslim immigrant adults, who have lived in Canada for at least two years participated in the study. The researcher responded by phone or by email to the recruited participants depending on their preferred means of communication.

The inclusion criteria of the study were:

Muslim participants originated from a country other than Canada

Participants need to be able to read and speak English

Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 65

Participants need to have lived in Canada for two years or more.

The rationale behind choosing to recruit participants who have lived in Canada for at least two years is that it takes time for people moving from one country to

another to adjust. An immigrant needs time to learn and understand the socio-political environment of the new community and country.

Procedures

Setting Up the Study

Strategies to ensure rigor and trustworthiness.

To help ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the proposed research, this researcher confirmed that the interview questions matched the aims of the research; that the language reflected in the interview questions was appropriate, accessible, and clear; and that the interview questions flowed in a logical manner. The researcher consulted her supervisor about the quality and appropriateness of the interview questions, and whether open-ended questions were being used when they should (Liamputtong, 2013), and did not include double-barrelled, leading, or loaded questions (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The researcher conducted four mock interviews to verify that participants would respond to the research questions in a way that helps to achieve the aims of this research (Liamputtong, 2013).

At the end of each interview, the researcher summarized and confirmed the meanings behind what participants said to ensure that their expressed themes are interpreted correctly, as a form of member checking (Liamputtong, 2013). This researcher also went over the transcripts, field notes, and the diary to help interpret the participants' messages and confirmed her understanding with her supervisor.

Ethics Approval and Informed Consent and the Interview Process

Before the interview.

This researcher put up posters to inform people about the study after obtaining permission from the University of Lethbridge Human Subjects Research Committee, and participants contacted the researcher via email to obtain more details and to ask any questions. If at this point, they showed an interest in partaking in the study, participants were provided more information about the study and a consent form by email. If they continued to show interest they were then, via email, asked to select three media pieces: one they felt represented Muslims positively, another they believed depicted Muslims in a neutral way, and, finally, one they thought reflected Muslims in a negative light. Participants shared these with the researcher by email. Each participant chose a date, time, and place for the interview. All meetings except two took place in a library. One interview took place at the participant's home, and another took place at the participant's workplace, at their request.

At the interview.

After the researcher met each participant at the chosen meeting place, participants were given a bottle of water and 20 dollars as a token of appreciation for their willingness to share their knowledge. Before each interview took place, the researcher explained the consent form (see Appendix A) to the participants regarding their rights and confidentiality. Participants were then asked to fill out a form answering demographic questions, including their age, gender, education, place of birth, and how many years they have lived in Canada (see Table 1). Participants were asked to use a pen to mark and

indicate their sense of belonging on a ranking scale (see Table 6). The researcher then quickly read the data to learn a little about the person being interviewed.

Next, the researcher informed the person that recording would begin and interview questions would be asked. Participants showed their familiarity of their selected news items by describing them. I asked clarification and verification questions to help my accuracy in relation to interpreting what participants said, that is, membership checking (Liamputtong, 2013). A semi-structured interview format was used to conduct the interviews (see Appendix B). A few introductory questions were asked covering four general areas: (1) their sense of belonging and what elements they attributed to their sense of belonging; (2) whether they believed that the media influenced them; (3) what they believed in regard to Western mainstream media's role in regard to multiculturalism; and (4) finally, from which media sources they tend to attain their news. Next, participants were asked questions about the specific media pieces. After that, a few broad questions were asked about how they felt about the media, whether they felt people should care about how the media represented Muslims, and if there was something more they would like to add, in order to give participants a chance to share a viewpoint that may otherwise have been missed. Finally, participants were then asked about their impressions about the interview in order to learn a little about how participants felt about the interviews, and how the interview process may be improved upon for the future.

The purpose of mixing general and specific questions was to observe whether there was some congruence between their general interpretations and reactions toward the media and how they evaluated specific media pieces. Ideally, some congruence should be present.

After the interview.

After the interview I thanked participants for their knowledge and time in person and by email. Later, I reread transcripts, field notes and my diary, and confirmed my understandings with my supervisor.

Data Analysis

The Media Pieces

The media pieces chosen by the participants as representing Muslims positively, neutrally, or negatively were analyzed.

Ranking Data

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively for each participant regarding how they ranked their sense of belonging.

Interview Analysis

Six steps were followed in a thematic analysis, which uses an inductive approach to generating knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, this researcher familiarized herself with the data, which involved transcribing the interviews, reading, and rereading the transcribed interviews, and writing down first impressions and observations in memos. The second step was generating the initial codes, logically gathering, noting, and organizing the data available. The third step involved searching for themes, and noting any concepts restated by more than one participant and any other relevant concepts, as well as the relationships between the found concepts. It also entailed observing the language used by the participants along with any differences that existed in the messages expressed. This researcher also had to systematically organize all of the above found information, organizing as many of these generated concepts as possible in answer to the research questions. The fourth action was reviewing themes

and re-reading the transcripts to see if any valuable information had been missed, and to double check the themes that were identified and that the organization of these themes made sense. The fifth step involved defining and naming the themes and identifying the connections they have with each other. As this researcher applied the steps mentioned above, a more coherent set of patterns became clear. In the sixth and final step, this researcher compared the themes found when comparing the media analysis to the interview analysis. This researcher purposefully applied examples and quotes whenever possible to help illustrate the themes identified.

Chapter 4. Results

At the outset, this chapter presents the demographics of the participants. Then, the media pieces categorized by the participants as positive, neutral and negative are discussed. Next, this chapter will examine the findings from the interview data not included within participant commentaries on their media pieces. How the media depict Muslims and why it matters will be explored. The presence of any incongruity in participants' comments on the media pieces and on the media in general will be examined. Finally, the media and other influences of belonging will be considered.

Table 1. Demographic data on Participants

Participant	Interview Date	Origin	Years in Canada	Age	Education	Gender Male = 1, Female = 2	Recruitment
Participant 1	10-Jul-17	Pakistan	17	25	Associate degree	1	Poster Recruited in small Western Canadian city in Alberta
Participant 2	24-Aug-17	Kenya	4	31	Bachelor's degree	1	Friend Recruited in small Western Canadian city
Participant 3	31-Aug-17	Afghanistan	23	25	Some college credit, no degree	1	Referral Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 4	05-Sep-17	Pakistan	25	46	Professional degree	1	Referral Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 5	11-Oct-17	India	2.5	38	Master's degree	1	Poster Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 6	12-Jul-17	Bangladesh	19	38	Bachelor's degree	2	Referral Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 7	10-Oct-17	Somalia	23	32	Some college credit, no degree	2	Poster Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 8	13-Oct-17	Somalia	23	27	High school	2	Referral through Islamic centre

							Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 9	28-Nov-17	Bangladesh	8	32	Master's degree	2	Met at an event Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis
Participant 10	09-Dec-17	Uganda	13	26	Bachelor's degree	2	Met at a conference Recruited in a large Western Canadian metropolis

Fifty percent of those interviewed were men, and 50% were women; this balance helped alleviate possible gender differences or biases. The average age of those interviewed was 32 years old, which informs that most of the participants, six of them, were above 30 years old and young adults. The youngest participant was 25 years old. The table also shows that the participants' average number of years living in Canada was 15.75 years, or about 16 years. So, although one participant has lived in Canada for as little as two and a half years, the majority of other participants, 8 out of 10 of them, have been living in Canada for at least 10 years, and therefore have had some time to settle into Canada. This table tells us that seven out of ten participants having either an associates or bachelor's degree or higher. Hence, the majority of those interviewed were fairly well-educated, mature, and fairly accustomed to living in Alberta, Canada.

Categorizations and Analysis of News Pieces

As far as the categorizations and analysis of news pieces, out of the 30 selected media pieces, 16 were text, 13 were text with a video attached, and one was a news video clip. With the exception of one report from the Independent, all other sources were verifiably mainstream. One article was from Quebec, four sources were from the United Kingdom, including one that reported on an incident that happened in Canada. Two media pieces were from CNN, an American media outlet. The rest of the media sources were Canadian: one article from the *Globe and Mail*, four media pieces from CBC, seven

media items from CTV, six articles from the *National Post*, one press piece from the *Toronto Sun*, one from Global News, and lastly, one from 660 News. Of the news pieces shared 20 were from 2017, four were from 2016, four were from 2015, one was from 2014, and one, the oldest, was from 2011. Therefore, only one media item, one categorized as positive, was more than five years old.

Media Pieces Participants Labelled as Positive

One of the media reports participants saw as positively representing Muslims was a video clip, three were articles with a video attached, and six were text in the form of online articles. Seven articles were from 2017, two from 2016, and one from 2011.

Characteristics of Pieces Considered Positive by Participants

Table 2. Media Pieces Labelled Positive by Participants

Participant	Title, Source, Reporter, Date, and Location	Link
Participant 1 Media Type: Video	Montreal's Ramadan Feast Source and reporter(s): CTV, Vanessa Lee Date: June 20, 2017 Location of report: Montreal, Quebec, Canada	http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1146261andplaylistId=1.3469028andbinId=1.810415andplaylistPageNum=1andbinPageNum=1andcid=sm:nationalvideo:facebook:post:06202017:-meals
Participant 2 Media Type: Article and video clip	Inside the Quebec City mosque attack: Emotional video traces the shooter's advance Source and reporter(s): National Post, Jacques Boissinot Date: February 1, 2017 Location of report: Quebec City, Quebec, Canada	http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/inside-the-quebec-city-mosque-attack-emotional-video-traces-the-shooters-advance
Participant 3 Media Type: Article and video clip	'Don't touch him': Hero imam 'saved life' of suspect of terror attack Source and reporter(s): Telegraph, Helena Horton Date: Jun 19, 2017 Location of report: Great Britain, U.K.	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/19/dont-touch-hero-imam-saved-life-suspect-terror-attack/
Participant 4 Media Type: Article and video clip	Muslims say they are proud Canadians but worry about discrimination Source and reporter(s): CTV News, Cynthia Roebuck Date: March 13, 2017 Location of report: Calgary, Alberta, Canada	https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/muslims-say-they-are-proud-canadians-but-worry-about-discrimination-1.3323746
Participant 5 Media Type: Article	Multi-faith rally condemning terrorism takes place at City Hall Source and reporter(s): 660 News, none specified Date: April 1, 2016	http://www.660news.com/2016/04/01/multi-faith-rally-takes-place-in-front-of-city-hall/

	<u>Location of report:</u> Calgary, Alberta, Canada	
Participant 6 Media Type: Article	Matchmaker helps Middle Eastern and South Asian Calgarians find love <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CBC, Danielle Nerman <u>Date:</u> July 24, 2016 <u>Location of report:</u> Calgary, Alberta, Canada	http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/sai-ma-jamal-muslim-matchmaker-1.3691446
Participant 7 Media Type: Article	Why do Muslims pray five times daily? <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CNN, Soraya Salam <u>Date:</u> March 21, 2011 <u>Location of report:</u> Atlanta, Georgia, United States	http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/21/why-do-muslims-pray-five-times-daily/
Participant 8 Media Type: Article and video clip	Quebec zoo visitors irked by Muslim group who prayed on premises <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CTV, none specified but from the Canadian Press <u>Date:</u> July 5, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Quebec, Canada	https://www.ctvnews.ca/mobile/canada/quebec-zoo-visitors-irked-by-muslim-group-who-prayed-on-premises-1.3489423
Participant 9 Media Type: Article	Muslim Heritage Day celebrates Calgary's diverse community <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CBC, Ryan Rumbolt <u>Date:</u> August 26, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Calgary, Alberta, Canada	http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/muslim-heritage-day-calgary-racism-1.4264098
Participant 10 Media Type: Article and video clip	Alberta premier on Bill 62: "A sad day for Canada" <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CTV, Jason Franson <u>Date:</u> October 21, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/alberta-premier-on-bill-62-a-sad-day-for-canada-1.3642738

Four news pieces categorized as positive by participants showed the humanity of Muslims by representing the positive contribution they have made to their communities. Three participants labelled media pieces that cited public support for Muslims as positive. Three participants chose news they felt provided an accurate reflection of the Muslim identity as positive.

News pieces that emphasize the humanity of Muslims are seen as positive.

Four news pieces depicting the humanity of Muslims are seen as positive and would likely help to foster positive relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, which would result in some Muslims feeling an increased sense of belonging. These were media reports that depicted individual Muslims contributing to society in acts of kindness, generosity, courage, and fairness.

Participant 1 categorized the article “Montreal’s Ramadan Feast” (Lee, 2017) as positive. The news video clip depicted an elderly Muslim woman feeding about 300 homeless people for Ramadan. Participant 1 stated that viewing the article “was a positive [experience]” for him and as it gave him “an expectation for [him]self” to also contribute positively to society, and he believes others may feel the same way. His comment suggested that when the news focuses on the positive actions of Muslims, such as showing Muslims helping others, it inspires him and others to do the same.

Participant 2 shared the news item “Inside the Quebec City Mosque Attack” (Boissinot, 2017). This media piece represented the authentic emotions and voices of Muslims who were traumatized when a man shot many of their fellow worshippers. Giving a voice to Muslims helped them feel like this is their home, everyone’s home, a place where all are human, different but equal, integrated and welcome. In his words, “it is giving voice to everybody. So, it’s a good media piece and will get me to feel more to be a strong Canadian.” He felt the article reflected the voices and emotions of victims’ family members and the community, and the united voices of “politicians across the divide condemning the event.” This media item also reflected the resiliency of Muslims through rebuilding their mosque. This participant felt that the media piece shows the humanity and spirit of Muslims.

Participant 3 chose the news item “Don’t touch him: Hero imam saves life of suspect of terror attack” (Horton, 2017), as “very positive as it reported the facts, a guy died, ten were injured, people were beating him [and it depicted] the religious leader of the community, the imam as stepping in and saving the attacker’s life. For his actions, they called him a hero.” The imam, an Islamic religious leader equivalent to a priest, stopped the man suspected of being a terrorist from getting beaten further and waited until

police took him into custody. Participant 3 also noted “Jeremy Corbyn publicly thanking him, that was good for a political leader to do.” The participant was proud that this imam acted responsibly. The participant felt that in crediting the actions of this Islamic religious leader, the media acknowledged the existence of the Muslim population in Canada and reflected acceptance of Muslims within mainstream Western society.

Participant 3 stated that he felt more comfortable and happier in conversations with others about a religious leader who mirrors his identity through doing or saying something positive, rather than engaging in conversations about a religious leader who has committed a cruel and heinous act.

It is nice being able to speak to someone about the awesome hero like this guy instead of an individual who did a sick and twisted thing. I think you are what you eat and you are what you talk about.

His statement also seemed to have conveyed the idea that the news you focus on may influence how you see your world. He wanted to share this piece of good news with everyone. His comment also seemed to imply that he felt that the traits of community leaders, such as their behaviours and words, reflect on the individuals in their communities. Similarly, as he and another participant seemed to share the view that what religious and political leaders say and do carries more weight than those of ordinary citizens. Participant 3 also implied that a person may feel great pride when observing a leader mirroring part of his or her identity positively. His comment also suggested that a person may feel great discomfort and shame observing a leader mirroring part of his or her identity negatively when portrayed by the media.

Participant 6 labelled the media report “Matchmaker helps Middle Eastern and South Asian Calgarians find love” (Nerman, 2016) as positive:

It had things like matchmaker; it had words like “help,” it had words like “love,” it had words like “Middle Eastern and South Asian.” These sorts of things don’t always fit in the same sentence. It had things that are other than war, and terrorism. And also, it talks about people who are looking after refugees...

Participant 6 felt this media piece, about a Muslim woman providing a matchmaking service to her community, was positive as it demonstrated a Muslim woman positively contributing to society by “looking after refugees ” She also “thought this was a positive article [be]cause it brought a different side of Muslims forward ” and represented a woman mirroring this participant’s own Muslim identity. The media piece discussed a critical issue of humanity in a light-hearted manner that did not trigger intense feelings and is associating positive attributes to the woman being represented in the article. The fact that this article also mentions that this person contributes to society has this participant feel good, as she expressed:

I can imagine the person would actually be feeling a little lighter and just feeling more mainstream, not part of a certain group, just regular Canadians, part of the mosaic that is Canada.

The participant felt that positive media pieces can help non-Muslims more easily relate to Muslims and can help Muslims feel integrated within mainstream society.

Overall, all four participants demonstrated an appreciation for news pieces that emphasized the humanity of Muslims.

Participants labelled media pieces that cited public support for Muslims as positive.

Other types of news that three participants selected as positive were those demonstrating public support for Muslims. The three examples illustrated support coming from Canadian organizations, as well as support from a Canadian government leader.

Participant 8 chose her positive news report: "Quebec zoo visitors irked by Muslim group who prayed on premises" (Canadian Press, 2017). This news item described some Quebec zoo visitors being annoyed by a Muslim group who prayed on the zoo premises, and how the zoo staff handled it. The zoo management supported the Muslims in this news item. Participant 8 felt it was a "proud moment when you realize you're not alone and that there are people willing to protect the rights of others. I felt it was awesome." Participant 8 stated that this media piece spread the message that there are people and organizations in Canada that accept and support people of diverse backgrounds. The media piece chosen by Participant 8 reflected a message that accepted difference and "unconventional" rituals as long as the rituals do not cause any harm. The participant felt "proud again to be Canadian Muslim in this country." Support from a community organization helped some Muslims feel more integrated and accepted, with an increased sense of belonging.

Participant 9 selected the article "Muslim Heritage Day celebrates Calgary's diverse community" (Rumbolt, 2017). She felt the article, representing a Muslim Heritage Day in Calgary, was positive "because it's promoting Islam," and referred to it as "a religion of peace." She also believed that often the way Islam is portrayed "gets all of the negative rap that it gets and all of the misperceptions that are slandered by, taken out of context." Her comments may reflect a grievance that she has with the media, as she expresses hurt feelings that Western mainstream media sometimes lacks acceptance and presents negative views of Islam and Muslims.

This article is also a positive news piece for Participant 9 because it advertises and encourages participation in this event and, in so doing, reflects a level of acceptance of Muslims. However, this participant appeared to be upset that the reporter felt the need to

remind people that Islam is a religion of peace. She felt that this did not have to be mentioned by the reporter because she believes that all Abrahamic religions are religions of peace and everyone should already be aware of this. On one hand, this participant feels pleased that Islam is promoted as a religion of peace, and on the other, is disappointed that the reporter felt the need to point it out. Her remark also suggests that Western media do not often present Islam as a mainstream religion in Canadian society. It also subtly suggests, or at least does not counter, the idea that Islam is not a religion of peace, whereas Judaeo-Christian religions are “assumed” to be. She also felt this news item represents Muslims “positively, but with that underlying thread [that] we don’t really belong here.”

For her positive news piece, Participant 10 picked the news report, “A sad day for Canada” (Franson, 2017). This media item aired the voice of Alberta premier Rachel Notley and her views against Bill 62, which banned facial coverings such as the niqab and burka, in places that provided public services in Quebec. Participant 10 labelled it as positive because she felt it’s “good to see someone who’s not Muslim standing up for Muslims.” Participant 10 felt “this bill [62] is taking away from that [sense of] belonging from people living in Quebec.” Notley publicly opposing Bill 62 made Participant 10 feel more welcome, understood, and supported as a Canadian Muslim living in Alberta. Finding an ally in a leadership position was important to this participant. Participant 10 also stated that “if this bill was nationwide this participant would feel less welcome perhaps I’m going start feeling unwelcome here, in Canada as a whole,” indicating that laws like this, especially if they were to be applied throughout Canada, and were reported by the media, could influence how welcome Muslims feel. These three participants valued these media pieces that cited public support for Muslims as they related to their

sense of belonging and felt that these media items did not decrease their sense of belonging to Canada.

News sharing accurate images of Islam and/or Muslims were deemed positive.

Three participants chose news they felt provided an accurate reflection of the Muslim identity as positive.

Participant 4's positive news item was "Muslims say they are proud Canadians but worry about discrimination" (Roebuck, 2017). The article covered the findings of an online survey asking Muslims living in Canada questions about whether they felt that they were discriminated or not, because of their race, ethnicity, or religion, and how they felt about living in Canada. He felt "'neutrally...positively' about this news piece because it represented Muslims as proud Canadians who are integrated but are facing racism instead of being viewed as terrorists," this news piece showed Muslims as human. He seemed glad that this article humanized Muslims. He also felt it was positive because it "explained the subject" and gave "due justice" to the topic as the "real cause of terrorism was discussed." This participant felt this media item reflected an accurate picture, representing Muslims as integrated while also mirroring the reality that not everyone in Canada is accepting of Muslims living in Canada. Interestingly, too, is that although he considered this media item as positive because he saw it as just representing the data attained from a survey, he still felt positively about it.

This illustrated the idea that what may be deemed a "neutral" news piece, that may just be reflecting data, can be seen as a positive news piece. According to Participant 4, some types of news that may be seen by Muslims as positive are those that depict Muslims as normal people who are proud and integrated Canadians. In the perspective of

this researcher, this type of media piece may help some non-Muslims better understand and be more accepting of Muslims.

Participant 5 categorized a media piece that showed diverse religious populations working together to condemn violence as positively representing Muslims. The article, "Multi-faith rally condemning terrorism takes place at City Hall" (660 News Staff, 2016), concerned a multi-faith rally that took place at Calgary's city hall. The participant felt this article was positive because he believed it illustrated that, the "majority of people at the protest, were Muslims, Muslims in general want nothing to do with terrorism." He felt positively because:

When non-Muslims see this type of event taking place, a bridge will be created, and the gap will be reduced in our lives, especially when they are seeing different faith leaders joined hand in hand, working together.

He believed this media item "will give a better understanding of Islam and Muslims to the public." He expressed that he felt more "comfortable when people are not misinformed and discriminatory toward me, do not see ISIS in my face," instead of judging him by his appearance and believing that his religious beliefs are synonymous with terrorism. His comment showed that he believes that the media shape how others in society perceive him. He also categorized this article as positive because he felt it demonstrated that people from diverse backgrounds could work together to achieve the same goal, which in this case was standing up against terrorism. He found that this media report educates non-Muslims on the fact that Muslims are against extremism, violence, and groups like ISIS. This media item gives people an opportunity to think about their assumptions, it "promotes a more peaceful co-existence," and, in this researcher's perspective, helps some non-Muslims be more accepting of Muslims, to see them as average citizens opposed to the "other."

Participant 7's chosen positive media piece was "Why do Muslims pray five times daily" (Salam, 2011), about a Muslim gentleman who prays five times a day, and the process involved. She said when she read the news, "I'm looking at everything check check check, [to see that it] makes sense [and that it's] accurate," demonstrating that she does not always trust the media. She felt this news piece "heals wounds [for those] affected by media's negative perspective and brings my confidence up." She remarked that it "would feel good" for "young [Muslim] people to have their religion talked good about." Her remark signified that she believes that the media can affect people's emotions and the way people are talked about can influence how they feel about themselves. Western media items offering a glimpse into a Muslim person's life can help to educate non-Muslims about the lives of Muslims. When the process of prayer is illustrated, non-Muslims may begin to understand the lifestyle of Muslims. This type of news piece, in this researcher's view, can encourage non-Muslims to be curious enough to ask questions about Islam and issues related to prayer, which can open up a dialogue and increase interaction.

News reports offering diverse views and an accurate image of Islam and Muslims were welcomed by these three participants as they felt that these media pieces helped to educate non-Muslims, and, in this researcher's view, may even aid some non-Muslims' acceptance of Muslims.

Overall Implications of "Positive" Media Pieces

The media news pieces identified by participants as positive media pieces were those that showed the humanity of Muslims in acts of kindness, generosity, courage, and fairness while condemning violence. "Positive" media pieces that feature Muslims in a generous, helpful, just, and human light increase the recognition, acceptance, and respect

of Muslims. Other pieces considered positive showed political leaders and organizations supporting Muslims, featured the human side of Muslims, and those providing accurate information and education about Muslims. Positive news pieces often have the potential to increase dialogue and connections between Muslims and non-Muslims in the workplace and among Canadians in society. People in positions of leadership featured or cited as supporting Muslims or exemplifying Muslims were found to be especially noteworthy for the participants, as they held these religious and political figures in high regard, and they are seen as symbolic figures representing a faith or a nation.

Positive news gave them an incentive to do good and promote positive emotions. Words and sentiments such as “healing,” “positivity,” “comfortableness,” “goodness,” “joy,” “happiness,” “gladness” as well as feelings of “trust,” “empowerment,” and “belonging” were used by participants in relation to the “positive” news pieces. They felt these positive types of pieces decrease discrimination, paranoia, and anxiety, as well as their feelings of wanting to hide and be isolated. The media pieces deemed as positive by the participants were those that increases one’s feelings of pride, confidence, happiness, and self-esteem. News pieces depicting Muslims participating in positive acts are easily acknowledged and recognized, and they are powerful in positively influencing some Muslim's emotions.

Media Pieces Participants Labelled as Neutral

Five of the media pieces categorized as neutral were news articles with video clips attached, and the other five were text online news articles. Six of these media reports were from 2017, two from 2016, and two from 2015, hence, all of these news pieces were less than five years old.

Characteristics of Pieces Considered Neutral by Participants

Table 3. Media Pieces Labelled Neutral by Participants

Participant	Title, Source, Reporter, Date, and Location	Link and Media Type
Participant 1 Media Type: Article	Muslim activist Linda Sarsour's reference to 'jihad' draws conservative wrath Source and reporter(s): <i>National Post</i> , Samantha Schmidt Date: July 7, 2017 Location of report: Washington, DC, USA	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/07/07/muslim-activist-linda-sarsours-reference-to-jihad-draws-conservative-wrath/?utm_term=.39502fbd2ae2
Participant 2 Media Type: Article and video clip	The Quebec City mosque attack: What we know so far Source and reporter(s): <i>reporter(s): Globe and Mail</i> , Fred Lum Date: January 30, 2017 Location of report: Quebec, Canada	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/quebec-city-mosque-shooting-what-we-know-so-far/article33826078/
Participant 3 Media Type: Article	Another social media stunt? Justin Trudeau attends Toronto Pride wearing 'Eid Mubarak' socks Source and reporter(s): <i>National Post</i> , Mark Blinch Date: June 25, 2017 Location of report: Toronto, Ontario, Canada	http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/another-social-media-stunt-justin-trudeau-attends-toronto-pride-wearing-eid-mubarak-socks
Participant 4 Media Type: Article	Calgary community leaders tackle radicalization and Islamophobia Source and reporter(s): CBC, Devin Heroux and Nazim Baksh Date: March 31, 2017 Location of report: Calgary, Alberta, Canada	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-muslims-radicalization-community-1.4044747
Participant 5 Media Type: Article and video clip	Millions of Muslims take part in mass pilgrimage of Arbaeen in spite of ISIS Source and reporter(s): <i>Independent</i> , Alexandra Sims Date: November 24, 2016 Location of report: London, Great Britain, U.K.	http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/20-million-muslims-march-against-isis-arbaeen-pilgrimage-iraq-karbala-a7436561.html
Participant 6 Media Type: Article and video clip	Anti-Muslim protest planned for Calgary on Sunday Source and reporter(s): CTV, Michael Franklin Date: June 23, 2017 Location of report: Calgary, Alberta, Canada	https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/mobile/anti-muslim-protest-planned-for-calgary-on-sunday-1.3473092
Participant 7 Media Type: Article	Islam is still rooted in the values of the dark ages – and until we accept that, we will never get rid of radicalism Source and reporter(s): <i>Telegraph</i> , Julia Hartley-Brewer Date: November 19, 2015 Location of report: U.K.	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/12005871/Islam-is-still-rooted-in-the-values-of-the-dark-ages-and-until-we-accept-that-we-will-never-get-rid-of-radicalism.html
Participant 8 Media Type: Article and video clip	The truth about Muslims in America Source and reporter(s): CNN, Holly Yan Date: December 9, 2015 Location of report: USA	http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/08/us/muslims-in-america-shattering-misperception/index.html
Participant 9 Media Type: Article and video clip	Success of Syrian refugee's basement clothing business has owner looking to expand Source and reporter(s): CTV, Ryan White Date: December 11, 2016	https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/success-of-syrian-refugee-s-basement-clothing-business-has-owner-looking-to-expand-1.3199006

Location of report: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Participant 10
Media Type:
Article

Vancouver teen thanks Good Samaritan after 'hate motivated' attack.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42173934>

Source and reporter(s): BBC, none specified

Date: December 8, 2017

Location of report: Vancouver, BC, Canada

Interestingly, it seems that it was difficult to distinguish positive and neutral media pieces. Two participants, Participants 3 and 5, indicated that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish positive and neutral media pieces in terms of how they assessed them. Participant 3 said, “So, I was having troubles... finding something neutral cause when it comes to this type of thing it’s very extreme. It’s either extremely good or extremely bad, and this was the best one that I found it was just kind of in the middle.” Participant 5 said, “When I was searching for a piece which is neutral. It is difficult to find something neutral.” It is possible that the lines separating “neutral” from “positive” and “negative” were not so clear-cut. It was also noted that the ten media reports that were selected as neutral represent a range, with six of the news items that leaned toward being identified as positive, two of these were seen as central, or very neutral as they just stated a situation, and, finally, two seemed to lean toward being categorized as negative.

Specifically, it was found that two participants chose news reports echoing the voices of Muslims and including diverse views as their neutral media pieces. Three of the news pieces labelled by participants as positive were often those that demonstrated a clearly positive contribution to humanity, those that clearly supported Muslims, or those that were accurate and giving Muslims a voice. Similarly, three media items categorized as neutral were ones that they felt accurately represented Muslims, or stories that were attributed to Muslims, as well as those that indicated Muslims desired to be seen as being

part of the mainstream population. Three participants labelled media pieces that accurately describe a situation or facts as neutral. Although accuracy was sometimes attributed to those media pieces categorized as positive, especially when it came to the media representing the image of Muslims, accuracy seemed to be more attributed to those considered neutral. Finally, two participants viewed news they deemed to lack critical thinking and/or missed pertinent knowledge as negative.

News echoing the voices of Muslims and diverse views were seen as neutral.

As stated above, two participants chose as neutral media pieces those that authentically echoed the voices of Muslims and represented more than one perspective.

Participant 1's selected neutral media report was "Muslim activist Linda Sarsour's reference to 'jihad' draws conservative wrath" (Schmidt, 2017). This news piece is about a public speech made by an American Muslim activist and women's march organizer, Linda Sarsour, and her use of the term jihad in that speech, and the wrath it drew from Breitbart, an American conservative media outlet. While a reporter for Breitbart seemed to emphasize the negative connotations attached to the word jihad, Sarsour was employing the term in a way that was meant to highlight this feeling of struggle and the need to rise above the elements oppressing them. She suggests they need to be the best versions of themselves to not be their own obstacles to be able to integrate in the West, in the United States. Participant 1 saw this news item as "neutral as they quoted her without adding emotions." He doesn't feel news of this type affects him, as it is "a feud between two people." This media item educated people on the term jihad, and had people better understand the term, which may reduce non-Muslims' discomfort interacting with

Muslims. This media report also shows that the media can discuss other media outlets' portrayals of people. This media piece depicted media outlet Breitbart's representation of a person and that person's point of view. This showed that media outlets pay attention to other news outlets, and thus hold each other accountable for what they report. At the same time, in another direction, some of the media's audience may not be aware that a media outlet has a specific political perspective, and therefore may believe the information presented to them as objective fact when it may not be. It is also important to acknowledge that this media piece represents more than one perspective on this story, as is the example below.

Participant 6 chose "Anti-Muslim protest planned for Calgary on Sunday" (Franklin, 2017) as her neutral piece. This article covered an anti-Muslim protest and a rally that opposed it. Participant 6 saw this article as neutral and "balanced," with an anti-Muslim protest including "comments from a Muslim at a rally," as well as "comments from the police." By the name of the protest one recognizes that some Calgarians do not like Muslims, and do not want them living in Calgary, while at the same time there is a rally against this protest demonstrating an opposing sentiment—highlighting more than one perspective. As this was an anti-Muslim rally, it was vital to hear from a Muslim on the other side. Reporting the emotions of Muslims at the rally may help to educate non-Muslims to the existing social climate they are facing and perhaps garner more empathy from non-Muslim Calgarians. This participant also highlights two points. First, she feels that a hate rally results in more people living in fear than before. As she said, "There was a lot of fear in Muslims, especially women who wear hijabs." This is because the hijab, as well as other clothing accessories attributed to Muslim women, make them more recognizable as Muslims compared to their male counterparts. After the protest, Muslim

women likely felt less welcome in Calgary, as a result of this protest and their fear of how non-Muslims would react to them, fearing an increase of Islamophobia and hate crimes being committed against them. Second, when it comes to serious issues that negatively impact a lot of people, sometimes media pieces can aid in bringing these matters to the attention of the government. In this case, it inspired a politician to get involved with educating people on Islamophobia, to attain a more harmonious population. This view was expressed in her comment,

I'm glad these articles came out [as it] brought into focus what's happening in our city and now the provincial government is taking steps to work on policy when it comes to tackling Islamophobia face on.

Overall, these two participants felt that it was important for Muslims to be heard and a multiple of perspectives to be represented by the media.

News showing the humanity of Muslims are seen as neutral.

News showing the humanity of Muslims by what is deemed as objectively relating to a topic is seen as neutral. Three participants chose neutral media pieces that they felt demonstrated the humanity of Muslims by accurately describing an event or an issue in a neutral manner.

For Participant 3's neutral media piece, he selected the article, "Another social media stunt? Justin Trudeau attends Toronto Pride wearing 'Eid Mubarak' socks" (Blinch, 2017). This media item represented the fact that Justin Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada, attended the Toronto Pride parade wearing "Eid Mubarak" socks celebrating Islam's holiest holiday. This participant felt that a leader of a country showing respect for a minority population's religion, in this case Islam, should be the norm, as he said, "I want this type of behaviour to be neutral, I don't want this [to] be a forced thing. I feel

that this should be normal." In short, this participant wanted it to be the norm for leaders of non-Muslim countries to promote the acceptance of Islam, and thereby Muslims. He also feels that,

It's very easy to alienate people and make them look like monsters. They (referring to reporters) just mentioned that it was Eid Mubarak, it was our Christmas, and I believe they (Muslims,) were represented positively in this.

He felt that this is helpful because there are people in the mainstream population of the country unsure about whether they want to accept Muslims as being part of mainstream Canada, and this may help to change their mentality toward being more accepting of Muslims. Prime Minister Trudeau spread this message, in his own way, by wearing and showing his socks that said "Eid Mubarak." The perception of Islam as a mainstream religion in Canada can reduce the number of Muslims in Canada experiencing discrimination affecting their health. This media piece, even though labelled neutral by this participant is also seen as "positive" as it had him feeling "happier and proud" because it is showing Canada's prime minister promoting the acceptance of Muslims.

Participant 4 picked "Calgary community leaders tackle radicalization and Islamophobia" (Heroux & Baksh, 2017) for his neutral piece. This article covered interviews that reporters held with community leaders about radicalization and Islamophobia. Participant 4 felt "that the way they spoke about the issues were really neutral. And they did due justice to what they were talking about" and Muslims "weren't labelled terrorists." He also felt the "real cause of terrorism [is] discussed" and "Because people would take Muslims as normal human beings and I would face less discrimination as well." In this researcher's view, having more non-Muslims understand that most

Muslims are not radicals and that they and their communities are doing what they can to fight terrorism while dealing with Islamophobia may help to increase the number of non-Muslims who accept Muslims. According to this researcher, improved relations between non-Muslims and Muslims also may help to increase the sense of belonging of some Muslims.

Participant 9 chose as her neutral media piece an article that showcased the entrepreneurial success of a Syrian refugee businessman. In her view, this article did not tie his accomplishment to his Muslim identity. She selected the article “Success of Syrian refugee’s basement clothing business has owner looking to expand,” (White, 2016). She felt it was “neutral, although it’s about Muslims, it’s still a piece about commerce.” This participant also believed that other Muslims would feel the same way, as she said,

I believe a little bit neutral unless this is picked up by someone who is very touchy on the issue of hijab. Unless they’re the ones who are reading it, I’m pretty sure they are going to have that very neutral reactions, but for me it’s a very neutral piece.

This media piece informed people of a person’s success and demonstrated that a person from an immigrant background can be successful, it therefore encourages others to follow their desired goals. This media piece about a successful Muslim immigrant tailor has her feeling encouraged:

It would definitely put courage in me and not only as okay maybe like I belong here because other immigrants have become very successful but, would also just encourage me to try out different things. Like you know business ideas, that I myself wouldn’t be particularly courageous about undertaking.

In short, this person felt this media piece helped her to feel that she and other immigrants can succeed regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

These three participants approved of media pieces that demonstrated the humanity of Muslims by accurately describing an event or an issue in a neutral manner.

News that seems to accurately describe situations or facts are seen as neutral.

Three participants chose to categorize media pieces that, in their view, accurately describe a situation or facts as neutral.

The neutral media item chosen by Participant 2 was the article “Quebec City Mosque attack: What we know so far” (Lum, 2017). This is a media piece about the shooting at a mosque in Quebec City, when a person entered this mosque and randomly shot at people. Participant 2 selected this as his neutral item because, in his perception, it “does not label” anyone, or “jump to conclusions.” He said this news item was accurately and simply “just stating what happened.” He considered that “this is kind of a neutral reporting just reporting what happened.” In his view, “if the media becomes more neutral and objective, and you know you feel you become more Canadian maybe and you feel that yes, you know everybody matters here, and everybody is important so that is good.” The title of the media item itself includes “what we know so far,” may have reflected this reporter’s desire to mirror transparency in their process and think about the situation which helps people see a media piece as objective, which he saw as a positive phenomenon. This participant showed that even a neutral news piece can be simultaneously seen as positive. This impression was generated by his comments below:

I think maybe I don’t think it will have any much of an impact because this is a neutral kind of journalism and so I got the information, what is happening, who was behind it, how it unfolded, how many people were killed, and how the different sectors, segments of society responded you know. So, it can change maybe in a positive way. In a positive way as you see journalists are objective, and the media is objective in a positive light.

In this researcher's view, when reporters have represented media pieces that seem to the majority of its audience to be "objective" it likely has increased their trust in that reporter and media outlet represented.

Participant 5 chose the media piece "Millions of Muslims take part in mass pilgrimage of Arba'een in spite of ISIS" (Sims, 2016) as his neutral media report. He felt this media piece is neutral as it is accurately "just describing" a yearly event that has meaning to many Shia Muslims. Millions of Muslims, especially Shia Muslims, take part in the mass pilgrimage of Arba'een, in remembrance of Husayn the son of Ali and the grandson of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, and Husayn's resistance against the leader at the time, in spite of a possible attack from groups like ISIS. He said, "We all are aware of it because it is representing Islam ... but in a neutral way." Still, as Participant 5 is not Shia he did not "feel represented" by this report, suggesting that sometimes even a small difference in the identity being portrayed by a media item may alter the extent to which a person connects to the story told. In the perspective of this participant, his reason for considering this media piece as neutral was as follows:

I don't think this article changes Canadian peoples' views or affects peoples' attitudes toward Muslims in any way, neither in a negative nor in a positive way, because it is neutral. It is just describing something that is taking place by a reporter from Canada.

This media piece—that described an event in context, informed and educated people about what has happened without telling them how to feel or perceive the situation—was categorized as neutral.

Participant 8's selected neutral media item was "The truth about Muslims in America" (Yan, 2015), because she felt it accurately stated some truths, since the reporter "fact checked [their] claims," as it countered some stereotypes stated about Islam and

Muslims. This media item focused on the social climate in the United States and some common stereotypes some non-Muslims have about Muslims and Islam. It countered these stereotypes with facts. Participant 8 said, “The media will always be talking about the negatives, all of the bad parts of Muslims, and this one just adds the positive.” Her comment showed that she feels that the Western mainstream media often represents Muslims negatively. She elaborated: “This [article] is more positive than negative. They always come back to Donald Trump and his issues with Muslims.” In this researcher’s view, media pieces that present researched facts on a topic have the ability to educate people. Media items that portray researched facts help people to have better informed opinions. This point is highly relevant if the media strongly influences some perspectives; if the media can sometimes shape beliefs and decisions regarding particular subjects, for these people, the media is powerful. Asked how she would react to seeing media pieces like this frequently and consistently, she stated that it would not change how she saw herself, “If anything, I feel more empower[ed], stronger I would say.” Her comment illustrated the following idea: when the media presents properly contextualized facts that positively portray a specific group of people, those within that population tend to accept it as an accurate reflection of who they are.

In sum, the media pieces that the three participants felt accurately described situations or facts were highly regarded by them.

News deemed to lack critical thinking or miss pertinent knowledge are seen as neutral.

Some news deemed to lack critical thinking or miss pertinent knowledge are viewed as neutral. Two participants labeled news pieces they felt lacked critical thinking

and in-depth analysis or missed pertinent information as neutral. In this researcher's perception, it may have encouraged a distrust in the media.

For example, Participant 7 chose "Islam is still rooted in the values of the dark ages and until we accept that we will never get rid of radicalism" (Hartley-Brewer, 2015) as her neutral piece. This article was about Sadiq Khan, the Muslim mayor of London, England, who stated that British Muslims are not integrated enough within British society and they do not affiliate themselves with other groups of people. She felt it was good to "tackle extremism" but thought that the reporter could have talked about it with "more sensitivity." She also wondered why this journalist implied that all Muslim British youth were radicalized or became targets for those who want to turn them into radicals. She would have preferred the journalist to do more research and discover the real cause of the issue, "to go further and find out the root of the problem."

In the view of this researcher, suggesting that Muslims are not doing anything about the issue of radicals, and are not integrating, may upset some Muslims because this may not be how they see themselves or want to see themselves. In this researcher's opinion, the participant's reaction to this article illustrates the concept that it may be more beneficial to do more research to show Muslims actively doing something to counter radicalism and praise them for it. For this researcher, praising the positive acts accomplished by communities, rather than being critical, may motivate people to push for positive change, which may have a more powerful and positive impact on feelings about integration and belonging. She also stated that the media "should not affect you. I know who I am, and what my religion teaches me, right?" Her remark makes the vital point that when you are confident in your beliefs and value system, what others say does not change your views about yourself.

Participant 10 gave another example of this type of news piece when she selected the article, “Vancouver teen thanks Good Samaritan after ‘hate motivated’ attack” (Author unknown, 2017) as her neutral media item. This article described a female Muslim teenager in British Columbia, Canada, who was rescued from being harassed for being Muslim, as she was identified as Muslim by her hijab. Although someone did come to the rescue of this Muslim female teenager, according to Participant 10 it only occurred when the situation started to get to a dangerous, physical point. She supported her view as follows:

I chose this neutral as in my feelings about it cause the extra part is supposed to portray this good Samaritan, but I didn’t think that was a good thing or bad thing, yes it was a good thing, but did it have to get to that point? So that’s why I said neutral, the offset.

In this participant’s view, the reporter did not recognize and question why no one helped the teenager until things got physical, and felt that, in so doing, it may have reinforced the idea that, unless that person’s life is on the line, one does not have to help a person in need if they are Muslim. This participant would have wanted the reporter to ask why the "hero" felt no one else helped, and why he did not help sooner. This participant also desired the reporter to represent the message that harassment is not tolerated, especially those that turn violent and are hate crimes. Her view on this report reminds us that what is not said may be just as powerful, or more powerful, than what is said. She indicated that when she observed media pieces like this it provoked her to feel that Muslims’ need to educate non-Muslims about their religion:

Muslims have opportunity to educate. To be out there, to be the voice, not to be afraid, not to be on the side, and unfortunately, things have been happening, they are put on the side. But the Muslim women should speak, be involved in various gatherings and speak, cause there’s people wondering about the hijab, you get that opportunity to speak about it.

Inadequate reporting and understanding of Islamic culture and practices prompted this participant to want to educate Canadians about her religion. Her remarks also suggested Muslim sensitivity to both what is said and unsaid, and what is implied in the media.

According to these two participants, some news deemed to need more critical thinking or be missing pertinent knowledge may be labelled as neutral. Importantly, these two participants are also disapproving of media pieces by reporters who do not really look at the significance of the information they are sharing.

Overall Implications of “Neutral” Media Pieces

Participants chose as neutral media pieces those that authentically echoed the voices of Muslims and represented more than one perspective, and those that provided information to educate the public about Muslims, Muslim life, festivals, and Islam. Other types of media items categorized by participants as neutral were those that invite debate about a contentious term, and one showed a leader of a country, Canadian prime minister Trudeau in this case, being an example of religious tolerance. Finally, one profiled a successful immigrant’s story while not singling out his ethnic identity or religious belief; this was also labeled as neutral.

With the exception of the two articles deemed to lack critical thinking or to miss pertinent knowledge, the media pieces identified by participants as neutral were deemed to be educational, objective, “expected,” and appreciated. They promote the acceptance of Muslims. Participants also seemed to appreciate the media representing multiple perspectives within their news stories. In this researcher’s view they would likely encourage feelings of belonging and increase the chances of reflecting their identity and views. Neutral news pieces do not increase peoples’ discomfort. Moreover, in the

perspective of this researcher, those news pieces that did not attach values to the content allowed people to judge for themselves and be more liable to accept the information conveyed. Accuracy was attributed to those media pieces categorized as positive, especially when it came to the media portraying the image of Muslims; however, accuracy seemed to be attributed more to those considered as neutral pieces. It was sometimes difficult to distinguish positive and neutral media pieces. In addition, it was noted that media reports that were selected as neutral seemed to range from those leaning to be positive, to those just stating a situation, and, finally, to those that seemed likely to be categorized as negative.

It appears that as long as media pieces are not explicitly anti-Muslim, they are viewed as neutral or positive. Similar to the positive pieces, many of the selected neutral news (not all explicitly portraying Muslims), promoted feelings of “belonging,” “pride,” “joy,” “happiness,” thus “energizing” and increasing peoples’ desire to integrate. At the same time though, other neutral news pieces resulted in some participants being somewhat disappointed and curious as to the angle the reporters took on their stories. These negative emotions just mentioned may be related to a reporter’s choice of words, the implied meanings within these media pieces, and an apparent absence of critical thinking on the part of the journalists. It left some participants feeling “surprised” and “shocked.”

Media Pieces Participants Labelled as Negative

Four of the media items were articles with video clips attached, and six were articles. Seven of these media reports were shared by the media in 2017, there were two published in 2015 and one in 2014, hence, none of these media items was more than five years old.

Characteristics of Pieces Considered Negative by Participants

Table 4. Media Pieces Labelled Negative by Participants

Participant	Title, Source, Reporter, Date, and Location	Link and Media Type
Participant 1 Media Type: Article and video clip	7 dead, 21 critically injured in London attack Attackers hit pedestrians and van, stab others; Canadian among 7 killed <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CBC citing the Associated Press, none specified <u>Date:</u> June 4, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> London, Great Britain, U.K.	http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/london-bridge-police-respond-incident-1.4145353
Participant 2 Media Type: Article	Canada's so-called anti-Islamophobia motion is nothing but trouble <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> Toronto Sun, Anthony Furey <u>Date:</u> January 28, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Toronto, Ontario, Canada	http://torontosun.com/2017/01/28/canada-s-so-called-anti-islamophobia-motion-is-nothing-but-trouble/wcm/32315241-6deb-4aa4-9261-d09c5a9ae3a2
Participant 3 Media Type: Article	Shafia parents and son, convicted in honour killing of four family members, seek new trial <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> National post, none specified <u>Date:</u> October 13, 2015 <u>Location of report:</u> Montreal, Quebec, Canada	http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/shafia-parents-and-son-convicted-in-honour-killing-of-four-family-members-seek-new-trial
Participant 4 Media Type: Article and video clip	Toronto-area imam's photo used in fake news story about Texas mosque turning away Harvey victims <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> Global News, Rahul Kalvapalle <u>Date:</u> September 3, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Mississauga, Ontario, Canada	https://globalnews.ca/news/3715936/fake-news-texas-mosque-turning-away-harvey-victims/
Participant 5 Media Type: Article	Calgary Muslim website defends female circumcision and critiques 'Jewish media' <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> National Post, Tom Blackwell <u>Date:</u> September 8, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> Calgary, Alberta, Canada	http://nationalpost.com/health/calgary-muslim-website-defends-female-circumcision-and-critiques-jewish-media
Participant 6 Media Type: Article	Former head of pro-Palestinian student group accused of hate speech over violent martyrdom posts on Facebook <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> National Post, Jen Gerson <u>Date:</u> January 9, 2014 <u>Location of report:</u> Calgary, Alberta, Canada	http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/former-head-of-pro-palestinian-student-group-accused-of-hate-speech-over-violent-martyrdom-posts-on-facebook
Participant 7 Media Type: Article and video clip	The world's fastest growing religion? Islam <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CNN, Tricia Escobedo <u>Date:</u> March 17, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> U.S.A.	http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/16/world/islam-fastest-growing-religion-trnd/index.html
Participant 8 Media Type: Article	Trump urges Muslim leaders to lead fight against radicalisation <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> BBC, none specified <u>Date:</u> May 22, 2017 <u>Location of report:</u> U.S.A.	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39989548
Participant 9 Media Type: Article	Concordia dean to meet and Muslim student group over library controversy <u>Source and reporter(s):</u> Montreal Gazette, Michelle Lalonde	https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/concordia-dean-to-meet-with-

	<u>Date:</u> March 4, 2015	muslim-student-group-over-library-controversy
	<u>Location of report:</u> Montreal, Quebec, Canada	
Participant 10	New York terror case involving Canadian shows growing reach of ISIS	https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/new-york-terror-case-involving-canadian-shows--growing-reach-of-isis-1.3623862
Media Type:	<u>Source and reporter(s):</u> CTV, Michelle McQuigge	
Article and video clip	<u>Date:</u> October 8, 2017	
	<u>Location of report:</u> New York, New York, United States	

Three participants chose as their negative media pieces those that depict Muslims as participants in violent behaviours. Five participants chose as their negative media pieces those they deemed to inaccurately depict Muslims. Two participants chose as their negative news items those they felt depicted facts about Islam or Muslims without providing the context and/or missed critical information.

Media pieces depicting Muslims in violent acts were categorized as negative.

Three participants selected and categorized as their negative media pieces those that showed Muslims involved in violent, terrorist, or misogynistic acts.

Participant 1 discussed the article, “7 dead and 21 critically injured in London attack” (Associated Press, 2017), which was about three Muslims who attacked random people on and around London Bridge. He perceived events associated to violence and death as negative occurrences, and therefore he labelled this article as one that negatively represented Muslims. In his perspective, Islam does not support violence or murder, stating, “God would not allow you to do something like this.” Moreover, without reporters making the clarification that Islam does not support these types of actions and without differentiating a handful of radicals from your average Muslim, non-Muslims may feel that the majority of Muslims hold the same values as these violent people. This absence of clarification and differentiation does not help to decrease the present

discrimination in Canada that this participant thought was already present. For this participant, this kind of media made him “feel suffocated.”

Participant 3 deliberated on the article called, “Shafia parents and son convicted in honour killing of four family members seek new trial” (Author unknown, 2015). This article was about a Muslim father and son who murdered the father’s three daughters and his first wife. Participant 3 saw this as “a horrible atrocity. A man killed his four daughters and it was reported just as that is a very negative thing.” Akin to the previous participant, Participant 3, if observing media pieces like this one, of a Muslim committing a horrific act of violence on a regular and frequent basis, he would want to isolate himself, leading him to be more disconnected from society. He said he especially feels hurt when he hears news about someone from his own country who immigrated to Canada like himself, someone who mirrors a part of his identity, committing such violent atrocities:

It feels really bad like when you hear like this guy is Afghan. I am Afghan, so it definitely hurts, it hurts you personally definitely. If this is all there was, and this is all you heard I feel like that would that would push me to be more sheltered and distant from society, just exacerbate that feeling of not belonging.

His fear was such stories of a Muslim carrying out a violent act may convince non-Muslims that Islam promotes violence and that Muslims are dangerous and cannot be integrated into Canadian society. He was also concerned that this kind of publicity would lead non-Muslims to confirm their negative views of Muslims. The participant felt that people tend to gravitate toward information to confirm their beliefs and biases. In the view of this researcher, media items like this may lead some non-Muslims to justify their beliefs about Muslims. It is a truism that people tend to find information that confirms their beliefs. When a person observes a press piece that cements his or her perceptions it

gives that person a sense of satisfaction, affirming personal beliefs. Moreover, when a person happens on media items with messages that goes against his or her beliefs, that person may feel driven to find other materials, more environmental cues, that agree with his or her views on those subjects.

Participant 10 selected “New York terror case involving Canadian shows growing reach of ISIS” (McQuigge, 2017) as her negative piece. This piece is about a Canadian Muslim teenage male planning to commit an atrocious act against citizens in New York. This was deemed negative as it represented a Muslim planning to commit a terrorist act, and because the voices represented in the article reiterated that ISIS has spread beyond its geographic borders, leading to the spreading fear toward Muslims.

I think it’s negative, it’s again just giving the negative connotation about Islam and you know the purpose of ISIS and how it connects to the religion and you know be scared of those Muslims.

However, she thought this news is “fabricated”, hence it does not influence how she sees herself.

These three participants illustrated that Western mainstream media pieces that portray Muslims who have participated in or were planning to participate in violent behaviours did not help foster a greater sense of belonging among Muslims living in Western countries such as Canada, and they did not help to increase non-Muslims’ acceptance of Muslims.

Five participants saw media pieces they felt inaccurately depict Muslims as negative.

Participant 6 chose as her negative news item, the article “Former head of pro-Palestinian student group accused of hate speech over violent martyrdom posts on Facebook” (Gerson, 2014). The participant felt that the reporter did not accurately depict the person she was portraying, stating “Non-Muslims, because they don’t know Ala’a” got a very wrong impression of her, which is very concerning.” In this participant’s perspective, the article slandered the person featured in the article, her identity, and her work, and suggested she supported suicide bombing and terrorism:

It’s very concerning when non-Muslims see you see these sorts of articles. They get a negative image perpetrating this false narrative about Muslims again and again...

This participant thought that when engaging with the media, one has to be very careful about what one says, as she says, “You have to be careful, cause everybody can twist your words, everybody can see you in a negative light no matter how much good works you have done.” She also believed that if you want to see a change in the media, then you have to actively and intentionally engage with the media and to build meaningful relationships with local journalists in a way that the journalists “hear” you: “We realize with the media, relationship building is very important to the Muslim community”. Overall, this participant saw the forming of relationships, in this case with journalists, as a key means needed to increase a person’s a sense of belonging and for feeling integrated.

Participant 2 identified the article “Canada’s so- called anti-islamophobia law motion is nothing but trouble” as negative because the journalist, Anthony Furey, “was portraying Islam and Muslims inaccurately, ...that it is a negative portrayal.” Journalist Furey shared her viewpoint on Bill M 103, a motion against a specific hate crime law

against Islamophobia. Furey is against M-103 and he indicated that he felt Islamophobia is now a meaningless term that originally was to represent Muslims who were harassed in response to 9/11. Participant 2, on the other hand, stressed that Islamophobia is real, “to me Islamophobia it’s a fact,” and he also made the point that inaccurate portrayals misinform others, which in this researcher’s opinion, does not help people understand and accept each other. However, an inaccurate portrayal of Muslims will not change who he is, although it may have him feel less welcome in Canada and less sociable. It could precipitate a traumatic response, making him feel that he has to move to a place where he feels safe and continue to monitor how Western media presents news about Muslims.

Maybe I go to a certain place just for my own security maybe cause if this kind of media piece continues it will create kind of a backlash it’s a form it can incite people to act against certain people. So, it’s just a matter of watching what is happening around you. Yeah, it’s like the weather forecast you know seeing what is happening around you.

His reaction to this news piece indicated that even inaccurate media items that appear to some to have portrayed Muslims in a negative way, were enough reason for some Muslims to have felt less welcome.

Participant 8 selected “Trump urges Muslim leaders to lead fight against radicalization” (Author unknown, 2017) as negative, as she feels the journalist did not cover the real agenda behind the meeting with the Saudi Arabian leaders, and depicted Muslims as doing almost nothing to fight radicalization:

It’s not the first time for him, Trump, to say you need to do better to report to us, Muslims. They probably do give as much information as anybody else but it’s never recorded it’s never shown in the media how much work they put in trying to help make their community safer, but the media made them look like they don’t do much, isn’t helping their fellow Muslims against Al Qaeda, against ISIS, against radicals.

The participant thought Muslim readers who live in the United States may feel that they are less welcome. This can have a very destructive effect on the Muslim audience. In this researcher's view, perhaps when Trump covertly expresses that Muslims all around are not doing enough, he may be subtly encouraging, and is definitely not discouraging, verbal, psychological, and physical abuse of Muslims. Although this participant felt that she was secure in who she is, and media pieces like this do not influence how she sees herself, they do however cause her to want to speak out more: "This kind of stuff doesn't affect me. It makes my beliefs stronger, and it makes me speak out more". For her, sometimes a news story negatively representing Muslims can strengthen her beliefs.

Participant 4 chose "Toronto-area imam's photo used in a fake news story about Texas Mosque turning away Harvey victims" (Kalvapalle, 2017) as a negative piece because the actions ascribed to the Imam by the journalist, and his name and picture, proved to be untrue. When he was asked whether experiencing more racism would impact their lifestyle he said, "I think people would hate us without even knowing who we are, just hate us for who we are," just for being Muslim. Increasing racism affects the minds of Muslims and their hope of integration and belonging. He pointed out that fake news misinforms its audience and breaches an unwritten trust between the media and its readers. A story like this alienates non-Muslims from Muslims. He felt if he were to see this type of news often it would increase the level of his fear and anxiety, which would affect his mental and physical health: "It would affect my mental and physical health and I would be fearful about racist hate crimes."

This participant's quote went right to the core of this research—it reflected that when Western mainstream news negatively represents Muslims, and it did not alter the views of some non-Muslims, those who already were not accepting Muslims. In some

cases, it has slightly encouraged negative behaviour toward Muslims: some have even committed hate crimes as they felt justified by the media pieces that negatively represented Muslims. Many of these behaviours, especially those considered Islamophobic, and reflective of not accepting Muslims, have negatively affected the mental health of some Muslims.

Finally, Participant 5 selected as his negative media report, the article “Calgary Muslim website defends female circumcision and critiques ‘Jewish media’” (Blackwell, 2017). This media item discussed the matter of female genital mutilation (FGM) and how some of the leaders in the Islamic community agree with its practice and feel that some in the Jewish community think it’s a bad idea. Participant 5 labeled this article as negative, as he believed the journalist reported on a small Somali group in Calgary and represented them as being in favour of FGM, but, according to him, did so in a way that she felt it had many non-Muslims believe that all Muslims favour female circumcision:

One group, Somalians, are represented in a correct way because they are responsible for this news but other Calgarian Muslims are misrepresented. I would see myself misrepresented as I don’t agree with FGM. When I read this news item, I feel generalized.

Media pieces like this generalize the values of a small group of Muslims from one country to the whole of the Muslim population, would cause him to “lose trust” in the media. He did not want his personal, religious identity associated with a value that he disagrees with.

These five participants seemed to disfavour Western mainstream media pieces that inaccurately depicted Muslims, and some implied if they felt they saw too many of these types of media items they may even grow to distrust the media.

News seeming to decontextualize Muslims and/or miss data were seen as negative.

Two participants chose as their negative news items those they felt depicted facts on Islam or Muslims without providing the context and/or missed critical information.

Participant 7 viewed “The world's fastest growing religion? Islam” (Escobedo, 2017) as a negative article, and asked these questions: “‘Fastest growing religion,’ is that a problem? Why do you make it seem like a problem?” She also pointed out that the article quotes Trump saying, “I think Islam hates us,” and references a study in the article, saying, “Pew (the name of an institution that conducted a study referred to in this article) seems to be saying watch out. Muslim women are having more kids compared to women of other religions.” She felt the intent of this report was to increase non-Muslims’ fears of Muslims. The reporter talked about Islam being the fastest growing religion with no explanation as to why this information was shared, and as such, raised questions about the motive, according to this participant. Although this type of media does not affect how she views herself, she is worried about Trump’s influence on Canada, and whether it will increase fear between non-Muslims and Muslims to the extent that it affects her aspirations, and whether “Canada is still going be the happy place?” This participant’s remarks showed her concern that views could travel across borders, and the views of leaders in the United States could impact Canada.

Participant 9 chose “Concordia dean to meet with Muslim student group over library controversy” (LaLonde, 2015) as her negative piece. The media item cites the dean of Concordia University asking the leaders of the Muslim Student Association to get rid of some materials in the Muslim Student Association Library that were considered extremist, violent, and misogynist. She categorized this article as negative as she believes

that “the ridding of these books was a complete violation of basic rights.” The article also represented these Muslims as “apologetic” and as “bullied into complying.” This situation could have arisen as a result of the inventory of books not being checked on for years. The reporter did not talk to any of the Muslim Student Association leaders, nor did she remind her readers that there are plenty of “(Muslim) scholars who have very fair and lovely views.” By not giving these leaders a chance to express themselves or not reminding the public that these are only a few books, and that they are not reflective of the Muslim culture or religion as a whole, the media may be subtly implying that these student leaders, and Muslims in general, agree with the violent and/or misogynistic values encouraged in these materials. Here the participant was showing her sensitivity to what was said as well as what was not said. News like this does not discourage non-Muslims from thinking that Muslims share the same values and beliefs on the treatment of women. When asked if articles of this sort impact her lifestyle, she said,

It could bug me, but at the same time, when I sat next to a stranger on a metro, or a train, I don’t automatically assume that they’re thinking about the same media pieces I’m thinking about, nor am I self-conscious...

These two media items had the two participants frustrated and curious about the journalists’ point of view. These participants would like facts to be reported in a meaningful and appropriately contextualized way. In regard to the article, “The world’s fastest growing religion? Islam” (Escobedo, 2017), for example, the reporter here could have reminded the public of the commonalities between Judea-Christian religions and Islam. In terms of the article “Concordia dean to meet with Muslim student group over library controversy” (LaLonde, 2015) the reporter could have presented a more balanced view by reminding their audience that there are plenty of peaceful and/or feminist Muslim scholars. The reporter could have also talked to the leaders of the Muslim student

association. The two participants may have felt that if they saw these types of media pieces often that they would distrust the media.

Overall Implications of “Negative” News Pieces

Participants chose negative media pieces that featured terrorist acts, violence, and misogyny without specifying that it only applied to a certain group of Muslims. In addition, other pieces identified as negative questioned their accuracy or intent, as did those reports that focused only on the negative side of Muslims or Islam.

There are consequences of negative news pieces. Some people feel more detached from society; negative news stories may discourage dialogue. Many of them, in the view of some participants, represented Muslims as a homogenous population, thus misrepresenting their values. Some feel that these news pieces perpetuate fear of Muslims, which may help non-Muslims justify negative views of them. Some want Western mainstream media to say ISIS does not reflect Islam, and they also want the media to specify what and whom they are representing within their news pieces. Some news reports frustrated some participants for not reminding the public there are good and bad Muslim scholars, like scholars in every religion.

Negative media pieces did not provide an opportunity for those accused of heinous acts to state their views on the situation. News that represents Islam without proper context prevents people from properly interpreting it. Interestingly, news that negatively depicts Islam or Muslims motivates some to engage with the media and/or to educate others.

Negative news caused some participants to want to isolate themselves, feeling like they did not belong. Feelings of “sadness,” “fear,” “disgust,” disappointment, discouragement, “hurt,” and upset, resulted, as did “distrust” of the media and feeling that

they misrepresent and “generalize” about their population. Generalized reporting as well as reporting without context left some participants feeling distrust of the media.

Summary

Overall, Western media impacted trust in the media and fear of how others perceive them. They influenced participants’ desire to communicate with non-Muslims their affiliation with their own community as a result of the effects of racism and religious prejudice represented by the media. Media pieces portraying Muslims committing negative acts led one participant to distance himself from his own group and from the larger Canadian community.

Everybody kind of believes in kind of this portrayal, that Islam is ISIS or the other way around. So, I would almost distance myself from everyone, getting involved in my community, not only in the Muslim community but the Canadian community at large.

Western mainstream news pieces categorized as negatively representing Muslims elicited two types of reactions from Muslims: that of Muslims wanting to isolate themselves, or that of wanting to educate non-Muslims around them, depending on their sense of inner security and conviction about themselves and their identity.

Gender Analysis on Choice of Media Pieces

Media articles that related to women’s issues were chosen by three participants, 2 males and one female. One male participant saw honour killing according to Shafia law as a cultural rather than religious issue and he deplored such acts. However, he did not focus on it being a gender specific issue. This participant also intimated that as the man represented in this media story, for murdering his daughters and ex-wife, mirrored much of his identity, this article hurt him personally. Another male participant who shared a media report on female genital mutilation (FGM) commented on this being

representative of a minority of the Muslim population. He remarked that the reporter should have talked to different Muslim Imams and community leaders to ascertain that this practice is representative of a very small segment of the Muslims. He also commented that he, himself, is against FGM.

The other two media pieces concerning women were chosen by one female participant. One of these was related to a young woman being harassed for being Muslim and identified as such because she was wearing a hijab. She felt that this particular media item was not covered well as it did not really delve into the significance of the situation, and it did not even send the message that this should not be occurring. Another piece she shared was about the Alberta premier expressing her view opposing Bill 62, a bill that proposed the banning of religious facial coverings, such as the wearing of the niqab, and burka. This participant was primarily responding to what the Alberta premier said. She was especially appreciative that the premier highlighted the fact that Muslim women, especially those who wear religious clothing indicating that they are Muslim, are particularly marginalized.

Both genders tackled the issues of violence. Male participants shared reports on specific violent attacks more than the female participants, in a ratio of three males to one female. However, all five males and four of five females spoke about the topic of violence. Given the small sample, it is hard to tell if there is a difference in relation to how males and females process violence in reporting.

Equal number of male and females, two males and two females, commented on political issues. However, more female than male participants (5 females: 3 males) thought the media unfairly or inaccurately depicted Muslims. A larger sample would

be needed to reveal any gender differences in terms of how Muslim men and women react to the media.

Themes from the Interview Data

The impact of Western mainstream media on the emotions of Muslims and their sense of belonging and feelings around integration centred around themes of identity, accuracy in media reporting, education, relationships, and the power of the media. The interview data closely echoed the comments made by participants regarding the media pieces.

Power of the Media

Some participants do feel that the media influences their sense of belonging. For example, Participant 1 intimated that if he regularly and frequently saw stories of Muslims committing violent acts, after a while he would feel “suffocated” and likely he would “isolate” himself.

You know that this kind of media piece almost made me feel suffocated, where it was to the point where it is just like everybody kind of believes in kind of this portrayal that I would get almost, that everybody already believes that Islam is ISIS or the other way around. So, I would almost distance myself from everyone. And it’s better that I just kind of isolate myself in whatever it is that I am doing I just do it on my own and, you know, not having to justify what I am doing, or having to explain what others are doing.

For Participant 3, the media also plays a role in shaping his belonging as he feels “media [negatively] influence peoples’ demeanors” toward Muslims, so he does not always feel welcome.

In considering the difference between when the media represent violence done by Muslims compared to non-Muslim, Participant 4 talked about how for non-Muslims who have committed public acts of their religious background, it was not associated to their behaviour whereas for Muslims it was. He was so provoked by this difference and

wanting non-Muslims to understand the full picture that in part of his response he said, “That is why I am doing the work that I am, to bring the facts out through interaction, so that an average Canadian can understand other aspects of the story”.

In other words, Western media portrayals may motivate some to react by engaging with it. They may feel that they need to add their input to the perspectives represented by the media. Participant 3, for example, has created his own media space by talking with and sharing information with journalists who then share this information in their newspaper website and printed articles, which likely empowers him in the process.

The attention variable.

Journalists are powerful. They choose what they give attention to, that is, who they represent in the news. For example, a reporter may publish a story about a person who did not want to be interviewed. Participant 6, who is in the same social circle as this person being represented by a reporter, gave us an example of this when she said that “she, Ala’a, (this person, represented by the reporter) did not want to talk to her (this reporter,) and yet she (the reporter, Jen Gerson,) still ran with it and did the whole spinning in whatever way she thought looked the juiciest, which is very wrong.” This indicates that, in Participant 6’s perception, journalists have the power to publish a piece about a person against the wishes of that individual, even if that individual is not being associated with any criminal activities.

In a different direction, but still considering the variable of attention, two participants also implied that they feel that the media should spend the same amount of time or attention on positive news as it does on negative news. Participant 1 feels that the news media should devote more attention to positive news stories as he implies that the more positive news is represented, the more people, such as himself, may be influenced to

contribute to society positively; this is addressed in further detail in the section that discusses positive media pieces.

Yeah, I can see how if I saw it on a daily basis it would be. Cause at one point I'd think right now it is something nice, it's an occasional thing, but the more I saw it the more of an expectation it may build for myself. So, if I saw an old lady cleaning, I don't know house, houses for, or no not houses maybe like the homeless shelter. So, there's a couple cleaning homeless shelters every Tuesday for example, and on then Thursday I saw a Muslim man I don't know trimming the yard of his neighbor. So, if I saw those positively reinforced ideas it would be an expectation I would have for myself, because it would literally feel like every other Muslim is doing something good other than me.

Participant 3 also supports the idea that the news media should give more attention or word space to positive news. This concept comes out his comments:

The majority of Muslim people are very level-headed individuals and there are heroes like this all over. And I think these stories [like these], [referring to "Don't touch him: Hero imam saves life of suspect of terror attack," (Horton, 2017)] need the proper representation and they don't need to be swept under the rug in comparison to all the atrocities that happen, and those are like shoved in your face without any differentiation of who is committing the acts. So, I think the importance of this article is just that it was reported responsibly and it's important that people know that things like this are happening in the world. I recall there was an incident in the States, I think it was in New York actually, a Muslim guy saw a Jewish guy getting jumped, they were stealing his wallet and stuff, and he defended him, and he died. He put his life on the line for a Jewish guy, and I literally saw this story in a small, small little section of an article and I was like this wasn't on the news, you don't hear about this. So, that is why this is important, cause they talked about it.

In this individual's perspective, stories about Muslims doing something positive need to get equal air time as those of Muslims doing or saying something negative. The media should remind its audience that people, including Muslims, do not usually commit violent acts. Participant's 3 comment reflects his perception that the media has a choice in regard to how much attention they give a story in terms of the physical space and location allocated to it.

The time variable.

There were many views when it came to the variable of time and the media. Participants 3 and 7 implied that news impacts people differently depending on the amount of time spent on a news story. Participant 3 talked about some non-Muslims emotionally supporting Muslims after a man rammed into a mosque in the United Kingdom killing one person and injuring 10 people. He noted a reported non-Muslim remark that if a Muslim had rammed into a church, the media would have discussed, or aired, the story for a lot longer.

Life stages and the media.

Participant 7 also observed that the impact of news also differs in relation to what stage of life one is in:

When I was young. I really didn't really watch the news. I didn't know what was going on. But now that I am older, and I know more, and I have kids, it really does affect me.

Timing of broadcast.

Participant 1 noted the importance of the timing of press releases. Regarding the article that depicted the story about the Muslim woman in Montreal feeding about 300 homeless people:

Because it was during the month of Ramadan, which is, you know, one of the Islamic calendar's holiest month, and a lot of people are meeting for communal feasts during their day. So as Canadians, you know, we see each other a lot, during that feast and that was something, it was almost like a conversational piece.

Hence, Participant 1 felt that the article would not have been as talked about or appreciated had the news piece not been shared during the month of Ramadan.

Politicians should publicly reassure targeted minorities as soon as social tensions are known, not just address issues after the fact. In Participant 6's view, when political leaders know that there will be a public event that will negatively target minority groups, government officials should voice their thoughts on the issue before the event:

Why is that we heard these statements [about the rally from politicians] after all these rallies happened? Why not some concrete statements before?

Hence, participant 6 felt that the timing when politicians deliberate on issues can influence how people think about matters and how they respond to them. Overall, these two examples show that some participants feel that the timing stories are released to the public matters, influences people's emotions and response.

Media views change over time.

Participant 1 suggests that the media changes over time. In his perspective, within the past five years, the Canadian government and Canadian advertisers have progressively increased their recognition of Canada's Muslim population. He felt that Western media, specifically advertisers, has increasingly depicted identifiable Muslims as potential consumers:

I feel like we're showing up in more ads, in more commercials specifically and in more governmental speeches I have heard recently as opposed to five years ago. Less so in the news outlets [less acknowledged in news outlets though]. I feel it is more so in the commercials. Chevy, for example, Apple, stuff like that, so it is more so the corporations.

Participant 1's comments seem to suggest that the media's views, values, and practices do change over time, in this case over the course of five years.

In contrast, Participant 6, seeing changes over time in the media and trying to speed up the process even further, tries to have a part in shaping the way Muslims are portrayed in Canadian media. Participant 6 has been actively trying to change Western

media's narrative of Muslims since viewing their coverage shortly after the attack 9/11. As a member of an activist group in her community, focused on watching media and observing the media's representations of Muslims change from negative depictions to moving to more neutral and then more positive portrayals, and she wants to observe more positive representations of Muslims in her lifetime, so she is taking action trying to ensure that this happens. Overall, both participants acknowledge that the media can be dynamic, and evolve over time.

Voices and the media, as understood by participants.

Two participants remarked that the voices of political leaders are heard more than those of ordinary citizens, and they also carry more weight and influence. Furthermore, participants believe the media are more likely to echo the messages of those with higher social status, such as political leaders, than those by ordinary citizens. As a result, messages articulated by those of higher social status are "heard" more and so have a greater impact. Imparting this view, Participant 10 said, "A person in power has a larger influence and a broader audience". Participant 3 conveyed this same idea with the following remark:

Let us just take what is happening in the South right now, in the States with Donald Trump. So, when you have an individual who is the leader of 300 million people--he represents 300 million people and he is not careful with what he says or what he does. Some of the derogatory terms he uses that kind of makes it okay for other people to do it. And when I see somebody randomly on the streets do it, I'm like okay, he is ignorant, but hopefully he keeps it to himself. When I see a leader of 300 million people do it, I'm like he is ignorant, but he is not keeping it to himself, he is influencing 300 million people.

Participant 3 further elaborated:

A lot of misguided uneducated people, when they look up to their leader, and he says something it will make them more open. The whole world looks at Justin [Trudeau], they are affected, too.

This comment reminds us that these messages are not only seen and heard on a local and national level, but on a global level.

The media's agendas.

Many participants saw the purpose of media headlines as attracting an audience's attention, and sensationalizing news to increase the sales of their products. The media's agenda to sell may also encourage the media's tendencies to focus on sharing negative news stories more than positive ones, because negative news procures more subscriptions than positive news. To some of these participants the media sensationalized more than clarified and educated people, on meanings or definitions of religious and/or cultural uncommon terms. For these participants, with the goal of profit in mind, the media targets heightened the responses of their audience, without encouraging their thinking or further research. In the end, some participants felt that news media were too focused on the profit margin than in delivering quality in-depth news.

Media and the digital age.

Many of the participants acknowledged that the progress of technology increases peoples' access to the media. For example, one participant even used his smart phone to look up the media pieces he was sharing. The prevalence and wide-spread use of personal computers, laptops, and smart phones increase the accessibility and effects of the media.

Participant 6 observed:

These days social media play a much greater role than mainstream media in peoples' lives. Cause people live in social media, they rarely ever pick up the, you know, the remote and turn the TV on. Most people don't even have TVs in their houses, you know, they just live with their laptops.

Social media was one way that one participant and her social activist group developed relations with local journalists. Two participants also noted that including social media can highlight views supporting Muslims. On the other hand, one participant also conveyed that she felt that not enough was being done to regulate hate speech present in social media. Social media forums that encourage discrimination against Muslims can cause serious harm.

Summary

While some participants view Western mainstream media as influential of their sense of belonging, others do not. The media provoke some of them to communicate directly with journalists or create their own media space in the process. For others, negative news of Muslims in violent acts could lead them to withdraw and isolate themselves from interacting with others. People can also be affected differently by news pieces depending on what stage of life they are in. This may be due to people's different life stages potentially affecting people's interpretations due to changing perceptions and what people focus on in the news.

The timing of when news is shared also matters, as it affects how it impacts its audience. In addition, the duration and attention given to an issue potentially suggests its importance in the eyes of the public. Unsurprisingly, participants observed that Western mainstream media is constantly changing and evolving. In a digital age, the internet and social media platforms exert pressure on mainstream media as they give the audience a chance to talk back.

The media has the power to choose whom they represent and how they represent them. Participants observed the leaders and upper-class people seem to have more of a voice in the media. The media's agenda was thought to be biased by its commercial

motives, such as selling their subscriptions, thus, according to some participants, seem to favour sensationalism rather than education.

Predominant Media Portrayals of Muslims

When participants were asked whether they saw Western mainstream media news as predominantly representing Muslims as positive, negative, or neutral, Participant 1 indicated that it was evolving, from mainly negative representations to neutral. Participant 2 felt that it depended on whether the journalist had an agenda. Participant 3, 4 and 5 felt that media reports more often negatively represented Muslims. Participant 6 felt that local Canadian media tended to positively portray Muslims, while international Western media news tended to negatively depict Muslims. Participant 7 felt that Western media generally represent Muslims negatively, and that the media needs to present more positive news. Participant 8 believed that Canadian news represents Muslims in a neutral light, although other Western news negatively portray Muslims. Participants 9 and 10 also felt that Western media is more disposed to negatively represent Muslims. In summary, six out of 10 participants felt that Western mainstream media tended to negatively portray Muslims.

Table 5. How participants feel the media tends to represent Muslims

Male Participants	How do participants feel the media tends to represent Muslims?	Female Participants	How do participants feel the media tends to represent Muslims?
Participant 1	Neutrally	Participant 6	Local media, positively, whereas national and international media tends to represent Muslims negatively.

Participant 2	Depends. Biasedly if a political agenda exists.	Participant 7	Negatively
Participant 3	Negatively	Participant 8	Neutrally
Participant 4	Negatively	Participant 9	Negatively
Participant 5	Negatively	Participant 10	Negatively

How Media Depicts Muslims: Why It Matters

Muslims are Canadians

Nine of the ten participants had the stance that people living in Canada should care about how the Canadian mainstream media represent Muslims. One of the most powerful statements on this point came from Participant 6, as she answered the question “Why do you think Canadians should care about how the media represents Muslims?”:

Because Muslims are Canadians, and Canadians are Muslims. So, issues that are Muslim issues are Canadian issues, too. For us to live in peace and harmony we have to appreciate each other’s diversity, you have stand up for each other. If you don’t stand up for us, next thing you know there might be a time they come for you. You will always belong to a group that is a minority in some way or the other, you know. So, even if you are a white Canadian belong to a group that might get persecuted. So, it is important to stand up and call out the media if they are portraying a community negatively because it has very real consequences for Canadians in general.

Participant 6 pointed out, for those Muslims living in Canada, Muslim problems are Canadian concerns, and sometimes Canadian matters are Muslim issues, and it should be framed as such by the media.

Media Affects Health and Performance

Another powerful response with regard to why participants feel that non-Muslims in Canada should care about how Western media depicts Muslims comes from Participant

5. He expressed the potential impact the media may have if it is not caring about how they are representing Muslims:

Medically, if people get a hate crime, they get anxiety and depression. That affects their medical, mental, and physical health. Like they eat too much or too less, they get anorexia, they get obese, they get mentally unstable, they get anxiety.... And they're not able to perform, to get their degrees, or to do their work, etcetera....

He expressed the potential impact of the media on increasing hate crimes. An increase in hate crimes would also likely increase Muslims' levels of anxiety and depression, which negatively impacts their mental and physical health and their performance at school or work.

Media Shapes Canada's Multiculturalism

The media plays an important role in shaping Canada's multiculturalism.

Participant 6 shared her perspective on this:

The media has a huge role in supporting multiculturalism [and] the way you tell your story and the way you perceive your community does not always come directly by interacting with your community, it comes from you seeing articles in the media, whether it is you being a Muslim who is seeing it, or somebody who is a non-Muslim, everybody is getting their information from the media. So yes, it's a huge, you know, especially for the non-Muslims who do not have an idea about Muslims and Islam as much, for them it is even more important because that is their only source of information about this demographic.

In short, Participant 6 pointed out that for some people, the news is the only way non-Muslim Canadians learn about those outside their peer group, hence it plays a big role in supporting multiculturalism as it affects inter-group relations and perceptions.

Participant 7 recalled that one non-mainstream media piece endorsed the idea that Canadians should talk to their children about a violent Muslim attack. Additionally, a mainstream source encouraged parents to talk to their children about the attack, to prevent misconceptions in children about their Muslim friends. Her view emphasized this idea

that media news reports, by not reminding their audience that most Muslims are against violence and peaceful ordinary citizens, can instil in people a fear of others: “Is he now going to have fear about that child, this friend, who he never considered anything of it?”

Overall, it appears that nine of the ten participants felt that the Canadian public should care about how Western mainstream media portray Muslims. The reasons shared by participants include three ideas. First, if Western mainstream media are biasedly reporting on one group of people, it may also be untruthfully reporting on other groups of people. Second, if mainstream media negatively represent Muslims, it may negatively influence the mental health of some Muslims, particularly those who feel that they have been discriminated against for being Muslim, and/or those with pre-existing mental health issues. Third, for some non-Muslims, negative portrayals of Muslims in the media may augment the negative bias about Muslims. The negative portrayals of Muslims could affect inter-group relations in Canada and the development of its multiculturalism. The media has a relationship with its audience, and the media influences social relations people have with each other. All of these points reflect how participants deem it extremely vital for Western mainstream media to be conscientious in terms of how, when, and why they represent Muslims.

Media and the Construction of Identity

The participants’ data indicated that how the media represents individuals can affect how they feel about themselves, especially when the protagonist in the news mirrors their identity. Participants thought that positive portrayals of them in the media would engender a greater sense of pride. A homogeneous portrayal of Muslims in the media upsets them and results in them feeling less accepted in Canadian society. Muslims are not a homogenous group, as they come from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds

and do not all hold the same values and beliefs as one another. Depicting Muslims as having the same values and beliefs on most matters is an inaccurate portrayal of Muslims. News pieces that homogenize or stereotype Muslims create a sense of dissonance in them as to who they are.

Relationships and the Media

The media have a relationship with their audience but also create social relationships among people. Participants' comments point to a ripple effect in that the news often does become part of people's everyday conversations, which also happens in social media. Neutral, positive, or negative news stir up different types of conversations that Muslims may want to initiate, join in or avoid. One participant felt that Muslim community leaders should initiate and develop relationships with local reporters. This participant thought that journalists should seek relationships with the ethnic communities that they will be representing, to enable them to provide a more accurate representation of these communities, including Muslim ones. A further ripple effect occurs when people choose to become more withdrawn due to their fear of the negative views they thought others have of them.

Trust is an especially important element of relationships. Three out of the ten participants expressed distrust of the media. One participant expressed her belief that the Muslim community does not trust the media. Comments by participants on the media pieces reported earlier showed the elements that reduce trust and elements that increase trust.

Comparing Interview Themes to Media Pieces Themes

The participants' answers to the interview questions were largely congruent with their comments on the media pieces, with a few notable contradictions. Participant 8 first said, "Canada is very neutral" in the media comments but later said, "I feel like Muslims are targeted ... anything goes bad, blame it on Muslims." When she said this, she was perhaps referring to American media, though this was not clarified. Another example of contradiction was when Participant 9 suggested that the media can put her in a "mood" sometimes but at the same time claimed that she is not "bugged" by what the media portrayed. Both Participants 4 and 7 suggested that Western media are good when it comes to supporting multiculturalism but not good when comes to representing Islam.

Summary

Although the media is powerful, the media's audience has its own power, which includes choosing whether to engage with the media at all. When participants do engage with the media, they can decide whether they do so passively or actively. For example, people can decide which media outlets they want to engage with, that is, which channels or social media sites they want to interact with. People can also opt to do further research for themselves on topics that interest them. Media consumers can also consider whether they wish to directly communicate with local reporters, if they want to write a letter to a media station or start a discussion on social media. These actions have some significant checks and balances on Western mainstream media.

Media views may change and evolve over time—one participant felt that Western mainstream media are changing from tending to negatively represent Muslims to now becoming more disposed toward neutrally depicting Muslims. Six participants felt that

Western mainstream media tended to negatively represent Muslims, although less so in Canadian media.

Media and Other Influences of Belonging

As far as the participants' sense of belonging to Canada, they were asked to indicate it on a piece of paper using a Likert scale, ranging from 1-7, what they felt was their sense of belonging to Canada, with 1= strongly unattached; 4 = neutral; 7 = very strong.

Sense of Belonging

Table 6. How participants ranked their sense of belonging to Canada

Male Participants	"Sense of belonging in Canada 1- I feel I have a/an X sense of belonging in Canada.	Female Participants	"Sense of belonging in Canada 1- I feel I have a/an X sense of belonging in Canada.
	7 = Very strong		7 = Very strong
	6 = Strong		6 = Strong
	5= Moderate		5= Moderate
	4= Undecided		4= Undecided
	3= Somewhat unattached		3= Somewhat unattached
	2= Unattached		2= Unattached
	1= Strongly unattached		1= Strongly unattached
Participant 1	6	Participant 6	6
Participant 2	6	Participant 7	6
Participant 3	3	Participant 8	5
Participant 4	7	Participant 9	5
Participant 5	7	Participant 10	6

*Average sense of belonging among all participants was 5.7, indicating on average participants had a moderate to strong sense of belonging.

The chart above shows that two participants have a very strong sense of belonging, five have a strong sense of belonging, two have a moderate sense of belonging to Canada, while one has a low sense of belonging.

Those with a moderate or low sense of belonging to Canada felt the media influences their sense of belonging. In contrast, it seemed that the two participants who indicated a very strong sense of belonging to Canada indicated that the media did not influence them. Hence, it may be that those with a strong sense of self are less likely to feel influenced by the media. Though this may be the case, more research would be needed to confirm this. Moreover, comparing Tables 1 and 6, it seems that out of the ten participants, two participants who expressed a high level of attachment to Canada had completed the highest level of education among all participants. Grouping subsets, with those participants with a high school diploma and some college/university credit into one subset, and those with bachelors degrees into another, and those with a masters degree or higher as a third subset, it was found that those with the lowest education tended to have the lowest sense of belonging, with an average sense of belonging of about a 4.7 or moderate sense of belonging. Conversely, those with a bachelors or higher tended to rank their sense of belonging as 6, have a strong sense of belonging. It would be interesting to confirm whether a potential correlation between a person's education and/or social-economic status and their sense of belonging may be stronger than a possible correlation between what the media represents and a person's sense of belonging. Finally, on average, male participants had a sense of belonging of 5.8 on the ranking scale, whereas females had an average of 5.6, thus gender does not appear to be a significant factor as far as the attachment people have for a country.

Media Influence on Feelings of Belonging

Seven participants acknowledged that media played a role in shaping their sense of belonging. For example, for Participant 6 media play a significant role in positively shaping her sense of belonging, as she “wanted to change [the] narrative,” of Western media when it came to their depiction of Muslims, and, within a group, can engage with local media and change some of these narratives. Media, or rather her reaction to them, have increased her sense of belonging. Participant 1’s sense of belonging, on the other hand, comes from seeing Muslims portrayed as consumers in ads, and positively recognized in government speeches. Participant 3 feels the media play a role in shaping his belonging as he feels “media [negatively] influences peoples’ demeanours” toward Muslims so he does not always feel welcome. Participant 9 suggests that media influence her life as she suggests that reading some Western media pieces can get her in a “mood.” That said, Participant 9 also shared her perception of Canada, expressing that, “at the end of the day, this is one of the very few places on earth where the political system works, law, informants, enforcement works—we are not under a dictatorship.” In Canada, she said she does not have to worry too much about what others think about her. She felt she was not powerless and could stand up for herself if she felt she needed to. The media are not the only factor impacting her feelings of belonging, in that she can “push back” on all the bad press.

For some, although the media still has a role, they only somewhat influence their sense of belonging. For example, Participant 2 states, “there is life beyond the media” but feels “more Canadian” when Canadian media are objective, and everyone’s voice is heard. Another example comes from Participant 7, who suggests that the media changed from not bothering her when she was younger but are affecting her a little more as time

goes on. As she says, “it never used to hit home but now it’s causing me more anxiety.”

Similarly, Participant 8 communicates that the beliefs of non-Muslims have become more influenced by the media than before:

Their beliefs and their opinion about your beliefs and they’re not quick to tell you; they are very quick to tell you the truth about how they feel. And that is a lot to do with the media and how people now behave. I guess it definitely does affect in how I feel like living here in this country.

Three participants indicated the media have no influence on their sense of belonging. Asked whether “the media influences [his] sense of belonging, Participant 4 says, “No.” Participant 5 says, “Media doesn’t play a role in my sense of belonging,” and Participant 10 says, “I don’t watch news much.”

Social Factors Influencing Belonging

Participant 1’s interactions with those in his community significantly contribute to his sense of belonging. Participant 6’s sense of belonging comes from being a productive member of society, raising a child and participating in life in Canada, in its institutions: workplaces and schools, for example, and feeling welcome, even as a person who is part of an activist group. Participant 2’s belonging comes from feeling that everyone is welcome here, and that Canada is a “welcoming society.” Participant 4’s very strong sense of belonging to Canada comes from feeling that Canada states and espouses the values of “equality, equity, and justice.” Participant 7’s sense of belonging is from feeling part of her community, her interaction with others in society and the respect she receives from those in her community. Participant 5’s very strong sense of belonging is from feeling welcome and respected. Participant 10’s sense of belonging comes from being valued for her abilities at university and now at her workplace.

Three participants have a moderate or a somewhat unattached sense of belonging to Canada. Participant 3's "somewhat unattached" sense of belonging comes from feeling unwelcome and believes that media negatively affect peoples' behaviours toward him. In his views these behaviours, "Could be coming from ... some be some random person at a coffee shop ... [or from] a friend of a friend, just not feeling welcome". Participant 8, who grew up here, and Participant 9, who recently moved to Canada, indicate their feelings come from their superficial social interactions as well as interactions at the workplace.

These findings also suggest that those with a stronger sense of belonging can differentiate and distinguish themselves how Muslims are represented in the media, even when Muslims are depicted in a negative light. More research would be needed to substantiate this view. Importantly, it seems that everyday social interactions and workplace interactions people have with one another are a significant factor in relation to how strongly people feel they belong.

Summary

These results seem to infer that Muslim immigrants' sense of belonging is significantly more influenced by their relationships with others than by what Western mainstream media represents. Although for most of the participants the media do play a role in shaping their sense of belonging in Canada, they are not the only determining factor. Their social interactions with others and the respect others show them also influence their sense of belonging. Their participation in Canada's institutions, such as its schools and workplaces also increase their sense of belonging. A few alluded to the values and policies of Canada to bolster their sense of belonging. Living in a democratic

society where Muslims can have a voice gives them a sense of agency in countering negative portrayals of them in the media.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to answer the following research questions: (1) *How do Muslim immigrant adults, who have lived in Canada for two years or more, interpret the Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims?* and (2) *How do they perceive these representations as affecting their social integration?* To answer these questions, I interviewed 10 Muslim immigrant adults, five males and five females, who have lived in Canada for at least two years. In conducting these interviews, this researcher gained greater insight as to how Muslim immigrants in Canada classify the Western mainstream media pieces they selected and how they felt about the media pieces and why.

In this section, I discuss the findings in relation to the literature. Then the implications, trustworthiness, strengths, and limitations of this study are considered. Finally, recommendations for the need for further research are provided.

The Media, Social Integration and Mental Health

All participants believe the media affect people's feelings. This view of the press influencing people's emotions is backed by Berkman, Glass, Brissette, and Seeman (2000), who infer that the media, mirroring the values of macrostructures, along with their own, and sharing tragic stories, affect people's norms and values, relationships, and feelings. Furthermore, McNaughton-cassill (2001) learned that the media affects people's emotional states of anxiety and depression in complex ways although it has not yet been empirically demonstrated that the media directly leads to depression. Perhaps, though not explicitly shown in this research, depression was more likely to emerge if the news people are exposed to caused them anxiety.

Bilodeau, White, Turgeon, and Henderson (2018) argue that belonging is a "feeling of being attached and feeling of being accepted" (p. 2). Some participants

interviewed think Western mainstream media (e.g., Canadian media) shapes their sense of belonging to Canada. Some also feel that Western mainstream media, through a ripple effect, affect social relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. This finding implies that the media has a ripple effect shaping conversations in constructing perceptions and identities. What the media portrays becomes a part of everyday conversations (Philo, 1990). Dialogues people have shape people's worldviews (Rahman, 2018) and behaviours, which in turn influence people's emotions, and their sense of belonging and feelings, and social integration. These conversations also influence the reception of the larger society to an ethnic or religious group. For example, Ahmed (2017) observed that meaningful talks with Muslims reduced prejudice against Muslims.

The ripple effects of the media illustrate the theory of social constructivism. It shows that we develop and add on to our knowledge through our interactions with others, such as our family, teachers, and peers (Amineh & Asl, 2015). These social exchanges where learning takes place occur in conversations, interviews, and other social narratives and rituals occurring in public spaces (Bandura, 2001; Philo, 1990), hence the media can be a catalyst in these social processes. Within these conversations are often an exchange of ideas, which can alter people's views or solidify them. These modified views can aid to broaden people's outlooks and increase their acceptance of others, or it can further cement the pre-existing values they hold, acting in accordance to their beliefs, impacting the social climate around them. Muslim immigrants see themselves mirrored by the media; it affects how they feel, how they see themselves, and how they think others view them. Their belief about how others view them alters how they behave around others, and, in response, how others act toward them, which can affect their emotions, and

thereby their mental health. Thus, the media has complex effects on immigrants' relationship with themselves and the larger society.

Berkman et al. (2000), claimed the media can alter people's emotions in two ways. First, a person could be directly emotionally impacted by something they observed in the media. For example, a person could feel immense pride seeing news recognizing a leader who mirrors part of their identity for their positive words or actions. Or, a person could feel great discomfort and shame viewing news recognizing a leader who mirrors part of their identity for their negative words or actions. Second, news can become a part of people's everyday talks. This idea that the media, being a part of people's everyday conversations can alter people's worldviews is upheld by Kaul (2012) who said, "For many decades, media... [has] contributed substantially to our general knowledge of international conditions and processes. The media is at the heart of cultural, social, political and economic events throughout the world" (p. 2). Our views shape our attitudes, our conversations, and our deeds. They affect our interactions and relationships, which can also indirectly affect people's feelings. Some participants asserted that the media can impact how they see themselves and others, and how they feel others view them (Bandura, 2001). The findings from this study showed that the media is akin to a mirror, in impacting how people perceive themselves, others, and how they believe others regard them. This in turn can influence people's emotions and their sense of belonging.

Through affecting people's emotions, the media directly or indirectly affect people's mental health (Berkman et al., 2000). For example, the press often demonstrating religious prejudice against Muslims or negatively representing Muslims can evoke internalized-Islamophobia. This can lead Muslims to feel ashamed of their religion and create feelings of resentment towards their own group. Internalized-

Islamophobia can cause “Muslims [to] blame their own communities for exacerbating and inflaming Islamophobia” (Abdel-Fatah, 2017, p. 410), devaluing their self-worth because of their religious background (Abdel-Fatah, 2017). Islamophobia can be spread through macro organizations, such as the media, and social media, through what they communicate. This can damage people’s physical and mental health through various pathways: “cognitive and emotional states such as self-esteem, social competence, self-efficacy, depression, affect, ... and stress responses” (Berkman et al., 2000, p. 850). The literature on the media and its impact on mental health of immigrants concur with the findings of this study.

There are two examples of this. First, one participant talked about a news item in which the Alberta’s premier expressed her view on Quebec’s bill 62 the banning of facial coverings such as the burka or niqab, and how both she and premier had the same views on the subject, and both found the law to be Islamophobic. This participant then said that if these were the types of laws and ideals applied throughout Canada and echoed by the Canadian press, she would feel less welcome here, which could be seen as a stress response and potentially lead to depression. Second, another participant talked about an article he labeled as Islamophobic, as he identified the journalist making inaccurate remarks about Muslim immigrants. He said that if he often saw many articles like this one, making erroneous comments about Islam and/or Muslims, he may want to isolate himself, which, as Berkman et al. (2000) argue, could harm his mental health.

Good relationships can benefit people’s mental health. Participants indicated that their social interactions, their relationships with others, and their participation in Canada’s institutions, such as its schools and workplaces, play a large role in influencing their sense of belonging and their feelings around integration. Although the media are powerful, the

relationships Muslim participants have seemed to affect their sense of belonging more than the media. This finding agrees with Kazemipur (2014), who inferred that one of the two key factors, which does not include the media, that most affects Canadian Muslim immigrant lives are social factors. These can include the relationships people have with each other, ranging from family relationships to those outside the family, for example connections one has with neighbours, friends, work colleagues, and peers.

Brown et al.'s (2015) research reported that the social climate described by Muslim students they interviewed in the United Kingdom potentially compromised their well-being. Stets and Burke (2000) observe that increase in self-worth that accompanies a group-based identity, comes not simply from the act of identifying with the group, but from the group's acceptance of the individual as a member. Hence, Western mainstream media can and should create a social climate that is conducive or otherwise to social integration and well-being of Muslims.

Participants' Categorization of Positive, Neutral, and Negative News

Media pieces labeled as positive show Muslims exhibiting acts of kindness, generosity, courage, fairness, and rebuking terrorist violence, and thereby humanizing Muslims. Others portrayed political leaders and organizations showing their support for Muslims, while others gave a voice to Muslims. Some of the news types labeled by participants as positively representing Muslims were those thought to reflect truthful information about Muslims. Other news types categorized by participants as positively representing Muslims were perceived to inform others about Islam and Muslims. None of these types of news pieces discouraged dialogue between non-Muslims and Muslims, nor did they increase existing tensions between Muslims and non-Muslim. For example, von Sikorski, Schmuck Matthes, and Binder (2017) discovered that press pieces that

differentiated between Muslims and Muslim terrorists, such as reports on Muslims condemning violence, did not increase tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims. In this researcher's opinion, this is because it does not add support to the perception that Islam promotes violence, so does not spread Islamophobia. Positive media pieces do not promote the view that Muslims are the "other," nor do they share hostile feelings toward Muslims. Media pieces that stress the humanistic side of Muslims through educational reports, stressing the positive contributions of Muslims, and showing those who showed support for Muslims and Islam do not increase people's anxieties about interacting with them. For participants, the reports they labeled as positive foster feelings of healing, positivity, comfort, good, joy, happiness, gladness, empowerment, and increased feelings of belonging and trust in the media. They also inferred that these types of media items increased Muslim immigrants' feelings of pride, confidence, happiness, self-esteem.

Literature shows that the types of news that elicit these emotions, "positive media pieces," do not harm people's mental health (Berkman et al., 2006) or performance (DeGarmo & Martinez, Jr., 2006). Hernández, Robins, Widaman, Conger, and Dubow (2017) inform us that students having an increased sense of ethnic pride have an increased sense of belonging in their school. Neumann, Arendt, and Baugut (2018) note that Muslims felt that stories representing Muslims positively contributing to society was rarely represented by Western mainstream media, and that reporters should put more effort into finding these types of stories and sharing them with the public.

Neutral media selected by participants include a debate about a contentious term, informational pieces of Muslims, the leader of a country who endorses the acceptance of Muslims and Islam, and a successful refugee Muslim businessperson. Accurate depictions of Muslims are also labelled as neutral media items. Much of the news seen as neutral are

those, in their views, that fall within what Dawish (2010) defined to be neutrality, “the absence of declared bias and taking sides” (p. 38).

Negative media pieces chosen by participants are those representing Muslims in terrorist acts, violent acts, or misogyny. The media’s association of Islam with terrorism or violence upsets many Muslims (Brown et al., 2015; Ewart, Cherney, & Murphy, 2017). Muslim immigrant participants viewed media pieces without context or missing critical information as negative. This agrees with Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy’s (2017) who observed that Muslims thought that Western mainstream media was often not a good source of knowledge when it comes to learning about Islam or Muslims. For some Muslim immigrants in Canada, these types of news diminish their sense of belonging, and have them feel sadness, fear, disgust, disappointment, hurt, upset, and discouragement.

News labeled as negative by participants discourage dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. For example, when Muslims see Western news of violent Muslims, they try to avoid non-Muslims. On the other hand, some non-Muslims may use reports negatively depicting Muslims to “justify” their dislike and fear of Muslims. Slater’s (2007) reinforcing spiral theory backs this view. He infers that people are attracted to news on topics that interest them, and these items of interest can back or refute their ideas on a subject. If a media piece contradicts their beliefs, they may search for other sources of information to ratify their theories. If it backs their views, they may use that media item to rationalize, justify, and hold on to their preconceived notions.

There were two types of news items participants believe could create a backlash (ranging from avoiding interactions with Muslims to performing a violent act against a Muslim). One of the types of stories are those that depict violent Muslims without reminding the public that most Muslims are peaceful, and the other type of stories are

those that inaccurately represent Muslims. Saeed (2007) sees that a backlash often occurs when non-Muslims see Muslims as the “other,” as outsiders who do not belong, with the concept of “others” and of us versus them. Tamborini, Hofer, Prabhu, Grall, Novotny, Hahn and Klebig (2017) showed that seeing news of terrorist attacks implemented by Muslims increased non-Muslims discrimination toward identifiable Muslim and Muslim organizations. Vucetic (2016) noted that Western media tended to show Muslims as the “other”.

Effects of Media on Identity

News conveys images of people, and these portrayals are then ingested and interpreted by the audience. The findings suggested it could give people a sense of pride to observe reports positively praising a person who mirrors a significant part of their identity, for something good this person said or did. It also gave one a sense of shame or guilt to see news of someone who matches one’s religious, ethnic, or cultural identity for having done or said something harmful.

We learn about ourselves through comparison (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (2001) and Hogg and Abrams (1988) averred: “The two important processes involved in social identity formation ... is ...self-categorization and social comparison” (p. 225). Bandura (2001) discussed how the media shape people’s worldviews, but the extent varies. Reasons for these differences could include how often a person engages with the media, how closely a person relates to the individual(s) shown by the media, when news is shared, when a person sees a news piece, what leaders of communities or countries say in the media’s eye, and a person’s vulnerability.

Participants have differing opinions as to whether the media affected them. However, all agreed that the media are powerful. The media’s potential to influence

depended on various factors, such as a person's mental health (Berkman et al., 2000) and vulnerability (Slater, 2007). A person's sense of self-worth and vulnerability may be tied to their socio-economic status. For example, the findings showed that those with educational levels below a bachelor's averaged a moderate sense of belonging, while those with a bachelors or higher level of education tended to rank themselves as having strong sense of belonging. This result inferred that Canadian Muslim immigrants' education level and socio-economic status may be related to their sense of identity and the degree to which they can distinguish themselves from Muslims shown in the media.

Media Reporting

According to Odartey-Wellington (2009), Smolash (2009), and Ewart and Pearson (2018), journalists need to be careful about the language they use, and to make sure the pictures matched their stories. Participants made a strong plea for reporters to describe people as truthfully, objectively, and appropriately as possible. They desired access to accurate factual information from the news, and that truth and objectivity should be the aims of journalists. Access to factual and accurate information from the news is a right of the people, and it is vital. People make choices based on media information and inaccurate news can have people make bad decisions (Nairn et al. 2006; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Scammell, 2000).

Some participants feel the media has agendas and sensationalizes the news. The idea that media have agendas was proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972). Two participants, concurring with the literature (Fleras, 2011), feel headlines are there to attract the attention of as many people as possible, to increase viewership and sales of their products. Participants also feel the media think negative news sells more than positive news. Bandura (2001) suggests the media dramatizes news to increase the

chances people will recall the stories. In sensationalizing news, reporters may compromise their integrity and fail to share meaningful knowledge. Moreover, Itaoui and Dunn (2017) found that the media's focus on events that negatively portray Muslims has the effect of spreading Islamophobia. Newman and Fletcher (2017) noted that some people distrust the media because of the belief that media companies are distorting or exaggerating the news to make money.

Reporters representing news objectively increase the trust of the public. Transparency regarding the purpose of writing on the subject, its context, and significance, and the limitations of one's knowledge helps in this process (Newman & Fletcher, 2017). The Canadian Association of Journalists states that accuracy is a vital part of media ethic and "...should not be compromised, even by pressing deadlines..." (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2018). Recommending accurate and meaningful news, two participants stress that they want journalists to show a multiplicity of views when feasible. This concurs with Sharify-Funk (2009), who observed that the media often presents polarized views, which leads its audience to being less informed as they miss hearing moderate views and so are unable to garner as much meaningful information.

Journalists who take the effort to do in-depth research and share their education improve the meaningfulness of the news they represent. To advance this idea of meaningful and accurate news, some participants want reporters to educate the public on non-mainstream words, such as jihad, to differentiate between cultural, religious values and extremism, and to distinguish Muslim extremists from the general Muslim population. This agrees with von Sikorski, Schmuck Matthes, and Binder (2017), who discovered that news distinguishing between Muslims and Muslim terrorists had no impact on people's fear of terrorism, while news that did not discriminate between

Muslims and Muslim terrorists did. They also felt that differentiating between the two different populations might go long way to help to not increase the feelings of fear some people may have of Muslims and Islamophobia. This demand for differentiation also matches a finding in Brown et al.'s (2015) study, in which Muslim students reject a homogenization of Muslims portrayed by Western media.

Relationships with the Media

People have relationships with each other and with the media, and the media have one with their audience. Some participants wanted reporters to have stronger and more meaningful ties with the communities they represent, reflecting the view of Elmarsy, as echoed by Sharify-Funk (2009). They also want Muslims to engage with the media, to have relationships with reporters, or to be part of a media's institution. The relationships Muslim immigrants have with the media may be influenced by a range of factors: how people see themselves and others, how they interpret the messages conveyed by the media, their stage in life, and their personal values and perceptions. People's relations with the media are also affected by what public leaders say in the media's eye, and the expectations people have for the media.

One participant felt that she often had to explain Islam, as she believed that Western media did not always do a decent job of representing Islam. This agrees with a finding from Brown et al.'s (2015) study, which stated that Muslim students found themselves in the unexpected position of justifying their faith and lifestyle to others, as well as correcting misperceptions promulgated by the media. Sharify-Funk (2009) also noted that Canadian Muslims often find themselves deprived of an authentic voice in media conversations and are forced to defend their identities in response to the media messages they hear and see.

Two other participants thought forging relations with local reporters was vital to evoke social change. This view was stressed by Bulluck and Jafri (2000), who aimed to improve Muslim women's media literacy and advocacy skills. Nearly everyone in their focus group felt that only hard work made a difference, e.g., sharing media literacy skills, activism, such as writing letters and making connections with journalists, and encouraging Muslims to become reporters.

Two participants found that the media privilege the voices of those in positions of authority over those of ordinary citizens. This agrees with Bourk (2010) and Smolash (2009), who purport that reporters listen to those in positions of authority more than ordinary citizens, and those in position of authority often echo the views of mainstream culture. It would put reporters in a difficult position if they were shown to be critiquing mainstream culture and running contrary to dominant views (Sealy, 2017).

Many participants wanted non-Muslims to know what Islam and Muslims are about. They wanted reporters to teach the public about Islam and Muslims. Ewart and Pearson (2018) also noted that some Muslims wanted to inform the public about Islam and Muslims. One participant averred that for some people the news is how they learn about those outside their peer group, ergo news has a big role to play in the acceptance of others different from themselves and diversity in general. As Philo (1990) infers, when a person has no direct knowledge of events and uses no alternative source of information, the media can have a potent effect on their beliefs. Stonebank (2010) agreed that for non-Muslims who do not have knowledge about Islam, or Muslims, or have relations with Muslims, the media are the primary source for knowledge on Muslims and Islam in the West. Tamborini, Hofer, Prabhu, Grall, Novotny, Hahn and Klebig (2017) illustrated that seeing reports of terrorist attacks done by Muslims ebbed prosocial behaviours and

heightened prejudice toward Muslim outfits and Muslims in Western countries.

Technological advances, such as laptops and smartphones, now facilitate the medias and social media platforms, make it easier for people to engage with the media (Newman, 2011; Sutton et al., 2008). The public's increased ability to "converse" with the media will likely affect mainstream news, the stories it opts to share, and how they depict them.

Some participants believe the media mold people's views. This view is backed by the central principle behind cultivation theory and the "drip drip drip effect" (Brechman, 2010; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; O'Neil, Simon, & Haydon, 2015). As such, some Muslims are troubled because they feel that the media often negatively portrays Muslims, and this worries them as they do not want non-Muslims to be ill-informed about Muslims and Islam by the news, and as a result fear Muslims and have a negative social climate to emerge. They want to have positive relations with the non-Muslims in their communities. So, some participants acted or pondered acting to disempower a negative social climate. Two participants even considered informally teaching others about Islam. One had no set plan while the other was imagining doing it at arranged public city-permitted times and places. Akter's (2010) study illustrates that some Muslims felt the need to teach others. Her study was about Muslim women in Newfoundland who did not like how Muslims were shown by Western media after 9/11. They were worried about people discriminating against them, so they chose to educate non-Muslims on their religious beliefs and viewpoints, solidifying their belonging within the community. Interestingly, findings seem to suggest that these Muslim participants also felt that they needed to learn more about themselves as well. They feel this knowledge empowers them on a personal level and in relation to their feelings on social integration. According to Akter's (2010) study

as well, this need not only enlightens them, but better enables them to educate others and socially integrate into society.

One participant felt that she often had to explain Islam, as she believed that Western media did not always do a decent job of representing Islam. This agrees with a finding from Brown et al.'s (2015) study, which stated that Muslim students found themselves in the unexpected position of justifying their faith and lifestyle to others, as well as correcting misperceptions promulgated by the media. Sharify-Funk (2009) also felt that the Western mainstream media should hear more from Muslims themselves, especially on issues around Islam and/or Muslims.

The Social Cost of Negative Media on Muslims

Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy (2017) state that generalizations and stereotypes were problems with mainstream news. This fit with Brown et al. (2015) who observed the U. K. students interviewed spoke of their distress over the misrepresentation of their faith in the media. There were participants in this study who felt Western media sometimes showed Islam as “backward” and “barbaric.” This matched Brown et al.'s (2015) study, where Muslim students said that Western media sometimes depict “Muslim countries as dirty, backward, and uneducated” (p. 53). Stonebanks (2010) purports that when Western media show Islam as inferior to the West as “barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist” (p. 37), it spreads Islamophobia. Furthermore, Steinberg (2010), having examined the media's representations of Muslims, points out that Islamophobia is present in the media, spreading stereotypes, intimating that Muslims are often dark-skinned, hiding among us, so are ‘othered’, evil, backward, and violent. These, and other, negative descriptors attached to Islam and Muslims cause some Muslims to develop a negative self-image, with self-attributions that negatively affect their mental health when internalized.

Some participants thought that Western mainstream news sometimes bore the message that Muslims hate non-Muslims, thereby negatively affecting relations between non-Muslims and Muslims in Canada and pose barriers to integration. For one participant, Western media had negatively affected the views of some non-Muslims such that he did not always feel welcome. Kazemipur (2014), inferred that the media could influence people's thoughts, but the extent is yet to be fully understood. Discrimination and internalized racism in which the media can play a role in promulgating, has social, work and school performance, and health costs.

Speight (2007), who completed a broad literature review on racism, highlights that racism or prejudice that oppresses people because of their ethnicity, harming them mentally, physically, socially, psychologically, spiritually, and economically. The same applies to Islamophobia, except in this case it is oppressing people because of their religion. The same applies to Islamophobia. Some of the many consequences of internalized racism include a significantly increased risk of diabetes, tuberculosis, heart disease, hypertension, long-term disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, and death (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). Kirmayer et al. (2003) finds that internalized racism contributes to increased chances of poor physical and mental health.

DeGarmo and Martinez, Jr. (2006) find prejudice is linked to lower grades, or academic performance. Hence, what they found was that discrimination, if it is linked to poor performance, negatively influences people's future careers and/or opportunities for advancement. Nairn et al. (2006) and Hyman (2009) show that prejudice harms people's health. Karlsen and Nazroo (2002) stress that racism and Islamophobia can manifest itself as interpersonal violence, institutional discrimination, or socioeconomic disadvantage, all of which have independent detrimental effects on health. This socioeconomic

disadvantage likely exists for two reasons. One reason can be due to their lower performance in response to prejudice. Another reason can be due to not being hired to a position they are the best fit for because of the bigotry of some employers, as Litchmore and Safdar (2015) cite data from Statistics Canada (2001).

Islamophobia can have some Muslims purposely avoiding engaging with non-Muslims, which increases their isolation and could negatively affect their mental health (Berkman et al., 2000). This was borne out by the reports of two participants who said they may isolate themselves if they see Western news about violent Muslims on a regular basis. Many of the Muslim participants expressed wanting a positive, at least civil, relations with the non-Muslims in their communities. They want positive news related to Muslims and/or Islam to be given the same amount of attention as negative news. Downing and Husband (2005) propose ways reporters may utilize to emphasize their messages. The amount of attention, i.e., how many pages (or space) or how much time, is given to a story is one way to amplify or diminish the power of a message.

Trustworthiness, Strengths and Limitations

My supervisor read my research questions to ensure that that the interview questions were aligned with the aims of the research, and that the language employed was appropriate, accessible, and clear, and the questions flowed in a logical manner. She also read excerpts of my transcripts which increases the trustworthiness of my interpretations.

This is an exploratory qualitative interview study that was limited to a sample of ten participants, thereby limiting its generalizability. A strength of this study is that the same number of men and women were interviewed. This helped to see if there were

any differences in the trends of perspectives due to gender in terms of their choice of media pieces, reactions to the media and sense of belonging.

Another strength of this study is that participants were asked to select the media pieces as a basis for their comments on what they considered positive, negative and neutral media representation of Muslims. The selecting of news items by the participants helped to ground the participants' perceptions and comments on the media in specific examples, and to avoid their comments from being overly general and impressionistic.

Studies interviewing Muslims' views of the media are few in comparison to analysis of media coverage. Studies based on interviews include ones done by Akter (2010) and Brown (2015) of Muslims in Newfoundland, Canada and in the U.K., Ewart and Pearson's (2018) research in Australia, Neumann, Arendt, and Baugut's (2018) in Germany, and Alencar's (2018) in the Netherlands, the last of which focused on social media. None of the foregoing studies considered how Canadian Muslim immigrants living in Western Canada perceived Western mainstream media, and how they believed it influenced their integration, hence the contribution of this research.

Recommendations for Further Research

Findings from this exploratory study could form the basis for future larger-scale study such as a quantitative survey, to learn about what demographic factors influence Muslim Canadians' reactions to Western mainstream media and how they are impacted by Western mainstream media. This study suggests that Canadian Muslim immigrant adults who have a strong sense of identity are able to differentiate and distinguish themselves from Muslims portrayed in the media. They are significantly less likely to attribute their sense of belonging in direct response to the media's depictions. Muslim immigrants' education level, socio-economic status and mental health status associated

with strength of personal identity, degrees of impact by the media, and levels of belonging to Canada can be researched.

Finally, as the media is powerful, and there is not enough known about the impact of media on people's mental health. The relative contribution of the media in comparison to social interactions and other factors to Muslim immigrants' belonging also offers an interesting avenue for future studies.

Recommendations

This research has three recommendations. The first is to teach media literacy to new immigrants and have them recognize that they can communicate with journalists, informing them that if they do so there will be no infringement on their freedom. The second is for journalists to present their stories in ways that are meaningful and accurate, put the information in its proper context, and give as much coverage to positive news as negative news. Finally, Muslim community leaders would benefit from forming relationships with local reporters and vice versa, to improve understanding of Muslim issues, reduce bias and increase dialogue.

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Appendix A
Consent form

SAMPLE LETTER OF INFORMATION & CONSENT



University of Lethbridge

Study Title: Muslim Immigrants and Western Mainstream Media
Researcher: Michaelle Tuz-Atkinson, M.Sc. student

February 15, 2017

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study to discover how Canadian Muslim immigrant adults view Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how these views compare to the perspectives of non-Muslims.

Who will be eligible for the study?

For Muslim Participants

- Muslim participants would hold Canadian immigrant status

All Participants

- Participants can originate from any country
- Participants need to be able to read and speak in English
- Participants have to be in the age range of 18 to 64.
- Participants need to have lived in Canada for two years or more.

What will you be asked to do?

- You will select 3 Western mainstream media pieces for analysis and discussion.
- We will conduct a 1-2 hr. face-to-face interview to discuss your feelings and interpretations of these media pieces.
- Some basic demographics information will be collected (age, gender, education, years in Canada).

Will you be remunerated for this study?

You will receive a \$20 honorarium right after the face-to-face interview is completed.

How will the findings be used?

The information collected from this study will be presented in a Master's thesis, in addition to other scholarly publications, website posting, and conference presentations.

Will you be able to withdraw from the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you may stop participating at any time without losing any potential benefits to which you are entitled.

Please know that your consent to use this information is entirely confidential. You can revoke your consent at any time up and your data will be removed, unless they have been incorporated into the analysis.

Will your data be confidential?

The information we collect will be kept confidential and only de-identified information will be reported. A code will be used in the place of your real name.

My supervisor may read the written versions of the interviews.

If you are to be quoted it will only be done with your permission.

Quotes or excerpts used will be to increase understanding, and to support the observations made in this study. Data on this study will be password-protected and kept in the researcher's office for a period of 5 years until 2022 at which time they will be destroyed.

Will there be any risks to you taking part in the study?

We do not anticipate that you would experience any distress or discomfort from participation. However, in case you do experience distress or discomfort, attached to the blank copy of the consent form is a list of available counselling services in your area.

If you have any questions about this study, or if you would like to obtain a copy of the research results and publications, please contact

Michaëlle Tuz-Atkinson
Email: michaëlle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
Telephone: (403) 685-3351

Or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Bonnie Lee, Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Lethbridge.
Email: bonnie.lee@uleth.ca
Telephone: (403) 317-5047

Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge
Email: research.services@uleth.ca.
Telephone (403) 329-2747

Page Break

Project: Muslim Immigrants and Western Mainstream Media

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

___ (initial) I have read the Participant Information Letter to this study and understand its contents.

___ (initial) I agree to participate in the study with the terms described in the Information Letter.

(Participant) Printed name:

Date:

(Signature)

I agree to do this interview: (Circle)Yes/No
:

I agree to be recorded during this interview. (Circle)Yes/No

I wish to receive a copy of the findings: (Circle)Yes/No

(Researcher acknowledging and witnessing the above) Printed name: Michaelle Tuz-Atkinson

Date:

(Signature)

Counselor services available in Calgary, AB:

University of Calgary Counselling Services
Room 370
MacEwan Student Centre
2500 University Dr NW,
Calgary T2N 1N4

SAIT Student Development and Counselling Services
Resources in Calgary distress centre – 24/7, free & confidential 403 266-4357 (help)
Some emergency and evening appointments for in-person crisis counselling if needed
distresscentre.com
http://saittrojans.com/documents/2015/1/26//Calgary_Resources_2_Page_Dec_2014.pdf?id=70

211 Alberta – 24/7: Free & confidential referral to community services dial 211
Available in English, Spanish, Punjabi, Russian & Chinese
Inform Alberta, Calgary Street Guide – Web application informalberta.ca
calgarystreetguide.ca

Alberta Mental Health Line 1 877 303-2642 (24/7)

Community Resource Team (CRT) 403 299-9699 (24/7)
Mobile Response Team (MRT) 403 266-4357

Calgary Counselling Agencies and Resources
Alberta Health Services (AHS).
albertahealthservices.ca Click “Find Programs & Services” under “Find Health Care”
Community Mental Health (AHS) 403 955-6200

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre
7th floor, 1213 4 Street SW albertahealthservices.ca
Intake on drop-in basis, daily; some appointments. FREE short-term counselling.
Calgary Counselling Centre 403 265-4980
#200, 940 6 Ave SW Intake 403 691-5991
calgarycounselling.com

Calgary Women’s Health Collective 403 265-9590,
calgarywhc.com

Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association (CIWA) 403 263-4414 Immigrant Services
Calgary 403 265-1120
ciwa-online.com

immigrantservicescalgary.ca

Counselling services available in Lethbridge AB.:

Counselling Services University of Lethbridge
TH218, 4401 University Drive West
Lethbridge AB T1K 3M4
Phone: 403-317-2845
Fax: 403-332-4551

Lethbridge Counselling Services
Counselor
740 4 Ave S
(403) 942-0452
Open until 8:00 PM

Appendix B

The interview questions

The structured part of the interview. All participants were asked the following questions:

These were the introductory questions.

1. How would you rate your sense of belonging? This was asked to find out how integrated in Canada people felt they were.
2. In your opinion what factors contributed to your sense of belonging? This was asked to learn what participants perceived to be and experienced as elements that either increased or decreased their sense of belonging to Canada.
3. Does the media influence your sense of belonging? This was inquired about to find out how powerful people felt the media was in their lives, and if it did influence them, how.
4. Another question that was asked was what do you see as the media's role in supporting multiculturalism? The question was to see what impression participants had of the media, and to subtly bring this idea of the media perhaps having responsibilities toward the forefront of these people's minds.
5. This researcher also inquired as to the media outlets the participant most commonly attained their news from, to learn whether people chose to engage with the news, whether participants chose mainstream sources to attain their news, as well as to find out which specific news outlets participants tended to get their news from.

These were the questions asked about each of the media pieces.

5. In regard to the media pieces themselves, participants were first asked to tell me the name of their media pieces. This was done to clarify which media items were being discussed and to see reactions people had to even the titles themselves.
6. Participants were also asked when they noticed the news report, to see how long it has been since they have observed the media piece, and whether they were still accurately remembering the material.
7. This researcher also inquired as to what participants felt was the central issue(s) or event(s) of the media items. This was asked to understand the participants' perceptions in regard to what they thought of the news pieces.
8. Interviewees were also asked, if it was appropriate in terms of the news item, to describe the behaviours of the Muslims represented in the news reports they were sharing. This was done to discover how participants felt Muslims were being represented in news pieces.
9. Interviewees were also asked, if it was appropriate in terms of the news item, to describe the behaviours of the non-Muslims represented in the news reports they were sharing. Interviewees were to be asked why they felt the event occurred or why was the event discussed, but later this was changed to why do you feel the media published this, which was asked to find out why participant's felt the media took notice of this issue or event or published this.

10. Interviewees were also asked whose voices they heard within the media item. This was done to find out which voices participants recognized as being represented. It was also to provoke the interviewed to think about the idea of who is “speaking” as being a relevant factor to consider when deliberating on a media item, an element that can alter how a matter being represented in a media piece may be understood. Participants were also asked how they felt the central action or issue of the news piece was represent, to discover how they felt about the news item in general.

11. After that, interviewees were to express, when appropriate, how they felt Muslims were represent in the news piece and why, to find out whether they felt the news report represent Muslims in a positive, neutral, or negative light, and why they felt this way.

12. After that, they were to communicate, when appropriate, how they felt non-Muslims were being represented to understand how they saw various people being representing in the media.

13. This researcher also inquired as to whether interviewees had comments and questions for the reporters of the media pieces they have shared. These questions were asked to discover the reactions they had to how the journalists represented these news items, how they felt about the approach these reporters took in terms of representing these topics.

14. This researcher also inquired as to whether seeing these types of news pieces on a frequent and regular basis would affect them, and if so how and whether they lifestyles were affected by them or not. This question, or questions depending, were asked to see if, over time, observing particular types of media items could affect them. This question was inspired by cultivation theory and the drip drip drip effect, which suggests that over time the media can have an impact on peoples’ lives, their worldviews, and perhaps even their lifestyles.

15. Participants were also asked what they felt the media items they chose were important, in an attempt to better understand why they chose these specific media pieces to share with me. At one point they were also asked what their impression of these media items were, but it was found to be repetitive. What their overall impressions of these media reports were also inquired about to discover their overall feelings about the particular media pieces they wanted to talk about.

Summary questions participants were asked.

16. As overall summary questions, participants were asked the following: In your everyday life, do you think most media pieces you encounter about Muslims...are predominantly positive, neutral, negative? This question was to discover whether Muslims felt that media pieces predominately represented Muslims positively, neutrally, or negatively.

17. The Muslims interviewed were also asked, whether they felt people living in Canada should care about how the media represents Muslims? This was to discover their point of view as far as whether they felt Western media was sufficiently influential that the public should care about how a segment of the population was represented by the media.

18. They were also inquired as to whether there was anything else they wanted to say about the media and Muslims? This was to ensure that those interviewed were given a room to tell the researcher anything on the topic they felt needed to be said, to reduce the possibility that important material has been missed.

Questions to find out what participants felt about interview.

19. They were asked about how they felt about this process? This interview’s process.

20. What they felt went well in the interview.

21. What they felt needed to be improved in regard to the interview process.

Appendix C

Ethics Proposal

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW OF HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

The Human Subject Research Committee is mandated by University policy to examine and approve research proposals to ensure that ethical principles and standards respecting the personal welfare and rights of participants have been recognized and accommodated. The Committee follows the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. This Policy Statement is available at: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/resources-ressources/news-nouvelles/nr-cp/2010-12-07/>. Other guidelines may be used when appropriate to the research in question.

You are encouraged to speak with the Office of Research Ethics about any outstanding issues, and seek the advice of the Committee when appropriate.

You are asked to respond to all of the following items and **to submit your application and all supporting documents electronically to Susan Entz, Office of Research Ethics (susan.entz@uleth.ca)**. If possible, please use a different font for your responses, and submit your application as one document including the supporting documentation (e.g. letters of introduction, interview questions, questionnaires, telephone survey scripts, letters of consent, etc.)

The Committee deals with applications as expeditiously as possible. **Please allow up to one month from the date of receipt for Committee review.**

Following approval of your protocol, any changes in procedures relevant to the ethical issues involved in the treatment of human participants are to be reported immediately to the Office of Research Ethics.

If the research involves invasive procedures, a Hazard Assessment Report (available from Risk and Safety Services or on-line at: http://www.uleth.ca/hum/riskandsafetyservices/PDF/HAZARD_ASSESSMENT_FORM.pdf) must be completed and submitted to Risk and Safety Services for approval. Review and approval by the Biosafety Committee may also be required.

SECTION A: GENERAL - This information is collected under the authority of the Alberta Post-secondary Learning Act and will be used for administrative purposes associated with the ethical review of your human participant research protocol. It will be treated in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of Part 2 of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (<http://foip.alberta.ca/legislation/act/index.cfm>). Questions about the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information collected on this form can be directed to Susan Entz, Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4, Phone: (403) 329-2747 and Email: susan.entz@uleth.ca.

A1. Researcher/Applicant Information

Name: Michaelle Tuz-Atkinson
Department: Health Sciences
Telephone Number: (403) 685-3351
Email address: michaelle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

Are you: Faculty Staff Graduate Student

 Undergraduate Student

A2. Co-Investigator's Information

Name:
Department:
Telephone Number
Email address:

Are you: Faculty Staff Graduate Student

 Undergraduate Student

A3. Student Thesis/Project Committee

a) Is this research for an undergraduate or graduate thesis/project? Yes No

b) If yes, please provide the names, departments and phone numbers of your Committee members.

Name:	Department:	Telephone:
1. Supervisor: Dr. Bonnie Lee	Health Sciences Department	(403) 317-5047
2. Dr. Rebecca-Hudson Breen	Health Sciences Department	(403) 394-3946
3. Dr. Abdie Kazemipur	Sociology Department	(403) 329-5132

A4. Title of Project:

Muslim Immigrants and Western Mainstream Media

Indicate the title of your project. If this project is funded, the title should be the same as the title of your funded research.

A5. Location of Research

a) Indicate where the research will be conducted.

The interviews will ideally take place in the study rooms of libraries. However, if this is not convenient for the participant, I will interview that participant in another public place of their suggestions.

b) Does this project involve other centers, jurisdictions or countries? If so, please provide a list of the other groups who will be reviewing this protocol. (For example, the Lethbridge College Research Ethics Board must approve all posters to be posted on their campus.)

As I will be recruiting, and ideally interviewing people at the University of Lethbridge and at the University of Calgary, I intend to attain ethics approvals from both Universities.

A6. Start/End Dates of Research Involving Human Participants

Please state the start and end dates of the research involving human participants. **NOTE: Research involving human participants cannot begin until Human Subject Research Committee approval has been received.**

Start date (dd/mm/yyyy): March 1, 2017

End date (dd/mm/yyyy): March 1, 2018

A7. Funding

a) Is the project funded? Yes No

Funding approved – please specify source(s) :

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Funding pending – please specify source(s):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b) Is the project part of a course? Yes No

Specify the course number and title: HLSC 6000 Master's Thesis

SECTION B: DETAILS ABOUT THE PROJECT

B1. Purpose of Project

Provide a brief and clear statement of the context and objectives of the project, including the key questions and/or hypotheses of the project (in two pages or less).

The media is a social structure that shapes public dialogue (Bauder, 2008), and worldviews (Bandura, 2001). At the same time, one should note that media views are not uniform in their deconstructing and reconstructing of events in their stories, whether condemning or praising particular actions (Bauder, 2008).

The media's role in shaping public perceptions of society is thought to have the same impact as an educator (Bandura, 2001; Van Dijk, 1991). Media can mold the way people see themselves, including the way people see themselves as fitting into society, i.e., their social identities (Bandura, 2001). It can also influence people's understanding around social values and social issues (Lull, 2006; Bandura, 2001).

Through the media's presentation of events, and their 'facilitation' of public discussions on current popular topics (Crespi, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Taylor, 2001; van Dijk, 1991), the media plays an important part in forming the social norms and values of society (Kazemipur, 2014). Hence, the media can exert power to affect people's willingness to integrate into society, and influence social cohesion and acceptance (Bandura, 2001; Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000). Media can promote

healthy societies through fostering a sense of belonging and well-being (Toye, 2007), creating environments of mutual respect, trust, and equality (Spicker, 2014).

Given the differences in power and influence between the media and society's more vulnerable groups like immigrants, learning how Canadian Muslim immigrants appropriate the representations of Muslims constructed by Western mainstream media is important. It will give us insight into what media messages are construed by Muslims as positive, negative or neutral in constructing Muslim immigrant identity and integration into Canadian society. Furthermore, understanding how Muslim immigrants feel about Western mainstream media's portrayals may allow the media to reflect on how they represent Muslim groups in the news.

This qualitative descriptive study aims to discover how Muslim immigrant adults feel about Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how they feel it affects their sense of social integration. **NOTE THIS PART OF THE STUDY HAS BEEN OMITTED:** Furthermore, this study also looks at how these views compare to how non-Muslims interpret the same Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how non-Muslim Canadians believe the representations affect their feelings and acceptance of Muslim immigrants.

Research Questions

The fundamental purpose of this qualitative descriptive research is to answer the following research question:

How do Canadian Muslim immigrant adults, who have lived in Canada for two years or more, interpret the Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims, and how do they perceive these representations as affecting their feelings of social integration?

B2. Description of Participants

- a) Indicate who you will recruit as potential participants in this study (e.g. undergraduates, school children, seniors) including any inclusion or exclusion criteria (e.g. over 65 years of age, self-identified as gay, speaks Blackfoot, speaks English), and the number of participants required.

I will be recruiting 5 female and 5 male Canadian Muslim immigrant adults.

- Participants can originate from any country.
- Participants need to be able to read and speak in English.

- Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 65.
 - Participants, due to time needed to settle in, need to have lived in Canada for two years or more.
- b) If the participants or facilities will be offered compensation or credit for participating in the research, provide details. Specify the amount, what the compensation is for, and how payment will be determined for participants who do not complete the study.

Each participant who has met with me and has given consent to the interview will receive \$20 at the beginning of the interview, even if the participant withdraws from the study at a later time.

B3. Recruitment of Participants

Briefly describe how participants will be recruited and who will do the recruiting. Researchers should avoid recruiting their own students. If this is unavoidable, researchers should provide the name of a research assistant, not associated with the course, who will do the recruiting and obtain consent when the researcher is not present.

If posters, newspaper advertisements, radio announcements or letters of invitation are being used, append these to this application.

I will be using posters and a web ad to recruit participants. The web ad will be an online version of the poster, which will only be shown at the University of Lethbridge and the University of Calgary with permission given ahead of time. In regard to the web ads at the University of Lethbridge, the people associated with digital publicity will be emailed in regard to permission and the requesting of airing a web ad. For permission to air web ads and to put up posters at the University of Calgary, the student union ClubHub will be contacted. These posters will also be at local community areas with the permission of grocery, coffee shops or library managers.

Below shows the poster for recruitment and the content of a contact email to potential gate-keepers.

During the recruitment process of this study I will be making contact and communicating with potential participants. Please look below to also see what the emails that will be sent to participants will look like.

- a) When and how will people be informed of the right to withdraw from the study? What procedures will be followed for people who wish to withdraw at any point during the study? What happens to the information contributed to the point of withdrawal?

At the consent stage, I will inform participants that they can withdraw from the study at any point and that the information they contributed up to the point of withdrawal will be destroyed, unless the data have already been integrated into the analysis.

b) Indicate how participants can obtain feedback on the research findings. I will provide participants who are interested with a lay summary of the findings. This option is in the consent form, which will include a place for participants to provide an email address so that I can send participants a copy of the lay summary.

B4. Description of Research Procedures

Provide a summary of the design and procedures of the research. Provide details of data collection, and time commitment for the participants, etc. NOTE: all study measures (e.g. questionnaires, interview guides, surveys, rating scales, etc.) must be appended to this application. If the procedures include a blind, indicate under what conditions the code will be broken, what provisions have been made for this occurrence, and who will have the code.

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that is exploratory in nature (Liamputtong, 2013). Those who contact me about the study will be screened for eligibility, and each participant will be asked to bring with them three media pieces they deem as being positive, neutral and negative with respect to the portrayal Muslims to bring to the interview. To generate the data to answer the research questions I plan to conduct a one hour to two-hour semi-structured interviews (below). I will utilize open-ended questions to learn about how Canadian Muslim immigrants think about the media's representations of Muslims. I will interview Muslim participants first (stage 1) for the study, and then non-Muslim participants (stage 2). Demographics information will also be collected on all participants (Table 1: Demographics of Participants, p. 48).

All interviews will be audio recorded with a digital recording device. The recording will be transferred immediately on to my password-protected laptop before I leave the interview site, with the original recording on the digital device deleted.

B5. Privacy Protection

The next set of questions deals with anonymity and confidentiality. Refer to the brief descriptions below to assist you in answering these questions.

a) Anonymity refers to the protection of the identity of participants. Anonymity protection can be provided along a continuum, from “complete” to “no” protection,

where complete protection means that no identifying information will be collected. We remind applicants that university researchers should treat any personal information in accordance with the privacy protection provisions of Part 2 of the [Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](http://foip.alberta.ca/legislation/act/index.cfm) (<http://foip.alberta.ca/legislation/act/index.cfm>). If you have any questions about the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information under the Act, please contact the FOIP Coordinator, The University of Lethbridge, 4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4, Email: foip@uleth.ca.

1. Will the anonymity of the participants be protected?

Yes (completely) Yes (partially) No

2. If “yes”, explain how anonymity will be protected, and describe how this will be explained in the consent process.

Participants’ real names will be replaced by a pseudonym immediately after the consent process. The list matching the real and pseudonyms of participants and the signed consent forms will be password-protected and stored separately from the participants’ data on a different drive and folder. I will tell participants I will address them by their self-chosen pseudonym during the interview. All quotations or excerpts from the interview will use their pseudonym.

The document containing any of the participants’ contact information will be saved in a password secured word document.

In addition, all the recorded interviews will be downloaded as a MP3 file and saved in the sync.com file. As soon as the downloading and saving of the file is done, the original file on the digital device will be erased. Furthermore, a password activated screen saver will be applied to my personal laptop in case it is used to work on my project.

3. If “no”, justify why loss of anonymity is required, and describe how this will be explained in the consent process.

***Confidentiality** refers to the protection, access, control and security of the data and personal information.*

Confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements are recommended for all the individuals involved with the project (e.g. transcriptionists, research assistants, co-investigators, etc.).

How will confidentiality be protected and how will this be explained in the consent process? Specify which personnel will have access to the listing of names and study ID numbers as well as other study information collected (use job titles rather than individual names.) Provide details on the location, manner of storage, and the proposed retention period of the information collected.

I will be the only one transcribing the interviews. I will let the participants know that my supervisor may read the written versions of their interviews, and in some cases, listen to the recordings of the interviews with their pseudonyms to confirm the accuracy of the transcription. The transcriptions of these interviews will be stored, and only myself and supervisor can listen to the recordings of these interviews with their pseudonyms.

The data generated from the interviews will be kept in a password secured laptop, which only I will be able to access. The document containing any of the participants' contact information will be saved in a password secured Word document. All interviews will be recorded with a digital recording device. The recording will be transferred immediately on to my password-protected laptop before I leave the interview site. Furthermore, a password activated screen saver will be applied to my personal laptop for security. No real names will be attached to any transcripts or recorded material, pseudo names or a code will be used instead. Approximately three months after all the interviews have taken place, I will email participants, asking them as to whether they still agree with sharing their information with me. This email will have an attached word document, only using pseudonyms, that will have summarized what the participant has said to me, as well as any statements of theirs that I may use as a quote, and the context in which the quote is to be employed. Finally, any physical materials associated to the study are to be locked in this researcher's desk in her office in Markin Hall. All information will be destroyed by the researcher of this project to ensure complete obliteration of the material five years after the study is completed.

B6. Potential Risks and Benefits

To facilitate Human Subject Research Committee review and to determine whether the study involves more than minimal risk, please respond to the following questions. Does this project involve...	Check those that apply
Collection of data through invasive clinical procedures that are not required for normal patient care.	
Collection of data through noninvasive clinical procedures involving imaging or microwaves that are not required for normal patient care.	
Collection, use, or disclosure of health information or biological samples where the researcher is requesting that the requirement for informed consent be waived.	
Any procedures involving deception or incomplete disclosure of the nature of the research for purposes of informed consent.	
Any possibility that a breach of confidentiality could place participants at risk of Criminal or civil liability or be damaging to participants' financial standing, Employability or reputation.	
Research questions or procedures that might be expected to cause participant psychological distress, discomfort or anxiety beyond what a reasonable person might expect in day to day social interactions (e.g., questions that raise painful memories or unresolved emotional issues).	x

Research questions that involve sensitive issues (e.g. sexual orientation or practices, etc.).	
Investigations in which there is a previous or existing relationship between the investigator and participants (e.g., manager/employee, therapist/client, teacher/student).	
Investigations in which there is a conflict of interest between an investigator and the sponsor of the investigation.	
. Any other non-therapeutic risks that arise from procedures not directly related to patient care.	

- a) Outline any risks of potential physical or emotional harm or discomfort to the participants and describe how the anticipated benefits outweigh the potential risks.

The central focus of this project is to discover how Muslim immigrant adults view Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims and how the media affects their social integration. This study gives participants an opportunity to voice their opinions, and to make these views known in a thesis. When talking about the negative content of the media pieces, some discomfort or anger could arise for participants.

If a participant appears to be feeling discomfort I will stop the interview and allow the participant to compose him/herself and then ask if the participant wishes to continue. If the participant does not want to continue, I will stop the interview and thank the participant for his/her time and delete the interview recording in this case. I will also indicate that there is a page attached to the consent form (Appendix A) with contact information available for counselling services available if the participant requests it.

Counselling services available in Lethbridge AB.:

Counselling Services University of Lethbridge
 TH218, 4401 University Drive West
 Lethbridge AB T1K 3M4
 Phone: 403-317-2845
 Fax: 403-332-4551

Lethbridge Counselling Services
 Counselor
 740 4 Ave S
 (403) 942-0452
 Open until 8:00 PM

Counselor services available in Calgary, AB:

University of Calgary Counselling Services
Room 370
MacEwan Student Centre
2500 University Dr NW,
Calgary T2N 1N4

SAIT Student Development and Counselling Services
Resources in Calgary distress centre – 24/7, free & confidential 403 266-4357 (help)
Some emergency and evening appointments for in-person crisis counselling if needed
distresscentre.com
http://saittrojans.com/documents/2015/1/26//Calgary_Resources_2_Page_Dec_2014.pdf?id=70

211 Alberta – 24/7: Free & confidential referral to community services dial 211
Available in English, Spanish, Punjabi, Russian & Chinese
Inform Alberta, Calgary Street Guide – Web application informalberta.ca
calgarystreetguide.ca

Alberta Mental Health Line 1 877 303-2642 (24/7)

Community Resource Team (CRT) 403 299-9699 (24/7)
Mobile Response Team (MRT) 403 266-4357

Calgary Counselling Agencies and Resources
Alberta Health Services (AHS).
albertahealthservices.ca Click “Find Programs & Services” under “Find Health Care”
Community Mental Health (AHS) 403 955-6200

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre
7th floor, 1213 4 Street SW albertahealthservices.ca
Intake on drop-in basis, daily; some appointments. FREE short-term counselling.
Calgary Counselling Centre 403 265-4980
#200, 940 6 Ave SW Intake 403 691-5991
calgarycounselling.com

SAIT Student Development and Counselling Services
Other Counselling Agencies and Resources
Calgary Women’s Health Collective 403 265-9590
calgarywhc.com

Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association (CIWA) 403 263-4414 Immigrant Services
Calgary 403 265-1120
ciwa-online.com
immigrantservicescalgary.ca

Although some may experience discomfort from participating in this study, others may feel relief at having the chance to express themselves, and the data generated from this study may generate some new and important knowledge that would benefit society in becoming more aware of the impact the media has on people's lives.

- b) Indicate the steps taken to inform participants of the possible consequences of releasing information in the public domain and describe how participants will be given an opportunity to review material before it is released.

I will let participants know that although I will do my utmost to ensure their anonymity, I cannot fully guarantee that their identities will be anonymous, as desks may be broken into, and emails may be hacked. However, I will follow all the procedures needed to make certain that everyone's data is protected.

Before I submit my thesis, I will share with participants the quotes I will use from their interviews and obtain their consent to use the quotes. When quoting I will use the pseudonyms the participant has created for themselves for the study, in place of their real names.

- c) Outline the exit strategy for termination of the study. Some types of research involve intense or lengthy contact between a researcher and the study participant(s), which may result in a close personal relationship, especially if the research itself involves matters close to the heart of participants. For this section, applicants should consider the possibility that a strategy may be required for participants who have difficulty in disengaging from the project after their role is completed or the project has terminated. If this does not apply to your research, please indicate n/a. If the research involves vulnerable populations, carefully clarify the boundaries between the researcher and participants.

At the end of each interview I will ask participants how the process was for them, and whether they felt any discomfort. All participants will be given a list of community counselling and mental health resources to access if needed.

Since my contact with the participants is time-limited to a short duration of one session of 2 hours, it is unlikely that there will be problems with dis-engagement. The important thing is to make sure they have supportive services to access should any distressing thoughts or memories arise in the course of the interview.

B7. Obtaining Consent

Advise the Committee how informed consent will be obtained. The Tri-Council Policy Statement ensures that informed consent be obtained in writing from all participants or, when appropriate from parents or legal guardians, unless there is a good reason for not doing so. If a consent form will be used, attach copies for the Committee. The Human Participant Research - Sample Letter of Consent is available from the Office of Research Ethics or our web site under Certification at:

http://www.uleth.ca/rch/funding/online_forms.cfm. Please ensure that the reading level of the consent form is appropriate to the population involved.

a) Clearly detail who will be obtaining consent and the procedures for doing so. If appropriate, specify whether participants will be randomly assigned to groups before or after consent has been attained.

I, Michaele Tuz-Atkinson, the principal investigator, will be doing the research and conducting the interviews, and therefore be the one obtaining consent. At the time of interview, I will go through the consent form with them.

After going over the consent form, I will ask the participants whether they have any questions, and if not, whether they feel comfortable to participate in the interview. After I have answered any questions they may have and if they agree to participating, I will ask them to sign the consent form.

b) If the participants are not able/competent to give fully informed consent (cognitive impairment, age, etc.), or if there are significant power differences in operation (professor/student, employer/employee, political or economic minorities, etc.), please specify, and describe steps you will take to obtain free and informed consent. If participants are not competent to consent, specify who will consent on their behalf.

N/A

c) Do any of the procedures include the use of deception or partial disclosure of information to participants? If yes, provide a rationale for the deception or partial disclosure. Describe the procedures for debriefing the participants.

None of the procedures in this study use deception.

d) For the letter of consent/consent form check below.

1. Extend an invitation to participate in the research project.

2. Provide a brief description of the project, including the purpose of the research, and a description of what is expected of the participant (e.g, the time commitment and the frequency of contact).
3. Describe the risks and discomforts (e.g. distress, inconvenience, psychological or social discomforts, fatigue, or physical safety issues). If the research project has the potential to identify upset, distressed or disturbed individuals, describe what arrangements will be made to assist these individuals, if need be.
4. Describe the benefits, including an explicit statement if there are no potential benefits to the participants (e.g. “You will not benefit directly from participation in this research”).
5. Provide assurance of anonymity and confidentiality – this statement should describe the steps taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, and should include information regarding who will have access to the data collected. **NOTE: Participants should be advised that their privacy cannot be guaranteed when electronic surveys are used.**
6. Outline compensation for participation in the research project, if applicable.
7. Provide a non-coercive disclaimer – this statement should indicate that participation is voluntary, and that refusal to participate will not initiate prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled.
8. Provide an option to withdraw – this statement should indicate that participants may discontinue participation at any time without prejudice, penalty or loss of benefits, and if they choose to withdraw, that they will be consulted regarding what should be done with their data.
9. Indicate the instances when the researcher may be obligated by law to report, to law enforcement or another agency, information revealed as a result of the research. **NOTE: Questions likely to result in reportable activities must be flagged for the respondent, and the respondent must be given the option to skip these questions.**
10. Provide a brief description of the anticipated use of the data.
11. Provide information on how participants will be informed of the results of the research.
12. Provide the name of the researcher, along with their institutional affiliation, and contact information for questions/clarification about the research project. Also include the following statement: “Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca).”

e) **For telephone surveys**, informed consent should take place in the form of a verbal explanation of the above points. Append the “script” for this explanation to this application.

f) **For anonymous questionnaires**, include a cover letter that includes all the information normally provided in a consent form. Append a copy of this cover letter to this application.

B8. Continuing Review

Propose a process for continuing review if the research is ongoing. Continuing review should consist of, at least, the submission of a succinct annual status report. Notify the Committee when the research concludes.

The protection of human participants will be assured in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement or with other guidelines if these have been agreed upon as more appropriate.

M. Tuz Atkinson
Signature of Researcher/Applicant

March 1/2017
Date

When the Researcher/Applicant is a student, the supervisor must sign the following statement:

“I have reviewed this application and I deem it ready to submit to the Human Subject Research Committee for review.”

Bonnie Lee
Signature of Supervisor

March 1, 2017
Date

(Revised December 2, 2015)

Comment: I will submit a final report at the conclusion of this study.

Example Poster



**University of
Lethbridge**

Muslim Immigrants and Western Mainstream Media

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

**WHAT DO MUSLIMS THINK ABOUT WESTERN MAINSTREAM
MEDIA'S REPRESENTATIONS OF MUSLIMS?**

Please inquire if you are:

- A Muslim Immigrant in Canada
- Between the ages of 18 and 65
- Can Speak and Read English
- Have lived in Canada for at least 2 years

Participation is voluntary and confidential.

Participants will be compensated \$20.00 for their participation in a 1-2 hour interview.

For more information contact:

Michaëlle Tuz-Atkinson, Graduate Student, Health Sciences

(403) 685-3351 Email: michaëlle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee.

Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
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Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca
Email Michaele Email: michaele.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

Email letter to potential gatekeepers

To whom it may concern,

I am a Master's student at the University of Lethbridge, in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

I wish to interview English-speaking Muslim immigrants to understand how they think about English-language Western mainstream media's portrayal of Muslims.

I am seeking your permission to post the attached poster to recruit potential research participants.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your assistance!

Michaëlle Tuz-Atkinson (Researcher)
Phone number : (403) 685-3351

Email: michaëlle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

Supervisor : Dr. Bonnie Lee Email : bonnie.lee@uleth.ca
Phone number : (403) 317-5047

Bonnie Lee, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge

Emails with participants (Introductory, Follow-Up and Post)

Introductory Email (if participant does email inquiry)

Date:

Day/Month/Year

Dear X,

Hope this email finds you well.

We spoke over the phone on (date).

You expressed an interest in this study, and I really appreciate that.

My name is Michaelle Tuz-Atkinson, and I am a master's student at the University of Lethbridge.

This study is part of my thesis to find out how people feel about the Western mainstream media's representations of Muslims.

How did you hear about the study?

What motivated you to respond to the web ad or poster?

If you take part in an hour to two hour interview, you will receive \$20 as a gesture of my appreciation for your time.

Attached is a copy of the consent form that tells you more about the study. Please read it over, and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Please let me know within a week whether you will be interested in taking part in my study.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michaelle Tuz-Atkinson

michaelle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

Phone number (403) 685-3351

Follow up

email

Date: Day/Month/Year

Dear X,

Hope this message finds you well.

I am just following-up to see if you want to take part in the study: Muslim Immigrants and Western Mainstream Media

Before we meet for an interview, I would ask that you:

- Select three Western mainstream media pieces for our interview. These media pieces can come from any Western country (Canada, U.S., Europe) so long as it is in written and/or spoken in English. It can be of any media type: video or print.
- The three media pieces (not using the examples provided) you choose would illustrate what you consider as
 - Portraying Muslims in a positive light;
 - Portraying Muslims in a neutral light;
 - Portraying Muslims in a negative light.

FOR MUSLIM PARTICIPANTS

Attached: Is an example one of each type of media piece, a video (link) and print media (link).

Please

- **Email** me your selected media pieces 3 days before the interview.
- Tell me **when**, what day and time, you would like us to meet.
- Tell me **where** you would like us to meet.

At the University library, or at another library near you?

Or, is there another public place we can meet if that is convenient for you?

- Tell me **if you want a confirmation email or phone call** the day before our agreed upon interview day.
- **Please bring your selected media pieces** with you for the time of the interview.

FOR NON-MUSLIM PARTICIPANTS

Attached:

- Attached are links to media pieces that Muslim participants have shared with this researcher

Please

1. **Email** me your selected media pieces 3 days before the interview.
2. Tell me **when**, what day and time, you would like us to meet.
3. Tell me **where** you would like us to meet.

At the University library, or at another library near you?

Or, is there another public place we can meet if that is convenient for you?

4. Tell me **if you want a confirmation email or phone call** the day before our agreed upon interview day.
5. **Please bring your selected media pieces** with you for the time of the interview.

If you have any questions that you would like answered before we meet, please feel free to ask me.

Again, thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Michaëlle Tuz-Atkinson

michaëlle.tuzatkinso@uleth.ca

Phone number (403) 685-3351

Post-interview email

Dear
Day/Month/Year

X, Date:

How are you?

Hope this email finds you well.

This last email is to personally thank you for your time and participation in this study.

Please email me any closing remarks you may have either about the interview process or topic.

However, if you wish to withdraw any information you have shared with me at this point please send me an email stating this within a month of receiving this email.

Thank you very much.
Michaëlle Tuz-Atkinson

Questions for the Interview

Sense of Belonging in Canadian Society

1. Belonging within Society

How would you rate your sense of belonging in Canada?

1- I feel I have a/an X sense of belonging in Canada.

Place an X in the appropriate column.

1. Very strong	
2. Strong	
3. Moderate	
4. Undecided	
5. Somewhat unattached	
6. Unattached	
7. Strongly unattached	

2- In your opinion, what factors contribute to your answer above?

3. Does the media influence your sense of belonging in Canada? How so?

Role of the Media

4. What do you see as the media's role in supporting multiculturalism?

Use of Media

5. Where do you get most of your news from?

Description of the media piece (positive, neutral, negative)

I will now ask you some questions about each of the 3 media pieces you brought in today.

Can you describe for me the story that you have chosen to share with me by telling me...

Typing of media piece by participant: Positive Neutral Negative
The title of the media piece
What is the title of the media piece?

Author(s)/Reporter (s)
Who is/are the journalist(s) of the media piece?
Date published
When was this media piece reported/published?
Date observed
When did you observe this media piece?
Source
What was the source of the media piece?
Topic Problem or Plotline
a) What was/were the central issue(s) or event(s) of this piece?
Description of the event/story, as depicted by the media piece.
b) If applicable: How does the media piece describe the behaviour(s) of the Muslim(s)?
Peoples' reactions, as represented by the media piece.
c) If applicable: What was/were the reaction(s) of Muslims reported in this media piece?
d) If applicable: What was/were the reaction(s) of [a] non- Muslim(s) reported in this media piece?
The description(s) of the Muslim(s) or Non-Muslim(s) of focus in the event/story, as represented by the media piece.
e) How was/were the main Muslim(s) and non-Muslim(s) of focus in the story described?
Why it happened, according to the media piece.
f) Why did the event occur? Or... Why was this issue discussed?
The voice(s) heard in the media piece.
g) In the media piece, whose voices did you hear?
The consequence(s) of the behaviour(s), as represented in the media piece.
h) In the media piece, what was/were the reported consequence(s) of the issue(s) or event(s) discussed?
Participants' responses
The event, or story, as represented in the media piece was either positive, negative, or neutral.

i) In the media piece, in what way is the <u>central action</u> focused on represented as being? Positive, negative, or neutral? And why would you label it as such?
j) In what way was/were the main Muslim(s) represented in the media piece? Positively, negatively, or neutrally? And why would you label it as such?
What you want to <u>say to the journalist(s)/reporter(s)</u>
<u>Comments you have for the journalist(s).</u>
k) Hypothetically, if you had an opportunity to speak to the journalist(s) of this story, what comments do you have for the writer(s) or reporter(s) of this story?
Questions(s) participants have for the journalist(s).
l) Hypothetically, what further question(s) would you have liked the journalist(s) of this story to have addressed?
Affect
m) Do you feel that observing this type of media piece on a regular basis could permanently affect how you see yourself? If so, how? (If your response is “No” skip the follow-up question)... If yes, do think this altered perspective could impact your lifestyle? If so, how?
Significance
n) What do you think is the importance of this media piece?
Overall view
o) What is your overall impression of this media piece?
Emotional reactions
p) What is your reaction or reactions to this media piece?

Overall summary questions:

- 5- In your everyday life, do you think most media pieces you encounter about Muslims are predominantly: Positive, Neutral or Negative.
- 6- Do you think people living in Canada should care about how the media represents Muslims? And, if so, why?
- 7- Is there anything else you want to tell me about the media and Muslims?

Appendix D
Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Information of Participants

Are you a Muslim immigrant in Canada?

Yes / No

Check the boxes showing a yes OR no answer:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

How many years have you lived in Canada?

[Write your answer in the box]

What is your country of origin?

Age: How old are you today?

[Write your answer in the box]

Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received* **Circle the highest level of education you have completed below:**

- No schooling completed
- Nursery school to 8th grade
- Some high school, no diploma
- High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
- Some college credit, no degree
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

What is your gender? Please indicate/show your answer by putting in an X in the box below.

Male

Female

Other

Participant pseudonym:

Date:

Table 7. How Macrostructures Can Affect People's Day to Day Lives

From: Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000) Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000), p. 347.



