
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF ISLAMIC STATE'S CLAIMS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS MUSLIM REFUGEES

A Case Study of the Danish Media Coverage



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Abstract

The aim of this study is to uncover if there are any correlations between the Danish media coverage of Islamic State's claims of responsibility and public opinion towards Muslim refugees in Denmark. I examine this through an online survey in which I receive 249 responses. It is important to mention, that all of the questions in my questionnaire are asked on the basis of twelve Danish headlines of IS's claims of responsibility, meaning that all answers I obtain are ideally based on such headlines. The survey is set out to explore public opinion towards Muslim refugees in the aftermath of the Danish media coverage of IS claims of responsibility which is done through relevant sections which all serve their purpose in the analysis as well as the discussion.

The study firstly contains a short background of the Danish media coverage of IS's claim of responsibility; ultimately showing the extensively thereof. What follows is a theoretical account of the nexus between terrorism and the media which will help understand why these two are universally interlinked.

In the theoretical account, I point to Stanley Cohen's Moral Panics and Appadurai's fear of small numbers. These two notions are relevant to consider in regards to this study because both deal with fear of a specific group in society which, among other things, is made up by the media.

Because of this fear of specific groups of people I also include concepts such as; Xenophobia and Islamophobia as both initially set out to explain fear and mistrust towards the other. The other being exogenous groups of people.

In the last part of the theoretical section, I combine other studies which examine othering through Islamic terrorism. This is included to uncover if there are any similarities between my study and the negative media representation of Muslims that the studies deal with. This ultimately is also set out to strengthen any findings that might arise from my questionnaire.

The Methodological section is a description of the work procedure of the online survey. The section includes an account of the questionnaire design, description of my respondents and deals with considerations in terms of limitation and ethical concerns. Here I also give an account of content analysis which is a method that I employ when I analyze the answers obtained from the survey.

Even though my sample size is 249, it is still a small sample that cannot draw tendencies to all Danes in general. Therefore, I also include a section that encompasses of other relevant statistics in Denmark of public opinion with topics such as; non-western immigration, refugees and Muslims in general.

My analysis clarifies that many of my respondents show negative attitudes towards Muslim refugees in the aftermath of the media coverage many are othering Muslim refugees as a potential danger to

Danish society. Yet, the analysis also shows that many of my respondents are positive towards the settlement of Muslim refugees in Denmark. However, forty-six of my respondents have a Muslim background which is important to consider when looking at the findings of the survey.

What is mostly interesting is that it seems that the already negative perception of Muslims in general has come to have its tool on Muslim refugees as well. The analysis suggests that it is difficult for the respondents to distinguish attitudes towards Muslim refugees from attitudes towards all Muslims in general. The findings are heavily marked by the unwillingness and fear that many of my respondents show from allowing the Muslim population from growing in Denmark.

By employing Appadurai's notion of ideocide my findings suggest that the idea of Islam promoted by headlines of IS can create battles between the Muslim idea of Islam and the idea of Islam as a result of the one-sided media coverage as the Danish media coverage of IS claimed involvement in attacks surely contribute to the othering of Muslim refugees as a danger to society.

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List of abbreviations

ISIS - Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

Isil – Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

Daesh - al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham

IS – Islamic State

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The Islamic State in its original form has been smashed. But for all the reasons that brought it about, IS and everything it represented will still be around in one form or another for a very long time to come (Muir, 2017).

Introduction

In 2014, 10 million people in Syria and Iraq were living under the rule of the Islamic State. The organization is known under different names, such as; Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isil), Islamic State (IS), and al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham (Daesh). The different names of the group have continuously changed depending on territorial occupation and translation into other languages (Irshaid, 2015). I will refer to the group as the Islamic State (IS).

After IS declared their caliphate in 2014, they have been linked to a minimum of 150 attacks in 29 countries across the world; killing thousands of people and scattering fear among millions (Muir, 2017). One of the ways in which IS has been linked to various attacks has been through their extensive use of social media platforms. The success of the organization on social media made most parts of the world fear the global reach of IS. The Islamic State has come to be known as a very successful communicator through social media which among other things, has attracted thousands of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria (Lakomy, 2019, p. 1). Through their social media platforms, IS has also managed to encourage European Muslims to carry out attacks in their name; even if they themselves have not had any organizational impact on the attacks. Through their online magazines they have simply encouraged Muslims around the world to kill the ‘disbelievers’ wherever they may be. However, during the latest months, the Islamic State seem to be declining as it has lost all territories, administrative structure and their finance (Lister, Sanchez, Bixler, O’Key, Hogenmiller, Tawfeeq, 2018). Yet, IS claims to be responsible for the recent terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. The group has published a statement on their news agency, saying that the attackers were fighters of the group leaving suspense as to how much the group has declined (Safi, Burke, 2019).

Despite of the confusion of Islamic State’s strength, the consequences of their rise is interesting to examine. Multiple conflict and terrorism studies have focused on the origin, operations and recruitment strategies of IS. Some have also focused on their use of Social media. For instance, the latest study from studies in conflict and terrorism is titled “Recruitment and Incitement to Violence in the Islamic State’s Online Propaganda: Comparative Analysis of Dabiq and Rumiya” which focuses on IS’s propaganda methods through their online magazines (Lakomy, 2019).

However, little attention has been given to the outcome of the media coverage of Islamic State's statements of responsibility¹. This is interesting to consider for multiple reasons.

Firstly, because IS's claims of responsibility boomed simultaneously with the so-called European refugee crisis where 1,321,560 (BBC, 2016), refugees were seeking protection in Europe (Muir, 2017).

This was in the same year as IS declared their Caliphate in parts of Iraq and Syria (Brady, 2017, p. 61).

Therefore, this study will attempt to uncover if the Danish media coverage of Islamic State's claims of responsibility has affected public opinion towards Muslim refugees. This will be done in different parts. I will shortly introduce the Danish media coverage of IS statements of responsibility from 2014 until the present. Secondly, I will outline different theoretical aspects of the nexus between terrorism and the media. I will also outline the notion of 'othering' by firstly accounting for Stanley Cohen's² notion of 'moral panics' and later examining Appadurai's³ 'fear of small numbers. In the section that follows I will specifically look at the othering of Muslims through Islamic terrorism by looking at other relevant studies hereof. Next I look at xenophobia and islamophobia in Europe.

The study also contains a methods section explaining the methodological approach of the online survey and to this study. In the survey I attempt to uncover the reactions of twelve Danish headlines of IS's statement of responsibility which I later will analyze by applying the theoretical implications. However, because of my small sample size, I will also introduce other datasets carried out in Denmark with similar focus as this study which ultimately can strengthen any findings that might derive from my study.

The last part will function as a discussion which in the end will offer subjects of further research. The findings of my study will be gathered in a joined conclusion and will be compiled on the basis of the following research question;

Research question

Has the Danish media coverage of Islamic State's claims of responsibility strategy affected public opinion towards Muslim refugees?

¹ A claim of responsibility refers to when a group claims to have executed an attack (Hoffman, 2010, p. 616).

² A sociologist and criminologist at the London School of Economics

³ Goddard Professor in Media, Culture and Communication at New York University, and Senior Fellow at the institute for Public Knowledge.

Background of the Media coverage of Islamic State's Claims of Responsibility

The following is a short introduction of international and Danish media coverage of IS's claim of responsibility from 2014 until the present. This is offered as background knowledge of the intensive publicity that their claims of responsibility has received.

Islamic State's global publicity peaked simultaneously with the announcement of their caliphate in Iraq and Syria in 2014. The organization started using social media platforms to claim responsibility for terrorist attacks all over the globe; linking hundreds of deadly attacks with the name of the Islamic State. In my bachelor's project I examined 18 terrorist attacks which IS has claimed responsibility for⁴. These attacks were committed in Europe and the US between 2014-2017. What I found was that only 4 of the attacks had somewhat direct connection and communication to the Islamic State itself (Mohammadi, Xhinovci, 2017, p. 25). There is a lot of suspicion to be drawn to IS involvement of attacks they claim responsibility for. In an article posted in the Independent, it says that IS took responsibility for the Las Vegas shootings in 2017 which killed 59 people and injured at least 527 more (Abadi, 2017). According to the article there were no evidence of connection between the gunman and IS. The article also suggest that IS has taken responsibility for other attacks that did not have any evidence of connection to the Islamic State. In another article in NBC news, it also questions IS claims of the shootings in Las Vegas. Peter Vincent who is a former official at the Department of Homeland Security and a counterterrorism expert says that even if IS falsely claim responsibility for an attack their followers will still see it as a victory even if others are beginning to see through their claim of responsibility (Smith, 2017).

Furthermore, the way in which Islamic State has been linked to numerous attacks in the media has mainly been through IS own statements on social media platforms where a standard claim of responsibility has been published where the group identifies the perpetrators as 'soldiers' or 'fighters' of the Islamic State.

For instance, in the recent attacks in Sri Lanka, IS wrote on its news agency that the attackers were 'fighters' of IS and later released a video of the attackers swearing allegiance to the group (Burke, 2019).

⁴ My Bachelor's project has been the source of inspiration for this current study as I wanted to explore if there are any consequences of the media coverage of IS's claims of responsibility. Given that my bachelor has not been published I have attached it as an appendix to this study

In the Danish media coverage of Islamic State's, the claim of responsibility is almost identical. For instance, in an article from TV2 Nyheder the claim of responsibility is described as follows:

Several days ago, two supporters of the Islamic State conducted an attack on a center in San Bernadino, California, says the daily radio broadcast from the Islamic State (Ritzau, 2015).

Another example is found in an article from Jyllandsposten:

According to ATF, the attacker that targeted the police in Copenhagen is a soldier of the Islamic State and carried out the attack as a result of the call to attack countries in the coalition, writes Amaq (Ritzau, 2016).

A last example that I will include is a statement of responsibility described in an article in Politiken:

The person who performed the operation in Nice, France, where he drove people down was one of the Islamic State soldiers, writes the group and continues; He performed the operation in response to calls to attack the nationals of the countries that are part of the coalition fighting Islamic State (Koch, 2016).

As one can see, information about the execution of the attacks and the attackers is something that the Islamic State does not offer. Yet, the Danish media highly publicize these claim of responsibility. For instance, in an article in TV2 Nyheder, reads the following headline;

“Islamic State takes responsibility for attack in Paris: Policeman and wife killed” (Ritzau, 2016).

Another article in BT has the following headline:

“Islamic State takes responsibility for deadly attack in London” (Ritzau, 2017). In a similar note, Politiken writes:

“Four men arrested in Nice – IS takes responsibility for truck attack” (Koch, 2016).

Further, Information has also identical reports of IS claim of responsibility. For instance, on December the 5th, 2015 they published an article with the following headline:

“IS: Our supporters executed the shootings in California” (Ritzau, 2015).

Jyllandsposten has also followed this pattern as one of many of their articles read:

“IS-news agency: Suspected Christiania gunman was an IS-soldier” (Ritzau, 2016).

A last example that I will include, is an article published in Berlingske with the following headline:

“Islamic States takes responsibility for arsonist attack in Malmö” (Ritzau, 2016).

These are not the only Danish articles with such headlines. If one searches for ‘Islamic State takes the blame’ on electronic webpage of TV2 Nyheder there are about 18 articles with similar headlines (TV2 Nyheder, 2019).

On BT’s searching page you can find over 30 articles with similar headlines by either typing “Islamic State takes responsibility” or “Islamic State takes the blame” (BT, 2019).

Looking at Politiken’s search page I find about 22 articles with headings similar to “Islamic State takes the fault”.

Moving on to Information, I find over 30 articles mostly with the same headlines and “Islamic State claims to be responsible for” (Information, 2019).

In Jyllandsposten I also find about 30 articles with similar headlines (Jyllandsposten, 2019).

At last, I look into Berlingske’s search page and also find over 30 articles reporting about IS claim of responsibility (Berlingske, 2019).

Combined I find about 160 similar headings in these six media sources.

It is important to mention that here I am not looking at subheadings nor the actual content of the articles when I am searching for reports about IS’s statements of responsibility. I am solely looking at the headlines, which might indicate that I have not included all reports about IS claim of responsibility in these media sources as there could be reports of IS with other headlines than what I have included.

Also, I am not looking at all Danish media sources but focus on 6 widely different newspapers. Hence, the Danish publicity of IS’s statements is most likely more extensive than I elaborate here. Yet, it is difficult not to recognize the extensive Danish media coverage of IS claims of responsibility with a standard headline reading “*Islamic State takes responsibility*”. It is also important to mention that I am not solely looking at attacks in Europe and the US but headlines which are reporting about IS’s claims all over the globe. These attacks and the self-claimed linkage to the group have been highly publicized which has added to the highly mentioning of IS all over the globe.

Theory

The sections that follow are part of the theory basis which deals with concepts such as: othering, moral panics, fear of small numbers, xenophobia and islamophobia. These notions will be further elaborated upon and applied to the findings of the survey and will help understand the answers from the survey.

Theoretical Perspectives of Terrorism and the Media

The succeeding section is an overview of relevant theoretical aspects of the nexus between the media and terrorism. I will apply these to the findings of the survey regarding the possible correlation between the Danish media coverage of IS statement of responsibility and public opinion towards Muslim refugees.

Looking specifically at the notion of terrorism, there is no universal agreement of the definition because the term is difficult to define (Eid, 2014, p. 16). Mahmoud Eid suggests the following definition:

Terrorism is the persistent, shocking, premediated, covert and/or overt, individual and/or collective, and direct and/or indirect threat and/or use of conventional and/or modern and military and/or nonmilitary tactics of violence, force, and/or coercion that is/are initiated and/or retaliated by and against individuals, groups, organizations, government, and/or states, on national, transnational, and/or international levels, resulting complete or partial severe loss/injury of lives, destruction/damage.... (Eid, 2014, p. 26).

Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman offer the following definition;

Terrorism is a method of combat in which random or symbolic victims serve as an instrumental target of violence. These instrumental victims share group or class characteristics which form the basis for their selection for victimization. Through previous use of violence or the credible threat of violence other member of that group or class are put in a state of chronic fear (terror)... (Schmid, Jongman, 2017, p. 1-2).

What both definitions emphasize is the violence that it entails. In recent years, terrorism has become deadlier as its goal is to cause the highest death toll and damage rather than targeting political objects (Eid, 2014, p. 26). Despite of the difficulty of defining and understanding the term, one aspect of terrorism that seems widely accepted among scholars is the importance that the media play in relation to it.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the vital role that the media play in shaping public opinion. This is so because the media choose what kind of subjects the public should focus on by reporting or choosing not to report about a specific issue or event. It is the media that decide when an issue or event is of public concern – media decide what is covered and what is not (Wilson, 2018, p. 35).

A, F. Lemieux and M, J. Boyle argue that the media have a vital role in distributing the messages of a terrorist attack. By giving terrorist attacks or organizations media attention, the media actively spread fear among the audiences even if this might be an unintended effect of their news reporting (Lemieux, Boyle, 2012, p. 602).

According to Mahmoud Eid, the media coverage of terrorism can help reduce uncertainty and provide governments with the necessary information to overcome terror threats. However, media coverage can also cause more chaos and confusion because the information about a given terrorist attack can be inaccurate and cause people to act in a way that might harm themselves or others (Eid, 2014, p. 247). Eid also outlines a guideline that the media should follow in times of terror. For instance, he suggests that the media should avoid giving a terrorist organization a platform where they can distribute their propaganda. Eid also argues that the media should firstly paraphrase possible demands that the terrorist/terrorist organization might have as oppose to presenting them directly. At last, he also mentions that the media should also avoid ‘catchphrases’ when reporting about terrorism (Eid, 2014, p. 249). These guidelines are given to the media to avoid inaccurate information which can lead to further damage. According to Eid, it is important to acknowledge that the media do not solely function as an information source, rather the media have a responsibility for *how* they report information; especially news/information regarding terrorism. That is, Eid suggests that the media have an active role in the conceptualization of terrorism among their audiences (Eid, 2014, p. 250). Ultimately, the media have a responsibility on how they report terrorist events and not just a responsibility to report about such. They have to be careful when labeling actors and chose whether or not they want to report about terror events. According to Eid, it becomes difficult to remember one's ethical responsibility in times of stress, which often is the case during terrorist attacks which can explain why some news reports end up causing more damage than good. Eid also suggest that after 9/11, the media have caused concerning problems as they, for one, have labelled the aftermath of 9/11 as ‘the war on terror’ which since has become a selling label (Eid, 2014, p. 253). The problem remains what kind of coverage a terrorist attack or a terrorist organization should receive from the media.

Otherring through Moral Panic and Fear of Small Numbers

This section will outline the notion of ‘othering’ by applying Stanley Cohen’s ‘moral panics’ and Arjun Appadurai’s ‘fear of small numbers’ as the main theoretical implications. This is included for later analysis of examining the answers from the survey.

Firstly, it is important to contemplate what othering really means. For instance, according to John a. Powell and Stephen Menendian othering is a process that creates inequality between different kinds of humans based on group identities (Powell, Menendian, 2016, p. 17). These inequalities can arise between different groups of religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status etc. The process of othering often relate to issues such as discrimination and racism.

According to Stanley Cohen societies are subjects to periods of what he calls ‘moral panics’ (Cohen, 2011, p. 1). The moral panics are evoked by either an episode or a group of people who have become defined as a threat towards the society and societal values. This threat is defined by the mass media and politicians. The length of the threat varies and sometimes the perception of that threat can last for a very long time and can change the way in which society sees itself (Cohen, 2011, p. 1). This perceived threat can be something that has existed for a long time that has suddenly been transformed to an issue of moral panics. Cohen argues that the mass media have a crucial role in issues of moral panics, even if they are not aware of this themselves. What the media choose to report about can generate concern, anxiety or panic. The media reporting of an issue of moral panics leaves the audience with feelings such as; ‘something should be done about it’, ‘where will it end?’, ‘this sort of thing can’t go on forever’ (Cohen, 2011, p. 10). These feelings are a result of over-reporting and regular use of phrases when reporting. Some reporting may also have misleading or even false statements in the headline which can contribute to further panic among the audience. Cohen argues that in some cases, headlines may presuppose that violence has occurred and when one actually reads the report, it states that no violence has occurred. In one part of his work, Cohen looks specifically of the representation of refugees and asylum seekers as an issue of moral panic. Cohen argues that the distinction between immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker is very blurred. Governments and the mass media have created a notion that firstly all refugee-type of foreigners must be kept out and secondly, that they must prove their genuineness towards the destination country and actually prove that they are in fact refugees and asylum seekers and not foreigners that have come merely due to economic reasons. Cohen argues that the bigotry in the mass media that is centered around the presence of refugees and asylum seekers has its effects and consequences.

He elaborates on an incident in 2001 where a Kurdish asylum seeker was stabbed to death in Glasgow after three days of negative news reporting about asylum seekers (Cohen, 2011, p. xxv).

Looking at Arjun Appadurai's 'fear of small numbers' he suggests that a minority symbolizes the small number it consists of. Yet, minorities have still come to be widely feared and provoke great rage among majorities (Appadurai, 2006, p. 49). The perception of this fear is different depending on state and media contexts (Appadurai, 2006, p.1). According to Appadurai, the fear of small numbers has developed a social uncertainty in social life because the thousands of ethnic minorities and media representation of such have caused a doubt about who "we" is and who constitutes "they". State propaganda, economic fear and migration turbulences are the main factors that feed fear of 'them'. Appadurai argues that the smaller and weaker the minority, the higher the frustration and rage of the majority because it becomes frustrated by the fact that such a tiny and weak minority can have an impact of the existence of the majority. This explains how such small minorities can have such an impact on a majority in question.

He also argues against the notion that minorities produce violence by arguing that it is in fact violence that needs minorities. Appadurai argues that they (minorities) are transformed into scapegoats because of the difficulty to maintain economic state sovereignty due to globalization which has led to the intolerance of minorities since they blur the boundaries of nationality (Appadurai, 2009, p. 43). More precisely, Appadurai argues about them;

They create uncertainties about the national self-national citizenship because of their mixed status. Their legally ambiguous status puts pressures on constitutions and legal orders. Their movements threaten the policing of border. Their financial transactions blur the lines between national economies and between legal and criminal transactions. Their languages exacerbate worries about national and cultural coherences. Their lifestyles are easy ways to displace widespread tensions in society... (Appadurai, 2006, p. 45).

Appadurai argues that majorities and minorities are closely linked to one and other and that majorities cannot exist without proclaiming a minority because the dynamic of 'us' and 'them' is a way for the majority to describe themselves as the opposite of 'them'. The 'we' create stereotypes of 'them' to enable themselves to set boundaries of their own identity.

Appadurai argues that this us and them dynamic has resulted in 'predatory identities'. Here he refers to the identities that need the extinction of a threatening other to be able to exist and define themselves as a we (Appadurai, 2006, p. 51). The predatory identities come to exist out of pairs of identities which have a long history of close contact with widely different identifications.

One of the pairs turn predatory through an understanding of itself as a threatened majority. The predatory identities are the ones that claim their cultural majority exclusively with the nation in question. This cultural aspect could be in terms of religion or racial grounds. These predatory identities often claim that their own existence is threatened by the minority and fear that they themselves one day can become a minority. The fear of becoming a minority is, according to Appadurai, closely linked with globalization because globalization fosters the possibility of this. According to the logic of the predatory identities, the only way for this not to happen, is by making the minority disappear. Hence, the predatory identities often use arguments related to the birthrates of the minority in question (Appadurai, 2006, p. 52).

Furthermore, Appadurai also focusses specifically on the nexus between fear of small numbers and terrorism. He argues that terror in itself is a notion that blur the lines within a nation. It does so firstly because it blurs the lines between military and civilian space but also because it creates social uncertainty among citizens because one never knows what boundaries terror respects (Appadurai, 2006, p. 92). In some cases, we do not know what the motive or message behind terrorists acts are – this creates uncertainty. Yet, when we are aware of the motive it also creates uncertainty because we become astonished of the actual motive (Appadurai, 2006, p. 92). Overall, terror is a war without spatial boundaries that challenges the sovereignty of a state. A terrorist can be your fellow citizen walking amongst you waiting to strike, which undoability create social uncertainty within a nation. According to Appadurai, terrorist are the ones that provoke the highest anxiety in terms of national identity, state power, and ethnic purity. The discussion of terror challenges notions such as immigration and free movement and forces deeper engagement of our states, our world, and our selves (Appadurai, 2006, p. 109).

At last, Appadurai argues that the world is now witnessing what he calls, a clash of ideocide. Here he refers to the fact that in today's world ideocides can target ideologies and ways of life and not solely states or political regimes (Appadurai, 2006, p. 117). Appadurai argues that by focusing on ideas of civilization and not civilization per say one realizes that such a clash can occur within regions and not solely across them. He gives the example of the war between Iran and Iraq who battle between Shia and Sunni ideas of Islam (Appadurai, 2006, p. 118). He argues that in today's world, there is a tendency of recognizing an internal opponent and a faraway one which are indistinguishable.

Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe

The succeeding is an account of xenophobia and islamophobia in Europe. These notions will later be used in my analysis and discussion which will help examining tendencies in the survey.

According to Liz Fekete, Xenophobia and islamophobia are concepts that are continuously increasing in European societies. Xenophobia, which is dislike and mistrust towards people with roots in another country, has come to include ethnicities whom have settled in Europe for decades. This is so, simply because they are Muslims (Fekete, 2009, p. 44). This also includes Muslims who are born in Europe due to the conception that Islam itself poses a threat to Europe. The Muslim that is born in Europe is also conceived as a threat towards basic European values which has consequently led to a negative perception towards multiculturalism. Fekete argues, that what is threatening the values of the Europeans comes from a domestic danger within Europeans themselves. A threat of Europe's own making (Fekete, 2009, p. 43). This is so, because of the way that Europeans conceive the external danger and the counterterrorism measures that have been adopted in EU societies (Fekete, 2009, p. 44).

Fekete goes on and argues that Xenophobia and Islamophobia, which is dislike and mistrust towards the people who practice Islam, are significantly linked to the war on terror because they are a consequence of that war. Citizenship reforms, revised integration policies, immigration laws and limited rights of existing citizens have all been consequences of the war on terror in the EU (Fekete, 2009, p. 78). Liz Fekete specifically uses an example from Denmark, where she discusses the fact that a citizenship reform in Denmark became so offensive resulting in the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights to describe the Danes as 'primitive nationalists'. She goes on and argues that parliamentary and media debates have adapted a repertoire suggesting that Muslims are not willing to integrate into European societies and that they keep the way of life from their origin country; allowing the justification of discrimination against Muslims (Fekete, 2009, p. 85). The media continuously represent European Muslims as untrustworthy citizens which, according to Fekete, has made possible the ongoing surveillance of young Muslim men and also women as they all become suspects of radicalization. The intelligence services and politicians both provide each other with the necessary anti-terrorist measures and give each other cover to criminalize Muslims (Fekete, 2009, p. 104). According to Fekete, today 'preventive justice' means that a Muslim does not have to psychically have committed a crime but merely a suspicion of a Muslims future intentions is

justifiable for orders of control. The 'Islam scare' is also linked to the relationship between the intelligence services and the media. This correlation allows public representations of Muslim radicalization as a security risk. She suggests that this ongoing discrimination in Europe has made the faces of young Moroccan, Algerian, Turkish, Kurdish, Pakistani and Somali men as faces of continuous dangerous criminals and most likely terrorists. Yet, European politicians argue that the cause of crime could not have emerged in the cities of Europe due to the 'glittering wealth and obscene inequality' (Fekete, 2009, p. 203). Fekete suggests that some European politicians argue that the cause of criminality among foreign young men can be explained in the lands where their families come from not from the land that their families settled.

Oksana Yakushko's work is also interesting to mention. She argues that the notion of xenophobia can be explained as follows; 'a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreign' (Yakushko, 2018, p. 14). Xenophobia is often described in relation to perceived economic, cultural, religious, political or social motivations, which is often manifested in a specific time period. Yakushko gives the example of the North African refugees in twenty-first century Europe. She goes on and relates the concept of xenophobia to other concepts such as nativism, ethnocentrism, populism and extreme nationalism. She suggests that these concepts have a nexus with xenophobia given that nativism, nationalism and populism put a great emphasis on differentiating "the people" and "the foreigners" with birthplace; meaning that one's social and political rights are determined on the basis of one's or parents birthplace (Yakushko, 2018, p. 15). The notion of ethnocentrism in relation to xenophobia is explained separately because it focusses specifically on cultural aspects which praises the way of life among "us" while belittling the way of life among "them". She also argues that historically, foreigners have continuously been perceived and described as dangerous and inhuman. Xenophobia results in demonization and exclusion of foreigners who have been able to migrate. Demonization and exclusion is carried out by the native-born majority. To sum up, the notion of xenophobia is related to the perceived reality that the native-borns status is superior to the immigrant.

Looking more closely into the relation between xenophobia and islamophobia, Yakushko argues that in some instances, one does not have to practice Islam to be exposed to Islamophobia, but solely be perceived as one that practices the religion (Yakushko, 2018, p. 22).

Furthermore, according to Salomi Boukala, during the latest years, rising numbers of asylum seekers arrived to the EU. This resulted in xenophobia and nationalism dominating the political debate

surrounding the asylum seekers (Boukala, 2019, p. 247). The terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015 opened for concerns in terms of security within the EU. This concern was mainly related to the threat of jihadist terrorism. Boukala argues that Europe and European identity is haunted by xenophobia and fear of the 'Other' – meaning the 'Islamist terrorists' and Muslim migrants. He argues that the EU unifies as an 'us' by distinguishing itself from the Muslim 'Other' (Boukala, 2019, p. 316). This was also the case in 2015 when refugees started arriving at the shores of the EU.

Othering Through Islamic Terrorism

The following section is an outline of theoretical perspectives of 'othering' in relation to Islamic Terrorism. This section will be applied to my empirical data later in the study. This notion is relevant to consider as it has become widely acknowledged that Muslims are being othered as terrorist and merely associated with the horror of terrorism. Similar to the sections above, this section is also set out to help uncover why my respondents answer as they do.

Numerous scholars have studied the 'othering' of specific groups as a result of terrorism. For instance, Enny Das, Brad J. Bushman, Marieke D. Bezemer, Peter Kerkhof, and Ivar E. Vermeulen, refer to the fact that the intensive media coverage that terrorism receive triggers prejudice towards outgroups. They divide their study in three parts. Firstly, they examine filmmaker Van Gogh's death by looking at death-related thoughts and if there is a relationship between terrorism news and prejudice. Secondly, they examine if that relationship reduces self-esteem. Both of these studies showed that terrorism news may in fact increase prejudice against Arabs among Europeans. The last part they examine the effects of terrorism news on prejudice against outgroups. They do this by including Muslim and non-Muslim respondents and find that terrorism news increase prejudice against Arabs for non-Muslim respondents, but that it also increases prejudice towards Europeans for the Muslim respondents (Das et, al. 2008, p. 454). However, they suggest that this might be the case because Muslims were expecting the Europeans to blame the Arabs for the terrorist attack, therefore, the Muslims prejudice towards the Europeans was triggered by anger as a response to what the Muslim respondents were expecting from the Europeans (Das, et, al. 2008, p. 459).

Abu Sadat Nurullah⁵ argues that Muslims have come to be associated with terrorists and terrorism. He draws parallels with the famous Danish drawings of Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist, which Nurullah suggests is an example of how the media are portraying Islam as being the root of terrorism

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(Nurullah, 2010, p. 1026). Muslims and Islam have become a way to describe terrorism as if all Muslims and the religion itself is rooted in violence and irrationality. He also argues that following 9/11, the media have made Osama Bin Laden the representative of Muslims and Islam. Osama Bin Laden came to be the face of Islam correlating Islam with the beliefs and actions of Bin Laden (Nurullah, 2010, p. 1031).

Amélie Godefroidt and Arnim Langer, have studied the relationship between terrorism and generalized social trust. They suggest that terrorist attacks have an essential impact on social trust among citizens, and that such attacks provoke “culture of fear” and out-group hostility (Godefroidt, Langer, 2018, p. 2). According to Godefroidt and Langer;

Thus, negative experiences of violence can shape our attitudes towards groups of people that share demographic characteristics with the specific offenders committing the violence... (Godefroidt, Langer, 2018, p. 3).

For instance, multiple studies show short and long-term aggressions towards Arabs, Muslims and immigrants in the aftermath of Islamic terrorism. They also point to the fact that the fear terrorist attacks evoke would be lost if terrorism was not a highly publicized topic in the media. These types of news reports are straightforward and makes it possible to reach large and diverse audiences. They are also excluded from any historical, economic or social context, focusing mostly on the event itself, which in turn might lead to an overestimation of the threat of terrorism among audiences (Godefroidt, Langer, 2018, p. 5).

Another study which is interesting to explore, is one by Erika Brady. She focuses on how the Syrian conflict has impacted security and political issues in Europe. She draws parallels to Islamic terrorism and refugee flow, among other things. (Brady, 2017, p. 54). She argues that in the wake of the Syrian conflict and refugee flows to Europe, there has been a sense of mistrust in Europe which also depicts a terrorism threat as a consequence of the refugee flow to Europe. These feelings of mistrust and fear among Europeans are a result of the conception that terrorists are arriving to Europe among the refugees (Brady, 2017, p. 55). As an important side note: in her work, Brady points to a study made by the European Union Institute for Security studies, in which it is concluded that the assailants that have joint IS's terror are not new refugees that have arrived to Europe in the latest years, but rather second and third generation immigrants that have been radicalized (Funk, Roderick, 2016). Going back to Brady's own study, she finds that there is a correlation between rising terrorist attacks and the Syrian conflict. However, she fails to explain the ways in which these are connected which she points to as subject of further research (Brady, 2017, p. 64).

Erin M. Kearns, Allison E. Betus and Anthony F. Lemieux's study deals with why some terrorist attacks receive more media attention than others. They firstly argue that some terrorist attacks receive more media attention than others, which in turn, determines what attacks are relevant to discuss. They also suggest that the media and a terrorist organization have 'a mutually reinforcing relationship' because one of the goals of a terrorist organization is to communicate with an audience, which the media provide through the amount of media attention the given terrorist organization or attack will receive (Kearns, Betus, Lemieux, 2019, p. 5). Through their study they find that if a terrorist attack is committed by a Muslim perpetrator then that attack will receive high media attention opposite to if the perpetrator was non-Muslim. More precisely, if the attacker is Muslim, they find 357 % more news stories about the attack (Kearns, Betus, Lemieux, 2019, p. 11). They find evidence of media bias when it comes to the correlation between media coverage of terrorism and Muslims which they suggest might explain why people often associate terrorism with Muslims and view them as a security threat. Kearns, Betus and Lemieux also argue that if the attacker is arrested, the terrorist attack will receive further media attention, which works as a sort of prolonging 'the show'. Their overall findings show that religion is the key factor that determines the amount of media coverage that terrorism receives (Kearns, Betus, Lemieux, 2019, p. 17).

In another study, Kearns, Betus and Lemieux suggest that the public in fact receive contradictory information by the media among other things. The opinion that a person might have about the topic of terrorism is a product of the information that they receive about terrorism and their acceptance of the information (Kearns, Betus, Lemieux, 2019, p. 2). If a person does not have first-hand experiences with Islam or Muslims then their opinions about those topics are derived from what the media tell them.

A last study which I will point to, is Paul James Pope's "Constructing the Refugee as Villain".

Pope argues that the terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015, was used as a triggering event for 29 U.S. state governors to resist the resettlement of thousands of Syrian refugees in America (Pope, 2017, p. 55). This article is especially important to consider in relation to this study due to the correlation between a terrorist attack and the Muslim Syrian Refugees. At the time, Barack Obama was in the midst of a refugee relocation program, which was rejected due to the fact that the American governors allegedly feared that the Syrian refugees were disguised terrorists. Pope focused on the framing of policy narratives in this matter and found that the governors linked the Syrian refugees to the attackers who executed the attack in Paris. According to Pope, this linkage between Muslim Syrian refugees and extremists, emphasizes a process of othering.

Pope argues, that this othering is interesting to consider, as the executors of the terrorist attack were not Syrian refugees, yet the refugee relocation was still rejected on the basis of that attack (Pope, 2017, p. 57). An alleged Syrian passport was found close to one of the dead attackers but was later found to be a false passport. Pope suggests, that the elites (in this case, the governors) presented the Syrian refugees as villains for the sake of their own political agenda.

Methodological Approach

I have divided my methodological approach in different subheadings; each explaining the way I chose to collect my empirical data, limitations hereof and the methodology in the way I chose to approach my analysis. I have attached the total status of my survey, the completed responses and the survey itself as appendixes.

Online Survey Research

I chose to conduct a survey on SurveyXact which I have attached as an appendix. SurveyXact is a Danish website that enables you to develop your own survey. This kind of method is helpful if one wants to collect a wider data sample and allows one to quantify a specific phenomenon (Stockemer, 2019, p. 8). I chose to use this method because I wanted to examine the effects of the Danish media coverage of IS in as many people as possible and also compare and examine the relationship between some of the variables which the quantitative research method enables me to do (Stockemer, 2019, p. 8). According to Stockemer, survey research is also widely used when examining public opinion.

Before posting the survey, I conducted a small pilot survey to uncover any misunderstandings that might arise from the questions. According to Stockemer, this ‘pre-test’ is useful when conducting surveys because it allows you to test out your questions and see if they are appropriate and understandable (Stockemer, 2019, p. 68). I distributed the survey to acquainted and some close friends in which I experienced some technical difficulties because some of the questions were not being filtered. I also realized that some of the questions were too general and I had to be more precise without being too leading. I discovered that some of my questions had to be more closed-ended questions. For instance, the questions of whether or not the headlines effect the respondents stance on Islam and later on Muslim refugees had to be closed-ended questions because it seemed that the questions could be misinterpreted. The respondents who feel that their stance on Islam and/or Muslim refugees is affected by such headlines were also presented with a closed-ended questions as to how positive or negative they were effected.

The questionnaire was open for responses from the period of the 5th march till the 29th march, 2019. I shared the survey on Facebook and other accounts reshared. I persistently shared the link in various Facebook groups, trying to reach as many respondents as possible and also because I wanted to increase the diversity of the respondents as much as possible in terms of gender, age, religion, occupation and region. This way of distributing my questionnaire was the best option for my study due to limitations in terms of resources. Because my survey did not have a specific target group or

audience, and my main concern being receiving as many thoughts on the Danish media coverage of IS as possible, I had the freedom to share the questionnaire in this manner.

Sharing surveys on social media platforms has its risks as all sampling techniques do. For instance, the method of distributing this way relies on volunteers to answer the survey. It also has limited external validity and relies on non-probability sample (M. Sue, A. Ritte, 2015, p. 15). The non-probability sample refers to when you are not sure that everyone in the population will be equally represented. This means that I cannot control and select who the survey will be available to and how it is distributed. The non-probabilistic sampling technique also means that my sample can be considered as convenience sampling because I select people who are readily available for my survey (Stockemer, 2019, p. 62). Convenience sampling refers to a sampling technique where respondents are chosen because they are available and makes it possible to create a sample (Stockemer, 2019, p. 62). I would also argue that my sample size has a non-response bias. According to Stockemer, this type of bias occurs when certain individuals have a higher likelihood to answer your survey than others (Stockemer, 2019, p. 59). This can for instance be if what you are interested in is a political issue, some individuals are not interested in political issue which means that they might not answer the survey. According to Stockemer, some people also spend more time online than others which can also create this bias when it comes to online surveys.

While distributing through social media can be difficult to control, it is also an effective method that allows me to reach a more diverse group of people than I would have by handpicking respondents. For instance, Valerie M. Sue and Lois A. Ritter argue that distributing through social media is a good method to employ in exploratory research and is effective and costless (M. Sue, A. Ritter 2015, p. 15).

The survey was distributed to 220 and I managed to receive answers from 249 respondents. This means that according to SurveyXact, my withdrawal percentage equals zero because it was answered by more respondents than it was distributed to. This is a result of distributing a survey online because as mentioned I cannot control the distribution. Despite of this, I also have 92 respondents whom have not completed the survey but merely answered a few of the questions. I will regard these as my withdrawal percentage which means that my survey has a response rate of 73 percent. I conclude this on the basis of the following equation;

$$\frac{249}{341} \times 100 = 73$$

The number 341 is the total number combined with the completed responses and the respondents who are regarded as withdrawal.

Moreover, I also chose to include a completion criterion which was the following question; *‘On the basis of the headlines, how likely do you think that a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark’*. The completion criterion means that respondents can still be regarded as completing the survey even if they have not answered all questions. I chose this question, because I feel that I can assess if these respondents are affected by the headlines even if they have not answered the last question. This completion criterion means that I have 7 respondents whom have not answered the last question but are still regarded as part of the respondents who have completed the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Design

In this section, I will go in depth with the design of my questions. I chose to use five identifying markers which will be explained further in the section below. The five identifying variables are answered by elaborating in one’s own words. I acknowledge that many who did not complete the survey dropped out of the questionnaire during these questions which means that I could have minimized the withdrawal rate if I had chosen multiple choice or another format for the first five questions.

In the beginning of the survey, I chose to present twelve headlines of Danish newspapers reporting about IS claim of responsibility to a variety of attacks instead of me explaining the content of such headlines. I wanted to get a variety of media sources and an equal amount of headlines from each of them. Therefore, I chose two headlines each from Politiken, BT, Information, TV2 Nyheder, Berlingske and two from Jyllandsposten. This information was also given to the respondents before they were presented with the headlines.

I will also point out that I chose to start off all of my questions with “on the basis of the headlines” because I want them to answer all of the questions on the basis of the headlines that I present to them. Yet, I cannot be sure that the respondents’ answers are not affected by their prior stance on the matter is part of the answers. I also chose to filter some of the questions. For instance, if some of the respondents had not seen the headlines or similar ones before the survey, then they were not presented with the question of where they had seen the headlines. I employ the filter tool onwards in the survey. More precisely, in survey research, you can distinguish between open and closed ended questions (Stockemer, 2019, p. 42). The latter allows a respondent to describe their answers in their own words. In my survey, I chose to include a mixture of the two. As I explain above, I present twelve headlines with similar phrases of IS claim of responsibility. I start off by asking if the respondents have seen the same or similar headlines prior by using multiple-choice format. Then I ask where they have seen them and here the respondents can tick off multiple answers. I present possible answers but I also

leave an 'other' box where the respondents can add an answer as I possibly have not included all possible answers which is a disadvantage in closed-ended questions (Stockemer, 2019, p. 42). I do the same with question eight and nine where they can also chose multiple answers. In question number ten, I once again use multiple-choice and a closed-ended question. Yet, the ones who believe that it is either likely or very likely that terror will occur in Denmark I further ask an open-ended question where they can elaborate on what factors make them believe that terror is likely to happen in Denmark.

The multiple choice and close-ended questions in questions twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen enables more precise answers and misunderstandings their replies less likely. However, the respondents who answer that they wish for more or less in question seventeen are presented with an opened question to further elaborate in their own words as to why they wish for more or less Muslim refugees. At the end of the survey, I ask the respondents if they have other remarks – this allows them to elaborate on a specific factor or subject that they feel is relatable to this survey and which they have not had the opportunity to mention before.

A last important think worth mentioning in regards to the questionnaire design is the formulation of question 16. It reads: *On the basis of the twelve headlines, do you think that a Muslim refugee can commit terror in Denmark?*. I acknowledge that there might be different understandings of this question as the formulation might indicate that I am interested in knowing if the respondents think that a Muslim refugees has the opportunity to commit terror in Denmark. Yet, what I am interested in is if they think that a Muslim refugee would/will commit terror in Denmark. I believe that the far majority of the respondents have understood the question as it was intended to, however, I cannot be sure of this therefore, this formulation is important to keep in mind when looking at the answers.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Firstly, due to the fact that I chose to use social media to disperse my survey I cannot be sure to reach all age groups. Yet, before conducting the survey I found a study from 2018 from Danmarks statistic to the Ministry of Cultural affairs examining the use of social media amongst Danes. According to their study, Facebook is the social media platform which is used the most on a daily basis amongst users between the ages of 16-89 years (Kulturministeriet, 2018, p. 2). The study also shows that in 2018 the ages between 16 and 89 were all represented on social media. Of course, the younger generations are more represented than the older ones. For instance, 97 % of Danes between 16-24

years use social media, whereas, its 32 % of Danes between 75-89 years. Overall, 77 % of Danes between 16-89 are users of social media in 2018 (Kulturministeriet, 2018, p. 2).

Moreover, distributing my questionnaire online also means that I cannot be guaranteed that all identifying variables are equally represented. For instance, the section below shows how over 50 % of my respondents are in their twenties. The section also shows that 72 % of the respondents are women and that 44 % live in the South Region of Denmark. This clearly shows that there is disparity between the division in some of the identifying variables. Yet, I have managed to include a wide differential in my respondents, even if they are not equally represented in all the categories. It is also important to mention that this study is limited in terms of time and space limitations which limits the conclusion of this study. That is, because of the disparity, time and space limitations I cannot draw any tendencies from my conclusion, but can however, point to further research in this matter and uncover if there might be evidence of a correlation between the Danish media coverage of IS claims of responsibility and public opinion among Danes. I chose to collate other research on similar subjects in my analysis, and relevant statistics of public opinion amongst Danes in similar subjects to strengthen my analysis. A last possible limitation that I will mention is that because I distributed it from my own Facebook account, many of the respondents might be friends and acquainted who might share some of the same views as I do. Yet, as I have mentioned, I persistently shared the survey on various Facebook groups to receive diverse respondents.

As for the ethical issues this study raises, I recognize that political issues such as refugees might be a sensitive subject for some and might not feel comfortable elaborating on their opinion of such.

On the other hand, others might be very eager to express their opinion on political issues.

Before the respondents begin the survey I inform them that their responses will be anonymous and that it is part of my master's project which gives them a sense of security about their participation (Bryman, 2012, p. 138). This minimizes invasion of privacy and harm to participants because I clearly explain the aim of the project in the beginning and that their privacy will be valued (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). Because I chose to distribute the survey through my own Facebook account, respondents were able to see my full name and profile picture. Because I am a second-generation immigrant from Kosova, some of the respondents might have been attentive with their answers because they might have considered me as part of the group in question. On the other hand, it might also have enabled some of the respondents to be very honest of their opinion because they want me to either know that they are supportive of Muslims and refugees or that they definitely are not. It is also important to

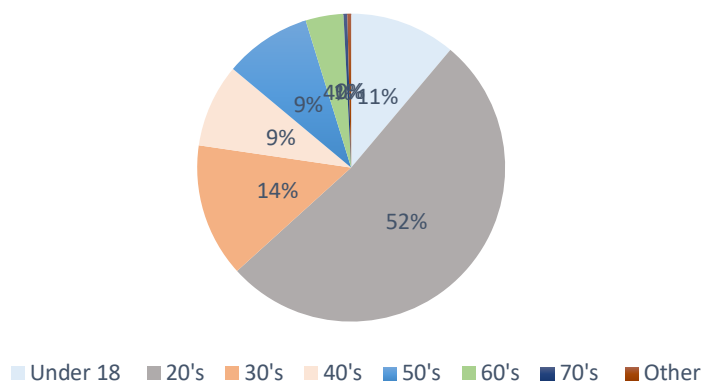
mention that everyone can create a Facebook account under a false name and picture. This means that some of the respondents that the survey was available to might have answered alleging to be someone else which might mean that they have not answered truthfully.

The Respondents

In this section, I will look into who my respondents are in terms of the first five identifying variables that I included in my survey, namely; Gender, age, occupation, religion and region. Looking into my respondents and data I could not find a correlation in occupation which is why I will not include that variable in the analysis. I could have chosen a different variable, in terms of educational level or maybe ethnicity but because I was mostly interested in identifying if the Danish media coverage really has had any form of effect on public opinion towards Muslim refugees, I find the variable of religion and region to be mostly important for my study. The sample size of my survey is limited due to time and space limitations to this study, which I have mentioned elsewhere as well. That is, I cannot draw any tendencies of public opinion among Danes in general, but I can however, indicate tendencies which would be interesting to examine as further research.

The first identifying variable is the age group my respondents represent.

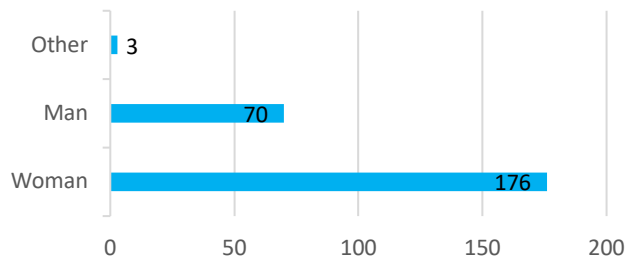
Figure I: Age



Looking at the pie chart above, the majority of my respondents are in their 20ies, which correlates well with the study conducted by Danmarks Statistik. As one can see, the age groups are not equally represented. Yet, the pie chart also shows that I have managed to reach a varied age group audience from under eighteen to seventy-six, even if it is solely one of the respondents who is in his 70's. I also managed to get quite a few in their 60ies and nine percent in their 50ies.

Looking into how my respondents are divided in terms of gender, there is also a variation as 70,6 % of the 249 respondents are women and 28,2 % are men.

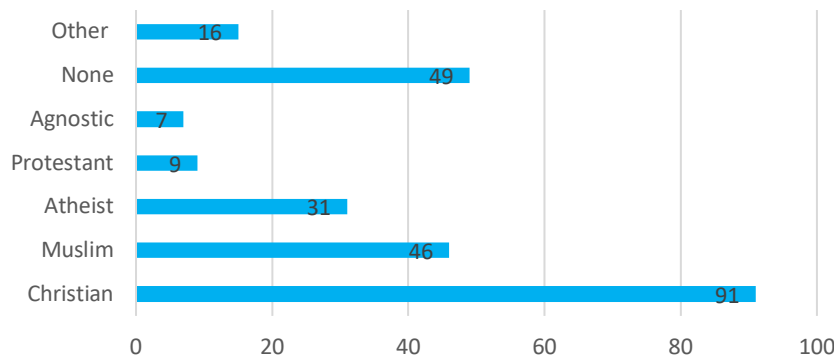
Figure II: Gender



Firstly, the category of ‘other’ represents three respondents who either answered “yes” or “no” to this. One study found that women use social networking sites more than men which might explain the gap between female and male respondents in my study (Kimbroug, Guadagno, Muscanell, Dill, 2013, p. 898).

The next identifier is what kind of religious belief my respondents identify themselves with. This is displayed in the bar chart beneath which shows that there is a good variety in religion amongst the respondents.

Figure III: Religion

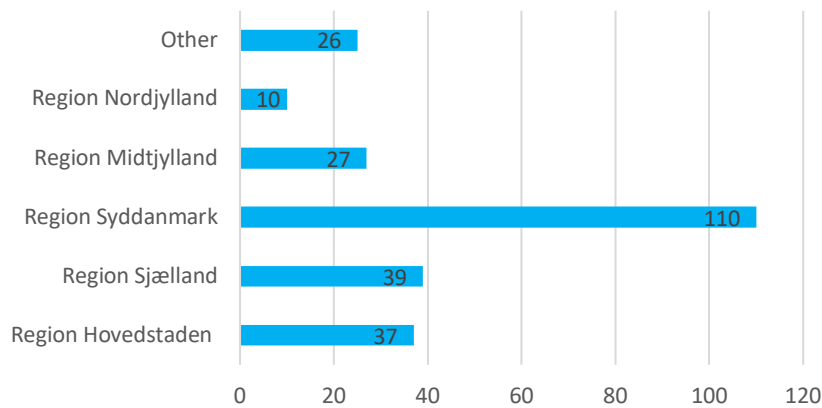


The category of ‘other’ constitutes respondents whose answers were not relevant to this question and religions who were underrepresented.

As one can see, the respondents represent different kinds of religious beliefs and a good amount of them do not identify with any religion. Because I am interested in public opinion towards a specific group with a specific religion, it is important and interesting for this study that I have obtained answers from respondents who do not identify themselves with Islam and that I obtained answers

from respondents who do. This is so, because there might be a difference in the effects amongst the respondents. The last identifying factor is region.

Figure IV: Region



The region of South Denmark is represented the most, however, it is important to mention that this region constitutes of Fyn and the South of Jutland which covers a big and two different parts of Denmark. The category of ‘other’ in this variable constitute of respondents answering ‘Jutland’, ‘Zealand’ or ‘Denmark’ and not being precise enough for me to place them in a particular region. The region of North Jutland is also less represented, yet the Region of Central Jutland, Region of Zealand and the Region of the Capital is almost equally represented.

Overall, I managed to include a varied survey despite of the fact that some of the categories are not equally distributed.

Content Analysis

As I have mentioned, I want the respondents to be able to elaborate with their own words to some of the questions. For instance, why they think terror is likely to occur in Denmark and why they wish for more/or less Muslim refugees to Denmark. The respondents also have the opportunity to write any last remarks they might have at the end of the survey.

I received 249 responses but not all of them have elaborated on the questions because the elaborating question was filtered if they did not think that terror was likely to occur in Denmark, or if they answered ‘either more or less’ to the question of more Muslim refugees to Denmark. This means that I have a lot of written data which I have to analyze to be able to use the data in my analysis. Therefore, I employ content analysis which is a way for a researcher to objectively analyze characteristics in messages (Bryman, 2012, p. 289). In this sense, it is important to be as objective as possible when looking for characteristics and avoiding bias. It is also important to be systematic so that anyone completing the content analysis will get the same results (Bryman, 2012, p. 289).

When working with content analysis, the idea is to interpret meaning behind the content. This method was the best solution for parts of my study because it is a flexible method that can be applied to unstructured text. Of course the questions that I pose reflect the interest of my study which reveals some kind of subjective bias. In my study, I chose to start off by coding specific themes among my respondents. According to Bryman, coding for themes allows one to categorize the phenomenon in question (Bryman, 2012, p. 297). I firstly coded the answers I received from the question; *‘Why do you think it is likely that terror can occur in Denmark?’*. As I will elaborate in the analysis, I find about five common themes that are mentioned several times. It is important to mention, that some of the answers can be neglected this way because I choose what is important in relation to the research question. I also looked for common themes to the following question: *‘Why do you think that Denmark should take more/or less Muslim refugees?’* and to the box that the respondents could fill out at the end of the survey if they had any last remarks. Here I find about eight common themes which I elaborate upon in my analysis.

Moreover, I also chose to look deeper into the background of the respondents in two of the questions; namely;

On the basis of the twelve headlines, do you think a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark?
And *On the basis of the twelve headlines, do you think that Denmark should receive more/or less Muslim refugees?*

I chose to look at two variables; religion and region⁶. Together with my supervisor we agreed that I would explain this approach in my methodology. The two graphs on the next page visualize the distribution in terms of religion and region to the following question;⁷ *“On the basis of the headlines, do you think that a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark?”*.

⁶ Due to space limitations

⁷ As I explain in the sections above, the region of South Denmark and Christians are overrepresented in my sample. Yet, in my analysis I collate other statistics of public opinion which strengthens my analysis

Figure V: Content Analysis in Terms of Religion

Religion	Very likely	Likely	Not that likely	Not likely at all
Christian	17	34	34	5
Muslim	4	4	21	18
Atheist	6	6	11	6
None	11	15	18	3
Agnostic	1	1	4	2
Protestant	2	4	3	
Other	1	4	5	5

Figure VI: Content Analysis in Terms of Region

Region	Very likely	Likely	Not that likely	Not likely at all
Capital	1	4	18	12
Zealand	11	13	15	1
South Denmark	19	29	48	15
Central Jutland	1	14	7	4
Northern Jutland	3	3	2	3
Other	9	5	9	3

The content of the two graphs are discussed in the analysis. This is merely to illustrate how I have counted the respondents in terms of religion and region.

Relevant Statistic of Public Opinion in Denmark

The succeeding section is a short outline of other statistics and datasets of public opinion conducted in Denmark. They all examine similar subjects, such as; non-western immigration, integration, and refugees. The statistics have been chosen on the basis of relevance to my study and will be presented before looking into the findings of my own empirical data. This short outline is included to see if there are correlations between my empirical data and the work of others' data in the same fieldwork.⁸ For instance, in **2006** TNS Gallup conducted a survey for Berlingske where they examined public opinion in Denmark towards Muslim Danes. The survey was conducted with 976 respondents above the age of eighteen and were divided in terms of age, gender, political opinion, education, region and how much acquaintance one has with Muslims in Denmark. The first question is phrased as follows;

What do you think about the integration of Muslims in Denmark?.

Seventy-four percent thought that the integration has failed. *Seventy-three percent* of the respondents that live in the smaller cities feel that it has failed and *81 % percent* of the respondents who live in bigger cities such as; Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense feel that it has failed (TNS Gallup, 2006, p. 1). Another questions in the survey is as follows:

“Muslim environments create breeding ground for terrorism” (TNS Gallup, 2006, p. 17).

Nineteen percent completely agree and *25 percent* agree. In the smaller cities, it is *twenty percent* of the respondents who completely agree that Muslim environments create grounds for terrorism and *twenty-one percent* of the respondents from the smaller cities feel that they have much less acquaintance with Muslims.

In **2009** CEPOS looked at public opinion on immigration among 1032 respondents.

The first questions is;

“How do you asses the consequences of non-western immigration?” (CEPOS, 2009, p. 3).

⁸ Given that my sample size remains limited due to space and time limitations, I am aware that I cannot draw any tendencies to public opinions among Danes in general. Therefore, this section might initially strengthen any findings that will derive from my small dataset.

Thirty-two percent answer more negative than positive or solely negative and *eighteen percent* feel that the consequences are more positive than negative or solely positive.

Moving on to **2014**, TNS Gallup conducted a survey for the newspaper Berlingske regarding public opinion on refugees in Denmark. The survey is among other things, divided in the five regions of Denmark with 1091 respondents distributed widely between gender, age, region, education and political opinion (Gallup, 2014, p. 13). The respondents are asked if they think that Denmark is taking an appropriate number of refugees in 2014. *Forty-four percent* feel that Denmark is taking too many and 47 % of the ones that live in the South Region of Denmark think that Denmark is taking too many whereas *ten percent* feel that Denmark should take in more (Gallup, 2014, p.12).

Another question which is interesting to consider in the same survey is.

“Is the current debate regarding refugees and asylum seekers is going to have an impact on how you are going to vote at the next national elections?”

Thirty-four percent of the respondents from the region of Central Jutland and the region of Northern Jutland agree that it will, whereas 28 % of the respondents in the South of Denmark agree.

A more general but relevant study is a Eurobarometer composed by the European Commission in **2015** concerning Europeans’ attitudes towards security. There are 1006 Danish respondents, which are the ones I will refer to in the study which were composed through face-to-face interaction. Firstly it looks at what factors play a crucial role in security within the EU (Eurobarometer, 2015, p. 2). *Sixty-two percent* feel that *terrorism and foreign fighters* are important factors and 44 % feel that the *management of the external border of the EU* is an important factor in terms of internal security. In the same survey, 53 % believe that *extremist ideologies* are a threat to internal security. In addition, 35 % of the Danes believe that *social exclusion, poverty and discrimination* are all factors that determine security. At last, 44 % feel that *war of political instability in regions outside of the EU* are a security threat within the EU (Eurobarometer, 2015, p. 2).

Moreover, in the summer of **2016**, Infomedia published an analysis of a public opinion survey regarding the refugee flows in 2015. The study include 1000 Danes widely distributed in terms of gender, age, geography and political opinion. In their analysis, they continuously relate their findings

to earlier surveys on public opinion of refugees. According to their survey, they find that in May 2016, 47 % of the 1000 respondents believe that *the Danish governments refugee policy has not been strict enough* (Infomedia, 2016, p. 7). The study argues that since June 2015, the Danes have moved significantly to the right in June 2016.

Besides the so-called ‘jewelry law’, the survey concludes, that overall, Danes are satisfied with the numerous restrictions that the government has implemented since the refugee flows from 2014.

A last notion I will mention from this survey is that 26 % of the respondents believe that there *should be another political party in government with a more strict refugee policy* than there was at the time of the survey (Infomedia, 2016, p. 8).

In **2017**, TNS Gallup also conducted another survey for Berlingske concerning Muslim immigration. The survey includes 1036 respondents again widely selected. The survey shows that 64 % of the respondents *wish for less Muslim immigration to Denmark* (Winther, Burhøi, 2017). According to the research institute the number is higher than in 2015.

Additionally, in October **2017** Eurobarometer published a personal survey interview of public opinion among Europeans concerning immigration with 1005 Danish respondents. Question QA16 is as follows: “Do you think that subjects surrounding immigrants are portrayed too positive, objective or too negative in the media?” 59 % of the Danes believe that the portrayal is too negative, whereas 26 % believe that the portrayal is objective (Eurobarometer, 2017, p. 1). In the same survey, I find the following question; Do you think that immigration from countries outside of the EU predominantly constitute a problem or an opportunity for our country today? (Eurobarometer, 2017, p. 2). Twenty-four percent feel that it is a prevailing problem and 41 % feel that it is a problem and an opportunity.

Another interesting aspect of the survey is that 73 % feel that *immigrants increase criminality*. Yet, 77 % believe that *immigrants enrich cultural life in Denmark* in terms of art, music, food etc. Another 56 % however, feel that *immigrants are a burden to the welfare system* (Eurobarometer, 2017, p. 2).

Analysis

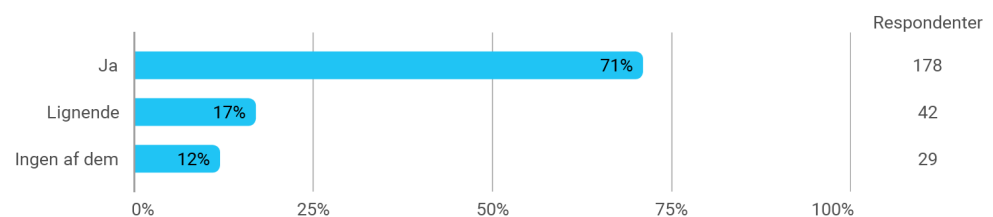
The succeeding section is an analysis of the findings of my questionnaire which includes a sample of 249 respondents who are diversified as much as possible in terms of gender, age, religion and region in Denmark.⁹ In this section I will examine the answers I obtain by employing the previous mentioned theory basis. This is included to understand the attitudes of my respondents towards Muslim refugees. The findings of the analysis will be discussed later.

Reactions of Danish Headlines of IS's Statements of Responsibility

I have already established that the Danish media coverage of IS's self-claimed involvement of terrorist attacks have been extensive. Combined, the six media sources that I have included have published more than 160 articles with the phrase 'IS takes responsibility'. I have also established the crucial role the media play in terrorist attacks and that they have a responsibility in how they report such news. Finally, the statistics which I have included pointed to the othering of Muslims and refugees as a security threat.

I begin the analysis with looking into how many of my respondents have seen the twelve headlines that I present to them in the beginning of the survey, where they have seen them, and what reactions they evoke.

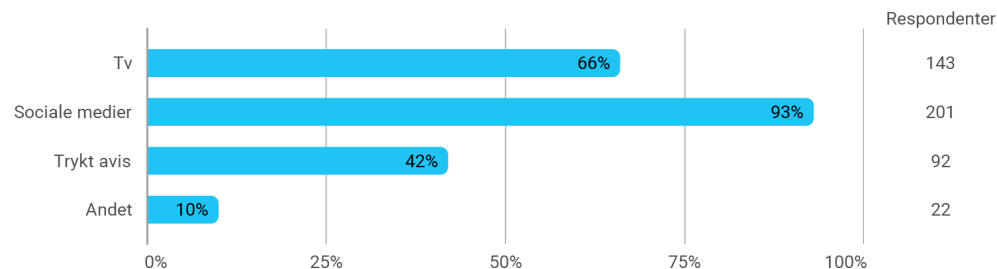
Figure VII: Have you seen these or similar headlines before today?



As the bar chart shows, the majority have seen the exact same headlines as I present in the survey. Forty-two have seen similar headlines, and solely 29 have not seen such headlines before they were presented with them in this survey. The bar chart underneath shows where the respondents have seen the headlines before.

⁹ As I have mentioned a few times earlier, the diversity of my questionnaire remains limited in some of the variables. This is due to time and space limitations. Before initiating the analysis, It is again important to mention that my dataset is small and cannot draw tendencies in public opinion among Danes in general.

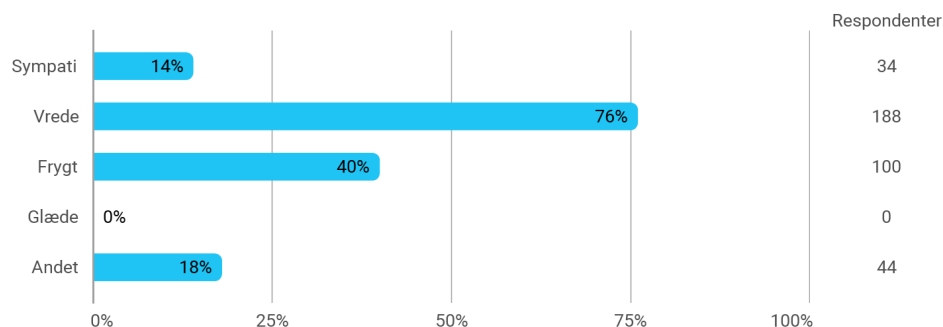
Figure VIII: Where have you seen the headlines?



Here the respondents can tick off as many answers as they wish. Yet, it is evident that the majority have seen the headlines or similar headlines on social media platforms. I also left an 'other' box in which the majority elaborates that they have seen the headlines in online newspapers.

The next bar chart underneath shows what kind of reactions/feelings the headlines provoke.

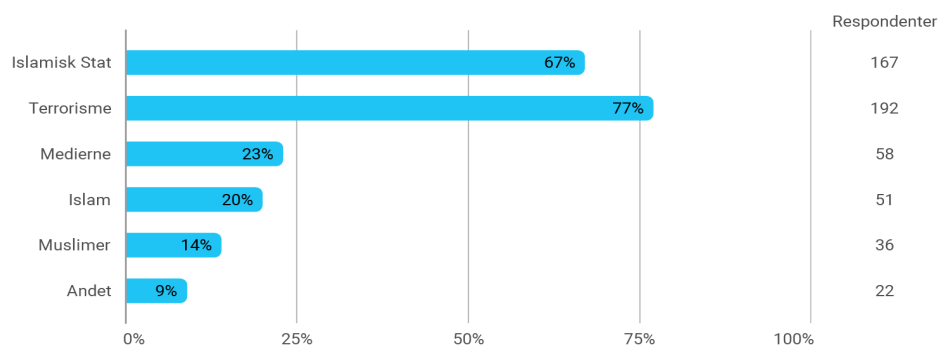
Figure IX: What kind of reactions do the headlines provoke in you?



As illustrated above, anger is something that the majority of my respondents feel after reading such headlines. It is important to mention that yet again my respondent have the opportunity to tick off as many answers as they wish. I want to be as objective as possible which is why I also include 'joy' as one reaction and 'other'- option; giving my respondents the opportunity to include other reactions. Looking at the category 'other' in which many mention 'frustration', 'skepticism', 'concern' and one respondents writes 'I want to kill those shitty Muslims' which is a statement that I will get back to in later parts of the analysis.

Moving on, I am also interested in examining who these reactions are directed towards. The bar chart underneath shows that the reactions are mostly directed towards terrorism in general and specifically Islamic State.

Figure X: Who are your reactions aimed towards?



Once again my respondents are able to choose as many answers as they want. Islam is chosen 51 times and Muslims 36 times, meaning that some of my respondents clearly direct their reactions towards Islam and that some also specifically direct their reactions towards Muslims in general. Looking into what kind of reactions (evoked by the twelve headlines) the respondents feel towards Islam and Muslims, it shows that the non-Muslim respondents who direct their reactions towards Islam and Muslims mostly feel anger. This is so because 43 of the times where the non-Muslim direct their reactions towards Islam or Muslims, their reactions are evoked solely by anger.

As for the Muslim respondents, they also feel anger and fear but mostly towards the media and terrorism.

What is interesting to consider in this regard is that the media coverage of IS claim of responsibility is something that awakes reactions such as ‘anger’ and ‘fear’ in almost all of my respondents. As I have mentioned earlier, the media coverage of IS has been extensive, meaning that my respondents feel ‘anger’ and/or ‘fear’ many times in relation to the reporting of IS’s self-claimed acts. As my empirical data shows, in some cases the media reporting of IS’s acts evoke negative attitudes/feelings towards Islam and Muslims meaning that the media are fueling these attitudes in some of my respondents towards a specific group in society.

As mentioned earlier, Godefroidt and Langer argue that such negative experiences of violence, in this case, numerous terrorist attacks, can shape our attitudes towards a specific group solely because that group might share demographic characteristics with the perpetrators (Godefroidt, Langer, 2018, p. 3). Hence, because IS is taking responsibility for terrorist attacks in the name of Islam, it might have an impact in attitudes towards other people practicing Islam. My data set shows that respondents with a non-Muslim background are more likely than respondents with a Muslim background to aim their anger and fear towards Muslims.

Moreover, most scholars agree about the crucial role the media play in relation to terrorism. Mahmoud Eid argues that the media can help governments with necessary information about a terrorist organization or event to help investigations. Yet, in some cases that information may be wrong which can lead to misunderstandings (Eid, 2014, p. 249). In the case of IS, the Danish media have extensively followed IS's claim of responsibility, publishing almost identical headlines of IS's involvement in terrorist attacks all over the world. However, the headlines fail to question IS's involvement of the attacks. According to Eid, the media have a responsibility in how they report terrorist events and not just a responsibility to report (Eid, 2014, p. 250). In some of the news reports, the media have been somewhat suspicious of IS's involvement in some attacks, but their headlines remain misleading in this regard. Given the background of the Danish media coverage of IS's statement of responsibility it shows that the Danish media sources have created a phrase of IS's involvement in terrorist attacks which is something that Eid suggests the media should avoid. Eid also uses the example of the phrase 'the war on terror' as a selling and damaging label (Eid, 2014, p. 253). One might argue that the phrase of 'IS's takes responsibility' has become a similar damaging label as 'war on terror' which is fueling anger and fear in the far majority of my respondents. Maybe not in the same extent as the 'war on terror' but might be further damaging attitudes towards Muslims. In a similar note, Nurullah argues that after 9/11, Osama Bin Laden became the face of Islam (Nurullah, 2010, p. 1031). In some sense, one might argue that IS has become the new face of Islam. Yet, some of my respondents also question IS frequent claims and the media coverage of such. For instance;

'I think that gradually one has gotten 'immune'? Additionally, I don't really think that many of the attacks are performed by ISIS, but they just take credit'.

Another respondents also argues;

'It is kind of funny that ISIS always takes responsibility for the awful things that are happening. But I might also have a feeling of professional respect. Well I am not a sympathizer with ISIS but as a communications professional have respect for their strategy and press campaign. They are surprisingly good. I also get a feeling of frustration because of how much the Danish media is reproducing international news'.

Other respondents also mention the media's role. For example, to my question about what kinds of reactions the headlines evoke in my respondents one respondent writes;

'Racism and that the Media are trying to create fear'.

Another respondent argues:

Doubt in relation to the agenda of the media with the headlines in relation to extremism. Fear that the readers have a difficulty to distinguish between extremism and common religiousness – especially against Islam.

A third respondent argues:

‘The media have been manipulated. The goal is for every non-Muslim to believe that Muslims are the enemy when in reality it is a ‘bigger power’...

A last example I will mention is the following quote from a respondent who states:

..I am so tired of the media’s coverage. It is embarrassing and one-sided and like most of the citizens, the Danish journalists disclaim their responsibility of creating a discourse that divides more than it collects citizens. It is sad and scary.

These statements show that once my respondents get the opportunity to elaborate on their reactions to the twelve headlines, some of them are suspicious of IS real involvement and communications strategy. This might indicate that even if the Islamic State was to be perceived as the new face of Islam, some will draw suspicion to that actually being true, while others won’t.

Moral Panics and Othering

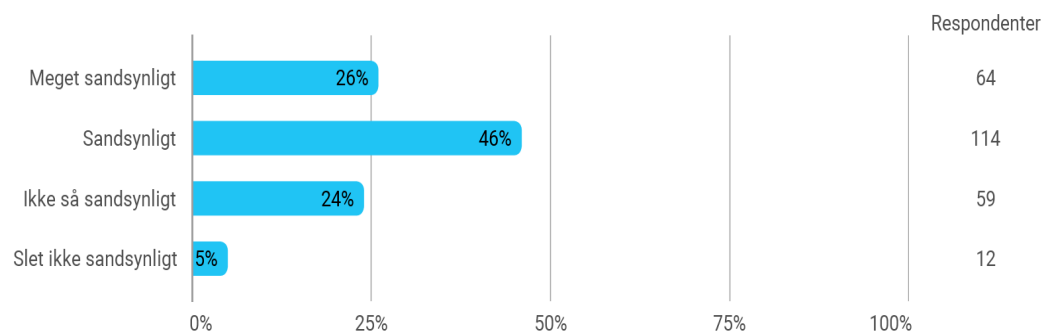
For the next section I will focus on Stanley Cohen’s theory of ‘moral panics’ which I will apply to the 10th question of my survey which is: *On the basis of the twelve headlines, how likely do you think it is that terror will hit Denmark?* Before looking specifically at the answers to this question, I will elaborate a bit on the consequences of the phrase ‘IS take responsibility’.

Cohen argues that some societies are exposed to periods of ‘moral panic’ defined by the media and politicians, where one group becomes viewed as a threat towards society (Cohen, 2002, p. 1). According to Cohen, the media can generate concern, anxiety and panic on issues that the media overreport and use phrases about, leaving the audience with a feeling of ‘where will it end’? Cohen specifically mentions headlines and argues that a headline can be misleading in times of moral panics. ‘IS takes responsibility’ clearly is a phrase which has been used in numerous Danish headlines which evoke ‘anger’ and ‘fear’ among the far majority of my 249 respondents showing how the Danish media

coverage of IS's claims of responsibility has created panics amongst the audience¹⁰. With these headlines, it presupposes that IS has an involvement in hundreds of attacks all over the world. Yet, scholars have suggested that the perpetrators of the majority of the attacks in the West are second and third generation lone wolves executing the attacks. If we look at Erika Brady's study for instance, she finds that there in fact is a correlation between rising terrorist attacks in Europe and the refugee flows which has led to mistrust within Europe (Brady, 2017, p. 64). However, Brady does not conclude that these two notions are correlated in other ways than their time period. She points to a study which argues that it is second and third generation immigrants who are committing terrorist attacks due to radicalization – not refugees (Funk, Roderick, 2016). Despite of this, the Danish headlines of IS self-claimed involvement in attacks presupposes that IS are the sole perpetrators, creating somewhat misleading moral panics of the reach of IS.

Furthermore, looking specifically at the answers I receive of the possibility of terror in Denmark the moral panics of future attacks in Denmark is much evident.

Figure XI: On the basis of the headlines, do you think terror can occur in Denmark?



The above bar chart shows that 178 respondents think that it is very likely or likely that terrorism will happen in Denmark. Whereas, twelve of the 249 respondents do not feel that it is likely at all. What is interesting to consider in regards to moral panics is that the far majority of the 178 respondents argue that it is happening everywhere, at any time and that it has happened in Denmark before and will definitely happen again. This is something that I read over 60 times. Reading through the answers, it seems that the majority of the respondents do not feel that it is a question of 'if' terror will happen in Denmark but a question of 'when'. For instance, one respondent writes;

'Why shouldn't you attack Denmark, like all other countries in the EU'.

¹⁰ I am aware that due to my sample size I cannot conclude anything on the basis of all Danes

Another respondent writes;

‘Because there are extremist everywhere’.

Another respondents argues;

‘ It has happened in London, Berlin and Malmö, it is a matter of time before it happens in this country’.

On the basis of these answers, it seems that these headlines contribute to the ‘normality’ of terrorism hitting all over the world. Given that many of the previously mentioned studies argue that Islam has become viewed as a terror religion it is almost like these headlines promote the normality of terrorism in the name of Islam. For instance, Abu Sadat Nurullah argues that Muslims have come to be associated with terrorism (Nurullah, 2010, p. 1026). Godefroidt and Langer argue that there exists long-term aggressions towards Arabas and Muslims because of Islamic terrorism (Godefroidt, Langer, 2018, p. 5). Kearns, Betus and Lemieus argue that because there is a media bias towards Muslims when it comes to terrorism, many often associate terrorism with Muslims (2018, p. 11).

Moreover, looking at some of the other answers I receive there are conflicting opinions about why terrorism will hit Denmark. For instance, seven of the respondents feel that Denmark is likely to be hit by terror because of western values in Denmark which makes it possible to carry out attacks. Here some mention freedom of movement. For instance, one respondents writes;

‘We live in an open society which makes us vulnerable’.

Another respondent argues;

‘It is easy to move around in Denmark’.

A last respondent says;

It has nothing to do with the headlines.. It is however, possible because we are a western country with freedom of speech and freedom of religion. 2 things that Islamic State swears to eliminate.. We are a target board.. a small one.. but still a target board.

Hence, what these statements might indicate is how terrorists might take advantage of western values to execute attacks in Denmark.

Eleven respondents mention that Denmark and Danish politics are xenophobic which they feel is reason for future terrorism in Denmark. One respondent argues;

“Denmark is very xenophobic. Especially when it comes to Islam. That is why Denmark seems like an obvious target”.

Another respondent writes;

“Because Muslims/Islam meets much opposition from a lot of Danes. Because our freedom of speech allows people to be racist”.

What this non-Muslim respondent is pointing to could also be related to the other respondents who mention western values, here being freedom of speech. Yet, this respondent talks about how Danes are misusing western values and not how terrorists are taking advantage of such.

Eight of the respondents mention the Muhammed drawings as reason for future terror.

As these statement show and the blaming of the Muhammed drawings for future terror, some of my respondents believe that xenophobia and islamophobia will cause more terror in the future. This is something that Fekete also points to, as she argues that the way in which Islam has come be viewed as a terror religion is of Europe’s own making. Hence, because of the way the EU is conceiving external danger and the measures they are taking to deal with counterterrorism are causing more discrimination (Fekete, 2009, p. 43). Salomi Boukala also specifically argues that Europe and European identity is haunted by fear of the ‘Other’ and xenophobia (2019, p. 247), which is something some of my respondents think can cause terror.

Furthermore, some also point to the fact that terror is likely to occur in Denmark because of Muslims and immigration. This is mentioned about ten times. For instance, one respondent writes;

‘We have a lot of Muslims’.

Another one writes;

‘Because there are crazy people, and because we have way to many anti-social young second generation immigrants’.

This specific statement is interesting to examine further. This statement shows how this respondent blames second and third generation immigrants for future terrorism because they are anti-social. As mentioned, Liz Fekete argues that Xenophobia against ethnic minorities and Muslims who are born in Europe exists simply because of Europe's negative perception of Islam (Fekete, 2009, p. 44).

Another respondent argues;

‘Because we have some Muslims who are brain-dead’.

Another respondent also writes;

‘Muslims want their faith in the whole world’.

A last answer I will include is;

‘Denmark has a lot of Muslim extremists’.

These statements are specific examples of xenophobic and Islamophobic statements from Danes. According to Yakushko, xenophobia is the demonization and exclusion of foreigners which is closely linked to Islamophobia (Yakushko, 2018, p. 22). The statements above are examples of such as it is evident that these respondents are demonizing Muslims as terrorists simply because they are Muslims. That is, they are specifically blaming Muslims and immigrants for the likelihood of future terrorism in Denmark.

Public Opinion Towards Muslim Refugees

In the next questions of my survey, I draw attention to the respondents' attitudes towards Islam and specifically Muslim refugees. I do not mention ‘Muslim refugees’ earlier in the survey because I want to explore if my respondents themselves will mention them which some, in fact do. Once my respondents get the opportunity to elaborate on why they feel terror is likely to happen in Denmark, some of my respondents themselves point to an external threat and some specifically point to refugees. For instance, one respondent argues;

‘Because we do not have control over who we let into the country. The borders should be closed’.

Another respondent writes;

‘Because in Denmark there is a lack of consequences when people break the law, and because the control of who gets in the country is too vague’.

Another respondent argues:

‘Import of so many refugees, badly guarded borders. Because it is easy for terrorists to commit terror’

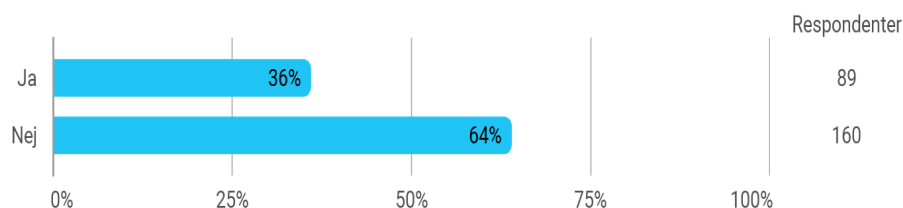
A last respondent argues:

‘It has happened in many European countries and we have received many Muslim immigrants the latest years’.

These statements indicate that some of my respondents truly believe that Muslim refugee are nothing more than terrorists. Even if it is not many that argues this, it is still some, which shows specific evidence that such headlines are in fact making some Danes correlate Muslim refugees to terrorism without me even asking about Muslim refugees.

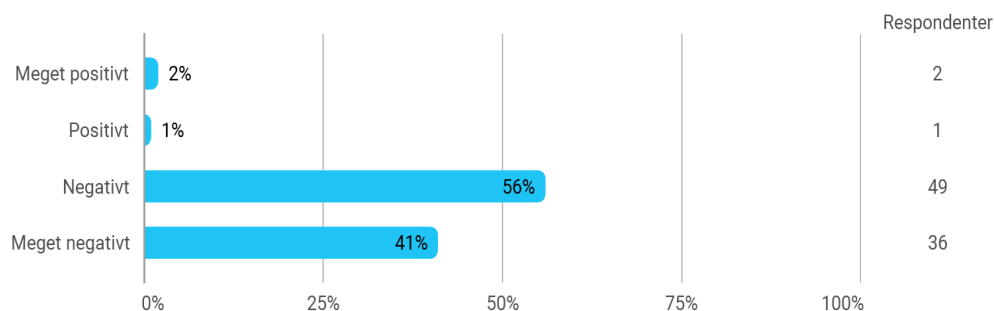
The bar chart underneath visualizes the answers that I obtain to the respondents attitudes towards Islam;

Figure XII: Do the headlines affect your attitude towards Islam?



The majority do not feel that the headlines have any effect on their attitudes towards Islam. Yet, 89 of the respondents do feel that the headlines have some kind of effect on their stance towards Islam. Looking more closely into the 89 respondents the next question tries to reveal how they in fact have been affected by the headings.

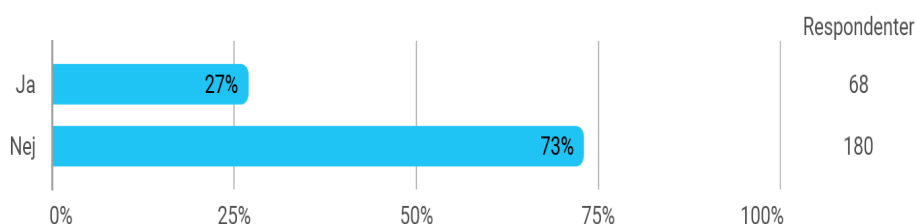
Figure XIII: How negatively or positively do they affect your attitude towards Islam?



The majority of the 89 respondents feel that their stance on Islam has been negatively affected by the Danish media coverage of IS. Thirty-six respondents feel that their attitude towards Islam have been affected very negatively¹¹. However, what is interesting to look at in terms of these two questions is the fact that 46 of my respondents are Muslims. Three Muslim respondents feel that they are affected by the headlines. One of those respondents feels that his attitude towards Islam is negatively affected and the second Muslim respondent feel that his stance on Islam is very negatively affected by the headlines. The third Muslim respondent feels that she is very positively affected by the headlines in terms of her attitude towards Islam. This means that the remaining 43 Muslim respondents have answered that they do not feel that their stance on Islam is affected by the headlines. If I was to take out the 43 Muslim respondents from the question of whether or not the respondents' attitude towards Islam is affected by the headlines, the percentage would change, meaning that 56,5 % of the total number of respondents would have said no, and 44,2 % would have said yes. This gives a percentage of 8,2 % in differentiation without the Muslim respondents which is quite high.

The question that follows in the survey resembles the questions above. Here I specifically ask;

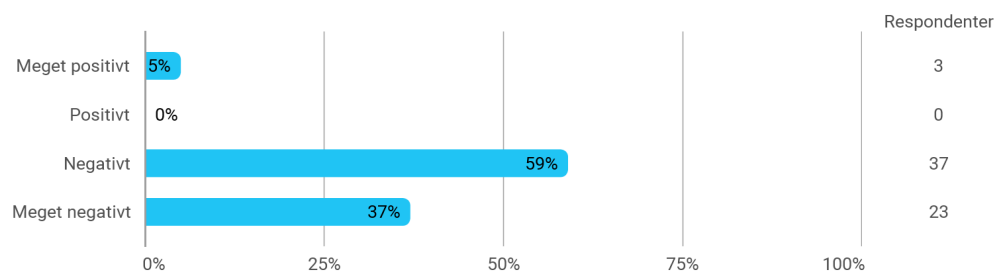
Figure XIV: Do the headlines affect your attitude towards Muslim refugees in Denmark?



As the above bar chart shows, 68 respondents feel that they have been affected by the headlines. In the next question, I was interested once again to look deeper into how they have been affected by asking;

¹¹ Some of the respondent who have answered that they have been affected have not elaborated here on the actual effects due to the fact that I later noticed that one did not have to answer this question before moving on to the next, which is a technical mistake.

Figure XV: How negatively or positively do the headlines affect your attitude towards Muslim refugees?



Thirty-seven are affected negatively, whereas 23 respondents are very negatively affected by the headlines. Eight of the respondents that have answered that they feel affected by the headlines in terms of their stance towards Muslim refugees have not answered this question¹².

I have once more looked into how the Muslim respondents answer these two questions. Six of the Muslim respondents feel that their stance on Muslim refugees has been affected by the headlines. Four of them feel that their attitude towards Muslim refugees has been negatively affected, whereas one of them feel that her stance on Muslim refugees is very positively affected by the headlines. The last Muslim respondent does not elaborate on how his attitude is affected.

So, if I take out the remaining 40 Muslim respondents who are not affected by the headlines, I would once again have another percentage on the division. Hence, it would mean that 33 % are affected by the headlines in terms of their attitude towards Muslim refugees, and 67 % of the respondents are not affected by the headlines; meaning that *three out of ten respondents'* stance on Muslim refugees are either negatively or very negatively affected by such.

Going back to the fact that four Muslim respondents feel that their stance on Muslim refugees has changed in a negative sense. One of the Muslim-respondents elaborates a bit on his stance to Muslim refugees;

Even though I am a Muslim then my interpretation of Islam is much different from the interpretation that people from the Middle East have, that is why it affects my stance on Muslim refugees from the Middle East.

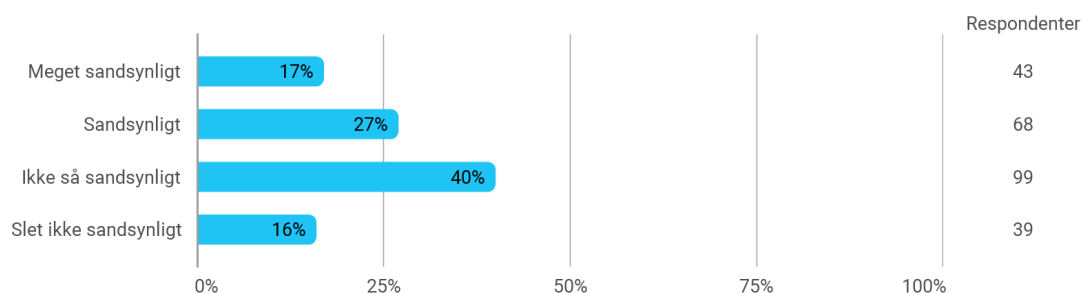
This statement shows prejudice from one Muslim towards other Muslims. The respondent feels a sense of superiority compared to Muslims from the Middle East. This might indicate that such headlines of IS self-claimed acts are also causing prejudice amongst ethnic minorities in Denmark.

¹² Due to technical difficulties in the survey

As mentioned Enny Das, Brad J. Bushman, Marieke D. Bezemer, Peter Kerkhof, and Ivar E. Vermeulen find that terrorism news increase prejudice against Arabs for non-Muslim respondents (2008, p. 454). My study might point to the fact that it also increases prejudice against Arabs for Muslim-respondents who feel superior¹³.

Furthermore, I also ask my respondents the following;

Figure XVI: On the basis of the headlines, do you think a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark?



The above bar chart shows how 44 % of my 249 respondents feel that it is either very likely or likely that a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark. This is almost half of the respondents including the 46 Muslim-respondents. I was interested in asking this question because as mentioned earlier in their study Kearns, Betus and Lemieus find that terror committed by a Muslim perpetrator receives much more media coverage than other perpetrators which they think could explain why many associate terrorism with Muslims (2018, p. 11). Given that IS has been overreported in the Danish media, I wanted to see if the association of terrorism and Muslims also apply to Muslim refugees given the refugee flows to Europe the latest years. The answers I derive from this question already suggest that there, in fact, might be a correlation.

I specifically ask that the respondents answer on the basis of the headlines meaning that the headlines of IS's involvement in the latest terrorist attacks have at least contributed to the perception that Muslim refugees are likely to turn to terror. Not many of my respondents feel positively sure that Muslim refugees will not commit terror in Denmark.

The headlines do not suggest that it is Muslim refugees committing the attacks which makes it interesting to wonder if the headlines make 44 % of the respondents believe that a Muslim refugee can commit terror in Denmark – solely because they mention IS and their acts.

¹³ I am aware that my sample size cannot conclude this, but it can point for further research on this manner

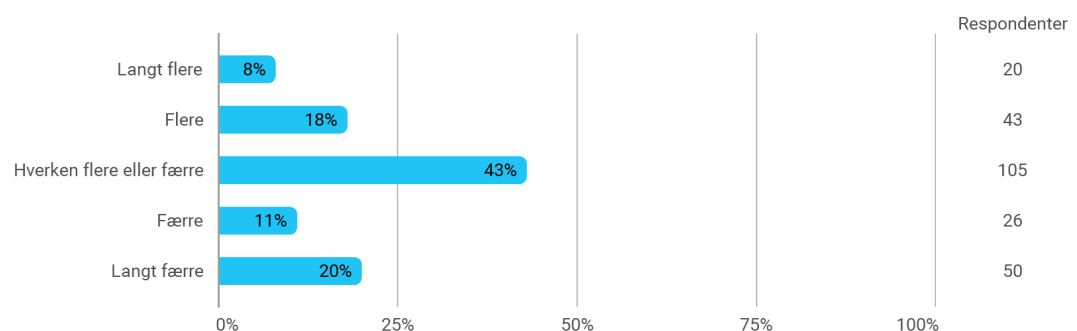
Looking into the content analysis that I mentioned earlier, the majority of the respondents who believe it is very likely that a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark are Christian and the far majority live in the Southern Region of Denmark¹⁴. More precisely, seventeen of the respondents are Christian and nineteen of them live in the South Region. What is also interesting to mention is that four of the respondents are Muslims emphasizing again that there might be prejudice amongst Muslims as well.

Moving on to the respondents who do not feel that it is that likely that Muslims could/would commit terror in Denmark - this category is chosen by the majority of my respondents. Yet, 34 are Christian and 21 are Muslim respondents. Once again the majority live in the South part of Denmark, however, the Region of the Capital is also well represented in this category, as eighteen of the respondents live in this part of the country.

The last category, is the respondents who are very sure that a Muslim refugee could not commit terror in Denmark. The majority of these respondents are Muslim-respondents as eighteen of the 39 respondents are Muslims. Twelve of the respondents live in the region of the capital city in Denmark and fifteen in the south region.

Looking at the second to last question I ask;

Figure XVII: On the basis of the headlines, do you think that Denmark should take in more or less Muslim refugees?



As the bar chart shows, it is 26 % that either feel that Denmark should take more or far more Muslim refugees, and 31 % that either feel that Denmark should take less or far less Muslim refugees. The majority of my respondents do not feel that on the basis of the headlines there should be a difference in receiving Muslim refugees.

¹⁴ I have mentioned this earlier, but the majority of my respondents are Christians and the majority live in the Southern Region of Denmark meaning that my sample size is not equally distributed in terms of Religion and Region which likely explains why these two groups are overrepresented in many of the categories

The majority of the respondents who wish for much less Muslim refugees in Denmark are Christian respondents, as they represent 23 of the 50 respondents. Again, the majority of them live in the Southern Region of Denmark. Further, the majority of the respondents who wish for less Muslim refugees are once again Christians. Fourteen of them say they live in the south part of Denmark and five of the respondents live in the central part of Jutland. It is interesting to mention yet again, that four of the respondents are Muslims. The majority of the respondents have chosen the option of 'not more and not less'. Here the Christian respondents again represent the majority, as 43 of them are Christian. The majority of the respondents again live in the south region of Denmark and nineteen of them live in the capital region. As for the last category (far more), it is the Muslim-respondents who are mostly represented in this category as half of the twenty respondents are Muslims. The majority (ten) of them again live in the south part of Denmark and seven represent the capital region.

The correlation between one's attitude towards Muslims in general and where you live in Denmark is also something the study from Gallup in 2014 examines. For instance, 44 % of the respondents from the Gallup study feel that Denmark is taking too many refugees and 47 % of the respondents from the South Region of Denmark think that Denmark is taking too many and solely ten % of them think that Denmark should receive more (Gallup, 2014, p.12). Even though my sample size is limited it is still pointing to the fact that respondents living in the South Region have more negative perceptions of Muslims and of refugees.

Kearns, Betus and Lemieux find that religion is the factor that determines how much media coverage terrorism will receive (2018, p. 17). As for my study religion is the main factor that determines how affected my respondents are from the headlines.

Respondents Elaborate

For the next section I will look deeper into how the respondents elaborate once they get the chance to. I want to uncover the reasoning behind why the respondents wish for more or less Muslim refugees to Denmark.

Reading through many of the answers that I receive I recognize that it might be difficult for my respondents to distinguish between the already negative perception towards Muslims in general and the twelve headlines. Here I will once again draw parallels to Stanley Cohen as he specifically points to the case of immigrant, refugees and asylum seekers and argues that the distinction between those are very blurred because some governments have created a notion that all types must be kept out and must prove their genuineness.

Proving their genuineness is also a point that I find made amongst my respondents. For instance, one respondent argues;

I think that it is a shame that the actions of sick peoples affect people that actually need help. Simultaneously, I think that Denmark/Europe has a responsibility to keep their citizens safe. I do not think that we should take less refugees but I think that we should be sure about who we let in the country. Islamic State travels without a doubt to many European countries, disguised as refugees.

Another respondent argues the following;

‘Because there will always be a religious fanatic between the ones that arrive and they will use religion as ground for terror’.

In a similar note,

‘To avoid that all of this happens or reduce the risk that might be by accepting refugees that might have other thoughts than just to live here’.

One respondent even writes:

‘Bigger risk of terror’

Another one argues:

‘I feel that it is often Muslims that commit terror’.

Another respondent writes:

I am nervous that it will be concluded, on the basis of my answer, that I view refugees negatively, that I generally view genuine refugees negatively because I do not. I do not view Civilian refugees negatively but I worry that there might be terrorist amongst the civilian refugees..

A Muslim respondent doubts the intentions of Muslim refugees:

I myself am a Muslim and I can quickly underline that religion and fleeing does not have anything to do with each other. People who flee, flee to the nearest peaceful country. Flee to Africa, or Asia. Flee to a neighboring country. You do not flee across the globe to find peace. You do not flee from your wife and kids...

This suggest that some of my respondents label Muslim refugees as criminals and even terrorists before arriving to their destination country. According to these statements, Muslim refugees must firstly prove that they are not people coming to create conflict but really are fleeing from it.

Appadurai argues how terror provoke the highest anxiety in terms of national identity, state power, and ethnic purity which brings up discussions such as immigration and free movement (Appadurai, 2006, p. 109). He also argues that terrorism creates social uncertainty and that it challenges a nation's sovereignty. The statements above indicate that some respondents simply do not wish for Muslim refugees to enter Denmark which shows the anxiety towards Muslim refugees entering Denmark that are evoked by such headlines. Consequently, it has developed an idea, for some of my respondents, that Muslim refugees must prove that they are not terrorists simply because they are Muslims.

Furthermore, the *blurriness* that Cohen points to is also evident in my study. As many of the studies of othering through Islamic terrorism show all Muslim communities, and also Arabs in general have become othered as terrorists. In my study, I find that many of my respondents have similar arguments as to why they wish for less Muslim refugees.

For instance, eleven of my respondents mention economy and that Denmark should help 'our own' first. One respondent argues;

'We do not have the economy and resources for more'.

Another respondent says; '.

'Because there are many Danes who need housing and resources and those resources are being spent on refugees'.

In a similar note

'We have more than we can have and they cost us a lot of money'

A last example I will mention;

'We should take care of the old and the homeless instead of giving housing to them'.

A good amount of my respondents also mention integration and that Denmark does not have space for more Muslim refugees.

One respondent writes;

‘Because they have a very difficult time integrating compared to other refugees from other cultures’.

In a similar note, one respondent argues;

‘They cannot integrate’ and another one writes; ‘They are generally unintegrable’.

Another respondent also simply argues;

‘We have enough!’.

The arguments related to integration presupposes that Muslim refugees can simply not coexist with Danes and the Danish way of life because they simply cannot adjust in the Danish society.

Another common argument is the view that Muslim refugees pose a danger to Danish values and the peaceful Danish society. This is something that I see about twenty times. For instance, one respondent writes;

‘Soon they are going to take over our peaceful country’.

Another respondent says;

‘Because Muslims do not belong in our part of the world. They have to go home’.

Another respondent simply writes;

‘Destroys the country’.

In a similar note, another respondent argues;

‘They do not belong in Denmark’.

And another respondent writes;

‘They are the root to all evil’.

Another example is the following;

Every society can 'absorb' a few. However, the huge amount is going to have immeasurable consequences and will end with war

Another respondent argues:

'They should stay where they came from'.

Another writes:

'Because many of them do not want to work'.

Another simply writes:

'It is a threat'.

And one respondent argues:

'Forbid Islam for peace in the world'.

These examples show how some of my respondents distinguishes the Muslim refugees with 'us' vs. 'them' dynamic. Appadurai argues that this dynamic is a way for the majority to describe themselves in contrast to 'them'. The majority creates stereotypes of 'them' to describe themselves as the opposite (Appadurai, 2006, p. 51). When my respondents mention that Muslim refugees do not belong in Denmark and that they simply are the root to all evil, they are othering Muslim refugees as a dangerous entity coming to destroy the peaceful and harmless Danes. A respondent even point to the fact that their arrival will lead to war, emphasizing how they simply cannot adjust to such peaceful environments.

These statements also indicate that they are afraid of losing their way of life and some are even afraid of becoming the minority in Denmark as a result of more Muslim refugees. This is also something that Appadurai mentions when he says that majorities are afraid of becoming the minority which creates this us vs. them dynamic (Appadurai, 2006, p. 49).

So even if the number of Muslim refugees is small, it still is a feared number for some respondents that clearly show xenophobic and islamophobic attitudes.

All of these arguments as to why the respondents do not wish for more Muslim refugees also relates to what Appadurai calls 'predatory identities'. The predatory identities are the ones who need the extinction of an threatening other for them to exist and define themselves as 'we' (Appadurai, 2006, p. 51). The predatory identities evolve as such through a long history of close contact with the other. The only way for the predatory identities to stay the majority is if that 'other' disappears. Many of my respondents describe Muslim refugees as dangerous people who simply cannot function in the Danish peaceful way of life creating a 'peaceful' and 'genuine' us vs. a 'dangerous' them.

Going back to the statement of 'I want to kill those shitty Muslims' it shows a clear case of predatory identity. This might be a result of the negative perception of Islam which in turn can evolve dangerously given the hatred and bigotry this respondent shows.

These kinds of arguments also point to the fact that many of my respondents relate other arguments as to why Denmark should not receive more Muslim refugees than merely because they might commit terror. This might indicate that many of my respondents who's attitudes towards Muslim refugees are negatively affected by the twelve headlines might have already been negative before being exposed to these headlines due to the already negative perception of Islam.

It almost presupposes an eagerness in many of my respondents to stop Muslims from entering and also a complete stop of the Muslim population from growing in Denmark which, I clearly establish the media have strongly contributed to.

The Danish media coverage of IS's statements of responsibility surely contributes to the already othering of Muslims as a danger and in some cases, even terrorists.

Lastly, Appadurai argues that migration turbulence, made possible by globalization, can feed fear of minorities (Appadurai, 2006, p. 52). If we adapt this, one might argue that the one-sided media coverage of IS and the latest migration turbulence from 2015 has contributed to the ongoing negative perception of Muslims which according to my dataset includes Muslim refugees.

Other Perceptions of Muslim Refugees

In this section I will focus on the respondents who are positive towards the settlement of Muslim refugees in Denmark. Of course, there are also many respondent, Muslim and non-Muslim, who have a more positive take on Muslim refugees. For instance, many write that we should take more Muslim refugees to show humanity and compassion. One respondent argues;

‘Because we have to help our fellow human beings’.

Another respondent says;

‘We should take more because refugees are in danger in their own homeland’.

In a similar note;

Because we as humans have a responsibility to help each other. Likewise, many of these people flee because they are afraid of the crimes that ISIS and other idiots commit

Some respondents also point to the fact that they do not believe that there is a correlation between terrorism and Muslim refugees. For instance, one respondent says; ‘Terrorism is not connected with refugees’.

Another respondent writes;

Because being a Muslim and/or a refugee does not have anything to do with terrorism. It is people that are fleeing that need a country who will take them, and I think that Denmark has a responsibility to do so.

A last respondent argues:

‘Terrorism and refugees have nothing to do with each other, so stupid to make a connection between those two things. Refugees seek security and away from terrorism. Terrorists typically are frustrated brainwashed young men who are misled’.

Furthermore, about eleven respondents believe that we actually do have the resources for more Muslim refugees in Denmark. For instance:

‘We should take more refugees because they are people and we have the resources to do so’.

Another respondent argues: ‘

If the underdeveloped neighboring countries can take millions of refugees, then a well-developed and rich country like Denmark can as well. People have a duty to help each other’.

Another respondent writes:

‘We have a good welfare society and the majority of the refugees that arrive in Denmark are a part of that, which is why I do not see a problem with receiving more that can contribute to a better Denmark’.

Another simply writes: 'We have an opportunity to do so'.

A last point I will mention in this regard is that about 5 respondents feel that Denmark is partly to blame for the conflicts that the Muslim refugees are fleeing from which is why we have a responsibility to protect. For instance, one respondent says;

'Because we have a responsibility when we ourselves exert wars in countries with a high Muslim population'.

Another respondent argues;

'They do not have anything to do with that. Denmark is also bombing them, so they cannot expect that they will not flee'.

In a similar note another respondent writes;

'Because we are to blame for all the wars that are occurring in the Middle East'.

A last example:

'More because we are as much to blame for their wars as their government is'.

The examples above show that many of my respondents are also positive towards the settlement of Muslim refugees in Denmark. They show a compassion towards them and do not show xenophobia or negative attitudes towards Muslim refugees.

However, despite of these optimistic arguments, it is inevitable not to recognize the way these headlines contribute to negative public opinion towards all Muslim communities amongst many of my respondents.

Discussing the Possible Effects

The following is a discussion of the findings of the analysis above. The purpose of the discussion is to examine the possible effects on the basis of the answers I obtain through my survey.

As I have mentioned, the reason that this correlation is relevant to examine is due to the time correlation between IS's claim of responsibility in hundreds of attacks and the so-called refugee crisis in Europe.

I am interested in uncovering if the Danish media coverage of IS affects public opinion towards Muslim refugees. Going through my analysis I realize that this is something which is difficult to assess. When I ask directly if the respondents are affected by the headlines, 27 % blatantly say that they are, in which 60 respondents say that they are affected negatively. Some of my respondents even indicate that Muslim refugees are potential terrorists.

How has a Muslim refugee come to be understood as a potential terrorist?

Looking at the other studies it is clear that since 9/11, the media representation of Muslims has come to depict that all Muslim communities, wherever they may be, carry potential terrorists. Kearns, Betus and Lemieus clearly establish that a media bias exists when reporting about terrorism committed by a Muslim perpetrator which has led to prejudice towards Muslims in general (2018, p. 11). The other statistics of public opinion in Denmark also suggest that it has been built up from ongoing xenophobia and islamophobia in general.

For instance, the statistics conducted in Denmark also demonstrate that since 2006 until 2017 attitudes towards Muslims and non-western immigration has been marked by negative perceptions. In 2006, 74 % of Danes felt that the integration of Muslims in Denmark has failed and 34 % felt that Muslim environments create breeding ground for terrorism (TNS Gallup, 2006, p. 17). According to my survey, the perception of Muslims as terrorist has likely been more extensive as 44 % feel that a Muslim refugee can turn to terror. The other statistics conducted in Denmark also show that in 2009, the consequences of non-western immigration were viewed more negative than positive. In 2015, 62 % of Danes felt that terrorism and foreign fighters are important factors in terms of internal security in the EU (Eurobarometer, 2015, p. 2). In 2017, 64 % of Danes wished for less Muslim immigration to Denmark (Winther, Burhøj, 2017). In my survey, I ask on the basis of the twelve headlines, whether the respondents wish for more or less Muslim refugees to Denmark. 31 % either wish for less or much less Muslim refugees in Denmark. Yet, 43 % do not feel that the twelve headlines affect their stance

on this matter. However, these statistics show that there has been and still exists an ongoing negative public opinion towards all Muslim communities in Denmark.

As I mention in the analysis, the answers I obtain also point to the fact that many of my respondents relate other negative arguments to the settlement of Muslim refugees which indicates that there is a blurriness between the categorization of Muslims. Stanley Cohen argues that this blurriness is made up by politicians and the mass media by arguing for a genuineness that all foreigners must prove (Cohen, 2011, p. xxv). As mentioned, proving their genuineness is also something that I find in my analysis.

The blurriness might also indicate that many of my respondents whose attitudes towards Muslim refugees are negative might have already been affected before being exposed to these headlines due to the already negative perception of Islam. It seems that it does not matter if you are a European Muslim, Danish Muslim, a Muslim immigrant or a Muslim refugee when it comes to the question of terrorism. The correlation between Islam and danger, and even terrorism, applies to all Muslim communities. My analysis shows that many of the respondents have prejudice towards the settlement of Muslim refugees in Denmark by relating their argumentations to concerns about Danish economy, integration and criminalization. Through such argumentations, many of my respondents demonstrate xenophobia and islamophobia and it seems that the othering of Muslim refugees is a result of an ongoing othering of Muslims as a general danger. My analysis suggests that Muslim refugees are viewed as Muslims and the refugee part is stripped from their entry to Denmark, simply because they are Muslims. A respondent even writes the following at the end of the survey:

‘Unfortunately, I am beginning to become a racist’.

This presupposes another possible effect and consequence of such headlines as the negative public opinion towards Muslim refugees seem to strip off Muslim refugees’ right to protection because the perception that all Muslims are criminals, is so integrated in many of my respondents that many are simply reluctant to having more Muslim refugees in Denmark. When many of the respondents are contemplating the outcome of Muslim refugees settling in Denmark, they simply refer to Muslim refugees as *Muslims*.

Why are the media not more attentive of their reporting?

As mentioned, Wilson argues that the media have a powerful role as it decides when an issue or event is of public concern. This is done by the media attention that an issue or event receives (Wilson, 2018, p. 35). According to Mahmoud Eid, the media have a responsibility on how they report and not just a responsibility to report (2014, p. 253). Yet, Eid also argue that reporting of terrorist attacks often occur in stressful circumstances which might explain why the media are not as attentive as they could be. However, it seems that this does not excuse the consequences of this kind of media coverage when looking at how it creates negative perceptions of Muslims and Muslim refugees. The phrase of 'Islamic State takes responsibility' made by media reporting depicts that the terrorist attacks are collective actions carried by believers of Islam. The European Union Institute for Security Studies has pointed to the fact that the attacks in Europe and in the US have been carried out by second and third generation immigrants who have been radicalized (Funk, Roderick, 2016). So why has the Danish media coverage created a false phrase of 'Islamic State takes responsibility' if it is lone wolfs carrying out the attacks? It seems more relevant for the Danish media to focus on stories and headlines that unite society than to overreport IS's possibly false claim of responsibility.

The twelve headlines which you can find many of in Danish media sources, are spurring moral panics of the reach of IS's terror in Denmark. It is also spurring moral panics towards the nexus between Muslims and terrorists because of the existing negative perception of this nexus which has come to have its toll on Muslim refugees as well. As mentioned, Salomi Boukala argues that the rising numbers of asylum seekers in the EU has resulted in European identity being haunted by fear of the other, namely Muslims (2019, p. 316). If I adapt Appadurai's earlier mentioned notion of battles between ideocide can create internal battles by recognizing a faraway enemy and an internal opponent - I argue that the idea of Islam promoted by such headlines of IS can create battles between Muslim's idea of Islam and the public opinion idea of Islam through the one-sided media coverage of IS (Appadurai, 2006, p. 118). The way in which the media extensively have covered IS claim of responsibility, might have created IS as a faraway enemy and all Muslims (refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants) in Europe as the internal opponent even if there is no correlation between the two¹⁵. This possibly false reporting of IS's claims adds to the already negative othering of Muslims as terrorists and Islam as a terror religion.

¹⁵ I once again would like to point out that I recognize my sample size is small and cannot conclude this on behalf of Danes in general.

Further Research

Due to time and space limitations I cannot address the questions that this study raises.

In this sense, it might be interesting to examine what consequences the negative attitudes have for the settlement of Muslim refugees in Denmark. One might also wonder if/how negative attitudes towards Muslim communities affect the sense of belonging in Muslim refugees.

It could also be interesting to look into if there are any consequences in changes to Danish legislation. For instance, in the theoretical perspectives I mention Paul James Pope who finds that the terrorist attack in Paris in 2015, worked as a way for U.S. state governors to resist the resettlement of thousands of Syrian refugees to America (2017, p. 55). The governors felt that there was a risk that the refugees could potentially be disguised terrorists despite of the fact that there was no evidence suggesting that the perpetrators of the attack were either Syrian or refugees. This example shows how politicians in the U.S. used a terrorist attack allegedly carried out by soldiers of IS as a way for them to resist the entry of Syrian refugees. One could imagine that the negative media representation of Muslims has made the correlation between Syrian refugees and terrorists so easy to make. In recent years, there has also been multiple changes in many areas of Danish legislation concerning refugees and integration in general. It would be interesting to examine if some Danish politicians have used the Syrian refugees and terrorists attacks committed in Europe to push forward their own agenda in the Danish legislation.

My analysis suggests that the negative perceptions of Muslims in general, enforced by the negative media representation of Muslims, strips the right to protection in the minds of many of my respondents. Does it also strip away the right to protection in Danish politics?

Conclusion

As a conclusion, I establish that the Danish media have extensively followed Islamic State's claims of responsibility. It is important to mention that my conclusions do not apply to all Danes in general but can function as a leap for further research with a bigger sample size.

According to The European Union Institute for Security Studies, the attacks in Europe and in the US have been carried out by second and third generation immigrants who have been radicalized (Funk, Roderick, 2016). This has not stopped at least six Danish media sources from flourishing their headlines with the phrase of 'Islamic State takes responsibility' which might have come to replace Osama Bin Laden as the new face of Islam. This is so because of the overreporting of a group that strikes in the name of Islam. As I explain in my analysis, this phrase has also become an issue of what Stanley Cohen calls an issue of 'moral panics' because of this overreporting, which has created a normality of terror in the majority of my respondents.

Through an online survey, distributed through Facebook, in which I obtain 249 responses, I try to uncover if the Danish media coverage of Islamic State's claims of responsibility has had any effects on public opinion towards Muslim refugees. My analysis shows that I receive disparate responses of attitudes towards Muslim refugees. Many of my respondents are welcoming of Muslim refugees by showing compassion and humanity towards their settlement. The majority of my respondents also say that they are not affected by the twelve headlines. Yet, it is difficult not to recognize that my findings are also heavily marked by negative attitudes towards the settlement of Muslim refugees. Many of my respondents show xenophobic and islamophobic attitudes from the beginning of the survey when they argue that terror is likely to occur because of Muslims and immigration. Other respondents are also specifically othering Muslim refugees as terrorists when some point to refugees as a source of future attacks with arguments such as;

'Import of so many refugees, badly guarded borders. Because it is easy for terrorists to commit terror'. On the basis of my analysis, I conclude that three out of ten respondents' stance on Muslim refugees are affected by Danish headlines of IS's claim of responsibility. When I ask the respondents, on the basis of the twelve headlines, if they think that a Muslim refugee could commit terror in Denmark, forty-four percent either say that it is likely or very likely. Their negative attitudes are also evident in their reluctances in receiving Muslim refugees. This reluctance seems to be a result of a joint sceptic towards the genuineness of the Muslim refugee.

Yet, my analysis also shows that it is difficult to assess if the respondents' attitudes are an outcome of the headlines or something prior.

When my respondents show concern towards the Danish economy, integration issues, and danger towards societal values as consequences of the settlement of Muslim refugees it presupposes that their stance on Muslim refugees were already negative and have come to have its tool on attitudes towards Muslim refugees as well. The other studies conducted about the representation of Muslims as terrorists show the agelong negative othering of Muslims which might also be integrated in my respondents prior to this study. The other statistics conducted in Denmark also show that there has been ongoing negative perceptions towards non-western immigration, Muslims and refugees amongst Danes. This also suggests that examining public opinion towards a specific group of Muslims is difficult because the religion itself seem to be othered as the religion of terror, and such headlines as the twelve headlines in my survey surely contribute to this perception.

At last, my content analysis indicates that there might be different understandings of the intentions of Muslim refugees amongst my respondents. This is evident when I establish that respondents with a Christian background are more pessimistic towards the intentions of Muslim refugees whereas respondents with a Muslim background are generally more optimistic¹⁶. According to Boukala, European identity is haunted by fear of Muslim migrants as a consequence of the terrorists attacks in Europe together with the rising numbers of asylum seekers (Boukala, 2019, p. 316). As mentioned, Fekete and Yakushko both also argue that Xenophobia towards European Muslims is increasing. Together with my content analysis, this suggests that the overreporting of IS's claim of responsibility has surely contributed to a potential battle of Appadurai's ideocides between ideas of Islam.

It is fair to say, that it might be difficult for Muslim refugees to engage in a society in which, it seems, they are unwanted by many from the very beginning of their settlement.

¹⁶ I acknowledge that the group of respondents who identify themselves as Christians is bigger than the ones who identify themselves as Muslims

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