cogent
social
sciences

SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The politics of being Muslim and being British in the British Christian print media

Gabriel Faimau[1]*

*Corresponding author: Gabriel Faimau, Department of Sociology, University of Botswana, Private Bag UB 00705, Gaborone, Botswana
E-mail: gabriel.faimau@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract: There have been a significant number of published studies in recent years on the British media representation of Muslims. These studies have tended to focus only on the British mainstream media, and to my knowledge, there is no significant research on the discursive construction of British Muslims in alternative media outlets. This paper attempts to fill this gap, focusing on the representations of British Muslims in the British Christian print media. Drawing on empirical data relating to four British Christian print media, *Church Times, The Tablet, Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times,* this paper investigates how the questions of being Muslim and being British are dealt with in the British Christian print media, and the extent to which the politics of being Muslim and being British inform us about identity formation and affirmation.

1. Introduction

There have been a significant number of published studies in recent years on the British media representation of Muslims (Ameli et al., 2007; Faimau, 2010, 2013; Moore et al., 2008; Poole, 2000, 2002; Richardson, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007; Runnymede Trust, 1997; Saeed, 2007). A recent report

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gabriel Faimau, PhD, is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Botswana. His main research interests include politics of multiculturalism, representations of Islam and Muslims in the media, new media and religious practice, social implications of HIV/AIDS and graduate employability. His current research project focuses on new media and cultural application on religion among prophetic ministries in Botswana.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Across the Western world, news media play a crucial role in influencing the perception and knowledge about Islam and Muslims in the past few decades. In the context of Britain, a recent study indicated that "74% of the British public claim that they know 'nothing or next to nothing about Islam'" and "64% of the British public claim that what they do know is 'acquired through the media'". Focusing on the British Christian print media, this paper aims at exploring the extent to which Islam and British Muslims are perceived in the British Christian print media. By paying particular attention to themes such as integration and multiculturalism, Islamophobia and stereotyping of Muslims, Muslim–Christian relations in Britain and reciprocity argument, the paper further examines the ways within which these themes provide frameworks for the representation of Islam and Muslims in the British Christian print media.

cogent - oa

indicated that "74% of the British public claim that they know 'nothing or next to nothing about Islam'" and "64% of the British public claim that what they do know is 'acquired through the media'" (Allen, 2012, p. 2). This means that the media play a vital role in creating and maintaining public perception or knowledge about Islam and Muslims. These studies, however, have tended to focus only on the British mainstream media, and to my knowledge, there is no significant research on the discursive construction of British Muslims in alternative media outlets. Drawing on empirical data relating to four British Christian print media, *Church Times*, *The Tablet*, *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times*, this paper attempts to fill this gap, focusing on the representations of British Muslims in the British Christian print media. While the British Christian print media has a relatively small readership, in comparison to that of the British mainstream media, given that religious belief plays a significant role in shaping people's identity and worldview, it could be contended that discourses in the religious media have the potential to shape people's thinking and their knowledge about other cultures or religions. Or, as pointed out by Modood (2007, p. 76) in the context of Britain, religion may be weak in civil society but churches "can be a source of political criticism and action".

What value can an analysis of religious media discourses contribute to the understanding of media representation of Islam and Muslims? By observing the inter-dynamic relationship between religion and politics, studies have confirmed that political identities are shaped by religious identity, and that religious identity normally affects political identity (Fox & Sandler, 2006; Mangolis, 2014). Unlike mainstream media, religious media play a crucial role in shaping people's religious identity and in informing people's political identity. Christian news media normally draw from many ecclesial documents, reports, and reflections. One can argue that although Christian news media may not represent the official voice of Christian churches, discourses within news media clearly reflect the internal discourses of the churches' positions on many issues, including the relationship between Christianity and Islam. In so doing, the religious media translate religion or religious positions into political thinking, and politics into religious ideas. These ideas are internalised by readers, and thus the religious media shape the political thinking and general perception of their audience (Faimau, 2010; Newman & Smith, 2007).

This paper investigates how the questions of being Muslim and being British are dealt with in the British Christian print media, and the extent to which the politics of being Muslim and being British inform us about identity formation of British Muslims. The paper, therefore, deals with three related questions. Firstly, to what extent are Islam and British Muslims represented in the British Christian print media? Secondly, how is the politics of being Muslims in Britain negotiated in the British Christian print media? Thirdly, how does the notion of Christian–Muslim relations inform the representation of Islam and Muslims in the British Christian print media? In approaching these questions, the paper will first discuss the notion of British Muslim identity. This will be followed by a note on research method. The study data will then be analysed and discussed.

2. British Muslims and the question of identity formation

Muslims have been present in Britain for at least 300 years. Even though the Muslim population in Britain has grown quite significant since the 1970s, studies normally classify Muslims as an ethnic or a religious minority group. This classification, however, cannot be understood in terms of a single group, but rather in "a much more plural and nuanced way" (Modood, 2007, p. 104). Modood suggests that the category "Muslim" is as internally diverse as other group categories such as "British" and "Christian" but is nonetheless a useful classification for identifying "visible minorities" in a pluralistic society (Modood, 2005a). Data from the 2001 census, provided by the Office for National Statistics in the United Kingdom (UK), indicated that the total Muslim population in Britain was 1.6 million, comprising 3% of the total population and 52% of the non-Christian religious population. A survey published in *The Times* in January 2009 indicated that the Muslim population in the UK has grown to 2.4 million. However, another report on the size and distribution of the world's Muslim population, published by The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in October 2009, maintained that "the United Kingdom is home to fewer than 2 million Muslims, about 3% of its total population" (Pew Forum, 2009, p. 21).

In considering the politics of being Muslim in Britain, a question arises concerning British Muslim identity. In the introductory chapter of his 2004 book, *"The Infidel Within": Muslims in Britain since 1800*, Humayun Ansari posed the fundamental question: "Is there a British Muslim identity?" He argues that key moments such as the Honeyford affair in the mid-1980s, *The Satanic Verses* controversy and the Gulf War in the late 1980s and early 1990s have framed Muslims such that they are imagined as outsiders and excluded from the essential notions of "Britishness". However, in the 1980s,

> British Muslims began confronting this established notion of identity through the celebration of difference and construction of new so-called hybrid identities. Their ways of imagining identity involved challenging the reductionist explanations of community belonging apparent in discourses on "Britishness" and in equally homogenous imaginings of "the Muslim community". (Ansari, 2004, p. 1)

Indeed, various Islam-related events in the past few years have contributed to the rise of Muslim consciousness (Meer, 2010, 2012). This does not only confirm the point that identity formation is multidimensional, but also indicates a crucial argument that in a modern context of a multicultural society, "identities are more fluid", in the sense that people may identify themselves with an ethnic or a religious group. At the same time, there are many different ways in which they can define and express their identity (Modood, 2007, pp. 105–106). The notion of prioritisation in defining one's identity is therefore—to say the least—not relevant in the context of a pluralistic society. This is because the framing of a question that assumes a prioritisation such as "are you British first or a Muslim first" provides insufficient creative space for narrating the ways in which people identify themselves or even define their identity in a larger society. Besides, the answer to such a question depends on the context in which it is asked. In other words, questions about people's association with a group or groups depend on how those questions are framed, and also on the conditions that may frame the answer. But generally, as pointed out by Sardar (2005), "identities are always contested and negotiated. They require give and take. The question of Muslim identity has two basic components. One has to be addressed to Britain as a whole; the other to the Muslim community itself" (*The Guardian*, para. 8). Following this assessment, Sardar (2005) proposed a strong argument that "Muslims can be loyal to Britain only by being loyal to their own worldview. And Britain can only become a genuinely pluralistic and multicultural society by providing the Muslim community with enough space to express itself the way it chooses" (*The Guardian*, para. 10). The use of the term "worldview" in this argument is significant because it points to the multidimensional character of identity formation, which includes various fundamental aspects, such as religious belief, cultural tradition and ideological component. These are aspects that normally shape a person's or group's knowledge, their understanding and their interpretation of their world and surroundings. In this sense, in the interests of politico-practical coexistence, a call for social cohesiveness should go along with a commitment to providing space for the respect of various cultural or religious identities.

Generally, discussion around British perceptions of national identity or the notion of "being British" often dominates the debate on the issue of what it means to be a British Muslim. In the context of Britain, increasing cultural diversity creates what Elizabeth Poole calls "insecurities", particularly through the emphasis on cultural differences (Poole, 2002, p. 186). While one might question whether or not there is a British Muslim identity, the question of Britishness relates to the question of national identity and the construction of national culture. In her study, Poole finds that as a result of the homogenisation of Muslims in media discourses, there is a strong tendency to interpret Muslims' preserving their culture as separatism and as a threat to "traditional British" values (Poole, 2002, p. 22). Poole contends that this leads to the perception that Muslims who retain their "Islamicness" do not have the characteristics of "Britishness". But what does "Britishness" or "being British" really mean? As already indicated, there has been a tendency to define the term "Britishness" through a single frame of homogenous culture, religion, ethnic group, skin colour and language. Very often, "Britishness" is associated with homogenous "Whiteness". This can be seen, for example, in the following remark: "Britain is basically English speaking, Christian and white, and if one starts to think it

might become basically Urdu speaking and Muslim and brown, one gets frightened" (Greenslade, 2005, p. 6; cited also in Saeed, 2007, p. 445). Modood (2005a), however, notes that "British" is a problematic and declining feature of identification among some white people, especially young people, Irish people in Britain and Scottish people in Scotland. Elsewhere, he contends that the term remains problematic at the discursive level, citing different arguments from the perspectives of the political right and the political left. On the political right, Britishness is understood on the basis of the notion that "non-white people are not really British and that Muslims are an alien wedge". On the political left, some argue that rallying round the idea of Britain and defining oneself in terms of a normative concept of Britishness is wrong because such attempts reinforce racism or elitism (Modood, 2005b).

The politics of being Muslim in the context of Britain, therefore, is not just about the politics of belonging or the politics of constructing boundaries of a collectivity where Muslims belong (Allsopp, 2012), but also refers to ways in which Muslim consciousness informs and shapes Muslim identities in a socially interactive space (Meer, 2010, 2012). The question is: To what extent does the representation of Islam and Muslims in the media influence the process of identity formation of British Muslims? It has been acknowledged that Muslims in Britain are ethnically diverse. They are also heterogeneous in language. The common element that binds Muslims together is their religion (Gilliat-Ray, 2010; Kabir, 2010). As noted by researchers such as Morey and Yaqin (2011), Petley and Richardson (2011) and Meer (2012), media play a crucial role in informing and shaping the rise of (British) Muslim consciousness. According to Meer, Muslim consciousness in the context of Britain manifests itself through "the development of a minority consciousness from being *in* itself ... to a minority consciousness that is *for* itself ..." (Meer, 2012, p. 199). The first minority consciousness developed for being *in* itself is a reaction to negative experiences that range from being perceived as disloyal minority to being associated with threat and terrorist attacks. The rise of Muslim consciousness that is *for* itself emerges from a pragmatic response to the anti-Muslim discrimination by focusing on the articulation of Muslim identity that reflects "a meaningful and reciprocal British Muslim identity" (Meer, 2012, p. 201). This synthesised Muslim consciousness puts an emphasis on reconciling Islamic faith commitments with the citizenship requirements in the context of Britain.

How does media narrative play a role in the rise of Muslim consciousness leading to synthesised identity formation? As far as the representation of Islam and British Muslims in the media is concerned, the rise of Muslim consciousness is shaped by the media in two ways. Firstly, the media representation of Islam and Muslims contributes to the identity formation of Muslims collectively as a group in a particular context such as Britain. In this group-oriented identity, shared belonging and similarities are recognised while creating socio-political space that allows active involvement in the societal affairs. In the context of Britain, through group identity formation and identification, "a British Muslim may connect himself to the criteria that are minimally common with the groups to which he belongs" (Kabir, 2010, p. 8). This includes connecting oneself with the Muslim community as well as with the wider British community. Secondly, the rise of Muslim consciousness reinforces the sense of difference, particularly when the media represent Muslims collectively as the "Other". This sense of difference is normally informed by the awareness of one's own culture and its boundaries (Jenkins, 2014). The central narrative running through this logic of difference is that the media representations and discourses of Islam and Muslims boast a public sphere that gives space for critical identity examination leading to the articulation of British Muslim identity. These are important issues in the representation of British Muslims in the British Christian print media, as we shall see in the data analysis and discussion sections of this paper.

3. Research method

The study data consist of existing materials published from 1998 to 2008 in four British Christian print media: *Church Times*, *The Tablet*, *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times*. The period 1998–2008 was chosen on the grounds that a number of Islam-related events, such as the September 11 attacks, the 7/7 London bombings, debates over the wearing of the veil and Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg lecture, were also delivered during this period. While the main focus of this study is on the variety of themes, the choice of materials published from 1998 to 2008 allows a close

observation of the trends in the media representation of Islam and Muslims in that period. In doing so, the analysis will focus on interrogating the emerging topical trends that characterised the period of 1998–2008 with its various Islam-related events as already highlighted. The phrase "British Christian print media" is used because the studied media are published in the UK and are associated with the Christian faith. *Church Times* is associated with the Church of England (or Anglicanism), *The Tablet* with the Roman Catholic Church and *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* with the Evangelical movement in various churches. Selection of the studied media was guided by their circulations as well as their acknowledged influence within the circle of Christian communities. The subscription controller of *Church Times* confirmed in an email to the author, dated 27 April 2010, that in 2010, *Church Times* already had 10,500 postal subscribers. *The Tablet* was audited by the Audit Bureau Circulations (ABC) in 2009 with a circulation of 21,978, across 150 countries. In 2010, the circulation figures of *Evangelicals Now* amounted to 6,750, with a readership of roughly double that of the circulation figures. This was confirmed by the Sales and Distribution Officer of *Evangelicals Now*, in an email to the author dated 27 April 2010. *Evangelical Times* has no specific readership data. However, its influence within the Evangelical circle is widely acknowledged.

While these publications cannot be considered the official voice of the churches they are associated with, it is fair to say that claims in the religious media cannot simply be isolated from discourses within religious institutions since they echo common discourses that circulate within various churches and across society at large. Nor can it be claimed that these publications are representative of British Christian media outlets. The choice of these papers is motivated by our interest in the variety of discourses on British Muslims in religious media outlets, and how religious media shape various perceptions of British Muslims as a religious community.

The frequency of coverage of Islam and British Muslims in the studied news media is small relative to the coverage of Islam and Muslims in relation to Islam-related international events. Of 1,357 articles that refer to Islam and Muslims in the studied print media, there are only 115 texts that specifically refer to Islam and Muslims in a British context. Most of these texts were published in *Church Times* (60 texts or 52.2%) and *The Tablet* (34 texts or 29.6%). Studies on the British mainstream media indicate that Islam and British Muslims occupy a larger volume of coverage in British mainstream media reporting as a whole. The small volume of reports on British Muslims in the British Christian media is not really surprising, the main reason being that the British Christian media seem more interested in reporting about minority Christians living in Muslim-majority countries (Faimau, 2013). Therefore, international events occupy more space in the studied media than local coverage of British Muslims.

Even though the number of texts is relatively small, in quantitative terms, the issues of Islam and British Muslims raised in the studied papers reflect public issues in Britain that are frequently covered in the British mainstream media. This includes issues around Islam-related events in Britain, such as the events of 7 July 2005, the discussion of the veil, the question of Muslim integration into British society, the politics of multiculturalism and particular reports concerning faith-based schools. There is, however, a theme that is addressed more frequently in the British Christian media than in the British mainstream media, namely: interfaith initiatives in a British context. Based on the importance of these themes, a discursive analysis promises a better understanding of how Islam and British Muslims are represented.

The analysis includes editorials, featured articles and news reports related to Islam and British Muslims. To facilitate our analysis, a qualitative analysis was applied as a tool to interpret the underlying meaning associated with the representations of Islam and Muslims in the studied media. The methodological approach employed in the analysis falls under the framework of discourse analysis. Following Fairclough (1992, Chap. 3), employing discourse analysis to analyse language use as a social practice leads to understanding the notion of discourse in two related ways. Firstly, discourse is a mode of representation exercised through written or spoken texts and visual messages (van Dijk, 2000). Secondly, discourse is dialectically related to social structure. This means that social structure

is a basic condition for social practice, and through various mechanisms such as systems of classifications and norms, social structure shapes discourse at a societal level (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64). Since the data analysis relies on opinions published in four British Christian news media, the relationship between opinion, discourse and social structure needs to be clarified. In his seminal work entitled "Opinions and Ideologies in the Press", van Dijk (1998) examines how opinions and ideologies inform various social representations. In his view, the ideologies and opinions of newspapers are not personal. Despite involving the beliefs and mental representations of an author, ideologies and opinions are not personal because they are framed within social, political and institutional contexts. This implies that any analysis of the textual expression of ideologically based opinions assumes a socio-cognitive orientation that is normally embedded within a discursive explanatory framework (van Dijk, 1998, pp. 21–22). The use of discourse analysis in this paper serves the purpose of examining the representations of British Muslims in the British Christian print media, and uncovering the significance of the construction of social identities and relationships through the narratives of written texts published in the studied print media.

4. Analysis and discussion

As far as the representation of Islam and British Muslims is concerned, there are five related themes in the studied print media: the question of integration in relation to the notion of multiculturalism, Muslim schools and the advancement of integration, Islamophobia and the stereotyping of Muslims, Muslim and Christian relations in Britain and the reciprocity argument. Table 1 summarises discursive approaches of the studied media in relation to these themes.

Table 1. Summary of the studied media's main positions in relation to Islam and Muslims					
Themes/Media	**Multiculturalism**	**Muslim schools**	**Stereotyping of Muslims**	**Muslim–Christian relations**	**Reciprocity argument**
The Tablet	Multiculturalism failed to address the issue of integration of (young) British Muslims into British society	Muslim schools contribute to the community cohesion in Britain like the Catholic schools in the past	Islamophobic attacks and hostility towards Muslims deny the rights of Muslims in a democratic society. Experience of Catholics in Britain in the past can be used as a model for acceptance of Muslims in Britain	Reports and analysis supported initiatives of Christian–Muslim dialogue at all levels	Analysis and reports emphasised the idea that Western and Christian acceptance of Muslim religious freedom requires Muslims to recognise Christian religious freedom in Muslim-majority countries
Church Times	Multiculturalism raises the question of dual loyalty	Muslims schools contribute to the integration of Muslims into British society	Reports were sympathetic towards Muslims who went through the experience of facing prejudices and stereotypes	Reports and analysis supported initiatives of Christian–Muslim dialogue at all levels	Muslim leaders in the West have moral responsibility of protecting Christian minority in Muslim-majority countries
Evangelical Times	Multiculturalism opens space for the Islamisation of European and British Society	No specific coverage on Muslim schools	Reports and analysis maintained the idea that "not all 'islamophobic stereotypes' are unjustified"	Rather than dialogue, reports and analysis focused more debates between Muslims and Christians on various theological issues	No specific coverage on the reciprocity argument
Evangelicals Now	Multiculturalism opens space for the Islamisation of European and British society	No specific coverage on Muslim schools	The commonly used term Islamophobia to describe various attacks on Muslims was countered with terms such as "Westophobia" and "churchophobia" to describe attacks on Christians by Muslims	Rather than dialogue, reports and analysis focused more debates between Muslims and Christians on various theological issues	Islamophobia is a result of Westophobia or Churchophobia in Islamic countries and among Muslims in Britain

5. Integration and multiculturalism

The question of British Muslim integration into British society is focused on the notion of "Britishness" or "being British" and the politics of multiculturalism. An article by Patricia Chadwick, published in *Church Times*, 6 October 2000, provides a clear summary of a range of attitudes towards multiculturalism. Firstly, there are those who argue that multiculturalism is a threat to the values and culture of Western society, particularly Christianity. Secondly, there are those who argue that anyone who wishes to live in Britain "must be assimilated, accept the norms of this society, and adapt their customs to fit in with British culture". Thirdly, there are those who are in favour of integration, and who suggest that people of other cultures can maintain their own cultures and traditions while recognising the majority culture. In short, there are various ways of understanding multiculturalism and a range of visions for a multi-ethnic Britain. It is worth noting that the political idea of multiculturalism employed in the present study is based upon the argument for recognising group difference "within the public sphere of laws, policies, democratic discourses and the terms of a shared citizenship and national identity" (Modood, 2007, p. 2).

In *Islam in Britain: Past, Present and the Future*, Raza (1991) explains the streams of assimilationist, isolationist and integrationist thinking in the wider community with regard to British Muslims (1991). Assuming this model of classification, the articles in the studied media pay more attention to the integrationist and isolationist streams. The events of 9/11 and bombings in Bali, Madrid and London are often used as a basis for this approach, and the 7/7 London bombings accelerated a critical view of the integrationist and separatist approaches. Interestingly, the representation of Muslims in the studied media is relatively narrow, aiming only at "young British Muslims". In relation to the politics of multiculturalism, the involvement of "young British Muslims" born and bred in Britain in the London bombings is taken to be indicative of multiculturalism's failings. A number of editorials in *The Tablet* go further, describing these young British Muslims as "orphans of multiculturalism" or "cultural orphans" (see also Faimau, 2010). The explanations given in support of these claim sound very sociological. According to these articles, young British Muslims or Asians are in a transition period, and as such find it difficult to follow the culture of their parents, yet at the same time do not feel ready to integrate within British culture. This brings out the question of identity or the sense of self that is generally validated by membership of a group or through affiliation with a culture or religion. When religious identity is considered, "Muslim identity and British identity have been felt not as complementary but as pulling in opposite directions" (*The Tablet*'s editorial 10 May 2003). In search of identity, they find that the *umma* concept (Muslim community) provides the answer to the question of their Islamic identity.

Some articles in *Church Times* offer a different analysis from that proposed in *The Tablet*, mainly focused on "Islam" as a belief system. In the wake of the violent riots in France in 2005, Peter Riddell published an article in *Church Times*, on 18 November 2005 entitled "France is still right about race integration". Riddell argues that "despite the violent riots, the French opposition to British-style multiculturalism is still the correct way to go". While acknowledging the efforts of some Muslim organisations to condemn these violent acts, Riddell asks, "So why were Muslim youths at the heart of the problems?" Responding to this question, he contends that "[T]he answer lies in a recognition of the incompatibility between the Islamic faith, which sees itself as applying in all areas of life and society, and the secular states of Europe, which are founded on the notion that religious faith belongs to the private domain". In the context of Britain, he suggests that for British Muslims to be better integrated, "it may even be necessary to monitor Muslim immigration until such time as the existing minority community is more effectively interwoven into the fabric of British society, and is more accepting of majority values". The argument proposed here certainly opens up a debate on the question of Islam and the secular state. What the writer does not consider is the fact that Muslim scholars such as Tariq Ramadan and Abdullahi Ahmed An Na'im have pointed out that the suggestion of the incompatibility between Islam and the secular state is, in fact, a narrow interpretation of Islam (An-Na`im, 2008; Ramadan, 2004). Moreover, as Abdullah Saeed observes, the most important trend in Muslim communities in Western societies today is the active way in which such communities actively negotiate their faith and culture within a local cultural context. In terms of religious belief,

Muslims "are dealing with areas such as rethinking Islam; Muslim identity, Islamic norms and values in the western context, *itjihad* and the reinterpretation of key Islamic texts, citizenship, functioning in a secular environment, and what it means to be *both* western and Muslim" (Saeed, 2009, p. 212). On an empirical level, the 2009 Gallup Poll on "Islam and Integration" even found that most European Muslims adapt to national political structures. The poll suggests that in Germany and Britain, Muslims have more confidence in the courts and the national governments than the wider public (see Bowen, 2010). Based on these arguments, it becomes clear that developing "a monitoring system" on Muslim immigration is unrealistic because this will fuel stereotypes and prejudices and make the integration process more difficult.

Another issue raised in the discussion of integration is the question of loyalty, based on the argument that integration is necessary in order to avoid a dual loyalty. This is normally based on the following question: "Do Muslim minorities want to adopt the country they have come to and its core values as theirs? Or do they want to live in it, but not be a part of it, reserving their fundamental loyalty for the country they came from and its culture and its institutions?" (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007, p. 11). An article in *Church Times*, on 3 November 2006, stated that "essentially, the fear of Islam arises from the fear that Muslims are not loyal to the same things as the rest of us". The issue of loyalty is accompanied by an argument that integration is often threatened by the mind-set of separation. Here, the issue of values takes on central importance. An article published in *Church Times*, on 24 November 2006 points out that "our society has always been embedded in Christian values; once you have pulled the anchor up there is a danger that our society moves with the prevailing wind". Another article published in the same edition of the *Church Times* takes the further step of defining such a segment within the Muslim communities. According to this article, "those Muslims who see the majority society as an adversary are typically those reading straight from the page of their holy books. They are committed to calling for the implementation of sharia law among British Muslims".

Perhaps the line of argument that is most striking in this context of discussion is the idea that Islamisation of British society has now emerged. This line of argument cannot be found in the articles published in *Church Times* and *The Tablet*, except in a few quotations from Patrick Sookhdeo, who "warns churches in Britain to guard against pressure from Islam before it is too late" and argues that "churches could lose their buildings if they invite Muslims to worship in them" (*Church Times*, 28 April 2006). Our data suggest that the charge of Islamisation of European or British society is more developed in the articles of *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* than in *Church Times* and *The Tablet*. An article by Sookhdeo appeared in *Evangelicals Now* in October 2005 entitled "The Islamisation of Europe". In this article, he observes that Europe is currently undergoing a rapid process of change, in which "Muslims make their presence felt in politics, economics, law, education and the media". He then suggests that as part of this rapid transformation, "Islam takes its place … often as the dominant player. This is not purely, or even primarily, a matter of numbers, but is more a matter of control of the structures of society. It is not happening by chance but is the result of a careful and deliberate strategy by certain Muslim leaders". According to Sookhdeo, Britain is going through a gradual transformation that allows Muslims to Islamise many aspects of life that also affect the life of non-Muslims. To support this claim, he cited the examples of *hallal* meat, the wearing of the veil, the practice of Islamic law, numerous concessions for British Muslims in education and an increasing number of university posts being funded from Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries. He then makes a claim that the ultimate goal in all these processes is to take control of society.

The notion of the Islamisation of Europe or Britain is also discussed in *Evangelical Times*. In the edition of January 2007, *Evangelical Times* ran a headline on its main page, proclaiming "Wake up to Islam". The article itself was a long report on a conference at Westminster Chapel held on 16 November 2006, attended by 300 Evangelicals. The purpose of the conference, as stated in this report, was "to inform and warn about the rapid progress of Islamisation in the UK". According to this report, most British Muslims are moderates. However, the report claimed that the fact that most Muslims are moderates has not prevented "an accelerating radicalisation of young British Muslims".

While acknowledging the diversity of the Muslim population, it was reported that British Muslims "achieve unity of strategy and action that Christians find hard to emulate" because "they want a territory" in order to increase their "sacred space" with an ultimate goal that "the whole world is a mosque". Moreover, the report continues by claiming that there is an ongoing strategy to impact UK culture with "Islamic consciousness", which is preparing the way for the Islamisation of various societal institutions, such as the educational, legal, medical and financial systems. Islam is then characterised as an "aggressive and spiritually impoverished ideology". Unsurprisingly, the proposed solution is very evangelical, encouraging evangelicals "to take concerted action to plant Christ-proclaiming churches in the Islamic heartlands of Britain".

In fairness, as acknowledged by Bassam Tibi, there is a claim by one Muslim religious leaders that Europe for Muslim immigrants is *dar al-Islam* (house of Islam). While rejecting this idea, Tibi argues that "there is a place for Islam in Europe as a religious belief, however with a pluralist set-up and not by making out of Europe *dar al-Islam*" (Tibi, 2005, pp. 191–192). Tibi's argument is echoed by An-Na`im (2008). Turning back to our discussion, what are we to make of the arguments, particularly in the evangelical media, about the rapid development of the Islamisation of Europe and Britain? First of all, in response to the concerns about churches being turned into mosques, perhaps the answer of Brother Andrew, who is in charge of the Open Doors charity organisation, can be quoted here. In an interview published in *Evangelicals Now* in March 2005, he is quoted as follows:

> [I]n our countries, Islam is not a threat as yet but it is a challenge that we are not accepting. If we do not accept a challenge, it turns into a threat. Sometimes people come to my office and they are very upset: "Oh, the Muslims have bought another empty church, and they have converted it into a mosque, isn't that terrible!" No, that's not terrible, what's terrible is that the church was empty.

Second, on a broader level, analysts have argued that the contention of the Islamisation of Europe or Britain is basically born out of a culture of fear, containing both the fear of losing the "status quo" and the fear of change, simply because for the West today, the present is worse than the past, while the future is uncertain and at the same time "the White man's burden seems to have transformed to the White man's loneliness" (Moisi, 2009). Or, to use Bobby Sayyid's term, what we are witnessing today is the intensity of "the de-centring of the West" (Sayyid, 2003, p. vi). Appadurai (2006) discusses the notion of cultural fear from a different perspective, calling it "fear of small numbers". He claims that

> minorities are the major site for displacing the anxieties of many states about their own minority or marginality (real or imagined) in a world of a few mega states, of unruly economic flows and compromised sovereignties. Minorities … are metaphors and reminders of the betrayal of the classical national project. (p. 43)

Philip Jenkins offers a fair observation, relating the question of Islamisation to that of religion in society. For Jenkins, Europe's transition to a multi-faith society in fact offers important lessons about "the nature of the great faiths and of the changing faces of Christianity" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 283). A similar contention is proposed by Archbishop Rowan Williams, when he observes that

> Europe's distinctive identity … is a "liberal" identity … But the crucial point for the Christian is the conviction that this 'liberal' identity is threatened if it does not have, or is unaware of, that perpetual partner which reminds it that it is under higher judgement. Unless the liberal state is engaged in a continuing dialogue with the religious community, it loses its essential liberalism. It becomes simply dogmatically secular, insisting that religious faith be publicly invisible; or it becomes chaotically pluralist, with no proper account of its legitimacy except the positivist one (the state is the agency that happens to have the monopoly of force) (Williams, 2005; cited also in Jenkins, 2007, p. 272).

cogent ·· social sciences

6. Integration and Muslim schools

The discussion of Muslim schools in Britain relates to the question of integration into British society. The use of the term "faith schools" has mutated from "church schools" or "denominational schools" (*Church Times*, 29 September 2006).The introduction of the term "faith schools" in 2001 clearly offers a public acknowledgement of the multi-faith condition in Britain.

The Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) was established on 14 November 1992. Since then, there has been a campaign for state-supported Muslim schools. In 1997, a breakthrough occurred, with the British Government decision to grant funding for the first time to two Muslim schools: The Islamia Primary School in London and the Al-Furqan Primary School in Birmingham. *Church Times* and *The Tablet* published a number of articles responding to this event, seeing it as a matter of social justice. Following this event, *Church Times*, on 6 February 1998, published an opinion article entitled "Seen from an Islamic perspective", written by Ibrahim Hewitt, the Development Officer for the Association of Muslim State Schools. In this article, Hewitt argues that "these schools make sense on educational grounds … Questions asked about our schools illustrate the degree of ignorance and prejudice (or both) that surrounds the whole concept of full time education for and by Muslims". He continues, "We believe children learn more if they are comfortable in their school environment. Sadly, in many state schools young Muslims are under pressure to abandon their faith and conform to the acceptable norm". Hewitt's argument is based on the idea of social justice, and also on the promotion of a conducive environment for young Muslims in which to nurture their Islamic faith and identity. A news report in *The Tablet*, 17 January 1998, stated that Catholic educationists welcomed the government's decision. Richard Zipfel, of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, was quoted as saying that "far from isolating Muslims from the mainstream of society, it is an effective way of drawing them into the system, as it was with Catholic Schools". In contrast, an article in *Evangelical Times* from March 1998 offered a negative view of the government's decision, quoting Rev. David Streater, Secretary of the Church Society, who argued that "Islam is probably more evangelistic than Christianity itself, and this could be seen as a foot in the door".

Faith-based schools cannot avoid public scrutiny. Even so, on the question of integration, Muslim schools have been scrutinised more intensely than other faith-based schools. A substantial number of articles in *Church Times* and *The Tablet* present the negative opinions of the general public concerning Muslim schools, and propose various arguments intended to debunk such views. Generally, negative views about Muslims schools are based on the arguments that such schools entrench social and cultural divisions, encourage the separatist approach, are lacking intellectual curiosity and promote ignorance, hatred, isolation and even fundamentalism. For present purposes, I will present just two cases covered in the studied media: the remark of the Chief Inspector of Schools, David Bell, and the arguments of Kenneth Baker, in relation to the passage of the Education and Inspection Bill in 2006. Firstly, in a remark made in January 2005, David Bell argued that the increasing number of independent faith-based schools could threaten the social cohesion of British society. He warned some Muslim schools in particular that they "must adapt their curriculum to ensure that it provides pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England, and helps them to acquire an appreciation of and respect for other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony".

The studied media, particularly *Church Times* and *The Tablet*, have noted that a number of religious leaders and educators indeed spoke up in defence of faith-based schools, particularly Muslim schools. Canon John Hall, the Chief Education Officer for the Church of England, points out in his article published in *Church Times*, on 11 February 2005 that a charge similar to Bell's is often promoted by the media to underline the notion that "Muslims cannot really be British, and that Muslim schools can therefore promote only division and segregation". Hall stresses that this kind of charge against Muslim schools is not so different from attitudes towards Roman Catholics and to Roman Catholic schools in the past. He argues that "[I]t is true that Roman Catholic schools have made a major contribution to the community and cohesion in Britain by giving their pupils a good education based on Catholic belief and values. They have not promoted segregation. … What was true in the past of

Catholic schools could be true in the future of Muslim schools". Hall's point is not merely that there is a historical parallel between Catholic schools and Muslim schools. He also challenges the untested assumption that if Muslims send their children to state schools, these children will be well integrated as a result.

Secondly, during the Education and Inspections Bill debate in 2006, Kenneth Baker called for more inclusion in faith schools. Just before the bill returned to the House of Lords for debate on 17 October 2006, *Church Times* published Lord Baker's opinion article, entitled "Act now to stop 'social disaster' of faith schools", in its edition of 29 September 2006. In this article, Lord Baker explained his argument for more inclusion in faith schools:

> For most of our country's [Britain's] history, the only faith schools supported by the state were Anglican and Roman Catholic. But the argument grew, over time, that other faiths should also be allowed their schools, and in 1997 the Government welcomed applications for new, exclusive faith schools. This … was a mistake … [T]here are now two Sikh, one Hindu, one Greek Orthodox, six Muslim, and several Jewish faith schools. All of these are exclusive …. The selection criteria of Muslim schools make it absolutely clear that they will accept only children of the Muslim faith.

Lord Baker then relates "the exclusiveness" of Muslim schools to the notion of extremism. Again, Canon John Hall responded, claiming that Lord Baker's fears were not justified. He backed up this response by suggesting that what drives young Muslims to extremism or to terrorism is

> … a profound sense of dislocation from the surrounding community. That sense of dislocation is not likely to be fuelled by education at a school where the faith and values cohere with those of the family and the worshipping community. It could be fuelled, however, by education at a school that treated pupils' Muslim faith and values as of marginal importance, or required them to be left at the school gate. Moreover, a national policy that refused the inclusion of Muslim schools in the maintained system … would enhance the risk by effectively demonstrating that it is difficult to be fully British and fully Muslim.

In fact, Canon Hall has consistently held a position critical of those who associate Muslim schools with extremism and terrorism. In an article published in *Church Times*, on 26 August 2005 in the wake of 7/7events, entitled "Muslim schools are a good thing", he explains that based on his visits to minority faith schools, he knows that such schools are admirable in their aims and ethos. Mohamed Mukadam, the chairman of the AMS, makes a similar claim. According to Mukadam, young Muslims need "a stable environment in order to develop their identity as Muslim in a creative way. The bombers went to state schools, not Muslim schools. We are not in the business of turning out little terrorists" (*Church Times*, 29 July 2005). The AMS, as reported in *Church Times*, 29 September 2006, was aware of the public impression that "Muslim schools are isolationist and fuelled by a fundamentalist agenda". This organisation launched its own community cohesion programme, designed to help young Muslims and other young people challenged by the identity dilemma around the issue of "Englishness" and "Britishness". In the same edition, *Church Times* published an opinion article by Mukadam, in which he contends that "most clear-thinking people would accept that schools can only be considered as good if they produce good citizens. Muslim schools … produce good citizens of this country". According to Mukadam, this argument is based on the reports and assessment records of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), which give a clear indication that Muslim schools successfully address the problems associated with faith and identity, nurture a high level of discipline and respect, have high levels of achievement and that graduates from faith schools tend to be better at integrating and participating in college, university and in the workplace.

The above discussion indicates how complicated the question of integration is in relation to faith-based schools. It is also interesting to ask how integration can be measured. Canon Alan Billings wrote an article in the *Church Times*, on 29 September 2006, in which he presented and discussed the first findings of the Burnley Project survey of Lancaster University in 2006 on young people's

social attitudes. This survey involved two groups of students from two schools: 125 young white people from a school in Burnley and 159 from a school in Blackburn that is 96% Asian and almost exclusively Muslim. Billings's article was entitled "A new generation of supremacists". The findings of the survey are quite surprising, in terms of measuring a general appreciation of the differences. On the one hand, the survey indicates that 96% of Asian young people said that they had received a religious upbringing and had embraced fundamental liberal values, including respect for others, a willingness to listen and a willingness to learn about the faith of others. On the other hand, the survey indicated that young white people displayed considerable intolerance, such as "a reluctance to learn about other faiths". Based on the data, Billings makes an important note that "if we assume that the values and opinions of the young people reflect those of their families, then it seems reasonable to suggest that the great majority of British Muslims are at home with British values of tolerance, fairness, and respect for the law and for democracy".

This indicates that it is arguably naïve only to address the question of integration in terms of faith-based schools or ethnic minority groups. While integration needs a clear definition, assuming that certain citizens are well integrated risks excluding various segments from the public space, the dictation of public policies and the encouraging of stereotypes and prejudices.

7. Islamophobia and the stereotyping of Muslims

The studied media, particularly *Church Times* and *The Tablet*, consistently report on the disadvantages of Muslims, including the stereotypes and prejudices experienced by Muslims, while at the same time remaining critical of young Muslims involved in various violent attacks. In the previous section, we discussed the first two voluntary-aided Muslim schools. The studied media reported that the fight of Muslims for state-funded Muslim schools provides an example of the many disadvantages experienced by Muslims. In a report published on 5 October 2001, *Church Times* claimed that during the first half of the 1990s, the government opened the door for independent schools to apply to become grant-maintained. While the applications of a few schools were approved, none of the Muslim schools' applications were approved until the end of the 1990s.

With the emergence of the "Islamic terrorism" discourse, hostility towards Muslims increased. Following the events of 9/11 and the 7/7 bombings, the public and the mainstream media clearly refer to Islam as a threat. British Muslims undeniably experienced various prejudices, stereotypes, Islamophobic attacks and even horror and condemnation, as the Islamic terrorism discourse came to dominate the socio-political sphere. The mainstream media clearly separated the great majority of British Muslims from the terrorists, but continued to publish negative images of Islam. In its edition of 29 September 2009, *The Tablet* published an article by Ahmed Versi, the editor of the *Muslim News*. In this article, Versi shared what mainstream Muslims in Britain experience. He pointed out that after the attacks on the US Twin Towers, hate has been directed towards Muslims, with hundreds of Muslims becoming the victims of Islamophobic attacks. Versi described the hostility towards Muslims in detail, as follows: "They are verbally abused, called 'murderers', 'killers'. … Many have been physically attacked. … Mosques have been firebombed, bricks and pigs' heads thrown through their windows". The same kind of attacks intensified following the 7/7 London bombings.

With Muslims facing Islamophobic attacks, articles in *The Tablet* expressed solidarity with Muslims, calling what Islam and British Muslims go through "alienation". Interestingly, when alienation and Islamophobic attacks on British Muslims are addressed, articles in *The Tablet* employ a historical analogy, comparing the experiences of British Muslims and the experience of Catholics who have in the past been the victims of prejudices, stereotypes and attacks (Faimau, 2010). By referring to the experience of Catholics in Britain, articles in *The Tablet* suggest that Catholicism's experience of how "a faith community established itself in a protestant state" could be a *model* for the acceptance and respect of Muslims in Britain, and also a *model* for British Muslims, helping them learn how to integrate within British society. The suggestion is that Islam and British Muslims could *learn* from the experience of Catholicism and British Catholics, and that Catholics could *help* and *sympathise with* Muslims with regard to the notion of integration into British society and values. Based on these

historical parallels, articles in *The Tablet* argue for "a British model of Islam". This proposal mainly deals with the "instruction of faith" in which articles in *The Tablet* advocate the need for "British-educated role-models to lead and to instruct" the young British Muslims in faith.

Reports in *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* take a slightly different approach. In August 2001, *Evangelical Times* published a report about the violence by young Muslims against non-Muslim pensioners in Oldham, headlined "Islamophobia in Oldham". This report claims that the police took little action in this case for reasons of political correctness. Having stated this, the reporter expresses the view that "Muslims must recognise that not all 'islamophobic stereotypes' are unjustified". To support this argument, the reporter presents some claims. Firstly, Christian witness is banned in many Muslim countries, yet British Muslim leaders rarely condemn such practices. Secondly, Oldham's Muslim violence and "no-go" areas fuel images of Muslims as violent bigots. Thirdly, earlier immigrant generation was passive in the face of racist abuse, whereas contemporary Muslim youths retaliate. Fourthly, the Mullahs are unable to relate to the special problems and temptations faced by British Muslim youth. Responding to the notion of "Islamophobia", *Evangelicals Now* dedicated space to the discussion of this term, proposing counter-terms such as "Westophobia" and "Churchophobia". An article published in November 2000, for example, states that "… the phenomenon of Islamophobia cannot be divorced from the prevalence of Westophobia in Muslim countries and among Muslims in Britain. … Westophobia also leads on to another similarly understudied phobia—Churchophobia". (See also *Evangelicals Now,* July 1998 and February 2002.)

On the basis of the above discussion, it is clear that articles in *Church Times* and *The Tablet* are more sympathetic to Muslims who go through the experience of facing prejudices and stereotypes. These two papers also give space to Muslim writers. Articles in *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* give more attention to how Westophobia and Churchophobia have developed within Muslim communities, while suggesting that some "Islamophobic stereotypes" can be justified.

8. Christian and Muslim relations

Articles in the studied media indicate that interfaith dialogue is a significant theme in the context of Christian and Muslim relations in Britain. There have been a variety of initiatives to strengthen Christian and Muslim relations in Britain over the years. A general list of initiatives concerning Christian and Muslim relations can be seen in Table 2 below. The initiatives intended to strengthen Christian and Muslim relations take various forms, such as conferences, debates, seminars, multi-faith meetings and joint statements by religious leaders. These include dialogue with religious leaders and scholars, and meetings with religious educators. These dialogues have included dialogue on religious experience, on social concerns and on conflict resolution. At the grass-roots level, there have been community meetings, communal worshipping and Christian–Muslim community organising.

The websites of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the UK Evangelical Alliance publish various documents concerning Christian–Muslim relations. Among others, these include materials that cover basic information about Islam, introductions to dialogue with Muslims and practical guidelines when visiting a mosque. Besides this, these churches form various interfaith dialogue committees on every level, including the appointment of Diocesan Interfaith Relations Advisers, particularly within the Church of England and the Catholic Church. The Church of England, for example, states the purpose of "Interfaith Relations and Presence and Engagement" in this manner: "The Church of England, in partnership with other Christian churches, seeks to build up good relations with people of other faith traditions, and where possible to co-operate with them in service to society" (see http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/interfaith/). The Roman Catholic Church develops the notion of interfaith dialogue on much the same basis. One notable gesture of the Catholic Church is the Pope's regular Eid greetings, addressed to Muslims all over the world at the end of the Month of Ramadan. This message normally reaches the Muslim community, the mosques and local community organisations. The notion of interfaith dialogue has also captured the attention of Evangelical churches. The former

cogent ··social sciences

Table 2. A selection of various initiatives concerning Christian and Muslim relations		
Date	**Topic**	**Event, place and participants**
October 1998	"People of faith in Britain today and tomorrow"	An organised conference by the Faith and Society Group held at the Islamic Foundation in Leicestershire, attended by Christians and Muslims
October 2000	"Faiths in society: A challenge to policy makers"	An organised conference by the Faith and Society Group held at the Carlisle Business Centre in Bradford
September 2001	Christian–Muslim relationships	Establishment of a joint Christian–Muslim planning group at Lambeth Palace, London
January 2002	Christians and Muslims face to face	The "Building Bridges" seminar held at Lambeth Palace in London, attended by 40 prominent Christians and Muslims
March 2003	Multi-faith encounter	Multi-faith meeting called by the Watford International Faith Association
April 2003	Dialogues of Christians and Muslims	The "Building Bridges" seminar held in Qatar, attended by 15 Christian scholars and 15 Muslim scholars
June 2003	"Faith-full Citizens: Christians and Muslims in Britain"	An organised conference by the Faith and Society Group held at the London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in London
January 2004	Christian–Muslim forum	The establishment of Christian–Muslim forum
May 2005	Christians and Muslims face to face	The "Building Bridges" seminar held in Sarajevo
March 2006	Justice and rights	The "Building Bridges" seminar held in Washington DC
November 2006	Christian–Muslim forum	Imams and ministers conference (organised by the Christian–Muslim forum)
December 2007	Christians and Muslims face to face	The "Building Bridges" seminar held in Singapore

General Director of the UK Evangelical Alliance, The Revd. Joel Edward, addresses this in a 2008 interview with *Christian Today*:

> I think we are still afraid of inter-faith dialogue. Ecumenism is now an old hat, although a very significant number of Evangelicals are involved in ecumenical discussions. But the environment within which the Gospel grew was multi-faith and inter-faith dialogue …

The importance of Christian–Muslim relations is noticeable in the British Christian media, in the published reports on interreligious meetings or conferences and articles on interreligious dialogue in Britain. The 1998 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion gave particular attention to other faiths, including Islam. A news report concerning the conference, published in *Church Times*, on 7 August 1998, stated that "dialogue remained necessary, and it was not just for academics nor even religious leaders, but neighbours and work colleagues". The purpose of dialogue is often questioned, particularly when dialogue involves believers of different religions and religious traditions. The same report indicates that the Lambeth conference acknowledged that there could be no "mission" without dialogue, and that conversion was valued but proselytism was unacceptable. In fact, one of the resolutions proposed by the interfaith team in the Lambeth 1998 conference is that "there is no place in the Anglican communion for material inducements, psychological pressure, or the targeting of individuals or groups" (see the website of the Church of England). Many have argued that rather

than theological dialogue, attempts at interfaith dialogue should devote more attention to personal relationships at the human level, based on respect for human dignity. The argument behind this proposal is that there are many differences to be dealt with in theological dialogue, and that theological dialogue may even create a trap that would result in falling into religious or cultural relativism. The letter of 138 Muslim scholars in 2007, addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and Christian leaders, is one of the modern major initiatives from the Muslim world for a theological dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

Compared to *Church Times* and *The Tablet*, it is only *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* that cover debates between Muslims and Christians on theological issues (Riddell, 2004, p. 151). These debates seem to be a matter of stating a stand taken by a religion, in this case Christianity and Islam, rather than finding common ground for dialogue. In general, it could be pointed out that churches develop their own ways or policies concerning Christian–Muslim interaction (Riddell, 2004, pp. 211–213). Generally, traditional and liberal protestant churches represented in the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church engage with Muslim communities but tend to ignore interaction with radical Muslim groups. Only Christian evangelicals choose to develop traditional mission and involve themselves in debates with radical Islamists, as already explained, although it is not always clear to what purpose these debates are organised.

9. The argument of reciprocity

In dealing with British Muslims or European Muslims, the argument of reciprocity is included in reports and articles covered in all the studied media. This argument is often used by high-level leaders of Christian churches. The point of this argument is based upon the idea of religious freedom, and therefore calls for advocacy on behalf of Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries. Cardinal Arinze (2002) of the Catholic Church, the former president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue argues that

> The right to religious freedom … applies wherever there is human being. People of the majority religion in a country should not therefore deny to religious minorities in that country the very freedom of religion that they claim for their coreligionists in another country where they are in the minority. This is what reciprocity is all about (p. 134; cited in Riddell, 2004, p. 181).

Indeed, the articles in the studied media are critical of the hostility of Muslims towards Christians in Muslim-majority countries (Faimau, 2013). In discussing the intolerant attacks against Christians, the studied media employ the reciprocity argument as a reminder, particularly for Muslim communities in Britain or in the West, on the grounds that "Western and Christian acceptance of Muslim religious freedom requires Muslims to recognise Christian religious freedom" (*The Tablet*'s editorial 25 March 2006). In the wake of global protests in response to Pope Benedict's Regensburg lecture, an editorial of *The Tablet*, 23 September 2006 used the reciprocity argument to argue for more mutual understanding. This editorial proposed that "just as Catholics should try to understand Islamic sensibilities, Muslims should be prepared to answer painful and difficult questions. They also need to heed the Pope's justifiable request for more reciprocity: religious freedom for Muslims in the West must be matched by religious freedom for Christians in the East". The argument of reciprocity is also used when immigration and the spread of the Islamic faith are discussed. Responding to these issues, particularly in the context of Italy, Giacomo Cappuzzi, the emeritus Bishop of Lodi in Italy, contends: "Let them [Muslims] come to Italy. Their intention to spread Islam is their right too, just as we Christians have the right to proclaim Christ throughout the world" (*The Tablet*, 21 October 2000). In the wake of the plan to build a mosque in the Northern Italian town of Lodi in 2000, the then Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, put forward a similar argument. Sodano argues that "Muslims have the right to build a mosque in the Northern Italian town of Lodi … but Christians have an equal right to build Churches in Saudi Arabia. … So far this is not possible" (*The Tablet*, 28 October 2000).

Very often, the reciprocal argument is addressed to Muslim leaders or scholars in Britain. In the events of the teddy row in Sudan, an article published in *Church Times*, on 7 December 2007 argues that this event could be a special moment for Muslim leaders in Britain "to behave as if they were British as much as they were Muslim". In other words, the writer of the article supposes that Muslim leaders have a moral responsibility to address the row. Articles in *Evangelicals Now* take the reciprocal argument to another level when discussing the notion of Islamophobia vs. Westophobia or Churchophobia, as pointed out earlier. The argument developed in these articles is that Islamophobia cannot be "divorced" from Westophobia or Churchophobia in Muslim countries and among Muslims in Britain. This position is based on the following reasons: Muslimphobic criticism of the West goes far beyond the opposition of Western policies towards the Muslim world; discrimination against Christian minorities in Islamic countries is not addressed seriously by Muslim leaders in the West; Christians in Muslim-majority countries are not given the same rights and freedom as those enjoyed by Muslim minorities in the West.

The reciprocal argument can certainly facilitate efforts to bring peaceful coexistence on a global level. Besides, the voice of Western or Christian advocacy for the rights of minority groups and religious freedom in Muslim-majority countries is understandable. However, such an argument cannot be used to justify the idea that since Christians in Muslim-majority countries do not enjoy religious freedom, then Muslims in Western societies should be denied their rights. An-Na'im (2010) suggests that the call to uphold all human rights, including religious freedom, should be "a global joint-venture" through which "religious freedom can neither be advanced in isolation of other fundamental human rights nor sustained by imperial imposition" (*The Immanent Frame*, para. 1). Similarly, the call for Muslim leaders or scholars in the West for advocacy on behalf of Christians in Muslim-majority countries does make sense. However, such a call should be accompanied by a clear understanding that Islam is not a monolithic religion, as it is internally diverse, just like Christianity. Moreover, the efforts of and the challenges faced by Muslim reformists in the West are often overlooked. What the general public does not fully realise is that reformist Muslim thinkers and leaders often go through various unfavourable challenges inside and outside Muslim communities. Take Tariq Ramadan, one of the most prominent Muslim thinkers in the Western societies, as an example. Outside of Muslim communities, he was once described as "the Muslim Martin Luther" but also as an "Islamic militant". Others see him as an "open" and "moderate" Muslim, while some see him as a potential "supporter of terrorism". Within Muslim communities, he even faces charges such as being called "akafir (disbeliever), a murtad (apostate) or an impostor seeking to adulterate Islam and destroy it from within" (Ramadan, 2010). In short, the reciprocal argument needs to take into account both cultural or religious structure and the motivation that lies behind a reciprocal demand.

10. Conclusion

The obvious limitation of this study is its focus on the existing materials published in four British Christian print media. Nevertheless, the identified themes in this study offer alternative discourses on Islam and Muslims that may lead to a more comprehensive study on the representations of Islam and Muslims in various alternative media outlets. During our discussion, it has become clear that the studied media represent British Muslims within the frame of the politics of being Muslim and being British. This can be seen in the variety of discourses around the issues of integration and multiculturalism, Muslim schools and the advancement of integration, Islamophobia and the stereotyping of Muslims, Muslim and Christian relations in Britain and the reciprocity argument. While the question of British Muslim identity has been an important topic, the discursive representation of British Muslims in the British Christian print media indicates that the "discovery" of identity does not happen in isolation but is negotiated "through dialogue, partly overt, partly internalized, with other" (Taylor, 1992, p. 47). Articles in the studied media provide a basic argument that the process of integration requires the recognition of British Muslim identity as well as the role of Muslims in the wider British society. This is necessary because the absence of recognising cultural identity and the emergence of ignorance towards cultural and religious diversity make cultural negotiation almost impossible.

cogent ·· social sciences

In general, Islam and British Muslims were represented favourably in both *The Tablet* and *Church Times*. Both print media provided space for Muslim writers to express their opinions concerning Islam and the questions of being Muslims in Britain. *Evangelical Times* and *Evangelicals Now* took a more confrontational way in representing Islam and Muslims. Looking at the themes identified in the study, articles in the *Church Times* and *The Tablet* generally represent British Muslims favourably, including the views of Muslim schools in relation to the question of integration into British society. Both print media represented Muslims schools as venues for public education towards the integration of Muslims into the British society. It should be pointed out, however, that both print media were being critical of the use of multiculturalism as a framework in addressing the question of being Muslims in the wider British society. It was suggested that to a certain extent multiculturalism may reinforce the idea that Muslim identity and British identity are not complementary as they are pulling in opposite directions. In this context, "a British model of Islam" was proposed as an integrative model that would allow the identity formation of Muslims in Britain as well as creating a space for the integration of Muslims into the British society. *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* had a different approach. In relating the presence of Muslims in Britain to a question of the Islamisation of Western society, articles in *Evangelicals Now* and *Evangelical Times* generally represented an unfavourable view of British Muslims.

Despite the above different views, initiatives of interfaith dialogue have occurred in Britain over the years. Such initiatives support the fundamental insight that recognising differences is possible when communities have the space for cultural negotiation, and the space to reread and renew cultural contents. Reports and analysis in *Church Times* and *The Tablet* generally emphasised the importance of dialogue between Christians and Muslims as a way of dealing with cultural and religious differences. Taking into account these negotiations in dialogue, reciprocal demand is needed in social relationships. Nevertheless, it was viewed that this cannot be turned into an obligation for the purpose of integration or cultural recognition. The best that can be achieved is that the reciprocal argument becomes a moral argument to advance a more dialogic space, one that is appreciative of cultural diversity.

Author details
Gabriel Faimau[1]
E-mail: gabriel.faimau@mopipi.ub.bw
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8177-3520
[1] Department of Sociology, University of Botswana, Private Bag UB 00705, Gaborone, Botswana.

References
Allen, C. (2012). *A review of the evidence relating to the representation of Muslims and Islam in the British media*. Birmingham, AL: Institute of Applied Social Studies. Retrieved April 20, 2016, from http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/IASS/news-events/MEDIA-ChrisAllen-APPGEvidence-Oct2012.pdf
Allsopp, J. (2012). The politics of belonging in Britain. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved January 16, from https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/jennifer-allsopp/politics-of-belonging-in-britain
Ameli, S.R., Marandi, S.M., Ahmed, S., Kara, S. and Merali, A. (2007). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation*. Wembley: Islamic Human Rights Commission.
An-Na`im, A. A. (2008). *Islam and the secular state*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.4159/9780674033764
An-Na'im, A. A. (2010). "Good Intentions" alone are not enough! *The Immanent Frame*. Retrieved February 24, 2010, from http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2010/03/01/good-intentions/
Ansari, H. (2004). *'The Infidel Within': Muslims in Britain since 1800*. London: Hurst & Company.
Appadurai, A. (2006). *Fear of small numbers*. Durham: Duke University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822387541
Arinze, F. (2002). *Religions for peace: A call for solidarity to the religions of the world*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
Bowen, J. R. (2010, February 1). *Nothing to fear: Misreading Muslim immigration in Europe, Boston review*. Retrieved February 24, 2010, from http://bostonreview.net/BR35.1/bowen.php
Faimau, G. (2010). Naming Muslims as partners: The discursive representation of Islam and Muslims in a British Catholic newspaper. *Journalism Studies, 12*, 474–489.
Faimau, G. (2013). British Christian print media and the framing of Islam and Muslims through the lens of Christian persecution. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 34*, 340–355. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2013.807227
Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity.
Fox, J., & Sandler, S. (2006). *Bringing religion into international relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
Gilliat-Ray, S. (2010). *Muslims in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511780233
Greenslade, R. (2005). *Seeking scapegoats: The coverage of asylum in the UK press*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.
Jenkins, P. (2007). *God's continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe's religious crisis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Jenkins, R. (2014). *Social identity*. London: Routledge.

Kabir, N. A. (2010). *Young British Muslims: Identity, culture, politics and the media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Mangolis, M. (2014). *Rethinking the relationship between religion and politics: A test of the life cycle theory* (MIT Political Science Department Research Paper No. 2013-36). Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. Retrieved from http://ssrn.com/abstract=2325662. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2325662

Meer, N. (2010). *Citizenship, identity and the politics of multiculturalism*. New York, NY: Palgrave. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230281202

Meer, N. (2012). Misrecognizing Muslim consciousness in Europe. *Ethnicities, 12*, 178–196. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468796811431295

Modood, T. (2005a). *Multicultural politics: Racism, ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Modood, T. (2005b). Remaking multiculturalism after 7/7. *Open Democracy*. Retrieved February 20, 2009, from http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-terrorism/multiculturalism_2879.jsp

Modood, T. (2007). *Multiculturalism: A civic idea*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Moisi, D. (2009). *The geopolitics of emotion: How cultures of fears and hope are reshaping the world*. London: Random House.

Moore, K., et al. (2008). *Images of Islam in the UK: The representation of British Muslims in the National print news media 2000–2008*. Retrieved August 20, 2008, from http://www.channel4.com/news/media/pdfs/Cardiff%20Final%20Report.pdf

Morey, P., & Yaqin, A. (2011). *Framing Muslims*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674061149

Newman, B., & Smith, M. C. (2007). Fanning the flames: Religious media consumption and American politics. *American Politics Research, 35*, 846–877. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1532673X07302335

Petley, J., & Richardson, R. (2011). *Pointing the finger: Islam and Muslims in the British media*. London: Oneworld.

Pew Forum. (2009). *Mapping the global Muslim population: A report on the size and distribution of the world's Muslim population*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved February 24, 2010, from http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/Muslimpopulation/Muslimpopulation.pdf

Poole, E.. (2000, April). Media representation and British Muslims. *Dialogue*. Retrieved February 12, 2010, from http://www.al-bab.com/media/articles/poole0005.htm

Poole, E. (2002). *Reporting Islam: Media representations of British Muslims*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Ramadan, T. (2004). *Western Muslims and the future of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ramadan, T. (2010, February 12). Good Muslim, bad Muslim. *New Statesman*. Retrieved February 12, 2010, from http://www.newstatesman.com/religion/2010/02/muslim-religious-moderation

Raza, M. S. (1991). *Islam in Britain: Past, present and the future*. Leicester: Volcano Press.

Richardson, J. E. (2001). British Muslims in the broadsheet press: A challenge to cultural hegemony? *Journalism Studies, 2*, 221–242. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616700120042097

Richardson, J. E. (2004). *(Mis) Representing Islam: The racism and rhetoric of the British Broadsheet Press*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.9

Richardson, J. E. (2006). Who gets to speak? A study of sources in the broadsheet press. In E. Poole & J. E. Richardson (Eds.), *Muslims and the news media* (pp. 103-115). London: I.B. Tauris.

Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Riddell, P. G. (2004). *Christians and Muslims: Pressures and potential in a post-9/11 world*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.

Runnymede Trust. (1997). *Islamophobia: A challenge for us all*. London: Author.

Saeed, A. (2007). Media, racism and Islamophobia: The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. *Sociology Compass, 1*, 443–462. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/soco.2007.1.issue-2

Saeed, A. (2009). Muslims in the west and their attitudes to full participation in western societies: Some reflections. In G. B. Levey & T. Modood (Eds.), *Secularism, religion and multicultural citizenship* (pp. 200-215). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sardar, Z. (2005, January 21). Islam and Britain. *The Guardian*. Retrieved February 10, 2010, from http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/jan/21/islamandbritain.comment15

Sayyid, S. (2003). *A fundamental fear: Eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism*. London: Zed Books.

Sniderman, P. M., & Hagendoorn, L. (2007). *When ways of life collide: Multiculturalism and its discontents in the Netherlands*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, C. (1992). *The ethics of authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tibi, B. (2005). *Islam between culture and politics*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230204157

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). Opinions and ideologies in the press. In A. Bell & P. Garrett (Eds.), *Approaches to media discourse* (pp. 21–63). Oxford: Blackwell.

van Dijk, T. A. (2000). New(s) racism: A discourse analytical approach. In S. Cottle (Ed.), *Ethnic minorities and the media: Changing cultural boundaries* (pp. 33–49). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Williams, R. (2005). *Forum debate: Is Europe at its end?* Retrieved February 10, 2010, from http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/958